

LAVENDON PRIORY.

The Abbey of Lavendon was founded in the reign of Henry II., by John de Bidun, in honor of John the Baptist.

The family of the Biduns succeeded to the estates of Hugh Beauchamp (Bello Campo) of Lathbury, who had followed William the Conqueror into England, and on whom he had bestowed the Manor of Benges, Herts, three other Manors in Buckinghamshire, and the greater part of forty-three Lordships in Bedfordshire.

This Abbey was of the Premonstratensian Order. The origin of this order is so interesting that I shall give it in the words of Mrs. Jamieson in her legends of the Monastic Orders. "This order," she says "was founded by S^t Norbert in the 11th century. He was born at Cologne, was kinsman of the Emperor Henry IV., and though early intended for the ecclesiastical profession, in which the highest dignities awaited his acceptance, for several years he led a dissolute life in the Imperial Court.—One day, as he was riding in pursuit of his pleasures, he was overtaken by a sudden and violent tempest, and, as he looked about for shelter, there fell a ball of fire which exploded at his horse's feet, burnt up the grass, and sank deep into the earth. On recovering his senses, he was struck with dismay when he reflected what might have been his fate in the other world, had he perished in his wickedness. He forsook his evil ways, and began to prepare himself seriously for the life of a priest and a missionary. He sold all his possessions, bestowed the money on the poor, reserving to himself only ⅜ marks of silver, and a mule to carry the sacred vestments and utensils for the altar; and then, clothed in a lamb's skin, with a hempen cord round his loins, he set out to preach repentance and a new life.

"After preaching for several years through the Northern provinces of France, Hainault, Brabant, and Liege, he assembled around him those whose hearts had been touched by his eloquence, and were resolved to adopt his austere discipline.

“ Seeing the salvation of so many committed to his care, he humbly prayed for the divine direction, and thereupon the Blessed Virgin appeared to him in a vision, and pointed out to him a barren and lonesome spot in the valley of Coucy, thence called ‘Prè Montrè’ ‘Pratum Monstratum,’ and hence the name adopted by his community ‘Premonstratensian.’

“ Their dress was a coarse black tunic, and over it a white woollen cloak, in imitation of the Angels of Heaven who are clothed in ‘white garments.’

“ St. Norbert lived to count 1,200 members of his community:—was created Archbishop of Magdeburg by the Emperor Lothaire, and after a most active and laborious ministry, died A.D. 1134.”

It was not long after his death (1154) that the Abbey at Lavendon was founded, and dedicated to the Premonstratensian Order. In the charter of its foundation preserved in Dugdale’s Monasticon, John de Bidun grants the site for the Abbey of St. John the Baptist near to Wardington (Warrington) with the adjacent lands, “Sartum scilicet de Hiltbeye,” and 20 acres of land near Walter’s bridge, and the park near Tynnockeswade (Tinnock Wood)—his property in the mill, called Hanslapesmilne, and two parts of the tithe of his Lordship of Lavendon; the tithe of his Lordship of Kirkby and Stowe, and all the Churches on his estates—the Church of Lathbury, (de Latebiri) and the Church of Wuttane, and the Church de Seltone—the Church of Stowe, and the Church of Kirkebi, and the Church de Thomestone, and the Church of Lavendon, “de confirmatione sancti Hugonis Linc. Episcopi.”

This seems to be the original endowment. I shall now mention the names of other benefactors to the Abbey.

Sibilla de Augervill gave “loeu[m] de Snelshall” (Snelson) and the Chapel of Tattenho.

Ranulph, Count of Chester, gave “terram de la Lunde cum toftis et loftis et messuagiis.”

Radulph de Bray—the wood of Hatheresey (now Adersley, near Eckley Lane), also a house in Rengo Mercatorum Northampt.

Richard de Wyleford—one hide of Land in Wigglec, and his property in Norhay.

Radulph de Bray—all his property in Hatheresay.

The Wife of Bertram Malme—her property in her mill at Hanslope.

Simon, Son of Guido—xix Selliones (5 sellions make an acre) and 5 acres of land and one messuage cum crofto in Lavendon.

Nicholes de Haversham } All the boscus de Ernesden,
Robert de Belauny } and the land under it.

Richard de bello campo (Beauchamp)—a parcel of arable land in Monewade in Lathbury.

G. de Holney—14 acres of land in Lavendon.

Simon de Holney—6 acres of land in Lavendon.

William de Franciis—X acres of land, and again 13 acres in Lavendon.

Gervase de S. } X roods of meadow land in
William, Son of Rolland } Fylgrave.

Simon, Son of Hanson—5 acres of land in Bradele, 17 selliones terræ, and 3 roods and $\frac{1}{2}$ meadow and totum assartum (arable land) in Lavendon.

Ermigard, d. of John de Bidun—all the land of Brunesunde in Lathbury.

John, s. of Roger de Lavendon—7 acres and a half of wood in Lavendon.

Guncod, Son of Robert de Braos—one picce of land in Harewold (Harrold).

At its dissolution in Henry VIII., its revenues were estimated at £79 13s. 8d. net. There were 11 canons, whereof nine were priests, and two novices. Servants 20, whereof waiting servants seven.—Hinds (servants in husbandry) eight; women for the day three; children two. Bells, lead, worth by estimation £73 6s. 8d. The house wholly in ruins. The entire value of moveable goods £37 18s 10d. Stock none—debts none—woods 54 acres, whereof under 20 years growth 50.

Let us now see what account can be given of the disposal of the Abbey property. By patent 7 Edward VI., the King, for the sum of £1315 8s. 10d., paid by Hugh and Thomas Lawe, Haberdashers of London, granted to them tenements and lands belonging to the late Monastery of Lavendon.

The King also granted to Alexander Brett, for £842 11s. 10d., several pastures belonging to Lavendon Abbey in Weston.

Queen Elizabeth granted to Roland Heywood and

Johanna his wife, all the houses and edifices, together with the site and precinct of the late Monastery of Lavendon, 75 acres, being in the field Culverwell; 65 acres in Downfield; 80 in Ten Oak Field; 80 acres in Adersey; 22 acres in Windmill Close; 16 acres in Laundre; 4 acres in Highwood; a waste or common called Pickmead in Warrington, with three watermills in Lavendon; one messuage and tenement in Brayfield; 50 acres of land, and 11 acres of meadow, with the house called the Parsonage in Brayfield, and also the Lordship and Manor of Lavendon and Advowson, Donation and right of presentation to the Church of Lavendon, all belonging to the said Monastery.

The remaining history of the Abbey site may be told in a few words. Sir R. Heywood died 5th December, 1593. His heir sold it to Mr. W. Newton, of Yardley Hastings, Northampton, who, about 1617, sold it to Mr. Robert Eccleston, whose son or grandson sold it to Mr. Thomas Newton, in whose family it remained till Mr. Benjamin Brookes purchased it.

"The Abbey Church is said to have stood in a close above the house, where was a warren of rabbits which burrowed among the ruins, as I learn; but nothing of it is now to be discovered." Feb. 22, 1760.

Joan de Bretagne, Lady Bassett of Drayton, sister of John Duke of Brittany, died 1403, 4th Henry IV., and willed to be buried in the Chancel of Lavendon Abbey.

TICKFORD ABBEY.

This Abbey, situated about a quarter of a mile north of Newport Pagnell, seems to have been sometimes called Newport St. Mary, and the Abbey of Newport Pagnell.—It was founded in the reign of William Rufus, by Fulk Paganel, Baron Dudley, of the County of Stafford, and Beatrix his wife, as a cell of the Cluniac Monks or Black Canons, and made subject to the Abbey of St. Martin Majoris Monasterii, commonly called Marmonstier of Tours.

It may be proper here, as affording a clue to the history of the Abbey, to say a few words about the history of the Cluniac order. It took its name from Odo Abbot of *Cluni* in Burgundy, A.D. 912., who felt himself constrained to reform many things that seemed to him remiss

in the order of St. Benedict, and to establish a stricter discipline.

William, Earl of Warren, son-in-law to William the Conqueror, first brought these Monks into England, and built the first house at Lewes in Sussex, A.D. 1077.

All the Monasteries of the Order were governed by foreigners—had more French than English Monks in them—were not only subject to the Foreign houses of Cluni, la Charitè sur Loire, St. Martin des Champs at Paris, but could be visited by them only. None of their Priors could be elected by their respective convents, but were named by the abovementioned foreign houses. They could not receive the profession of their novices in England, nor could so much as any of their differences be determined here; but they were obliged, in almost all cases, to go to their superiors beyond sea, by which means the greatest part of their revenues were carried to those foreign houses—and, upon that account, during the wars with France, the different establishments of this Order, as not owning allegiance to, or allowing the superintendence and supervision of, the Government at home, were generally seized into the King's hands as *Alien Priories*.

After the petition to Parliament at Winchester, 4th Edward III., these anomalies and inconveniences were by degrees removed. Some of these houses were, in that and the following reign, made denizen, and discharged from all manner of subjection and obedience to the Foreign Abbays, and placed under the Government of Religious houses at home.

Of the number of these Alien Priories of the Cluniac Order was St. Mary of Tickford. On looking over its lists of Abbots, from Robert de Bohun 1187, to Thomas Brooke 1523, we see many names of French origin, till the reign of Henry IV., when it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Holy Trinity at York, founded also by one of the Paganel family. After that, the Abbots seem to be entirely English till the time of its dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII.

There is nothing particularly worthy of notice that is recorded to have happened in the Abbey, with the exception of a fire which destroyed all the Charters and Muni-ments of the Abbey.

It was in the reign of Henry VIII. that this Abbey,

together with twenty other small Monasteries, was dissolved by virtue of a Papal Bull, and its revenues, estimated at £126 17s., were bestowed on Cardinal Wolsey, to be annexed to his two Colleges at Oxford and Ipswich. On the fall of the Cardinal, the King bestowed it on Christ Church, Oxford, but it was afterwards resumed by the Crown.

It will be interesting to know what the property of the Abbey was. I shall give an account of it, in the order in which it was bequeathed. The account is taken from the deed of Edward II., confirming the former charters and deeds of gifts, the old deeds having been destroyed by fire.

Fulk Paganell—bequeathed the Manor of Tickford—Monechuset, from the gate of the house to the Cross on the high road; the lands and tenements in the village called the Hawstrete, to the bridge of Tickford, east; Lands, to the River Ouse, south; Castlemete and its fishery between Ildele and Larkebrok, east; Mill of Caldecote, twenty-seven and a half acres of land; Property in Newport; Chapel of Little Linford, and the Mill there, with the tenth of the Ecls; Tithe of all his Mills in Newport, with pasture for twelve Cows; Tithe of the Hunting in the Park at Tickford; Meadow called Hoggmede, north of Newport; Rents from Houses in the Mersh juxta Newport; Property in Lathbury, Gayhurst; Rent from a House quod Joannes Berthelmewe tenet in Emberton; Property in Weston—Clifton; “Scyrington, quæ Sampson Clericus quondam tenuit;” * Property in Great and Little Crawley; In Solebury; Lands of Richard de Tours in Wolston and Great Linford; Bradwell; Loughton; Staunton; the Church of Bradwell; the Church of Wilyn; Pensions from Woburn Chapel; Chicheley; † Hand-

* The Church of Sherington, called also Scyrington, is dedicated to a French Bishop “St. Laud,” (St. Loo in Latin). Laudius was descended from a noble family in the same diocese of which he afterwards became Bishop. About A. D. 528, a little after his consecration, he applied to St. Melanius of Rennes for instructions to advance the glory of God. He was present at the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Councils of Orleans, and, by proxy, at the 4th. It is said that succeeding to his family estate he enriched his diocese and endowed it with the lands of Briovere, now St. Loo. The holy Bishop governed his diocese with equal zeal and virtue, and went to the reward of his labours in 568.

† There are now pointed out the site of a Chapel, and the remains of the fish-ponds close by Thickthorn.—The Sanatorium is also said to have stood on the site of the adjacent Farm-house.

mede; the Manor of the Kethorne; Astwoode, Church and Lands.—Ecclesia de Bernak,* which paid two marks de nomine pensionis through the “Abbot Petri de Burgo.”

Gervase Paganel—Gave all his property at Chicheley with the consent of his wife, the Countess Isabel. The Chapel de Pettesho; Laverkehrage apud Tickford; Terra de Brocheleshai; De Cadewothe; Medietatem de Cuculmesho; decimam pathnagii de Newport et de Linford—wood to repair and build their Churches and houses.

Giffard de Tyringham—The Church of Tyringham.

Fulk Paganel—The Church of Bridgewater (Burgewalter de Sumersete) Hunesfill in Brentemares.

Hawase Paganel—Benefactress of land in Tickford.

Radulph Mansel—Gave lands de Cuculmesho.

John de Somery—Gave to the Prior and Convent of Tickford the right of fishing in the River Lovent.

Giles Erdington—Died in 1270—a great benefactor to Tickford Abbey, who had, in memory whereof, a monk to sing here for his soul and the souls of his parents.

These seem to have been the chief endowments of the Abbey, so far as I have been able to discover; and it will only remain for us to say how all these possessions were disposed of by the Crown at the dissolution.

In 1541, the King granted to Anthony Cave, the manor of the late dissolved Priory of Tickford. In the same year the possessions of the Priory, of Moulsoe, Great and Little Linford, Stewkley, Little and Bow Brickhill, Wavendon, North Crawley, and Swanbourne were, by Act of Parliament, annexed to the Manor of Ampthill,† then erected into a Royal Honor.

In 1573, Queen Elizabeth leased it for 21 years to George Annesley, Gentleman, of Newport Pagnell, and James, his son. Before the expiration of the lease, however, it was granted in fee by patent 11th November, 1592, to

* Ecclesia de Bernaches—now *Barnack* near Stamford. Cir. A.D. 1193 Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury granted to the Monks of Newport the presentation of Gervase Paganel to the Church of Bernaches.

† This Honor having been since given to the Russells, the Duke of Bedford, as Lord thereof, holds inquests by a coroner of his own appointment in the present hamlet of Tickford, and a portion of Marsh End, as well as in nine other manors expressed in this grant.

Thomas Compton, Robert Wright, and Gelley Meyrick, Esq., at the instance of that unhappy favourite, Robert Earl of Essex ; but, by his attainder, reverting to the Crown, it was sold to Sir John Fortescue, Knight of Salden, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, during the short period of his possession of this property, became remarkably conspicuous in the County from his electioneering contest with Sir Francis Goodwin. He was also so unfortunate as to have been taken prisoner in May, 1644, by Sir Samuel Luke, Governor of Newport, by whom he was surprized near Islip.

In 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted to Henry Adkins, M. D., for £1534 6s. (together with the Rectory of Newport Pagnel), the Manor or Lordship of Tickford Abbey, including the Mansion House of the Manor or late Priory of Tickford, with the Manor of Caldecote and all thereto belonging.

In 1621, Dr. Adkins purchased the property (for £4500) of Lady Fortescue, the widow of Sir John.

In 1623, King James I. granted to him all those Closes of Meadow and Pasture in Newport and Lathbury, late parcel of the Manor of Newport—Bury Close, Bury Field, Bury Meadow, the Kickles, and other lands.

In 1625, the Doctor died, whereupon his Estates descended to his son and heir, Sir Richard Adkins, Bart. He died in 1628.

In 1628, the Manor was sold by the family to the Uthwatts, of Linford, and by them to Sir William Hart, Knight. —Mr. Jaques purchased it of the heirs of Sir William Hart, whose widow was married to Frederick Hendrick Van Hagen, Esq., and held by him in her right.

In 1758, Thomas Hooton, Esq., purchased Tickford Abbey. He devised it to his only daughter, the wife of Philip Hoddle Ward, Esq., from whom it came, by purchase, into the possession of the present owner, William Powell, Esq.

April 1, 1767, Browne Willis writes—

“ In 1719, the original gateway was standing, consisting of a large and small arch at the entrance into the Convent, with some few remains of the old building, besides five or six pillars which had supported the nave of the Priory

Church with the arches which had been turned over them.

“Thomas Hooton erected, in a retired part of the grounds, traditionally the site of the ancient conventual Church, a building twelve feet high, designed as a burial place for his family. This ground, having been the burial place of the Monks, is considered as sacred, and the burial service, as prescribed in the Liturgy of the Church of England, is performed by a clergyman.”

These are the only records that remain to us of these two Abbeys of Lavendon and Tickford. The interest that attaches to them must be drawn rather from their locality than from their intrinsic worth. No work of piety or of genius, produced by any of their Abbots, has come down to us; their names alone are recorded: they might have been great in their day and generation, but they have passed away like a tale that is told, and have left scarcely a trace behind them. Ah! how idle a boast, after all, is the immortality of a name! Time is ever silently turning over his pages; we are too much engrossed by the story of the present to think of the characters and anecdotes that gave interest to the past, and each age is a volume thrown aside to be speedily forgotten. The idol of to-day pushes the hero of yesterday out of our recollection, and will in turn be supplanted by his successor of to-morrow. “Our Fathers,” says Sir Thomas Brown, “find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors.” History fades into fable—fact becomes clouded with doubt and controversy:—the inscription moulders from the tablet; the statue falls from the pedestal—columns, arches, pyramids,—what are they but heaps of sand, and their epitaphs but characters written in the dust? What is the security of the tomb, or the perpetuity of an embalmment? The remains of Alexander the Great have been scattered to the wind, and his empty sarcophagus is now the mere curiosity of a Museum! The Egyptian mummies which Cambyses or time have spared, avarice now consumes—Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams. The coffin of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey has been broken open, and his remains despoiled of their funereal ornaments: the sceptre has been stolen from the hand of the imperious Elizabeth, and the effigy of Henry V. lies

headless. Not a royal monument but bears some proof how false and fugitive is the homage of mankind.—[*Washington Irving*.]—And yet, how useful—how wholesome is the study of bygone times and places! How captivating to escape from the common place realities of the present, and to lose ourselves amid the gigantic shadows of antiquity; and, forgetting the present, to rove amidst the places of former greatness, and people them again with their lordly residents! To walk over the well-marked outlines of Lavendon Castle, with its wide moat, and fancy that the name of Peover* still echoes within its renovated walls, and its donjon still keeps its watch and ward—to wander by the place where once its Abbey stood, and amidst the ruins of houses that once clustered around its hallowed shrine, to seem to catch again the sweet and swelling notes of praise!

How sweet and refreshing, as we cast our eyes over the gently undulating slopes of Chicheley, and bend our steps towards its Sanatorium and Chapel—or from its heights cast our eyes over the well wooded and well watered Sanctuary of Tickford, with its winding Ouse and the sparkling Lovent—to remember that it was amid the same scenes and on the same soil that the Biduns and Paganels once lived and walked—whilst, as we bend our steps towards the place where its Abbey once stood, who would suppress the feeling that he is still walking on hallowed ground—that the spirit of peace and holy calm, and quiet serenity still hovers about it—that each stone becomes a chronicle, speaking of the times that are past—connecting us with the mighty dead, and seeming to exhort us that “Whatsoever *our* hand findeth to do, we should do it with all our might—knowing that there is no device, or work, or knowledge, or wisdom in the grave whither *we* are hastening.”

“This may be superstition weak and wild,
But e'en the faintest relics of a Shrine
Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.”

C. G. HULTON.

Emberton,
March 11, 1861.

* The life of Roger Peover, Bishop of Salisbury, (Henry I., 1107) equals in interest, and is not very dissimilar to, the fortunes of Cardinal Wolsey.—See *Godwin de Præsulibus*.