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THE
HISTORY OF
WINCHCOMBE ABBEY

A
THESIS
submitted by
GORDON THOMAS HAIGH, M.A.
to the
UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM
for the
Degree of
MASTER OF LETTERS

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CONTENTS

	Page
List of Abbreviations	VI
Introduction	1
Chapter One.	6
King Kenulf commences to build the Abbey, 798; dedicated, 811. Foundation Charter. Endowments for 300 monks. 'Abbot' Livingus? Kenelm legend.	
Chapter Two.	15
Universal collapse of religious life. Abbey re-founded c.972. Abbot Germanus from Fleury. Monks ejected from the Abbey c.975; restored c.983. Abbot Godwine, 1044. Monastery in hands of the Bishop. Abbot Godric, 1054; deposed and imprisoned c.1072. Abbey in charge of the Abbot of Evesham.	
Chapter Three.	25
Prior Aldwin leads mission to North of England, 1073. Abbot Galandus, 1075. Church damaged by lightning, 1091. Abbot Ralph dies, 1095. Property at time of Survey.	
Chapter Four.	33
Abbot Girmund, 1095-1122. Exhumed. Abbot Godfrey, 1122. First observance of the Feast of the Conception of the B.V.M. Abbot Robert from Cluny, 1138. Winchcombe held for the Empress Matilda. Postlip chapel built. Hayles Chapel forced on the monks. Fire destroys Abbey 1151. Abbots William, 1152, and Gervase 1157.	
Chapter Five.	43
Abbot Henry, 1171. Papal protection. Property.	
Chapter Six.	52
Abbot Crispin, 1181. Tithe disputes. Separation of Abbatial and Conventual revenues. Active Priors. Daily celebration of the Mass of the B.V.M. Dispute with Parson of Hayles c.1186. Water pipes laid to the Abbey.	

Chapter Seven.

Abbot Robert, 1194. Five marks pension taken from Sherborne and Twining Churches. Manors of Hawling, Hazelton and Yanworth purchased, 1201.

Chapter Eight.

78

Abbot Thomas, 1221, appropriates Sherborne. Obtains grant of the Town of Winchcombe and the Hundreds. Attends General Chapter. Excessive bell ringing at the Parish Church disturbs monks. Abbot Henry.

Chapter Nine.

89

Abbot John Yanworth, 1247, buys the Manor of Dry Marston, 1250. Hayles Abbey dedicated, 1251. Abbot presides at General Chapter 1271; resigns 1282. Grants and demands.

Chapter Ten.

109

Abbot Walter de Wickewane, 1282. Division of tithes with the Vicar of Winchcombe, 1287. Nepotism (?) 1293. Abbot in debt; later, money owing to him.

Chapter Eleven.

122

Abbey receives property in London, 1301. Abbot excommunicate. Gates closed against Prior of Worcester, 1302. Royal pensioners imposed on monks. Acquisitions at Enstone; Church appropriated, 1307, living obtained 1309. Complaints against excessive taxation.

Chapter Twelve.

140

Extensive building at the Abbey. Walter de Wickewane's Constitutions. Died 1314.

Chapter Thirteen.

149

Abbot Thomas de Sherborne, 1314. Abbot Richard de Idbury, 1316; buys Manor and advowson of Rowell; sells Framilode Fishery. Discipline lax; Bishop Orleton's Ordinances, 1329. Abbey staff. Reduction in grants of property. Numerous Corrodies. Resigns, 1340.

Chapter Fourteen.

Page
175

Bishop provides William de Sherborne after disputed election. Violent attack and robbery by townfolk. Monk breaks out of the Abbey, reconciled. Abbot deposed, 1352.

Chapter Fifteen.

196

Abbot Walter de Wynforton provided by the Bishop. Whirlwind damages the Abbey, 1364; Indulgence to meet cost of repairs. Lawsuits. Trespasses against the Abbey by the townfolk. Twining appropriated. Dispute with Vicar of Winchcombe; appeals to Rome; popular support for the Vicar. Prosperity restored.

Chapter Sixteen.

214

Details of the election of Abbot William Bradley; he appropriates Winchcombe Church, 1398. Value of the Abbey. Parish Church bell-ringing restrained by Pope. Grant of Pontifical Insignia. Appropriation of Bledington, 1405. Abbot presides at the General Chapter.

Chapter Seventeen.

Election of Abbot John Cheltenham, 1423. Lollardy. Sound finances. Bond of association of monasteries, 1430. Law suit with Abbess of Polesworth, 1440.

Chapter Eighteen.

242

Abbot William de Winchcombe, 1454. Winchcombe Parish Church built. Abbots Thomas and John Twynning. Abbot Richard Kidderminster, 1488. Grant of the lordship of Sudeley, 1509. Preaches sermon at St. Paul's Cross, 1514; subsequent discord. Interest in the Royal Divorce. Correspondence with Cromwell.

Chapter Nineteen.

260

Richard Anselm Mounslow, Abbot; his correspondence with Cromwell who harries the monks; appoints Vicar of Winchcombe to disturb the Convent. Dom Placet's correspondence. Insubordinate monks supported by Cromwell who gives severe Injunctions; he accepts High-Stewardship, 1538. Leases before Suppression. Monks surrender, 1539.

Chapter Twenty.

Page
238

Pension awards; after careers. Values of the Abbey, 1535, 1539 and 1540. Disposal of fabric and estates.

Chapter Twenty-one.

303

Conclusion and review.

Appendix.

317

Plans & Map of district.
Bibliography.

317-20

321

Anglo-Sax. Chron.	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.
Annal. Mon.	Annales Monastici.
Bod. Lib.	Bodlian Library, Oxford.
C.P.R.	Calendar of Patent Rolls.
C.R.	Close Rolls.
C.S.	Camden Society.
Cal. C. R.	Calendar of the Close Rolls.
Cal. Charter R.	Calendar of the Charter Rolls.
Cal. Papal Regs.	Calendar of the Papal Registers.
Chron. Abb. Evesham.	Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham.
Cott. MSS.	Cottonian MSS.
Dugdale Mon.	Monasticon Anglicanum, Vol.II. Dugdale.
English Hist. Soc.	English Historical Society.
English Monks etc.	English Monks & the Suppression of the Monasteries.
Flor. Worc.	Chronicle of Florence of Worcester.
L. & P. Hy VIII. / 8.	Letters and Papers of Henry VIII.
M.O.	The Monastic Order in England.
R.S.	Rolls Series.
Rec. Com.	Record Commission.
Trans.	Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.
Trans. R. Hist. S.	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.
V.C.H.	Victoria County History, Gloucester- shire Vol.II.
V.E.	Valor Ecclesiasticus.
Worc. Epis. Regs.	Worcester Episcopal Registers.

THE ABBEY SEAL.



INTRODUCTION

That the Benedictine Abbey of Winchcombe has received much less attention from historians than its early foundation, size and importance would demand may be due, in part at least, to the almost complete obliteration of every trace of the buildings. Where ruins exist they excite some interest and, sooner or later, someone takes in hand a serious and careful account of the past history of those relics; but the incentive has been wanting at Winchcombe. It is not too much to say that in no other case has an Abbey of like size so utterly disappeared from sight.

Hitherto, the fullest history has been that by Dr. Rose Graham, in the 'Victoria County History, Volume II, Gloucestershire.' It is detailed and very accurate which, with the exception of the valuable material included in the account of the Abbey in Dugdale's 'Monasticon,' is more than can be said for most of the other histories. These are, for the most part, local products of the Victorian era and coloured by the prejudices of the authors. The fullest account in this class is the 'Annals of Winchcombe' by Mrs E. Dent, which, however, contains many errors and betrays an entire lack of understanding of, and sympathy with, the monks and their vocation. The brief history of

the Abbots contained in the Landboc, Vol. II, is marred by many mistakes in the dating and by the absence of references for many statements.

The recovery of the long lost 'Landboc, sive Registrum Monasterii de Winchelcumba' and its restoration to Lord Sherborne, whose ancestors acquired it with Sherborne House, made possible its publication by the Reverend David Royce in 1903. Thus, a most valuable source of information concerning the domestic and business activities of the monks of Winchoombe was brought within the reach of historians.

The original MSS are bound up in two volumes, of which the second is the thicker. They are alike in size (7 ins. by 10 ins.) with oak lids, bevelled at the edges and covered with vellum. Volume I contains 135 leaves, 3 inserted slips, and 276 pages. The earliest penmanship is of the thirteenth century. The first pages contain a list of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings, two Indexes and some grants; after these, the Landboc proper begins.

Volume II, was, as is stated at the beginning of the book, compiled under the direction of Abbot John Cheltenham, c. A.D. 1422. His election records are included in the first entries. Afterwards, other documents were added, bringing the records up to 1464. (1)

(1) Landboc, II. xlv - xlix.

3

There is no sort of chronological sequence about the ordering of the material, so that the student is compelled to search very carefully through both books to find all the information relating to any one particular period. Moreover, a great many of the documents are undated and the approximate date can only be ascertained by comparing the names of persons appearing in the text of the documents or as witnesses to them with other documents of known date; a task not made easy by reason of the limited number of surnames in use. (1)

The Landboc is the main surviving work executed within the Abbey, but there are others of inferior historical importance still extant. (2)

The most interesting of all, the History of the Abbey, compiled by Abbot Richard Kidderminster, 1488-1525, perished in the Great Fire of London, 1666. This Abbot was a keen student, and he attempted to bring order to the deplorably torn and mutilated records and to compile an account of his house. He found his task much hampered by reason of the loss of the earliest records in the great monastic fire of 1151, and confessed that he was

-
- (1) Many of the Landboc documents have been dated by the Editor, but in several cases he has fallen into error. My copy was, fortunately, formerly in the possession of the late Dr. R. Lane-Poole, of Oxford, and his marginal notes and corrections have proved invaluable.
- (2) The 'ANNALES DE WINCHCOMBE' in the British Museum, Cottonian, Tiberius E. IV.; and the 12th century

very uncertain regarding events prior to that calamity. Nevertheless, he succeeded in writing up five books:- I, concerning first fruits; II, Papal and Episcopal Privileges and Instruments relating to pensions and tithes; III, Royal Charters and Privileges; IV, a collection of documents connected with possessions and acquisitions of all house property; V, a series of brief 'lives' of the Abbots. Fortunately, before these works were destroyed, Dugdale was able to read them, and he incorporated some of the material in his 'Monasticon.' (1)

Much valuable material has been found in the early contemporary histories and chronicles, chiefly Florence of Worcester, William of Malmesbury, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Symeon of Durham. During the later periods, the Calendars of the Patent, Close and Charter Rolls were of great assistance, also the Calendar of Papal Letters. For the period preceding, and at the Dissolution, the Letters and Papers of Henry VIII were invaluable and considerable use is made of them.

The Episcopal Registers of the Bishops of Worcester are frequently referred to, mostly in those cases where they have been published. Greater use would have been made of others still awaiting publication, if it had been at all possible to gain access to them during the war.

Breviary in the library of Valenciennes. c.f. Dom. Knowles, 'Monastic Order', n.539
 (1) V. C. H. p.71, and Landbooc, II, xlvii

This was not possible as those valuable documents have been placed for safety in the Crypt of the Cathedral and it was not permissible to remove them from the safes there.

The account of the excavations carried out on the site of the Abbey has been included in an Appendix.

CHAPTER ONE.

The Kingdom of Mercia reached the zenith of its power under Offa, a dominance that it retained under Kenulf, who ascended the throne in 794, after Offa's son Egbert's short reign of five months. The Chronicler's estimate of Kenulf's character as "religious at home and victorious in war" (1) is attested by the defeat that he inflicted upon Eadbert, surnamed Pren, of Kent, whom he brought captive to Mercia in 796, (2) and by the Abbey of Winchcombe which he commenced to build in 798. (3)

While this new foundation was designed for monks, it would appear that there was, or had been, a house of nuns in the town, as King Offa is "said" to have built a nunnery there in the year 787. (4) If this was the case, it may have continued in being with the new monastery. This possibility receives some support from the fact that Quendryth, daughter of Kenulf, is styled 'Abbess of Winchcombe,' in as late as 825 and that Abbess Aelflaed is named as her successor. (5) Against this stands Quendryth's appointment as Abbess of Southminster,

(1) Wm. Malmesbury, Vol. I, 130.

(2) Flor. Worc. 48.

(3) Wm. Malmesbury, Vol. I, 130; Landbooc, I.17; Dugdale, II, 300.

(4) Dugdale, II, 300.

(5) Landbooc, II, xiii; Trans. XXXIX, 25

in 820; in which year she was engaged in litigation with Wulfred, Archbishop of Canterbury. (1) Possibly Quendryth held both nunneries or, on the other hand, she may have inherited the Winchcombe house at her father's death in 821. Such a legacy would not have been unusual, since, in those times and for long afterwards, religious foundations were regarded as the personal property of their founders.

On the 9th November 811 A.D. Wulfrid, Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by twelve other bishops, dedicated the Abbey. Amid the great concourse were two visiting sovereigns, Sired of East Anglia and Guthred of Kent, and ten ealdormen. (2) As a gesture of royal clemency, Fren of Kent, who had remained a captive, was set at liberty. (3)

The royal foundation provided for a community of three hundred monks who were to maintain the Abbey out of revenues derived from the following lands:-

6	hides	in	Alne, Warwickshire
7	"	"	Bledington
2	"	"	Charlton Abbots
1	"	"	Chesterton, Oxon.
3½	"	"	Admington
7	"	"	Snowhill
24	"	"	Enstone, Oxon
10	"	"	Honeyborne
30	"	"	Sherborne

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- (1) Trans. XXXIX, 17
 (2) Landbooc Vol. II. p.17; Wm. Malmesbury, p.131;
 Dugdale, Mon. II. p.301
 (3) Wm. Malmesbury, p.131

3	hides	in	Stanton	
3	"	"	Twining	
2½	"	"	Alderton	
1	"	"	Frampton	
2	"	"	Hidcote	
3½	"	"	Wenric (Windrush)	(1)

If the hide be taken at the generous estimate of 120 acres, the total would be about 13, 080 acres. Judged by monastic standards of later times, this total area does not appear over lavish for such a great community. Moreover it is doubtful if the Abbey did receive all these grants at first, for Abbot Kidderminster confesses himself unable to ascertain the exact possessions at this date owing to the decay of the monastic records and the loss of many of them in the great fire during the reign of Stephen. (2)

He was uncertain about how the three hundred monks managed to maintain themselves, and concluded that "they could live then on what seems incredible now; not more than forty would be clerics and the rest recluses or such as by trade and handiwork could forecast against a lack of sustenance." (3)

That there were ever as many as three hundred monks may be doubted. The recruitment of so large a community, even when the eminence and influence of the royal founder is taken into account, would take time. Moreover the time when monastic life in Mercia was to break down en-

(1) Dugdale. Mon. II. p. 302; V.C.H. Glos. Vol. II. p. 66
 (2) Dugdale. Mon. II. p. 302
 (3) Dugdale, II, 302

9

tirely was not far distant, so that subsequent increases were scarcely to be expected. We must envisage, in this first foundation at Winchcombe, a community that included many who, by their previous secular experience, were well fitted to make the most of their endowments and, as was then customary, do most of their own domestic work themselves. Even under these circumstances only a community of many less than three hundred would have found the endowments adequate for their maintenance.

On the day of the dedication of the Abbey, King Kenulf granted a foundation Charter to the monks. In it he recounts the event and the names of the principal guests and states that generous gifts were given to the great men, priests and monks. He also decreed that the Abbey should grant the benefit of 'sanctuary' to any person "who has forfeited his life, or is guilty of any other crime open or secret."

This Charter was signed by the three kings, the Archbishop and the twelve bishops and eleven ealdormen.(1)

Apparently in the same year, though it is undated, Pope Leo granted a Privilege declaring the monastery "where Kenulf shall be buried" free from secular service.(2) Another Papal privilege is recorded as having been received

(1) MS. Cotton, Tib. E. iv, fol. 13b.; Dugdale, II, 301; Landboc, I. 18.

(2) Landboc, I. 21-22

from Pope Paschal in 818, which confirmed, without going into details, all Kenulf's monasteries and possessions. (1)

Both of these Papal Privileges are mentioned in the Foundation Charter, though the latter Privilege was not granted until seven years later. Moreover, that Pontif did not begin to reign until 817; so that his existence, as such, was unknown to at least one of those who was included among the witnesses to the Foundation Charter, viz. Adulf, Bishop of Lichfield, who ceased to hold office and probably died in 816.

That the Foundation Charter and the Privilege of Pope Paschal have been declared to be forgeries will come as no surprise. (2) Many of these early charters are, in some degree at least, suspect. The ravages of time and the perils of theft and fire destroyed many ancient and valuable documents upon which the monks were wont to rely for the defence of their property and rights against the claims of kings, ecclesiastics and laymen. These grave losses were made good in some cases by the ingenuity of scribes, who, working from what was remembered or saved of the originals, produced serviceable documents,

(1) Landbot, 22-23

(2) Trans. XXXIX, 13, where Haddan & Stubbs, Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents, iii, 572, is quoted, re Foundation Charter "is beyond doubt, in its present form at least, a forgery." "The confirmatory Privilege .. is no more worthy of credence than the charter."

though often marred by errors and anachronisms.

In 821, King Kenulf died, (1) and was buried in Winchcombe Abbey, in accordance with his wish. (2) After his death no more is heard of the Abbey for about a century and a half, a dark period generally in monastic history. (3)

Once only, is there found mention of an 'Abbot of Winchcombe.' In 851, Livingus, with that style, witnessed a Charter of Bertulf, King of Mercia, granted to Croyland Abbey. This Charter, too, has been held as spurious. (4) Even if it is valid, the title 'Abbot' is not conclusive evidence that there were monks at Winchcombe at that date, or indeed that Livingus was either a monastic superior at all or even a cleric, so uncertain were the times and the uses of such titles. (5)

A product of this same 'dark age' was the legendary

(1) V. C. H. 66

(2) Flor. Worc. 49.; Wm. Malmesbury, 131; Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 345. All three agree in dating Kenulf's death in 819. but he signed a Charter in 820. Trans. XXXIX, 14.

(3) V. C. H. 66. c.f. Knowles, M.O. 24 ff.

(4) Cartularium Saxonicum, Birch. No. 461, Vol. II, 54; c.f. Landbooc, II, xvi.

(5) "as for the words 'abbot' and 'monastery' they had already had such a strange history both in England and western Europe in general for more than two centuries that it is unsafe to build any argument upon them for the existence of monastic life." Knowles, M.O. 35

prince who was destined to be elevated by popular credence and devotion to the status of a martyr and local saint and to become co-Patron, with the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Abbey, wherein a shrine was later erected over the place where he was supposed to be buried to which pilgrims flocked in great numbers and where miracles were performed. (1)

This was Kenelm, assumed to be the son of Kenulf, but concerning whose existence the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle has nothing to record, either before or at the time of King Kenulf's death. In charters granted between the years 803 and 811, a 'Kenelm,' styled 'princeps' or 'dux,' is found among the magnates and witnesses; but after the latter date all mention of him ceases. It would appear, therefore, that he died in or about 811, ten years before Kenulf, and that at the time of his death he must have been a young man of some twenty-four years of age, as he can hardly have been employed as a responsible witness to important documents in 803 unless he had then attained an age not less than somewhere about sixteen years at least. (2) As we have no writings still extant concerning him for the next three hundred years, it

(1) "There is hardly any place in England more venerated, or where greater numbers of persons attend at the festival; and this arising from the long continued belief of his sanctity and the frequent exhibition of miracles." Wm. Malmesbury, Vol. I. 364

(2) Trans. XXXIX, 16

is not possible to trace the origin and growth of the legend that embellished his name. The decline in learning and the invasions and ravages of the Danes and Normans did little to preserve sober local history. In the absence of restraint imposed by written records, rumour waxed, until Florence of Worcester, writing in the eleventh century or early twelfth, knows only that Kenelm was murdered at the instigation of his ambitious sister Quendryth at the tender age of seven, five months after he had ascended the throne of his father. The secret crime was revealed by a celestial column of light marking the thorn tree within a deep wood, beneath which he lay. From his severed head there had flown a white dove. (1)

William of Malmesbury, a few years later than Florence of Worcester, knows even more. He tells of a white dove that dropped a parchment upon the Altar of St. Peter's, Rome. An Englishman, providentially present at the time, made known to the perplexed Romans how Kenelm had been slain and buried in a wood. A letter, sent from Rome, informed the English kings; whereupon the body was recovered and conveyed to Winchcombe for burial.

More and more was subsequently added, until Richard of Cirencester had a most florid account to excite popular piety in the fourteenth century.(2)

(1) Flor. Worc. 49.

(2) Trans. XXXIX, 30

It may be that during his twenty-four or so years of life the young prince (for he never became king) was well known for his saintly character; and in those days it did not require a great degree of holiness to gain a reputation for sanctity! Posterity then supplied the one distinction necessary to set the seal of sanctification on him, martyrdom; so that, in an uncritical and credulous age, Winchcombe Abbey received the benefits that fell to it by reason of its possession of such relics. A coffin containing the remains of a person of short stature lay by the side of that of King Kenulf for centuries beneath the Sanctuary of the Abbey, until, in 1815, they were brought to light and the stone coffins, emptied of their royal relics, were placed in the Parish Church of St Peter at Winchcombe. (1)

Kenelm's sister, the Abbess of Winchcombe and Southminster, who lived with her nuns for many years after the supposed murder, came into the legend because she was known to be the daughter of King Kenulf and, possibly, there was some confusion between her name and that of King Offa's well-hated wife. Certainly Quendryth's subsequent career does not stand consistent with guilt of murder or of having aspired to possession of the throne, even if a woman was permitted to bear the office.

(1) Trans. XXXV, 3.
 (2) Trans. XXXIX, 59

CHAPTER TWO.

The reign of Kenulf gave to the Abbey ten settled years during which it could develop; but after his death the power and influence of Mercia declined, suffering speedy eclipse by the rising power of Wessex. The loss of Kent, Sussex and Essex was soon followed by an invasion of Mercia and the acceptance of Egbert of Wessex as overlord. These disasters and the quick succession of the Mercian kings could have been of little assistance to the monks at that time when they stood most in need of encouragement and stability. Kenulf had given them his favour. That his successors had the means, opportunity, or inclination is by no means certain.

A factor of even greater importance is that the general attitude towards the regular religious life was rapidly undergoing a change. In the previous two centuries, monastic houses had been established in Mercia in great numbers. These and houses elsewhere paid the greatest reverence to the Rule of St. Benedict, yet did not hesitate to modify it freely in favour of purely local usage. The changed attitude without the monasteries and the free interpretation within, paved the way for an universal breakdown of the Benedictine system, and everywhere secularization of the houses went on apace; clerical estab-

lishments taking the place of the ordered monks. (1)

This general collapse of the monastic life was distinctly accelerated by the increasing raids which the pagan Danes began to make, even before the Abbey had been founded. In the far north Lindisfarne and Jarrow had been sacked for the first time in 793-4. By 870 there were no monasteries in existence north of the Humber, while, between 830 and 880, all the monasteries of Wessex and south Mercia either had become extinct during the wars or had become houses where a number of priests or clerics lived together without any full regular life. (2)

We have no information that either the town of Winchcombe or its Abbey suffered direct hurt from the Danes, though they were encamped within no great distance for over a year, moving from Chippenham to Cirencester in 879. (3) The prolonged proximity of such foes and the consequent threat to communications and the settled life would make for isolation and deny to scattered communities that mutual encouragement and support so sorely needed. Under these conditions it is not surprising that each became a law unto itself, and that, if it had not already

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- (1) Dom. D. Knowles, "Monastic Order," p.23. "...in north and south alike, the tendency, common in every country and century in the Middle Ages, for the monastic life to lose its regular character, and for houses to become merely clerical establishments or to fall wholly under lay control, was making itself felt more and more strongly."
- (2) Dom. D. Knowles, Monastic Order, p. 24.
- (3) Flor. Worc. p. 72.

taken place, Winchcombe should now abandon its Benedictine character for an elasticity more adapted to those troubled and disheartening times. Where greater and longer established houses had succumbed to circumstances, it is too much to expect that Winchcombe could persist. In the face of overwhelming difficulties the monks gave up their original manner of life and allowed their house to pass into the possession of secular clerks.

After the autumnal blight had carried off the monasteries, the long winter set in, that dreary period marked by the low levels to which clerical learning sank. In their day the monasteries had ensured a standard of education, but with their passing went their learning, save perhaps where some children were taught in a few of the clerical establishments. It was King Alfred's lament that he could not find a priest south of the Thames capable of translating the Mass into the language of the people. He did his best to remedy the prevailing ignorance by appointing efficient bishops, but when he sought to restore the monastic system at a new foundation at Athelney it failed to develop and probably ceased altogether after its founder's death.

If nothing monastic would grow here in England as yet, the seedbeds, from whence was to come the new life for the springtime of Edgar's reign, had been well pre-

pared in the Empire of Charlemagne. In 910, the great Abbey of Cluny was founded, wherein the strict Rule of St. Benedict was observed. The ancient and celebrated monastery at Fleury came within the control of Cluny in 930, and "was destined to have great influence upon England, at first by attracting individuals from across the Channel, and later by supplying a model for one of the centres of the revival." (1)

From Winchcombe, in the hands of its secular clerks, it seems a far cry to Fleury with its strict Benedictine Rule, yet Fleury was destined to supply the man that was to bring again the monastic order.

The revival of the monastic life in England was due more to the efforts and influence of St. Dunstan than of any other man. His early education was received from the secular clerks at Glastonbury, close to where he was born in about 909. During his later life at the royal court he came into contact with, and under the influence of, visiting foreign monks. His opportunity to revive the monastic order in its entirety came when he was made Abbot of Glastonbury in 943-4. From this date the restoration went forward, though interrupted for two years by Dunstan's banishment by King Edwy. However he spent the time in observing the conduct of the reformed house

(1) Dom. D. Knowles, Monastic Order, p. 29.

of Blandinium.

His recall by King Edgar in 957 was soon followed by his consecration as Bishop of Worcester, which See he left for Canterbury in 959.

On his advice, Worcester was given to his friend Oswald, lately returned from five years spent at Fleury. While there Oswald had come to value the character of one of the monks, Germanus of Winchester, whom he recalled from Fleury soon after his own appointment to Worcester in 961. Oswald sent Germanus with twelve others and some boys to found a monastery at Westbury-on-Trym, which became the Mercian centre of Benedictine revival. (1) From this new foundation sprang Ramsey in 971 (2) of which Germanus was prior.

Ramsey became a flourishing and model house, at once providing an example for others and a veritable storehouse from which Oswald drew men as required. His enthusiasm may be estimated from the number of new communities that he settled within a few years: Deerhurst c. 970 (3) Winchcombe c. 972 (4); Pershore c. 972 (5);

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- (1) Hist. Ramesien 42. V. C. H. Vol. 2, p.3. Knowles, Monastic Order, p. 51, dates foundation of Westbury as c. 962.
- (2) Vita Oswaldi, 435; dated 968 in V. C. H. Vol.2, p.3; 969 in Cambridge Medieval History Vol. 3, p. 375; Knowles, M. O...971.
- (3) Knowles, Monastic Order, 52.
- (4) *ibid*, 51, and also his 'Religious Houses of Medieval England' p.67; in both of which he dates Winchcombe 972, but see V. C. H. Vol. 2, pp. 3 and 66 where 969, as also in the list of Abbots in same.
- (5) Knowles, Monastic Order, 51, with ex-Glastonbury Abbot.

Worcester 974 (1); Evesham c. 975 (2).

Strong support was forthcoming from King Edgar, who urged Dunstan and Oswald in 969 to turn out the secular clerks in Mercia and put monks into their places. At Worcester Oswald gave them the option of leaving or of making their professions as monks, which some elected to do and remained there under the direction of Winsige who had been sent to Ramsey for some training.(3)

Much the same procedure was followed at Winchcombe where the strict observance of the Benedictine Rule was established on the same lines as at Fleury under its new Abbot, Germanus. (4) If the importance of Winchcombe can be gauged by the status and experience of its head, Oswald must have ranked it high among the monasteries. It is possible, too, that, considering the early restoration, the possessions were still adequate or that there was every prospect of an easy recovery of whatever had been alienated during the clerks' long tenure. (5)

In 975, the monks lost their main stay, for King Edgar died. His passing and the disputed succession

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- (1) Knowles, Monastic Order, 51, with ex-Glastonbury Abbot.
 (2) *ibid*, p. 52. also under ex-Glastonbury Abbot.
 (3) *ibid*, p. 51, but says "where monks were gradually introduced." The same view held in Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 3. 375, "Oswald brought monks... to his Cathedral Church of Worcester, establishing them in his 'familia' side by side with the clerics whose life interests he respected."
 (4) V. C. H. Vol. 2. p. 66, cites 72, 73, Hist. Ch. York, 1, 443.
 (5) Landbooc, II. xv. "...with the King's authority the Bishop recovered any land lost to the monastery."

gave the Mercian nobility the opportunity to express their long felt sympathy with the dispossessed seculars, many of whom had been recruited from the ranks of those noble houses, and, not infrequently being married, had passed both offices and possessions on to their sons. Moreover the lay lords had come to regard the grants of large estates to the monks with considerable jealousy as all hope of acquiring the lands was denied to them.

This sympathy flared up into action under the leadership of Aelfhere, whom Edgar had set up over the Severn area. In a short time the monks were expelled from several houses (1), including Winchcombe, and the seculars, with their wives (2) were reinstated. Germanus returned to Ramsey with his monks. (3)

On the death of Aelfhere, 983, the persecution ceased, so that the monks were able to return, presumably after turning the seculars out once more: and, slowly consolidating their position, raised the Abbey to foremost rank by the time of Edward the Confessor. (4) After the return of the monks nothing further is known concerning the Abbey for about sixty-one years, until,

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- (1) Flor. Worc. 975. p. 105. Knowles M. O. 53, gives Deerhurst and Pershore; Cambridge Medieval History III, p. 378, gives Evesham.
- (2) Flor. Worc. 975 p. 106 "introduced clerks with their wives" but this may be a monkish slander arising from prejudice.
- (3) V. C. H. 66. Knowles, M. O. 53. Landbooc II.xvi. "...Oswald brought him (Germanus) back to Ramsey (from Fleury, whither he had fled) where he died."
- (4) V. C. H. 66f.

in 1044, Godwine or Easwine is found as Abbot. (1) Those whom he ruled were probably few in number, if we may take the Abbeys of Evesham and Worcester as being at all typical of conditions prevailing in this district during the middle of the eleventh century. (2) Godwine died in 1053, whereupon Ealdred, Bishop of Worcester, held the Abbey in his hands. (3) He, like Stigand of Canterbury, was a gross pluralist, for in addition to the bishopric of Worcester he held York as it had been held before him with Worcester, and administered Hereford and Ramsbury as well.

Whatever were the reasons for the episcopal tenure it did not last longer than July 17th in the following year, when Godric, a chaplain of King Edward the Confessor, was made Abbot. (4) This position he may have owed to Goda, the King's sister, who owned lands at Horsley in the County, (5) while her son held the manors of Sudeley and Toddington, adjacent to Winchcombe, (6) or to the influence of Harold within whose Earldom Winchcombe lay.

Set then, as Godric was, in the heart of Saxon England and probably owing his elevation to that court in which he had served, it was not to be expected that

(1) Landbooc II, xvi, cites, in footnote, Earle's Land Charters p. 242. Dugdale, Mon. II. 302.

(2) Knowles, M. O. 75.

(3) Flor. Worc. 1053; V. C. H. II. 66

(4) Flor. Worc. 1054

(5) S. Taylor, "Domesday Survey of Glos." 276

(6) *ibid*, 240

his sympathies would be with William the Conqueror in 1066 or afterwards.

Unlike most of the other Abbots, who were either more discreet or set in less suspicious surroundings, Godric did not long retain his office. For by some means, now unknown, he came under the notice of King William and was deposed along with five others(1). After his removal to prison at Gloucester in c. 1072 (2) he was given into the custody of the English, but decidedly pro-Norman, Aethelwig, Abbot of Evesham, who managed to retain royal favour in this reign even as he had enjoyed it under the Confessor (3). Aethelwig was very capable and treated the Abbey of Winchcombe, which passed into his care, very fairly, "even as if it were his own" (4), and continued to do so for the three years during which he held it. (5). It was probably due to his influence that the Abbey did not suffer loss of property, though, as Abbot Richard Kidderminster records, "some write that the Monastery resisted and rebelled against the Conqueror, to the loss of its possessions, but whether these things are true or not I do not dare to write, because I do not

(1) Knowles M. O. 104, 105n. traces six deposed Abbots; Abingdon, Croyland, Glastonbury, Malmesbury, New Minster, Winchcombe.
(2) Chron. Evesh. 90. Freeman, Norman Conquest, IV, 177
(3) V. C. H. Glos. II 66f. Knowles, M. O. 76ff.
(4) Atkyns, "Gloucestershire" p. 436.
(5) V. C. H. Glos. II, list of Abbots, and above.

find them in our ancient books." (1) Certainly as it will be seen below, the possessions before and after the Conquest are very similar, despite the misfortunes of the last English Abbot to reign.

(1) Dugdale, Mon. II, 302, Trans. XL, p.64, quoting Freeman, Norman Conquest IV. 176

CHAPTER THREE.

That the full force of the Norman influence did not at once come to bear on the diocese of Worcester was due to the continuing presence there of two most influential men who retained, despite the fact that they were both Englishmen, the confidence and support of William. We have already noted that the custody of the Abbey was entrusted to the Abbot of Evesham, but the entire diocese was fortunate in that Wulfstan, a man of saintly character, had been appointed to be bishop in 1062 and that he retained the see until 1096.

Elsewhere in the land, monasticism was being changed, but these two men ensured that English monasticism had a worthy phase of splendour in the vale of the Severn. This stability in the midst of universal reform was not without its effect. When Aethelwig went to Evesham he found there only twelve monks, but when he died in 1077 the number had risen to over thirty, while the property of the house had increased. (1) The benevolent rule of such a capable administrator could not have impoverished Winchcombe nor retarded the spiritual life of its monks. Of the spiritual vigour and missionary zeal of

Knowles, M. O., 126

at least one inmate of Winchcombe evidence was soon forthcoming. While other houses were undergoing the pains of transition, Winchcombe and Evesham, knowing little of these disturbances, were out of their settled state able to carry the monastic life elsewhere.

In 1073-4, there started from Evesham a mission that was to have far reaching results. (1) It consisted of but three men, chief of whom was Aldwin, the prior of Winchcombe. His companions were Aelwig, monk and deacon of Evesham, and Reinfrid who had gone to Evesham to become a monk after life as a knight during which he had seen the desolation of the northern houses. These men, making their way on foot and leading an ass bearing the sacred vessels and vestments and a few books, came first to Newcastle, but finding there no trace of the ancient monastery, moved on to Jarrow. Here, with the approval of Bishop Walcher, they decided to settle amid the roofless walls of Benet Biscop's foundation. A simple roof was thrown over the church and a rude hut built in which to live. (2)

Aldwin was well fitted to become instructor to the many recruits that joined them, chiefly from the south, for he was "patient in adversity, modest in prosperity,

(1) Knowles, M.O. p. 167 gives this date. For an account of the above see Symeonis Dunelmensis Opera, ed. T. Arnold (R.S. 75)

(2) Sym. Dun. 1. 110

acute and provident, weighty in word and deed, always yearning towards heavenly things, and taking thither such as would follow him." (1)

After taking advantage of Earl Waldef's gift of land for a monastery at Tynemouth, Aldwin journeyed on to the neglected foundation at Melrose. However, discouraged by the attitude of King Malcolm, and moved by the repeated supplications and pressure of Bishop Walcher, he came back and commenced to settle monks at Wearmouth on property given by the bishop (2) about 1076-8. (3)

In 1083 the next Bishop of Durham, William of Saint-Calais, was able to refound his cathedral as a monastery, and from Jarrow and Wearmouth he drew the necessary twenty-three monks. On May 31st in the same year he made Aldwin prior of Durham. Thus for almost the four years that remained of his life Aldwin provided a link between Winchcombe Abbey in the then far south and the great cathedral priory of Durham in the north. (4)

Meanwhile, at Winchcombe, a Norman Abbot, Galandus, had

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- (1) Sym. Dun. i. 110
 (2) ibid i, 124; ii. 260-1.
 (3) Knowles, M.O. 168, gives this date as being probable.
 (4) ibid. 170

been set to rule in 1075; presumably after Aethelwig had put the house into good order. He was efficient and successful, (1) but his tenure appears to have been all too short. After his death the Abbey passed once more into the care of the Abbot of Evesham. (2) Aethelwig himself died in 1077 (3) leaving Winchcombe without a head. The deficiency was made good the same year by the appointment of another Norman, Ralph I, who held the Abbey until 1095. (4)

In his reign a tempest with lightning occurred, 15th. October, 1091, during which the tower was struck and severely split; within the Abbey, a large beam was splintered; from the crucifix the head was detached and a leg broken, and the figure of St. Mary cast down. A procession with holy water, incense and the relics of saints did much to ventilate the Abbey church and disperse the lingering fumes. Casting around in their minds for a cause for this visitation, the monkish chroniclers had no difficulty in ascribing it, and other disasters of the times to the divine displeasure aroused by the misdeeds of William II, which mounted high in the outraged

(1) V. C. H. Glos. II. 66. See also list of the Abbots.

(2) Chron. Abb. Evesham (R.S.) p. 90 "Deinde rex donavit illam cuidam abbati Galando nomine, et, eo, post modicum tempus ex quo eam accepit defuncto, iterum isti abbati Ageluno committitur, qua longo tempore postea uti propria dominabatur."

(3) Anglo-Sax. Chron. p. 456.

(4) V. C. H. as above.

estimation of all churchmen. (1)

However, such damage was not beyond the capacity of the community to repair, for it is at this period that we are first able to obtain accurate details of their quite adequate possessions. Hitherto, past references to property have been dependent upon the opinion of Abbot Richard Kidderminster, unsupported by documents denied to him by loss in early fires. In the Domesday Survey, we have records compiled by, and for an independent authority, covering both the time when it was made and also recording conditions obtaining at the time when King Edward the Confessor was "both alive and dead."

At the time of the Norman Conquest there were in existence in England some thirty-five autonomous monasteries of black monks. These monasteries were as a body very wealthy, and their aggregate income has been calculated at £11,066, or almost a sixth of the total actual revenue in England in 1086, (2) In the county of Gloucestershire the proportion of land and wealth in Church hands was even higher, for the religious houses held 936 of the 2611 hides at which the shire was rated, and the

(1) Flor. Worc. 1091

Wm. Malms. *et al.* Vol. II. 504-5

(2) Knowles, M. O. 100. Dom. Knowles estimates the value of the property at £72, which would include the extra-Gloucestershire lands etc. This value is compared with other houses, e.g. Evesham £129, Coventry £157, Burton £38.

whole value of the property in the county being about £3,100, their income was £731. It is probable that their share of the wealth would have been in closer proportion to their share of the total hidage had they cultivated their lands in the same manner as did the lay owners, for ecclesiastical property produced an average income of only 15/8 a hide, as against 19/5 from each hide in lay ownership.

Of the Church landowners in the county, the Abbeyes of Gloucester and Winchcombe were the largest. From the Survey it has been calculated that Winchcombe held about 25,300 acres, or 78 hides in the county, valued at £60; while in 1095 Gloucester held 47,000 acres, or 163 3/4 hides, valued at £155 12 0. (1)

A detailed examination of the Survey shows that Winchcombe Abbey held property in the following places, which is set out in tabular form for the sake of clarity:-

PLACE	HIDES	VALUES					
		T. R. E.(2)		T. R. W.(3)			
Cow Honeybourne	10	£6	0	0	£8	0	0
Hidcote Bartram	2						
Admington	3 1/2	£4	0	0	£3	0	0

(1) S. Taylor, "Dom. Sur. Glos." 98-99
 (2) "Time of King Edward"
 (3) "Time of King William," i.e. the Survey

PLACE	HIDES	VALUES					
		T. R. E. (1)			T. R. W. (2)		
Twining	3	£8	0	0	£7	0	0
Frampton (3)	1	£2	0	0	£2	10	0
Alderton	2½	£1	10	0	£1	10	0
Naunton (3)	3½	£2	0	0	£2	0	0
Stanton	3	£3	0	0	£3	0	0
Charlton Abbots	2	£1	0	0	£1	0	0
Snowhill	7	£5	0	0	£5	0	0
Sherborne	30	£20	0	0	£14	0	0
Bledington	7	£4	0	0	£3	0	0
Windrush	3½	.	.	.	£8	0	0 (4)

The last entry, Windrush, changed hands between the time of King Edward and the Survey. The Lord of the Manor in the first reign was Bolle, who is noted as follows, "Bolle tenuit et Abbatie dedit." There appears to have been some question regarding his legal right to bestow the property on the Abbey, but certainly from 1086 onwards the Abbey was in possession. The extra-county property was as follows; Alne, 6 hides; Enstone, 24 hides; Chesterton (Oxon), 1 hide. Thus we arrive at a gross total hidage of 109 (5) valued in

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- (1) "Time of King Edward"
(2) "Time of King William," i.e. the Survey.
(3) "-in-Winchcombe."
(4) S. Taylor. Dom. Sur. Glos. 232-262.
(5) V. C. H. Glos. II. 66

all, at between £72 and £82. (1) Moreover the territory in the Abbey's hands did not vary more than half a hide between King Edward's time and that of the Survey, and of this 15 hides were quit of geld payments. (2)

Mills brought in varying amounts. These were established; one, at Charlton Abbots, worth 1/8; 4, at Sherborne, worth £2; 1, at Bledington, worth 5/-; and one, and a half interest in another, at Windrush, worth 12/6. (3)

The total male population recorded on the Gloucestershire Abbey manors is 250, excluding eleven ancillae, of these 134 are Villani, 33, Bordarii, and 83 servi. Fifteen burgesses in Winchcombe pertained to the Abbey. (4)

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- (1) Knowles, M. O. p. 100. V. C. H. Glos. II. 66
 (2) Trans. XL. 64 and 67. geld = a tax of 6/- per hide imposed by the Conqueror
 (3) S. Taylor, Dom. Sur. Glos. 232 - 263
 (4) *ibid.* and page 131

CHAPTER FOUR

After the death of the Abbot Ralph, Girmund succeeded in 1095 and ruled for twenty-seven years. (1) He showed himself not unmindful of the estates of the Abbey, for c. 1115 he found that land at Twining had been held for life by the late Richard, son of Boselin, under the terms of an irregular grant made without the consent of the Chapter. Presumably Richard's heirs, his son-in-law, wife, and their two sons, were able to make out some kind of claim for continuing the tenure, so it was deemed expedient to buy them out. With the help of Theulf, bishop of Worcester, 1115 - 1125, an agreement was drawn up under which they waived all claims in consideration of a payment from the Abbey of thirty-five silver marks, and this was ratified by the very expressive gesture of laying a small knife on the Altar.(2)

In 1122 Girmund died, (3) and was buried in the Cloisters. When in later years his tomb was opened under the direction of Abbot Richard Kidderminster, that

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- (1) Landboc. II. xvii, where he is called "monk of Gloucester." V. G. H. 66 and list of Abbots.
 (2) Landboc. I. 212. "et, per, cultellum, super Altare posuerunt signum pactionis hujus."
 (3) *ibid.*, II. xvii. He witnessed a Charter in 1113 - 1114; vide, *Historia Monasterii de Abingdon*, Vol. II, 105. (R. S.) 1858

scholar made some observations which throw interesting light on the austere simplicity of monastic life in the twelfth century.

He writes that "we caused one or other of the aforesaid sepulchres (of Godfrey or Girmund) to be opened; for we were filled with a great desire to see in what habiliments our ancient fathers had been laid to rest in their graves. On examining the tomb we saw that a chalice of artificer's wood, according to the custom of the monks, if I mistake not, had been buried with them. Moreover for cowls they used cloth of a coarser and less costly kind than at present, yes, of extreme coarseness; for buskins they had high boots after the monastic fashion. These and many other things we could plainly discern even then, though they had lain more than three hundred years in the earth. From these and many other signs I am decidedly of the opinion that monks at that time in dress and food, and furthermore in character and manner of life were far more lowly, meek and self-restrained than we are in this unhappy age; and came much nearer to the pure and simple observance of our Rule as laid down in its first institution by our founder, Benedict, from which, alas, through the carelessness of our prelates, we seem nowadays to have fallen away and

utterly departed." (1)

After the death of Girmund, Godfrey became the next Abbot in 1122. (2) Probably he was among those who received and assisted in enthroning Simon, the new Bishop of Worcester on June 21st 1125. (3) Certainly he was in Worcester next day, for the blessing of Benedict, the Prior of Worcester, who had been first of all Prior and then Abbot of Tewkesbury. (4) The Abbey of Tewkesbury, to which monks had come from Cranborne in the time of Bishop Wulfstan, had been consecrated but a little while before, October 24th, 1121. Thus Winchcombe had yet another illustrious neighbour, and the Vale of the Severn added one more to the many consecrated therein. (5)

It is of interest to note that, in 1126, Winchcombe first observed the festival of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (6) which had been reintroduced into England by Anselm, Abbot of Bury, 1121, and nephew of

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- (1) M. S. Tanner, 342-343. Bod. Lib. Landboc II, lvii and lviii.
 - (2) V. C. H. 66, and list of Abbots. Landboc II. xviii. "He had been Prior Venerandus of the house," but no reference is given.
 - (3) Flor. Worc. 1125, some confusion is apparent in the dating.
 - (4) *ibid.*
 - (5) Flor. Worc. 1121
 - (6) Liturgica Historica, Edmund Bishop, Oxford, 1918, p. 24. "first celebrated in the Abbey of Winchcombe in the year 1126." Winchcombe Annals, Cotton M.S. Tiberius, E.N. at 1126. "Ipso anno primum cepit celebrari apud nos solemnitas conceptionis sancte Marie."

the Archbishop. Within a few years it gained wide recognition in the monasteries. Worcester preceded Winchcombe in this respect by a year. (1)

By the middle of the century it was regularly observed and had its place in the Winchcombe Calendar.(2)

Moreover, a Constitution was established, about the same time, for the Solemn Mass to be sung by the Prior or his deputy with the assistance of all the precentors, on the day following that of St. Kenelm. After the service, because "the labourer is worthy of his hire," all who had taken part were to receive a special refectio in a place appointed by the Prior. Ample fare was forthcoming from several specified sources. The Abbot was expected to provide the Chanters with one pint of wine; the Prior a similar quantity and a full dish for those at his table; the Sacrist a pint of wine and four geese as well, while the Precentor, Refectorer, and Infirmarer each gave half a pint of wine. If by chance the Festival came during a Fast, then the Prior was to supply fish and the Sacrist to substitute eight other dishes for the four geese.(3)

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- (1) Knowles M. O. 511 ff.
 - (2) Liturgica Historica, as above; "the feast occurs in the Winchcombe calendar of about the mid. 12th cent. in the same MS."
 - (3) Landboe I. 242-243.

This constitution and the elaborate service that is envisaged owes, no doubt, much to the influence of Cluny, at this time setting the highest standard of liturgical worship and providing an example and inspiration to other monasteries. Its bearing on Winchcombe was direct, for the next Abbot came from Cluny in 1138; having been blessed by Simon, bishop of Worcester on May 22nd. He was a kinsman of King Stephen, and the appointment may indicate that the house, when Abbot Godfrey died, was in a flourishing condition and regarded as a not unfitting sphere for one so well connected. (1)

Abbot Robert's kinship could not have been altogether responsible for the promotion; the decisive factor was that he came from Cluny, and that Abbey was in high favour with King Stephen. In the next year, evidence of the royal regard for Cluny was again forthcoming, for another Cluny monk went as Abbot to Gloucester. By the year 1148 the number of such Abbots had risen to at least six. (2)

Stephen's motive in selecting Cluny monks was, it would seem, a laudable desire to raise the standard of monastic life and liturgy by bringing these houses into line with that which was best on the Continent. Once again Winchcombe has been brought into the mainstream of monasticism through the impact of Cluny, as it had been

(1) Flor. Worc. 1138
 (2) Knowles, M. O. 284

in the late tenth century, via Fleury.

This renewal of continental contact was not the only parallel between the reigns of Germanus and Robert, for just as the former Abbot was disturbed by the violence of Aelfhere, so was Robert to experience the distress that accompanies civil warfare close at hand.

On 31st January 1140, Milo of Gloucester, the ex-Constable, having broken his allegiance to Stephen, attacked Winchcombe on behalf of the Empress Matilda. The greater part of the town was burned and many of its inhabitants driven out or removed as hostages. (1)

While there is no mention of damage done to the Abbey proper, or to the monks, its property must have suffered. Moreover the fact that Abbot Robert was related to the King could hardly have weighed in his favour with a foe in possession of the Castle close to the Abbey gates and who subsisted for four years by harrying the countryside. In 1144, Stephen himself reduced the garrison and spared the Abbot further embarrassment. (2)

To such an extent did robbers and other malignants roam the countryside in the troubled days of Stephen, even waylaying people within a mile or so of the Abbey,

(1) Flor. Worc. 1140
(2) Gesta Stephani, Eng. Hist. Soc. p.109, cited by Royce, Landbooc I. xvi

that William de Solers, "moved by the tears and supplications of his tenants," built at Postlip for their convenience and safety a Chapel, dedicated to St James. (1)

By his charter, granted about that same time, he withdrew his tithes from St. Peter's, Gloucester, and made them over to the Sacrist of Winchcombe in return for a light to be kept burning in the Abbey and, more substantially, the provision by the Convent of a chaplain to say daily Mass during the residence of the donor and his family at Postlip; but when they were absent, duty on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays would suffice. For the chaplain, William provided a house, half a yardland and granted free common rights and fuel. His tenants gave another half yardland. (2)

At the Convent's request this Charter was renewed some forty-four years later by Roger, William's son and heir, and confirmed by Henry de Solacio, bishop of Worcester, 1193-96. (3)

There is evidence that in Gloucestershire, as elsewhere, the times were favourable to the erection of Churches. Certainly another was built at Hayles, on the opposite side of the Abbey to Postlip, the presence

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- (1) V. C. H. II. 6. (This Chapel is now in the possession of the Roman Catholic Church. G. T. H.)
 (2) Landboc. I. 81-83.
 (3) ibid. 83-86

the burning dwellings the flames spread to the monastery, and soon Church, domestic dwellings, books, charters, vestments, all were reduced to ashes. (1) This culminating disaster occurred in 1151, and in the next year Abbot Robert died, (2) worn out by the great difficulties with which he had had to contend for almost the whole of his reign. He had come to Winchcombe well qualified to introduce changes and to develop liturgical practices on the lines of Cluny, but the times had been against him and had robbed him of the security and peace in which alone the Clunian style could have been consolidated. At the end he had neither house nor Church.

To the stricken monastic body William came as Abbot in the same year. (3) It was a bold man who would take the rule of a homeless community although it still enjoyed an income from its property; but even that income, in so far as it was derived from the Town, must have been reduced when the Town itself was burned down. (4)

In 1155-6 the Town was unable to contribute more than 12/- towards the sum of 100/-, at which it was assessed by King Henry II, and its sad plight was recognised as being due to 'waste' (de wasto). (5)

(1) Landboc. I. 83.

(2) V.C.H.II, 66, and list of Abbots.

(3) *ibid*, and Landboc. II, xix, where stated to have been "a monk of Christchurch, Canterbury."

(4) Landboc, I. xviii, "time of Henry II," but no reference is given.

(5) *ibid*, citing Pipe Roll, 2 Henry II, 1155-6.

Nevertheless, William kept the community together for the five years during which he reigned, so that both he and Abbot Gervasse, 1157-71, about whom history is equally silent, (1) deserved well the regard and prayers of their successors.

(5) V. C. H. 66, and list of Abbots. Landbooc, II.xixi, "monk of Winchcombe."

CHAPTER FIVE.

Until the reign of Abbot Henry, which began in 1171,(1) material for the history of the Abbey has, as far as the Convent's own records are concerned, been sadly lacking. This is due, of course, to the great fire which consumed all the documents relating to the period prior to 1151. That nothing is known concerning the twenty years after is probably due to the monks' preoccupation with rebuilding the house and settling in once more. But, sooner or later, the lack of sound documentary evidence for property and rights was bound to come under consideration. It is clear that it was most unsafe to continue to rely upon the memories and testimony of a dwindling number of the monks who could recollect the Abbey's affairs. This weakness was soon realized by Abbot Henry who knew that there were never wanting those who would take advantage of the monastic misfortunes to question lands or rights. With the object of guarding against just such a possibility and of preserving to the Abbey that which his generation held as yet undisputed, he sought confirmation of the 'status quo' from that source most likely to meet the circumstances, Rome; and, by so doing, not only achieved

(1) V. C. H. 67, and list of Abbots.
Landbooc II, xix, where Henry is stated to have been Prior of Gloucester.

his own purpose but also provided us with a fairly serviceable list of the Convent's property.

The first document that he obtained was a Privilege from Pope Alexander III, dated the 14th July 1175, which confirmed the Abbey in its possession of the Abbey Church and Chapels, together with the churches at Twining, Sherborne, Bledington, Stanton, Alne and Enstone. (1)

This was soon followed, on July 21st of the same year, by a more detailed Bull which again covered the above churches and added that of Snowhill and the Chapels of St. Peter (Winchcombe Parish Church), Hayles, Sudeley, Postlip, Alderton, Dixton, Prescote, and Charlton-Abbots.

The general property included the Villis of Twining, Sherborne, Enstone, Alne, Bledington, Stanton, Snowhill and Admington with the lands, meadows, grazing rights, woods, water, and the subject population in each place. (2) There was also land at Naunton, Windrush, Winchcombe and Cotes; common pasture between Winchcombe and Sudeley, a hide at Gretton, two hides at Alderton (3), land at Frampton (in Winchcombe) and two hides in Hidcote. (4)

(1) Landbooc, I. 24.

(2) *ibid.* 25-27. There was a vineyard at Twining, and mills there and at Sherborne, Enstone, Bledington and Admington. It would appear that more had been erected since the Survey, 1086.

(3) In the Survey Alderton had 2½ hides of Abbey land.

(4) Landbooc, I. 27. No mention is made of the two hides at Charlton-Abbots and the ten at Cow-Honeybourne.

Elsewhere, the Abbey possessed three houses in London and another at Oxford, and salt pits at Droitwich.(1) Perhaps without the Abbot's seeking, but more likely at his request, the Abbey was taken under the Apostolic Protection in the same Bull. (2) This form of close association with Rome was much sought after by houses which were anxious to escape interference from patrons or bishops and had gradually become widely extended. (3) By the time of Pope Alexander III, exemptions had been practically formulated into two categories; Abbeys that were merely 'protected,' and those that were 'commended.' The former, as was Winchcombe, were with ill-defined privileges and were not free of their bishops; but the latter were exempt from all control save that of Rome. (4) Nevertheless with 'protection' certain privileges were often extended. In this same Bull the Abbey was granted permission to hold Divine Service during a general Interdict, but the services were to be conducted with suppressed voice behind closed doors and without the ringing of bells.

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- (1) Landboc, I. 27. The ancient 'Salt Way,' or route along which the salt was conveyed from Droitwich to the Thames at Lechlade, ran through the Winchcombe district by Hayles and Farmcote.
- (2) *ibid.*, I. 25.
- (3) Knowles, M. O. 575, ff.
- (4) Landboc, I. 28. "*salva sedis apostolice auctoritate, et diocesanii episcopi canonica justitia.*" The absence of the second clause would have placed the Abbey among the 'commended' houses and given exemption from episcopal control. Later the Abbey was often visited, c.f. Knowles, M.O. 584, and for varying degrees of exemption, *ibid* 585.

and none who were excommunicate or under the Interdict might attend. (1) It was also decreed that the Abbot, after his election by the brethren, was to receive free Benediction from the Bishop. (2) The same exemption from Bishop's fees extended to consecrations of churches, altars, and chrism (holy oils), as well as to ordinations of monks and of clerks presented by the Abbey to the Diocesan. The Abbey was at liberty to choose its own bishop if the diocesan was not qualified, i.e. excommunicate or under interdict, but this right of choice did not extend to all occasions, a privilege enjoyed by some of the greater houses. (3)

In the matter of recruitment of monks, it was permitted that all clerks and free laymen desirous of entering the cloister might be received without hindrance from any quarter; but when once professed, no monk was to withdraw and obtain reception elsewhere unless he passed into a stricter rule. (4)

The Chapter's voice in the assignment or making over of the Abbey's churches was made absolute; and to those churches the monks were to present, and the bishop

(1) Landbooc, I. 27-28.

(2) *ibid.*, et II, 89.

(3) Landbooc, I. 28

(4) *ibid.* (A certain number of monks had migrated to the stricter Cistercian houses, but these appear to have been all in the North. Knowles, M. O. 706 - 7. The Pope probably foresaw this movement would spread as it had on the continent.)

induct. (1)

A welcome relief from tithe on fresh-broken land and Conventual livestock was also granted. (2)

Armed with this useful document the Abbey was secure for the rest of Abbot Henry's reign, (which ended in 1181,) except for a wrangle with the Abbot and Convent of Evesham over the church at Cow-Honeybourne, and the ultimate agreement possibly explains the absence of the church from among the others in the above Bull. By the terms of settlement the Chapel at Cow-Honeybourne passed to the Mother Church at Honeybourne which belonged to Evesham Abbey, together with the tithes and obventions of freemen and villeins, except those payable by the Abbey on its demesne. In exchange for this, the Abbot of Evesham surrendered two acres of land which he held in the Winchcombe demesne there and granted the priests' sheaves from Cow-Honeybourne to the Abbey. Evesham undertook to provide Divine Service on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Holy days. (3)

Against this probable loss the Abbott and Convent were able to set the four hides that they obtained from William Taillard in Gaginwell, Eastone. He remitted the

(1) Landboc, I. 28 and II, 89.
(2) ibid, I. 27
(3) Landboc, I. 216-217.

land in consideration of three (consecrated fine) handkerchiefs or towels from the Abbot and sixteen marks silver. As there appears to have been considerable argument about the land, the Abbot took the precaution of having it well settled, and placed the grantors in danger of losing sixteen marks if they again questioned the transfer. Sixteen sureties bound themselves to see that the agreement was carried out. (1)

At the Abbey itself conditions had so far improved that the monks were in a position to receive some guests; and, moreover, the guests were prepared to pay for their accommodation. Robert, clerk of Aine, thought his frequent visits to Winchcombe worth a reserved lodging, so he arranged with the Abbey for an intermittent corrody. For the good of his own, his wife's and ancestors' souls he quit-claimed three and a half acres; but, for the more immediate matter, he gave all his land between two valleys, called Kenredsled; and in exchange, as his charter records, "the monks have granted me twenty shillings and a monk's allowance of bread and beer such as are daily laid on the refectory table, so often as I may come to Winchcombe on their business or my own. Moreover

(1) Landbooc, I, 186-192.

they have granted to receive me at my latter end as a monk 'ad succurendum;' and to Alice, my wife, they have granted her part in all good deeds which are done and shall be done in the Convent of Winchcombe, and burial at her latter end, if she desire it." (1)

Another guest whose presence was more regular, was that capable man of business and servant of the King and the Abbey, Nicholas of Bruere. He obtained fair terms; for ten marks down he was to receive for life a daily corrody of bread and beer, a thick pottage of the kitchen, a commons in the evening, and at his latter end the habit of St. Benedict. Perhaps, because he wanted better fare, he gave all his land in the fee of Roger de Burton, in Winchcombe, for a master's dish in the kitchen.(2)

It will be noted that both of these guests made preparation well ahead for their reception at the close of

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- (1) Landboc, I. 210. (G. G. Coulton's translation in "Five Centuries of Religion," Vol. I. 91, where he dates the charter about 1180.)
- (2) Landboc, I. 213 -214. Nicholas of Bruere was very active during the rule of Henry and the next two Abbots. He was for a time Reeve of Winchcombe Hundred, c. 1193-6. (Landboc, I. 85, "N. de B., tunc preposito hundredi de Winhecumba") and also King's Bailiff in Abbot Henry's time, (Landboc, I. 183, "tunc ballivo Regis in W.") His name is found among the witnesses to at least 37 varied documents. As Reeve, he would be responsible for the presentation of the Manor accounts; and, as Bailiff, he would have charge of the royal manor/s. Nevertheless, his inferior social status is apparent, in that his corrody was centred in the Abbey kitchen, whereas the Clerk of Alne, being in Orders, received refectory fare.

life into the Order of St. Benedict. Such an arrangement was often entered into, for a consideration, by those who were deeply influenced by the aura of sanctity that invested the monastic state in the popular mind during the Middle Ages. Society was then sharply sundered into 'the world' with its many spiritual pitfalls here and ultimate perils, and 'the cloister' with its present renunciation and eternal bliss and security. The idea spread that mere 'clothing' with the monastic habit was sufficient to invest the belated 'monk' with all the benefits of the cloistered life and make him partaker of the accumulated merits of the Convent. In making that provision, and ultimately accepting a last-minute clothing, Robert of Alne and Nicholas of Bruere found themselves among good company, for bishops and other great men had not hesitated to enter into similar preparations to ensure their celestial well-being. (1)

William Taillard, his family and their heirs (2), and Alice, wife of Robert of Alne, entered into a less intimate association with the Abbey when they secured 'fraternity,' or a share in the merits of the monks' good deeds. The popular and widespread belief in the doc-

(1) Knowles, *MC*, O. 477-8, and Coulton, 'Five Centuries of Religion,' Vol. I. 91.

(2) Landdoc, I. 192. William was the remitter of the four hides in Gaginwell recorded above.

trine of the Treasury of Merit brought many into confraternity, particularly in the case of the great monastic establishments and, as the connection was achieved and marked by donations before, or payments at the time, rendered those abbeys no small service.

Lanfranc, in his statutes, gave instructions governing the ceremony of admission to confraternity, including the reception of women into such an association with the monasteries, which often took place within the Chapter House (1) though there is no mention of such a ceremony in the above instances.

(1) Knowles, M. O. 476

CHAPTER SIX.

Although thirty years had elapsed since the fire, one portion of the Abbey buildings still lay in ruins at the time of the death of Abbot Henry in 1181.

This was the Cloister, the absence of which must have imposed a severe handicap in many ways, for apart from being deprived of space for meditational perambulation, the monks were without a covered passage to link up the various important domestic buildings with the Church as well as the necessary accommodation for the convenient performance of those tasks upon which many would normally be engaged during the daytime.

Without the Cloister, the novices lacked the proper place for their education and recreation during leisure hours (1), while their seniors must have felt the loss of that space in the south-facing walk, where they often did their reading, copying, and illuminating. An example of their activity in this respect during this same period is the Winchcombe Abbey Breviary, one of the earliest extant, preserved in the Library at Valenciennes. (2)

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- (1) Lanfranc's Constitutions, sect. 3, permitted talking within the Cloisters. q.v. Cranage, "Home of the Monk" Cambridge, 3rd edtn. 1934, p.1 -.
- (2) c.f. Knowles, M. O. 539 (note).

No doubt, during this period the monks improvised and made use of other parts of the Abbey in which to work, but the lack of proper space for their labours must have been a perpetual source of inconvenience and discomfort, not to be tolerated for longer than was absolutely necessary.

But building in the solid Norman style was a lengthy business, and other works were more pressing. Domestic offices, living accommodation, the Abbey Church itself, all these had a prior claim on materials, labour, and money.

None knew the disadvantages of a monastic house without Cloisters better than Abbot Crispin, who succeeded Henry in 1181. He was a monk of the Abbey and had been Sacrist and Prior before his election. (1) He planned to rebuild the Cloisters, but his death after a rule of barely a year again held up the work, (2) and it was not until the close of the century or the early years of the next that the task was completed.

Crispin is described as a man of spotless life,

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- (1) V. C. H. 67, and list of Abbots. Sacrist, Land-
 boc, I, 56. Prior, *ibid* 68, and II. 260. Blessed
 at Worcester where he gave the Sacrist there a cope
 and vestment and 40/-. *Annales Monastici*, Luard,
 (R. S.) IV. 384.
- (2) Landboc, I, 68.

fervent piety and singular prudence. (1) Of his charitable nature there is evidence, for he granted the tithes of Naunton and the oblations on St. Kenelm's day to the Abbey Sacrist to provide wine and wafers for hungry applicants on Sundays. (2)

In business matters he certainly made the best of his opportunities, for he managed to wring, in 1181, three shillings a year from the Abbot and Convent of Bruerne, when that house made good its claim to tithes on the Grange at Corndene. (3) In the next year he did much better, for when he received a pious benefaction of some land in Sherborne, he obtained with it the right to improve the Abbey millpond there and, more important from a long term point of view, the assurance that no other mills would be erected by the grantor to offer competition. All this was obtained at the cost of a mere three marks. (4)

Shortly after, at a charge of ten marks for expenses paid to the same donor, William of Eaton, another gift was registered in the Chapter House and the agreement

(1) Landbooc, I, 68.
 (2) *ibid* 92
 (3) *ibid.* 45 - 46
 (4) *ibid*, I, 196

presented on St. Kenelm's Altar, by which the Abbey received pasture in Farmington and Sherborne. Intent on taking no chances, Abbot Crispin went over to see for himself and made a formal perambulation around the land to ensure that it was properly marked out. (1)

When the tithes of Snowhill and Stanton were in dispute, this Abbot called in the Bishop of Worcester who made a full enquiry and settled the matter in a manner entirely to Crispin's satisfaction. Not only did the monks obtain their two sheaves on all lands, but they kept all the tithes of their own lordship there. (2)

The community knew well the value of an energetic Abbot, and what a loss they sustained by his early death; particularly as the next Abbot was to rule for a short time and leave behind no record of any achievements to his credit. (3)

It was always the Abbot who dominated and guided the community in spiritual and material matters. Not every one was a Crispin, deeply spiritual and yet business-like; but whatever his qualities, these he, as being supreme and subject only to the Rule, imparted to the rest for good or evil.

(1) April 22nd, 1182. Landbooc. 196-7

(2) *ibid.* I. 69-72

(3) V. C. H. list of Abbots. Robert Abbot 1182-84. c.f. *Annal. Mon.* I. 53

In one department he was absolute where business matters were concerned. This was in respect of the control of his own income and property, for it was about this time that a division between the Abbot's own share and that of the rest of the community took place. The primary cause of this separation was the feudalization of the Abbot's position and, above all, the claim of the King to hold and enjoy the revenues of an Abbey during a vacancy. To avoid this alienation of the entire income during a royal sequestration it became the practice in all monasteries to allocate to the Abbot a share of the property sufficient to enable him to discharge the duties peculiar to his office and to maintain his growing establishment, and this portion alone passed into the King's grasp; the rest remained untouched, enabling the monks to live no matter how protracted the interregnum. (1)

The communities' share was administered by the Abbot and Convent, and any business was settled and sealed in the Chapter house during the daily meeting. Here without doubt the Abbot had the leading voice, especially if he possessed the initiative and business acumen of Ralph, the next Abbot, 1184-94. (2) While it does not follow

(1) Knowles, M. O. 405

(2) Election of Ralph, Landbooc, I. 44. V. C. H. List of Abbots.

that he always had his own way in details, his spirit would infect and leaven the whole community and be reflected in the activities of his subordinates.

These subordinates were, as the obedientary system developed during this century, officers, each responsible for his own department and holding lands and incomes for specific purposes. They received grants, bought property, and either held it themselves or let it out on the best possible terms. If the details of most of these transactions make dry reading in the Landboc, they yet serve to illustrate the vigorous life of all concerned with the temporal affairs of the house at this time and the growth of the 'customs' which, under later Abbots, were codified. We have already noticed the elaborate departmental arrangements in connection with the repast after the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, (1) and the grant of tithes to the Sacrist from Naunton. (2) The Sacrist was now granted land, worth 4d a year, for a grange under the North wall of the Abbey and in return had to find a taper for the Mass of the Virgin. (3) He also came into possession of an acre of land adjoining his own, for which the Abbey paid half

(1) P. 36, above.

(2) P. 54, "

(3) Landboc, I. 93-94

a mark to the donor, 4d to his heir, and 3d each to his wife and other son. (1)

The Precentor, during the same reign, received some land, the proceeds from which were earmarked to buy books. (2)

The greatest beneficiary was the Infirmarer, who, for the very small outlay of one shilling per annum for a light in Cold-Aston Church, received sixteen acres of land and a house bringing in three shillings a year rent, from Geoffrey de Longchamp of Aston. (3) There may have been much sadness and want behind the sale that William Burel and his two sons made of some land to Gervase the Almoner, afterwards Prior; for he bought it from them for food and cash to the value of one mark. (4) This same official persuaded one, Adam of the Vine, to part with his house and kitchen garden near the Abbey Gateway. It may be that the dwelling was in the way of the Abbey building plans and Adam not anxious to sell, for the price was fairly high, ten shillings and a corrody for life from the Almonry. The house next-door was bought by Gervase's successor at the Almonry, Nicholas, for two marks and a similar corrody. (5)

(1) Landboc, I. 59

(2) Landboc, I. 53. The donor received fraternity and every boon.

(3) *ibid*, 233-4.

(4) *ibid*, 232, "Gervasius, tunc Elemosinarius, dedit eidem W. in denariis, et in victualibus, ad pretium unius marce argenti."

(5) *ibid*, 230-1

When Gervase became Prior, c. 1194, he bought up some land for ten shillings, and adding it to another plot, let it out for $\frac{3}{4}$; but under his successor, Thomas, the rent went up to 5/- per annum from the new tenant. (1)

Apart from rents derived from ordinary property, one of the most regular sources of income was that brought in by the mills, to which all tenants had to take their grain to be ground and leave there a set portion for the work. This some lords claimed for themselves, paying the miller a wage as their agent; (2) but at Winchcombe it appears to have been the practice to let the mill for a fixed rent of about a pound a year, leaving the miller to make what he could. At least this is what Abbot Ralph did when, in the middle of his reign, he built a fulling-mill in Cliveley and let it, with a corn-mill, dwelling house and land for 28/-. (3) Again, about the same time, another corn mill close to the Abbey was let for $20\frac{2}{3}$ per annum, but in this case the miller was held responsible for the repairs. (4)

Although as a rule they were not indifferent to their

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 94-95.
 (2) c.f. H. S. Bennet, "Life on the English Manor," Cambridge, p. 129-30. The proportion of wheat retained on the Durham manors was $\frac{1}{24}$ th from free men, and $\frac{1}{13}$ th from serfs. 134
 (3) Landbooc, I. 195. $\frac{1}{2}$ a mark was paid for the right to throw down the corn mill if desired.
 (4) *ibid*, 234-5

own interests in business matters, the monks could on occasion display compassion; for when Humphrey of Sherborne, brother of one of the monks, pleaded hardship, c. 1189, the rent of 10/- a year on his tenement was reduced by 2/- for his lifetime. (1) Another case was that in which the monks allowed William of the same place to run eight oxen and four cows with their stock after he had been lawfully compelled to renounce his claim to pasturage on the Abbey demesne. (2)

Concern for the poor by the monks is shown by additional provision out of their garden at Babelescombe. For fifteen days about midsummer the monks were to take all that they required, the rest of the produce, tree fruit excepted, was to be granted to those in need. (3)

A marked feature of this reign was the increased liturgical devotion paid to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Hitherto, apart from the special observance on the morrow of St. Kenelm's day already referred to, (4) the masses had been said, "*retroactis temporibus, secreto et suppressa voce celebrare consueverant;*" but, from 1194 onwards, it

(1) Landbooc, I. 204
 (2) *ibid*, 205
 (3) *ibid*, 230
 (4) page 36, above

was ordained by Abbot Ralph that there should be a daily solemn celebration of High Mass. The many grants of lands and rents already received and afterwards showered upon the Abbey by the devout laity made it possible for Winchcombe to conform to the practices already prevailing in most monasteries. (1)

To base an estimate of Ralph's reign solely on the foregoing and to imagine that his was a period of undisturbed acquisition and progress would be far from correct. He and the Convent had their real troubles, for they had to face both a long legal dispute and heavy expenditure on necessary improvements.

The first arose from no novel source, but out of the matter of the seven shillings that the monks were supposed to receive each year from Hayles. (2) During the ministry of Reginald, the first Parson, the Abbey had its money; but the next cleric, Simon, withheld the payments. (3)

The matter was brought before William, Bishop of Worcester, 1186-91; whose Official held an Inquisition and found that the monks had always received the money. (4) But Simon was not the man to be quelled by a mere state-

(1) Landboc, I. 93 -4

(2) p. 40, above.

(3) Landboc, I. 65

(4) Landboc, II. 300

ment of fact; and, taking advantage of the subsequent silence or the end of the episcopal rule, continued to withhold the seven shillings and even demanded of the monks the tithes from a hide in Cockbury and another hide in Gretton.

This was too much for the monks who referred the whole matter to Rome, from whence Pope Celestine III committed the enquiry on 9th Jan. 1199 to a commission composed of Henry, Bishop of Worcester, the Dean of Hereford and Thomas of Llanthony. They pronounced in favour of the Abbey.

However, Simon was prepared for this, for having provided himself with fraudulent Papal letters (1), he staged another commission composed of judges whom he took care to see dwelt at a considerable distance from the scene. Before these Simon did well and even managed to prevent the Abbey representative from being heard. Abbot Ralph, in defiance of an alleged inhibition against an appeal to Rome, sent the matter there. It was then that the truth about the suspected letters and commission came to light. (2)

On a Papal mandate, the Abbot of Tewkesbury and the

(1) "Simon per Litteras Apostolicas, fraudulentor, tacita veritate, obtentas "

(2) Landbock, II. 301-2.

Priors of Worcester and Llanthony, heard the whole case. On three occasions the monks produced their witnesses, but Simon attempted neither defence nor counter-claim, and the matter was referred back to Rome for sentence. (1) This was in due course passed on Simon, who lost on all counts, by the decision of yet another commission, composed this time of the Prior of Stodeley, the Dean of Warwick, and William de Tunebrig. At the same time the Church at Hayles was decreed to be a Mother and Baptismal Church. (2)

Finally, Henry of Worcester, 1193-6, confirmed the sentence, and presumably there the matter ended. (3)

If from this protracted and probably expensive lawsuit, with its appeals to Rome and several commissions, the monks secured no more than was theirs from the commencement and by right, they were more fortunate materially in their other venture of a very different nature.

This was the construction of a long pipeline to convey water from a spring at Honiwell, on the high ground above Sudeley, to the Abbey. The spring itself had been granted by Robert Russel, and he (4) and Robert, the Parson of Sudeley, (5) both readily gave permission for

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 199-200
 (2) *ibid.*, 66-67
 (3) *ibid.*, 67-68
 (4) Landbooc, I. 237
 (5) *ibid.*, 242

the monks to lay and maintain the underground aqueduct where it was necessary to pass through their lands.

But the difficulty lay not so much in securing a source of water and obtaining concessions to bury pipes, as in the actual construction, for between the spring and the Abbey was a deep valley traversed by the little river Isborne. Lead pipes with sound jointing would be necessary to withstand the great pressure of the water and these alone must have proved expensive without taking into account the cost of skilled labour. Nevertheless the advantages must have far outweighed any temporary straitening of the Abbey's finances that may have arisen therefrom.

Just how the monks did manage to pay for the work is not clear, but it is to Abbot Ralph's credit that when he died in 1194, the accounts for the half year showed a small balance in hand.

The Abbey income amounted to £59 15 11 for the half year, of which £19 10 8 came from wool. (1) Against this the main item of the expenses was for clothing, food, and other necessities, amounting to over £51; leaving an

(1) The Cotswold country lends itself to sheep farming, and the Benedictines at Winchcombe found that at this period and later wool provided a very useful source of income, though most of the trade in wool was in the hands of the Cistercians who were usually established in suitable areas.

excess of income over expenditure of £3 10 6d (1).

Had Abbot Ralph lived a little longer it is probable that he would have left the Abbey even better off than he did, for his successor almost immediately reaped advantages from negotiations that were very probably set on foot by this energetic prelate, whose business foresight made possible considerable expansion within the next reign.

(1) Trans. Vol. LIX. p. 201

CHAPTER SEVEN

The community made an excellent choice when they elected Robert as the next Abbot in 1194. (1) For, according to his "Life," he was a monk of the house and "a man highly commended for all manner of virtues, particularly divine service, observance of the Rule of the Order, repairing and building our Church and Cloisters, and the increase of our revenues."(2)

To what extent the building plans had been worked out or even put in hand by Robert's predecessor is uncertain, but that money was needed is quite evident, for immediately on commencing his rule he either successfully concluded Abbot Ralph's negotiations or quickly initiated and carried through some on his own account by which he obtained from Bishop Henry of Worcester (1193-6) the grant of an annual pension of five marks for the building fund from the income of the benefice of Sherborne, as soon as it should next fall vacant. Thus, though the incumbent then in possession was secured against loss, the future

(1) V. C. H. p. 67, and list of Abbots. Landbooc, II. xix.
(2) Atkyns, 'Gloucestershire,' 438.

vicars were to be poorer by the above sum and yet remained burdened with the charges for church and episcopal dues. (1) Even so, they had not yet sunk to the level of mere stipendiaries, removable at the will of the owners, towards which this increasingly close grasp by the monasteries everywhere on their benefices was tending, and which was to culminate at Sherborne and elsewhere in complete appropriation. (2)

The Abbey building fund was not the only beneficiary from a pension nor Sherborne the sole benefice to suffer amercement in this manner, for, in the next year, at the instance of Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Henry of Worcester granted five marks from the Vicarage of Twining to the Abbey Infirmary on terms precisely the same as those imposed on Sherborne. (3) For the same purpose other lesser sums were forthcoming later. In 1203, six acres, given by Robert, son of Alard, on receiving the habit of religion, were let at three shillings a year. (4) While in c. 1215, exactly twice the above acreage realized a rent of but two shillings and a pair

(1) Landbec. I. 171, and II. 275
 (2) Knowles, M. O. 600
 (3) Landbec, I. 170-1, where the Archbishop's name is given as 'Henry', in mistake for 'Hubert Walter.' Among the signatories are bishops Alan of Bangor (1195 - 7), and William of Hereford (1186 - 1200)
 (4) ibid, 149.

of white gloves, valued at one penny. (1)

The year 1201 was marked by the largest single financial and territorial venture embarked upon by the Abbots and Convent to date. This was the purchase from William de Bethune, Advocate of Arras, of the fee farm of the Manors of Halling, Hazelton, and Yanworth, at the cost of £208, with further payments of £12 for stock, £5 to Maud, William's wife, and £3 to his children. (2)

By a Charter granted shortly afterwards, the Abbey was given all three manors in frankalmoigne at a yearly rental of £20, and an annual payment of 20/- to St. Peter's, Gloucester, but the right of presentation to the Churches was retained by William. (3) The assent of King John was forthcoming on the 13th May, 1202. (4) Later, the rent was twice reduced; firstly in 1208, when it fell to £10 a year; (5) and again, at the instance of Eustace, wife of Daniel, William's son and heir, in 1211, when another pound was subtracted. (6)

(1) Landbooc, I. 152

(2) *ibid*, II, 309. The V. C. H. p. 67, states that the price was £558, and probably bases this figure on that given in the "Life of Robert IV"...quoted by Atkyns, "Gloucestershire," p.438 "...recovered the manors and advowsons of the same put out of the hands of Wm...., which had been mortgaged to him at several times for above £558." There is no mention elsewhere of the manors as having ever been in possession of the Abbey before this purchase.

(3) Landbooc. II. 310 -1

(4) *ibid*, II. 109

(5) *ibid*, II. 311-2

(6) *ibid*, II. 313-4

However, the charge of 20% continued to be paid to St. Peter's until it was quitclaimed on the 25th March, 1321.(1)

Papal Confirmations were granted on the 11th May, 1216, by Pope Innocent III, who was apparently unaware that the rent had fallen from £10 to £9 a year; (2) and by Honorius III, who charged the Abbot one mark paid, through Archbishop Stephen Langton, into the Roman Court for his Confirmation, dated 20th January, 1217. (3)

The last stage was reached when Eustace persuaded her husband to make the patronage of the three manorial Churches over to the Abbey, some time in February, 1217. A formal notification of the change in patrons was sent to Bishop Silvester of Worcester. (4)

In the meantime so actively did Abbot Robert press forward with the work of enlarging or rebuilding the Abbey Church that, by the year 1206, he could foresee the completion of the task and even entertain plans for the construction of a new cloister and a range of claustral buildings.

For all this the funds derived from Sherborne and elsewhere were insufficient; so, on the 21st March, 1206, with the Chapter's consent, he set aside the tithes from Stanton and Snowhill, together with the four and a half

(1) Landbooc, II. 317
(2) ibid, I. 110-1
(3) ibid, I. 111
(4) ibid, II. 314-6

marks from Enstone Church and the mark and a half from St. Peter's Winchcombe, for the fabric fund, to be applied first for the building of the Church and afterwards for the cloister and other offices. (1) A solemn excommunication with lighted candles, "cum candelis accensis," was pronounced against all who might attempt to infringe the ordinance, save during a period of famine or other urgent necessity. (2)

In this same period building operations were by no means confined to the Abbey and Church, for Prior Thomas engaged in a little house-building on the Convent's behalf. Noticing that a patch of land in North Street, Winchcombe, was void, he bought it for one mark and commenced to lay the foundations of a slated house estimated to cost rather more than seven marks. But, as soon as the work had been put in hand, Goda, Alard's daughter and sister to that Robert who had recently given six acres to the Abbey, rushed up with her husband and son, loudly clamouring for the work to stop as the land had been illegally sold. (3) After a few days, however, sounder counsels

(1) Landboc I. 73. "...in usum operationis edificii ecclesie et cum ecclesia edificata fuerit, in usum simul edificationis claustrum et domorum claustralium." The above tithes and pensions had been confirmed to the Abbey by Pope Urban III during the early years of Baldwin's rule as Archbishop of Canterbury, c. 1185
ibid 72-73.

(2) ibid, I. 73-4

(3) Landboc, I, 99-100. "...et terram prefatam jure propinquitatis, ex successione, scilicet; paterna, sibi vendicavit;"

prevailed and she surrendered all claims to the land out of reverence for the Blessed Virgin. (1)

When Robert, the Soap-boiler, (le Savoner) fell on evil days and found himself unable to pay off eight shillings arrears, he was only too glad to be able to extricate himself from the difficulty by the surrender to the Prior of his right in a house which he had started to build. This was then completed at a cost of more than five marks and, when let, brought in the very satisfactory rental of 5/6 a year. (2) It would appear that the Abbey was at this time quite ready to relieve others of financial pressure and their property as well; for Walter, son of Osbert raised £1 from Prior Thomas when he parted with his land through poverty; (3) and, in 1210, Kenelm of Cutsdean being in desperate straits, sold land and everything thereon for the large sum of forty marks. (4) If there was much building and business during Abbot Robert's reign, there was no neglect either of the brethren or the poor. For the former a Caritas, or special allowance, of wine was ordained by the Abbot to be issued on St. Margaret's day, provided for out of the rents derived from property in Gloucester. If there was any residue, this

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- (1) *ibid*, I. 100.
 (2) *ibid*, I, 105 -6.
 (3) *ibid*, I, 103.
 (4) *ibid*, II, 303

was to go to the sick monks in the Infirmary. By the same ordinance eight lections during the year were established in honour of that Virgin Saint, and a third nocturn on St. Kenelm's day.(1) The poor, to the number of a hundred, were to be feasted on the morrow of All Saints.(2)

The growing devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, noted in the two previous Abbots' time, showed no sign of decrease for want of support. On the contrary, substantial contributions were made by many.

Bishop Walter de Gray, at the instance of Archbishop Stephen Langton, granted an annual pension of 20/- from Bledington Church to the Abbey to provide whatever was necessary for the fitting celebration of the daily Mass of the Blessed Virgin, c. 1214. (3) Humbler grants of rents and charges ranged from five shillings, (4) to five pence a year (5) chiefly for lights. Of these, one grant was for 6d a year rent from a shop in North Street, Winchcombe, given by Henry, son of Baldwin the baker, when he left for the Holy Land, "Cruce Signatus." (6) There was considerable uncertainty however about the

(1) Landbooc, I, 167

(2) Dugdale, ii, 312.

(3) Landbooc, I, 108-109, and 173. It was confirmed by the Archbishop of Canterbury on 7th April 1215 (ibid 109-10) and by Pope Innocent III on 11th May, 1216 (ibid, 110;) and again by Pope Honorius III 1216-17. The Papal confirmation cost Prior Thomas one mark. (ibid, 111)

(4) ibid, I, 96

(5) ibid, I, 98

(6) ibid, I, 98

promise of two shillings a year that John Palmer made when he was very sick; for, as soon as he recovered, he repented of his piety and determined to withdraw the grant. However, a subsequent relapse soon brought about a change of mind again and the Abbey received the money. (1)

While Winchcombe Abbey was flourishing, materially, spiritually and in works of charity under Abbot Robert, a very different state of affairs obtained at Evesham Abbey, under the rule of Abbot Roger Norreys. This prelate's character was exceedingly mixed, for he was at once a lavish host, entertaining companion and possessed of remarkable energy and spirit; but against this he was "openly and cynically impure of life, hesitating not at all in the face of adultery or sacrilege, gluttonous besides and a drunkard, he disregarded, even when within the monastery, every rule and custom of dress, food and decorum.. he abused and at times starved his monks, misappropriated the convent's property, and practised the most oppressive tyranny on his subjects. The fabric of the monastery was neglected, and as a result only those portions of the church were weatherproof which had stone vaulting; hospitality and the relief of the poor were out of the

(1) Landbooc, I. 104

question." (1)

Such a dismal picture of the conditions at that time in a once great and neighbouring monastery makes sad reading, but it, nevertheless, serves to throw into vivid contrast the sound work and rule that prevailed at Winchcombe when a man of high mental and spiritual calibre had the rule.

In 1213 the two men were brought into contact, for in that year Roger Norreys, after many evasions, contests with his diocesan and appeals to Rome, was brought at last to account for his misdeeds before the legate, Nicholas of Musculum, who was assisted by the Abbots of York, Selby, Gloucester, and Robert of Winchcombe. His defence was poor and the legate straightway deposed him and "told the Abbot of Winchcombe, who had always favoured him, to lead him forth from the chapterhouse, never to return: and so it was." (2)

If it is true that Robert had shown him consistent favour, it must have been from out of a deep sense of charity that refused to believe the reports of the de-

(1) Knowles, M. O. 333-4 and onwards, where he gives a very detailed account of the circumstances.

(2) 'Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham' (R.S. 1863) 251. "... praecepit dominus legatus abbati de Winchelcumba (qui semper ei favebat) ut illum irrediturum a capitulo educerot. Quod et factum est." Also see G. G. Coulton, "Five Centuries of Religion," Vol. II. p.376

plorable conditions prevailing at Evesham, to which Abbey he had neither right nor occasion to go and investigate for himself. Meeting one another as fellow Abbots, Robert would see and know the Roger Norreys that had impressed Rome itself, where that subtle prelate more than held his own in the teeth of his Diocesan's opposition. At the trial, however, the truth must have been glaringly obvious, even to Robert who learnt then that all men were not as himself, conscientious and zealous where the interests of their houses were concerned.

Winchcombe and its property at this period provided more than enough responsibility and work to keep an active Abbot at home; and, with the exception of the visit to Evesham just mentioned, there is only one other occasion on record on which Abbot Robert left his Abbey, and this was to attend the dedication of Worcester Cathedral in 1218. (1)

Three years later he died, (2) having ruled the Abbey for twenty-seven years during which time he proved himself to have been both a worthy pupil of, and successor to that energetic Abbot, Ralph, and well deserving of the high estimate of his character and abilities quoted at the commencement of this chapter.

(1) *Annales Monastici*, IV. p. 409.
 (2) *ibid*, 414

Of the number of monks in the community during this period we have no information, but "by c. 1200, there was probably no community larger than a hundred, and almost all had decreased from their maximum by about a third. Never again, it may be added, did they attain the size reached at the beginning of the twelfth century." (1) Of those that were received during the reigns of Kings Richard and John, they "were recruited almost entirely from what may be called, at the risk of anachronism, the middle class: from families, that is, of small owners of land and traders in the town or district near the Abbey." (2)

These, on entering the community, appear to have brought a small dower, as did Silvester, the son of William Blancpain of Gloucester, in 1210, for his father settled property on the Abbey to the value of four shillings a year rental at the time of Silvester's admission.(3) Later, in the next Abbot's time, Thomas the Convent clerk, when 'in extremis laborans' bequeathed two hides

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- (1) Knowles, M. O. p. 426 . (The names of seven of the monks are recorded among the witnesses to a document, 1221-32; viz. Walter, the Prior; Simon, sub-prior, Achard, Ralph, Osbert, Phillip, and German, monks. Landbooc, II, 186-7.)
- (2) *ibid*, 424.
- (3) Landbooc, I, 163

to the Abbey for habits for his two brothers, Vincent and Robert, with the saving condition that if either did not desire the life of a monk he was to receive one hide for himself. (1)

(1) Landbooc, II, 186

CHAPTER EIGHT.

I

On the 23rd of June, 1221, the Licence to elect another Abbot was issued to the Convent by Henry III, (1) and within a fortnight the King had been notified of the Chapter's choice of Thomas their active and capable Prior to fill the vacancy. The Mandate signifying the royal approval and instructing all in the service of the Abbey to obey the Abbot-elect followed on the 8th of July, (2) after which Thomas received his Blessing in Dodderhill Church at the hands of the Bishop of Worcester and presented to the Sacrist of Worcester the customary cope and vestment. (3)

Thomas found the affairs of the Abbey secure as far as Papal Confirmations could render it for, on the 21st of March 1220, Pope Honorius III had taken the Convent and its possessions, especially the property given by Roger de Solers and the Chapels at Charlton and Postlip, under his protection. (4) On the 11th of May in the next year, the same Pope extended his protection particularly to the manors of Twining, Sherborne, Enstone, Stanton, Snowhill, Halling, Haselton, Yanworth, Honeybourne,

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- (1) C. P. R. 1216-25. p. 294
 (2) *ibid.* p. 296
 (3) *Annal. Mon.* IV. p. 413.
 (4) *Landboc*, Vol. II, 79-80.

Adelmington, Charlton, and Rowell. (1)

Following precisely in the footsteps of his predecessor, the new Abbot soon turned his attention to the benefice of Sherborne, and the Vicar there had his income still further reduced in the interests of the Abbey. Sometime before, or early in 1224, he prevailed on William, Bishop of Worcester, to appropriate to the Abbey two out of the three parts of all the tithes of sheaves not already absolutely possessed by the monks for the support of hospitality. The remaining third share was reserved to the Perpetual Vicar, together with a manse and some land. The Vicar was still, however, held responsible for the payment of the customary episcopal dues; but the Aids, and the Procurations about the dedication of the Church were to be borne proportionally by the Abbey and the Vicar.(2)

The Prior and Convent of Worcester confirmed the appropriation, (3) as did Pope Honorius III on the 12th December, 1224, (4) and Archbishop Stephen Langton in September, 1226. (5) By long standing custom the tithes had been divided between the poor, church maintenance, and the Vicar; but the appropriation of the two-thirds by the Abbey left the unfortunate parish with only the

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- (1) Landbooc, Vol. II, 102-3
 (2) *ibid.*, 275-6
 (3) *ibid.*, 279
 (4) *ibid.*, 280-1
 (5) *ibid.*, 279-80

Vicar's share; and, as he had to meet some of the church expenses out of his income, both he and the poorer people were much worse off, for rarely did the distant monks concern themselves with works of charity among the parishioners, although Archbishop Stephen Langton had decreed that the poor should not be defrauded out of their share of the tithes. (1)

In the monks' defence it must be conceded that they were finding increasing difficulty in meeting the cost of the hospitality given not only to the humbler pilgrims and travellers, but to more exalted personages who came with considerable entourages, among whom were the King, whenever he chanced to be in the district, as he was in June 1232,(2) and the Bishop's Official, who might stay for perhaps eight days and expected accommodation within the Abbey.

As their income was derived from various sources, each of which was allocated for a specified purpose and presumably expended fully in its discharge by the official concerned, the monks were compelled to seek additional revenue elsewhere, and so turned, according to the prevailing monastic manner, to those livings in their patronage.

(1) G. G. Coulton, *MEDIEVAL PANORAMA*, Cambridge, 1938, p. 169

(2) Landbooc, I. xx.

While the Community was thus providing for its guests, the Abbot's prestige was greatly enhanced by the King's grant, for his time (usque ad aetatem), of the Town of Winchcombe and the Hundreds of Kiftsgate, Holford, and Gretestan at an annual fee-farm rent of £50, payable at Michaelmas through the Sheriff of Gloucester. From the fact that this grant was constantly renewed it may be surmised that the Abbot made a profit satisfactory to himself.

At the same time the Manors of Sherborne and Bledington were released from suit at the Hundred and County Courts. (1) In 1227 and 1228, writs for the annual payments were issued to the Abbot. (2)

For many centuries the Abbots of the greater houses had taken their share in national and ecclesiastical councils, but until the time of Abbot Thomas the activities of the Winchcombe Abbots have in this respect escaped notice, though, no doubt, they had been called upon to bear their share of responsibility. However, in 1225, Thomas was called away on two occasions to attend to business of some importance; the first of which was in connection with the re-issue of the Magna Carta, for his

(1) C. P. R. 1216-25, p.415
(2) *ibid*, pp. 148 and 207

name is included among the signatories. (1)

His other journey took him to Northampton for the fourth Provincial General Chapter of the Benedictine Order, which began on September 21st. (2) It was a very poorly attended meeting as only fifteen Abbots and Priors in all were there. (3)

These Chapters had been ordered to be convened every three years in each Province by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, in order to bring the hitherto almost unconnected Benedictine monasteries into closer association, to afford opportunities for discussing matters of common concern and policy and to ensure that the Rule was enforced by triennial visitations by the monks themselves, as distinct from, and additional to, the ordinary episcopal visitations, where made. (4) At every Chapter two joint Presidents were chosen to hold office and power until the close of the next Chapter, (5) and in later years Abbots of Winchcombe both presided and acted as Visitors.

During this rule several small properties passed into the possession of the Abbot. In two cases the poverty of the vendors compelled them to sell to Thomas, who,

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- (1) Annal. Mon. I. 232
 (2) W. A. Pantin, CHAPTERS of the ENGLISH BLACK MONKS, Vol. I. pp. 21 and 293.
 (3) Trans. R. Hist. S. 4th Series, Vol. X. 1927, p.219.
 (4) *ibid*, p. 195.
 (5) *ibid*, 227

it will be remembered, had already evinced the keenest interest in and appreciation of this type of situation's possibilities during that time in which he was Prior.

The first person with whom he dealt was Idonea, widow of Peter of Cutsdene, who had been steadily making away with her property for the five years preceding her negotiations with the Abbot. She was a lady with a weakness for white horses, for in her previous sales to laymen she always demanded, as part of the price paid, a white horse and harness. (1) This equestrian predilection may not have been unconnected with Idonea's later financial difficulties, for she was forced to sell an acre of land near her dower-house for 4/- to the Abbot in order to meet her expenses. (2) Not long afterwards, in 1225, she was in financial trouble again, and this time the dower-house had to be sold for her lifetime. To what extent the half a mark and a half seam of wheat met her needs is uncertain, but that was all the cautious Abbot was prepared to pay for a tenure that he considered might possibly be only too short. (3)

Thomas's other purchase was also made from a woman, Basilea, a spinster of Colstreet, Winchcombe, who managed to drive a better bargain with the Abbot and raised two

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- (1) Landboe, II. 304 - 5
 (2) ibid, 306.
 (3) ibid. 306 - 7.

marks for her land in order to ease the situation. (1)

This peaceful reign was marred towards its close by reason of the friction that arose between the Abbey and Henry de Campden, Vicar of Winchcombe. (2) If the cause of the trouble is obscure there was certainly no lack of publicity in the mode by which Henry gave expression to his annoyance, for he caused the bells of the Chapel of St. Peter to be rung in so violent a manner that the monks were disturbed during their observance of the Canonical Hours. Apart from this unseemly behaviour he appears to have provided the Abbot with other causes for complaint. Indeed, so tiresome did the Vicar become that the matter was referred to Rome. The Pope, Gregory IX, delegated the Priors of Llanthony and St. Oswald's and the rural dean of Gloucester to determine the charge against the Vicar on the 7th of March, 1231. (3) As no further references to the trouble are found it may be that a compromise and settlement was arrived at that left the monks to pray in peace.

II

On the death of Abbot Thomas in 1232, (4) probably shortly after the 10th of September, as on that date the

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- (1) Landboc, II, 389.
 (2) T. E. Meurig-Davies, HANDBOOK to WINCHCOMBE PARISH CHURCH, p.30, List of Vicars.
 (3) Landboc, II. p. 139
 (4) Annal. Mon. IV. p.424.

King had renewed the grant of the Town of Winchcombe and the three Hundreds to the Abbot, (1) Prior John and the Convent presented Henry of Toddington, Sacrist of the Abbey, as the Abbot-elect. (2) The royal assent to the election was issued on the 12th of October, 1232 with a mandate to the Bishop of Worcester to proceed with the matter. (3) By the 18th of the same month the Bishop had confirmed the election and all was in order to the royal satisfaction. (4) On Mid-Lent Sunday, 'Laetare Jerusalem,' Abbot Henry received his Benediction at Worcester and gave to the Sacrist there the cope and vestment together with 40/- procuration.(5)

The King's visit to the Abbey on the 10th of June, 1232, (6) has already been noted, and he was there again on the 29th. of May in the following year, (7) moving on to Worcester the next day, from whence he reissued the grant of the Town and Hundreds for another four years from Michaelmas next at a rental of £50. (8)

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- (1) C. R. 1231 - 41. p. 107
 (2) Landbooc, II. p. xx, where 5th Report Deputy Keeper, folio 70, cited.
 (3) C. P. R. 1225-32. p. 505
 (4) C. R. 1231-34, p. 118
 (5) Annal. Mon. IV. p. 424. (The Landbooc footnote, Vol. II. p. xx is obviously in error in dating the benediction as in 1232.
 (6) C. P. R. 1225-32. p. 479
 (7) *ibid*, 1232 -47. p. 16
 (8) *ibid*, p. 17

Perhaps, while he was at the Abbey, the building requirements were made known to him, for on August the 14th, 1233, the King gave the Abbot twenty oaks from the Forest of Dean, which lies to the south-west of Winchcombe across the River Severn. (1) Two years later a mandate to the Constable of St. Briavels was issued making another grant of twice the number of oaks, (2) and again in 1241, four more oaks were given by the King to the Abbey for roofing. (3) Such gifts were no doubt very welcome, both to the Abbey and to the other monasteries that received similar favours; but, in 1242, it was the Convent's turn to assist the needy King. In a letter addressed to the Abbot, Henry III made it plain that he expected a subsidy from him towards the cost of the coming campaign in Gascony(4). This request appears to have been ignored at first, but later a contribution of 15 marks was made.(5)

Probably in accordance with the constitution of the legate Otho, (6) the Abbeys of Evesham, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Pershore, Winchcombe 'et multae aliae per regnum Angliae' were dedicated in 1239;(7) the Bishop

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- (1) G. R. 1231-34. p. 248
 (2) *ibid*, 1234-37, p. 122
 (3) *ibid*, 1237-42. p. 278
 (4) G. R. 1237-42, p. 431
 (5) Landboc, II. xx. No references are given.
 (6) V. C. H. Glos. II. p. 67; p. 638
 (7) Matthew Paris, R. S. 1876, Vol. III, p. 638

of Worcester, Walter de Cantilupe, coming to Winchcombe for this purpose on the 18th of October. (1)

The Abbot and Convent were commissioned in 1242 to examine into the election of John to the Priory of Great Malvern. (2)

In 1247 Abbot Henry resigned, (3) but not before he was disturbed in the last months of office by the Vicar of Winchcombe, that same Henry de Campden who, having vexed the close of his predecessor's reign by ringing the bells, planned to enlarge the Chancel of the Parish Church by some twelve feet, and the south aisle, then incomplete, by an addition measuring thirty feet by twelve, thus threatening the Abbey and public highways. However, when the King eventually granted him leave to proceed with the work on September the 18th, 1246, he was restrained from reducing the Abbey's entrance to less than thirty feet in width and the public thoroughfare to less than eighteen. (4)

The various gifts received and purchases made during this reign were, like those of the previous Abbot's time,

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- (1) Annal. Mon. I. 112 and IV, 430
 (2) *ibid*, IV, 434
 (3) *ibid*, I. 136 and IV, 438
 (4) C. R. 1242-47. p. 462

neither spectacular nor numerous, but they serve rather to indicate, together with the absence of expensive lawsuits and demands, a time of quiet prosperity and steady expansion.

In 1235, William, son of Eustace, released to the Abbey a mill and yardland in the field at Cliveley.(1) Five years later, Hugh de Colonces gave a messuage, croft, and four half-acres in two fields at Enstone;(2) and the Abbot succeeded in letting 41 acres of assart in Alne Wood to Robert de Bosco for 20/6 a year and an in-going fine of three marks. (3) The most valuable gift came to the Abbot in 1245, from John, the son of John the Knight of Sherborne, who gave a dwelling house near to St. John's Chapel there, together with four acres and a plot, and followed this up with another gift of nine more acres shortly afterwards. (4)

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- (1) Landbooc, II. 190-1
 (2) ibid, 174 -5
 (3) ibid, 530 -1
 (4) ibid, 233-4, and 235

CHAPTER NINE

The resignation of Henry of Toddington was made known to the King at Clarendon on the 10th of July, 1247, by the Cellarer, Sacrist and Almoner, by whom licence was given to the Community to proceed with the election of a successor. (1) Thereupon the monks made choice of John Yanworth, the Cellarer, whose election received the royal assent with a writ 'de intendendo' to the tenants of the Abbey on the 26th of the same month. (2) The new Abbot was blessed at Worcester by the Bishop of Hereford, acting for the Diocesan, later in the same year; giving to the Cathedral Sacrist the usual alb, cope and chasuble, together with the 40/- procuration. (3)

Presumably John Yanworth was a fairly young man when he commenced his reign, for he held the office for thirty-five years before retiring. In his earlier days he displayed all the ambition and vigour of youth which gave place in later life to a more mature judgement enabling him to steer the House through those troubles that came upon it and to win for himself a degree of recognition beyond his own domains.

On the 10th of August, 1249 he and the Augustinian

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- (1) C. P. R. 1232-47, p. 504
 (2) *ibid*, p. 505
 (3) *Annal. Mon.* I, 136 and IV. 438

Abbot of Cirencester arrived at a settlement concerning their respective legal rights in the Manors of Haselton and Yanworth, whereby the Hundred Court of the Abbey of Cirencester was to take cognizance of all thieves arrested on the Manors and the Abbot of Winchcombe lodge the Cirencester Bailiffs at their annual View of Frankpledge; but all amercements for concealment, all defaults, all pleas of bloodshed and of hue and cry, together with waifs taken in the Manors, were secured by the Abbot of Winchcombe. (1)

The next year was marked by the very enterprising purchase of the Manor of Dry Marston from the Prior of Coventry. The price agreed upon was perhaps injudiciously high, 1130 marks (£753. 6. 8.) and an annual rent of £1 together with a day and a night's accommodation for the Coventry Bailiff and his three horses when that official came for the Court Leet. The Prior, it may be noted, did not include either the patronage of the living or the scutage in the sale. (2)

In the meanwhile members of another Order had been introduced into the district by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, uncle to the King. These were Cistercian monks from Beaulieu in Hampshire, who settled at Hayles just

(1) Landboc, II. p. 380.

(2) The King confirmed this on Oct. 20th, 1250. *ibid.*, I, 11-13

before John Yanworth was elected Abbot. (1) They steadily proceeded with the building of a great Abbey and Church there, almost within sight of Winchcombe. The completion of the essential portions of this brought the King and Queen to Winchcombe for the dedication on the 5th of Nov. 1251 by Walter de Cantilupe, Bishop of Worcester, who was assisted by the Bishops of Ely, Lincoln, London, Norwich, Sarum, Exeter, Chichester, Bath and Wells, St. David's, Rochester and St. Asaph. On the next day the King and the twelve Bishops returned to Winchcombe for a conference at which they agreed to send an envoy, John of Cheba, a prudent and discreet man, to the Holy See to seek protection against the visatorial powers claimed by Boniface of Savoy, Archbishop of Canterbury. The Bishops entered into an agreement with this envoy by which he was to receive 300 marks for his expenses and salary, if he was successful; but, in the event of his meeting with failure, his remuneration was limited to £100. (2)

When the General Chapter of the Benedictine Order met at Oxford, on either March the 30th or April 7th, 1253, John Yanworth was among the 15 Abbots and Priors

(1) Founded June 17th, 1246. M. O. p. 709

(2) Landbooc, I, xx-xxi, (citing Report of the R. Hist. MSS. Comm. appendix, 358.)

present, 25 others sent excuses by their proxies and 11 failed to do either, (1) It was during this Chapter that the Abbot was appointed to be Visitor to the monasteries of the Order in the dioceses of Sarum, Exeter and Bath. (2)

At home the Abbot and Convent were in financial difficulty. Very possibly the recent Dry Marston venture was pressing heavily upon their resources and compelling them to take stock of their other commitments, in particular the various injurious agreements into which they had entered previously. An appeal to Rome, for release from some of these brought, on the 4th of January 1254, a mandate from Pope Alexander IV authorizing the Abbot of Tewkesbury to revoke all adverse grants of farms made by the Convent on long leases, for life, or in perpetuity. (3)

Almost four years later the Abbey was still experiencing trouble, partly due to the difficulty encountered in the collection of the tithes, for the same Pope ordered these to be fully rendered in his Confirmation of December 22nd, 1257. Among the other possessions secured to the community were the patronage of St. Peter's

(1) Trans. R. Hist. S. 4th Series, Vol. X. 219.

(2) Pantin, CHAPTERS of the ENGLISH BLACK MONKS. Vol. I, p.51.

(3) Landboc, II, 87-88

Church, Winchcombe, with the tithes, houses, lands, etc., there; the vills of Charlton Abbots, Stanton, Snowhill, Halling, Yanworth, Sherborne, Bledington, Twining, Cotes, Naunton, Frampton, Cow-Honeybourne, Admington and Dry-Marston; the patronage of the Chapels of Gretton and Postlip together with the tithes there and in the Manor of Sudeley, as well as the 7/- per annum rent in Diddbrook Church.

It was also decreed in the same document that no Chapel or Oratory was to be built without the consent of the Bishop or Convent, saving the Pope's privileges, thereby preventing a recurrence of the troubles that had arisen at the time of the erection of Hayles Church. Fresh exactions, both clerical and lay, were forbidden, and rapine, theft, arson, bloodshed, rash seizure, slaughter and violence prohibited. (1) The demand for a 'twentieth' for the Crusade was resisted by the Bishop of Worcester who issued a writ to the Collectors in January 1269, forbidding them to exact from religious persons and to desist from the same on the Abbot and Convent of Winchcombe. (2) No doubt the impoverished monks had complained to their Diocesan.

But in January of the next year the sporadic rebel-

(1) Landbooc, II, 93-5. (Cotes, Naunton and Frampton are all "in-Winchcombe.")

(2) Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard, Worcester Hist. Socy. 1902. J. Willis-Bund. Vol. II. p.31-32

lion of the followers of the late Simon de Montfort compelled the same Bishop to call upon the Abbots of Winchcombe, Bristol, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Pershore and Llanthony "to raise as many men as possible without delay, armed and with horses, to resist those who wish to impugn the ecclesiastical liberty and subvert the kingdom." (1)

Whatever may have been the response and part played by those loyal citizens and churchmen in the campaign, by the end of that Summer all was at peace as far as the Abbot and Convent were concerned, for they joined, on Holy Rood day, with their neighbours of Hayles in celebrating the inauguration of the relic of the Precious Blood given to Hayles Abbey by Edmund, son of the founder; a gift that was destined to make the shrine in which it was housed one of the foremost centres of pilgrimage in the land and prove a valuable source of revenue to the monks for centuries. (2) About the same time the Bishop of Worcester for ever settled what had once been the occasion of considerable discord when he ordained the Vicarage of Hayles in the possession of the Abbot and Convent of Hayles. (3)

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- (1) Register of Godfrey Giffard, Vol. II. p.44.
 (2) Trans. XXIII, 278.
 (3) Register of Godfrey Giffard, Vol. II. 42

The year 1271 was important, for Abbot John Yanworth, - with Abbot William Whitchurch of Evesham - presided at the General Chapter of their Order held at Oxford on the 12th of April. (1) His duties included the despatch of a letter to the Abbot and Convent of Ramsey on September 22nd 1271, commanding obedience to the Statutes of the General Chapter. (2) Apart from his absence from Winchcombe demanded by this and other Chapters, the Abbot appears to have journeyed beyond the seas in c. 1255, (3) and to have attended Parliament, to which he was summoned in 1264. (4)

Reference is made in 1275 to the monastic library, for on the 20th May, the Abbot granted a mark a year from the rent of Cow-Honeybourne Chapel, paid by Evesham Abbey, for "the repair of our books" and for the larger support of the Precentor (*ad librorum nostrorum emendacionem et officii sui uberiolem sustentacionem*). (5)

In the next year the aged and bankrupt Rector of Twining and Bledington placed himself and his affairs in the hands of the Bishop. He was indebted to many creditors whom he could not pay. (6)

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- (1) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. I. 58, and Annals. Mon. II, 110, and IV, 460
 (2) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. I. p.58
 (3) C. R. 1254-6. p.206-7
 (4) *ibid*, 1264-8, p.85
 (5) Landbooc, II. p.540
 (6) V. C. H. p.15, (citing Register Godfrey Giffard. 86.)

He seems to have served the Lady Chapel of Winchcombe and to have had a lodging in the monastery. The Bishop decided that, "as his mature age merited a rest from labour," the Abbot should receive his rents, maintain him in food and wine, raiment, shoes and bed clothes, and let him have his lodging in the monastery. The Abbot should also provide a clerk to say the "hours" with the Rector and a groom and boy to wait on him. He was to satisfy the Rector's creditors, cause the Churches to be properly served and bear all the charges. (1) During the closing years of this Abbot's reign a Lady Chapel was under construction in the Abbey Cemetery. By about 1280, it would seem that the completion of this work was well within sight as grants of money to provide Altar lights were recorded about this time. Adam, son of William Colemon, gave the Prior 12d a year from his oven for that purpose, (2) and similar sums were forthcoming from Joan, Osbert Turpin's widow, (3) and from Henry Drake, charged on his father's land in North Street, Winchcombe. (4)

The long reign of Abbot John Yanworth closed with his

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- (1) V. C. H., p. 15, citing Register Godfrey Giffard, 86
 (2) 'ad sustentationem luminaris in Capella, ad honorem Ejusdem Genetricis, in Cimiterio Winchecumbe inchoata.' Landboc I, 245-6.
 (3) *ibid.*, 246-7
 (4) *ibid.*, 245. (Perhaps the Chapel was complete by this time as it is no longer termed 'inchoata.'

resignation sometime before the middle of October, 1282. (1) His term of office has been described as "marked by reckless expenditure," and the assertion made that during it "land was acquired at all costs." (2) However, with the possible exception of the costly purchase of the Manor of Dry-Marston in 1250, I am unable to trace any transactions that could warrant this accusation. Indeed, the amount of property received, in addition to the above Manor, of which there is any record, is surprisingly small when the length of the reign is taken into account. Consideration of the following examples, though not absolutely exhaustive, will serve to illustrate the nature of such acquisitions and show that the monks' property could not have increased to any considerable degree during the period under examination.

In 1255, the Abbey exchanged with John de Solers for the house of Thomas of the Ash their yardland in Postlip Chapel, (3) but it is to be doubted if they secured a great bargain from the layman as he had been disputing the long established settlement of Postlip with the monks some three years before. The Bishop's Commissary had been called in, and he confirmed the Abbey in possession of the tithes of the manor there and the profits of the Chapel - the monks

(1) C. P. R. 1281-92, p. 37

(2) V. C. H. p. 67

(3) Landbooc, I. p. 87

having to find a resident Chaplain. (1)

For 17 marks paid, in the same year to the hard pressed Richard, son of Walter de Luton, he surrendered his tenement at Haselton held of the Abbey for eight years. (2)

About the same time William Dungenen, for the good of his own and heirs' souls, gave a dwelling house and walled curtilage, and a little later released all right in his tenement at Cliveley. Apparently this property did not cost the Abbey anything. (3)

In 1261, John de la Haye granted the Convent in frankalmoine 10/- a year rents, and the Almoner a further 6/- rent and appointed Walter, the Clerk, his Attorney to put the Abbot in seisin on September the 14th, 1261. (4)

Four years later William Dousing and Henry the Mower sold land called 'Edrichesmede' at Gothurst, Yanworth, to the Abbot for 6 marks; one of which was paid as deposit, the balance to follow on completion; power of distraint for fault being within the jurisdiction of the bailiffs of Cirencester. (5)
The other shareholders in Edrichesmede, Henry and Alice de Gothurst, also confirmed their portions in frankalmoigne about the same time. (6)

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- (1) Landbooc, I. p.86
 (2) *ibid*, II. 376.
 (3) *ibid*, II. 199
 (4) *ibid*, II. 396-7
 (5) *ibid*, II, 365
 (6) *ibid*, II, 363

Property in Winchcombe was acquired about 1270; a messuage being remitted by William de Vel, and a messuage with garden, yard, and shrubs near Capun's lane given in frankalmoigne and in consideration of 20/-, by John Petycru.(1)

In 1278, the Rector of Mickleton and the Abbey brought their dispute about the tithes of Hidcote before the Bishop of Worcester, Godfrey Giffard, who ruled, on July 14th, that the Rectors should pay the Abbey 6/- a year at Winchcombe Fair in lieu of tithes on the old demesne of the Abbey in the Parish, under pain of contributing 4/- to the Cathedral building fund. The Abbey was quit of the 4/- previously paid to the Rectors.(2) It is to be doubted whether the Convent gained anything by this decision other than convenience and assurance of receipts.

Two messuages in Winchcombe were received c. 1280, from Adam, the son of Ralph the sumpter-man; one near the 'small meadow' and the other on the corner of Mill Street and the south side of Gloucester Street, in frankalmoigne.(3) A little later another messuage in Hayles Street was given by Amice, the daughter of Gilbert, the Smith of Hayles. (4)

About the same time John Bolur of Cliveley in Enstone gave his messuage there and 29 acres to the Abbey, saving a

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- (1) Landbooc, II, 394-5
 (2) *ibid.*, I, 135-6
 (3) *ibid.*, II, 400-1.
 (4) *ibid.*, II, 403-4

rent of 2/4 payable to Roger de Gardino. (1)

Another of those frequent and unprofitable disputes concerning tithe arose between the Abbots of Hayles and Winchcombe, which was settled on July 11th 1280, by which Hayles paid 2/- a year in lieu of the hay tithe on the land known as Kentismede.(2)

If it is true that Abbot John Yanworth left the Abbey in debt to the extent of 930 marks (3) then the reason for the adverse balance must be sought elsewhere than in 'reckless expenditure' and the purchase of lands 'at all costs,' for as it has been seen the above acquisitions did not cost any more than 24½ marks, plus the legal and litigation charges when resort was made to the Bishop. Moreover it is scarcely conceivable that so large a purchase as that of Dry-Marston could have been entertained lightly and without the least hope of its payment being met and made good within a reasonable time.

It is when we turn to consider those demands that were made upon the Abbey and the losses that it sustained, all of which were most probably unforeseen by the Abbot and Convent,

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- (1) Landbooc, II. 172-3
 (2) *ibid*, 294.
 (3) V. C. H. 677.

that we shall perhaps discern some of the reasons for the adverse balance on the long reign.

On March 2nd, 1251, the year following the purchase of Dry-Marston, the Hundreds of Winchcombe, Holford and Kiftsgate passed out of the hands of the Abbot into the keeping of Richard de Cromhal, the Sheriff, (1) and on the 8th of July, 1261, the Hundreds, with the Manor of Winchcombe and Gloucester Castle were given to Matthias Bezil. (2) Thus the Abbot was deprived of such advantages as had accrued to him by reason of the keeping of the Hundreds immediately after he and the Convent had committed themselves to their greatest outlay.

It is not surprising that the King had to pardon the Abbot for his lack of support, due to sundry debts, in the campaign against Scotland in 1255. (3) But the recognition of those difficulties did not prevent the King from demanding further help from the Abbey for the war against Wales in 1258, (4) nor from pressing urgently for payment again in 1260. (5)

A year later thirty-six Abbots, including Winchcombe, were requested to furnish help by the morrow of St. Martin; (6) a demand that was again repeated in 1263 (7) and in the following year. (8)

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- (1) O. P. R. 1247-58, p. 89
 - (2) *ibid.*, 1258-66, p. 162.
 - (3) C. R. 1254-6, p. 1; p. 133-4
 - (4) *ibid.*, 1256-9, p. 295
 - (5) *ibid.*, 1259-61, 191
 - (6) *ibid.*, 498-9
 - (7) *ibid.*, 1261-4, p. 305
 - (8) *ibid.*, 379

Prince Edward's engagements with the remnants of the de Montfort survivors around Northampton and Axholm in 1266 called for another 'aid,' this time for 40 marks from the Abbot. (1) For a space after this we have no record of further demands, until October the 11th, 1271, when the Abbot received quittance for his payment of the 20th demanded.(2)

On July 4th, 1277, the King had to be content with, and grant the Abbot quittance for, £40, which was all that he could pay of the £53. 6.8. required for two knights' fees for the Welsh war. (3)

Apart from these oft recurring and unexpected demands for aids in the wars, the King had to be entertained at least twice during the period and at no small expense to the Abbey. The first visit was made in November 1251, when he and the Queen stayed from the 5th (4) until at least the 7th. (5) The other occasion was on April 16th, 1265, (6) and he was still there on the 26th. (7)

In return for all these outgoings to their monarch and patron the monks received very little indeed. In 1251, the King granted the Abbey Free Warren or the right to take game on their own manors, but not from the royal forests; but

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- (1) C. R. 1264-8., p. 171-2. From the Bishop of London 260 marks were demanded, and from Cirencester Abbey 60. *ibid.*
 (2) C. P. R. 1266-72. p. 577
 (3) Landboc, II, 229-300, ditto dated the previous day, *ibid.*, I. 218.
 (4) C. P. R. 1247-58, p. 117.
 (5) Landboc, I. xxi
 (6) *ibid.*, xxii
 (7) C.P.R. 1258-66, p. 470

this concession cost them £10. (1) However, the King did grant them oaks from the Forest of Dean, 10 in 1251 'ad reparacionem cujusdam aule sue,' (2) and six more on February 8th, 1282. (3)

A more substantial and timely relief came, not from the King, but by the generosity of Robert de Gynnes to whom the Convent had been paying that rent of £9 a year for their Manors of Halling, Haselton, and Yanworth, in the stead of the Advocates of Bethune. On March 13th, 1251, he quitclaimed this rent (4) and the Inspeximus and Confirmation of the Charter by the King followed on May 10th, in the same year. (5)

Two other grants may be mentioned here, although they did not alter the situation to any great degree. The first, was the fat buck that Adam le Despenser bound himself on May 5th, 1261 to deliver annually to the Convent for the hamlet of Bradenston, (6) Though of no great intrinsic worth it was probably appreciated for a day or so by those who were responsible for feeding the community. The other was of more value but, as it did not fully devolve to the Abbey until the expiration of a life interest, could have proved of little assistance to the hard pressed Abbot. William of Cheltenham bequeathed to the Convent his houses in

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 89
 (2) C. R. 1251-3. p.9
 (3) Cal. C. R. 1279-88. p. 148
 (4) Cal. Charter R. 1226-57. p. 359-60
 (5) Landbooc, II. p. 110-112
 (6) ibid, p. 200-1

Smith Street, Gloucester, on condition that the monks found a secular priest to pray for his soul and that of his widow in the Church of St. Mary le Crypt Gloucester. The monks bound themselves to do this to the Rector of that Church. Aldith, the widow, had a life interest in the property, but by an agreement between her and the Abbey on Sept. 29th, 1274 she was to hold the houses for a rose presented on St. John Baptist's day, and to keep the buildings in repair at a charge not exceeding a mark a year. She also undertook to find the Abbot and brethren, or others on business in Gloucester, board and lodging in the houses. In return the Convent paid her 20/- a year. (1)

There can be little doubt that the Abbot and Convent, having burdened themselves with their early costly venture, were forced into increasing difficulties by the constantly recurring demands made upon them by the King and the Papacy, and that the acquisitions of the time did not meet the extra expenses. Money had to be raised by some means, so John Yanworth resorted to selling corrodies from at least 1271, onwards. For varying sums in cash or kind, he undertook to provide for the payers' worldly requirements for the rest of their lives. The scheme amounted to something very similar to the modern purchase of life annuities. It had, from the

(1) Landbooc, I. 116-8

Convent's standpoint, the advantage of providing ready cash or assured income from property when it was most needed in return for just one more person to maintain among the large number of those whose lives were spent in one capacity or another in the Abbey. But when the number of corrodians grew to become quite a large proportion of the establishment the situation changed. Every fresh 'guest' meant that there was less to spare for the monks and might well mean that the community would be unable to receive fresh members.

It has been said that "at Winchcombe in 1282 the 45 monks had to pay 15 corrodies, or as much as would have raised their own conventual numbers to 60;" (1) but I am unable to trace anything like this number of corrodians up to the end of the reign, nor can I discover the strength of the community with such exactitude. The following corrodies were, however, granted during the last eleven years of the Abbot's rule.

On August 15th 1271, John West gave the Abbot his messuage and tenement in Yanworth, together with all his land for the following corrody for himself and his wife who were allowed a house free in the town with dovecote and garden, and daily:- two monks' loaves, and one esquire's, two flagons of ale, two dishes of "free servants" fare in the Abbot's Hall;

(1) G. G. Coulton, FIVE CENTURIES OF RELIGION, VOL. III, p. 246.

two seams of firewood weekly, common for a cow in the Abbot's pasture; and a robe for John or 8/- and a like sum for his wife. If either died half the above ceased excepting the house, the pasture and half the firewood. (1)

About the same time John, son of John the Knight of Sherborne, whose former gift to the Abbey has been noted, (2) surrendered all the land remaining to him in exchange for a corrody. It was, in his case, a wise decision as he had been slowly parting with his property for years; two sales at least being due to pressing need for money. (3) He bargained to receive a loaf and a gallon of ale and one dish of flesh or fish daily; a robe a year; half a mark, in two instalments, for linen and shoe leather; and the services of a waiting lad when too old or infirm to dine with the Abbot's servants. It would appear that he had a wife living whom the monks were prepared to entertain at Winchcombe for not more than two days at a time, perhaps twice or thrice a year. (4)

For faithful service and the payment of ten marks, Nicholas Howe received eight bushels of grain when away from the Abbey on the Convent's business but, when disabled, the promise of a monk's loaf, a flagon of ale, and a dish from

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 129, and II, 321-3
 (2) see above, p. 88,
 (3) Landbooc, II, 327-8
 (4) ibid, I. 122, and II. 240

233-40?

the Abbot's kitchen daily, but no corn, together with half a mark a year for a robe. (This grant dated from Jan. 29th, 1274. (1)) (On June 19th, 1276 a married couple were admitted to fraternity and every boon. For the payment of 55 marks down, were promised two loaves, two neggins of ale, two dishes of pulse and of flesh, fish or eggs, or in Lent ten herrings. If either died, half of the corrody ceased, except the consoling two gallons of ale. (2)

The much more expensive corrody of Elias de Foxcote, the Abbey Steward, in December, 1278 brought him more elaborate accommodation. He paid one hundred marks and gave all his land in Sherborne. This, and his faithful service, secured him maintenance of better quality, such as the Cellarer enjoyed. His robe was to cost 20/-, at the Abbey's charge. During his residence at the chamber built at his own cost near the Abbey gate, a groom and horse would be kept for him at the Cellarer's and a seam of wood delivered on Saturdays. (3) His brother also secured a corrody about this time. (4) On January 22nd of the same year, the Abbot entered into a covenant with Master Walter Hereford, a mason and faithful servant, whereby his services were secured to the Abbey exclusively, - saving the King's work. He was to receive, apparently with-

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- (1) Landboc, I, 121-2
 (2) ibid, 124
 (3) ibid, 124-6
 (4) ibid, 126

out paying a deposit, accomodation as did the Abbey's chief servants, and, when confined to his chamber, his food was to be taken to him. Two grooms were to be kept for him when working; but only one when in continual sickness. He, too, was to build a chamber at his own expense, but the Abbot undertook to find the timber and stone. Fuel and from two to six candles nightly, were also provided. (1) Walter Hereford's services were at the disposal of the Abbey for a very long time, as, thirty years later, he very generously paid all the costs of the appropriation of Enstone Church.(2)

These nine paying-guests and their servants brought in at least 165 marks when sorely needed, but, on the whole, it is to be doubted whether that sum and the unspecified property really paid the monks for the ofttimes lengthy survival of their pensioners and the friction and inconvenience that was bound to arise from the presence of so many lay people among the monks.

The times were against the Abbot, but at least he had secured property to the Abbey, and against the alleged debt which he left his successor to clear off John Yanworth could show the Manor of Dry-Marston, an extra Chapel, and houses and lands around Winchcombe and the more distant domains of the Abbey; achievements that did not escape the approving notice of his contemporaries. (3)

(1) Landboe, I. 136

(2) Worc. Epis. Regis. Orlton. fol. 36 and Landboe II, lxiii

(3) Annals. Mon. IV. 485, "who secured many good things for his house."

CHAPTER TEN.

Possibly, because the Community realized the advantages of a long and able rule such as they had experienced under John Yanworth or that their choice was limited because the men with long administrative experience had failed to outlive the old Abbot, the monks chose another young man to succeed him, a man who was destined to hold the office for more than thirty-one years.

This was the same Walter de Wickewane, (of Childs Wickham) the Abbey Cellarer, who, with Walter Wynt, had journeyed to Rhuddlan to inform the King of the vacancy and to obtain, on 13th Oct. 1282, licence to elect. (1) The Convent lost little time in reaching a decision, for exactly a week later Bishop Godfrey Giffard appointed a Commission to confirm the election of Walter de Wickewane. (2) The royal mandate to the escheator, the Sheriff of Gloucester, to restore the temporalities to the Abbot-elect was issued on 5th November; (3) and, shortly afterwards, he received his Benediction at Worcester. If the Sacrist there considered the present of a cope and red chasuble embroidered with lions, to be of little value, 'parvi pretii,' no doubt, that Official's fellow monks were more satisfied with the 'dolum' of wine - costing

(1) C. P. R. 1281-92. p.37
 (2) Reg. Bishop Godfrey Giffard, 120
 (3) C. P. R. 1281-92. p.39

the Abbot of Winchcombe 40/- - provided for their customary celebration on the Benediction of a new Abbot to one of the monasteries in the diocese. (1)

The appointment of Abbot Walter de Wickewane was in every way excellent as he was gifted with tremendous energy and sound business ability, so that, under his direction, the Abbey flourished to a degree hitherto unattained and certainly unsurpassed or even equalized by his successors during the next century. This prosperity was to be seen in the building undertaken, the marked improvement in revenue receipts and the general well-being of the community. Moreover, all this was not achieved by amassing debts; on the contrary, not only did he manage to discharge all that was owing when he assumed office, but he left his Abbey financially secure despite considerable contributions to King and Pope, the many royal pensioners imposed on the House and several protracted and expensive disputes.

During the first year or so, Walter de Wickewane appears to have done nothing very noteworthy. Probably he was taking stock of the position and concerning himself with the Abbey property for the rent of the fullers' and corn mills at Cliveley was raised from 28/- paid in the time of

(1) Annal. Mon. IV. 484 and 485.

Abbot Ralph, (1) to 30/- a year about this time, (2) and this may indicate the general trend where small properties were changing tenants.

In July 1284, the first of the new Abbot's troubles came upon him. Robert de Gretton, the Perpetual Vicar of Sherborne, informed the Bishop that he could not reside at his Vicarage for fear of death and dread of his enemies. He had been there but a little while, for it was as recently as February 1279, that Robert's predecessor, Robert of Aston, had been presented to that Vicarage by the Abbot and Convent. (3) Possibly the unpopularity of the appropriation of the living by the Abbey found expression among the parishioners in hostility towards the Vicars who were sent there. The Bishop's solution was to make the Abbey provide Robert with his maintenance and find a priest who was able to reside and keep the house in repair. (4)

If the Abbot found difficulty at the time in securing a man sufficiently courageous to go to that dangerous cure he would have experienced less trouble in doing so two years later, as he then had a cleric on his hands

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- (1) See above p. 59.
 (2) Landbooc, II. p. 189
 (3) Regis. Godfrey Giffard, p. 104
 (4) *ibid*, 242

to whom he was bound to pay a pension of 20/- a year until the Convent found the man a benefice.(1) It is not clear concerning that clerk's standing in Orders, but it may have been he whom the Abbot wished to present to Twining four months later (September 1286), and to have him excused from receiving Priest's Orders, as the Bishop was enquiring into the Abbot's reasons for such a request at this time. (2) On Lady Day, 1288, another cleric entered into his reward for 'past labours, protections and well deservings in hard matters.' This was Nicholas de Munham whose services were still desired. He was promised a competent benefice of not less than 20 marks in value and, until he received it, he was to have that sum from the Abbot as well as private accommodation for himself, two servant lads and two horses, and in addition 40/- for a robe. Under such favourable circumstances the Clerk must have deemed himself far better off in the Abbey than he was likely to be in a living with its many outgoings.(3)

In the meantime, two disputes had arisen concerning tithes. On March 24th, 1287 the Convent referred the matter between Nicholas de Devizes, Vicar of Winchcombe, and themselves to the Bishop, Godfrey Giffard. (4) The Vicar submitted his case to the Bishop at Kempsey on March 30th

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- (1) Landboc, I. 128
 (2) Regis. Godfrey Giffard, 295
 (3) Landboc, I, 266
 (4) ibid, 267-8

in the next year. (1) On the next day Godfrey Giffard managed to arrive at a compromise settlement by which the Abbey received all sheaves and hay tithes, lambs, and living death duties; the small tithes from Littlemead and Longcroft went to the Abbey as well, if they built on it. The Vicar's portion was the small tithes, oblations, obventions and wool. If his source of income failed to provide £10 a year, the Abbot undertook to make good the deficit. (2)

This ordinance received confirmation, after inspection, from the Prior and Chapter of Worcester on the Feast of the Translation of S. Wulstan, 1298. (Jan. 19th) (3)

When, in March 1300, a sharp controversy raged between the Bishop and the Prior before Robert of Winchelsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, this settlement and the confirmation provided the second of the thirty-six charges against the Bishop. In the legatine Constitutions of Cardinal Ottoboni in 1268, it was forbidden to appropriate any parish church to a monastery unless it was plainly oppressed by the burdens of poverty or there was some lawful cause. The Prior and Convent maintained that the appropriation had taken place at the false suggestion of certain persons, and that they had consented to it in

(1) Landboe, I. 268

(2) *ibid*, 270-1

(3) *ibid*, 268 and 272

error.(1) The Bishop answered that he had merely mediated in a dispute touching debated portions, to the profit and peace of both parties and that he had secured to the Vicar a steady income. (2) The Papal Confirmation was granted on July 15th, 1291 by Nicholas IV, (3) and there the matter rested until the complete and final appropriation in 1396.

The other dispute, between the Abbey and Simon de Overbury, Rector of Hawling, was settled at the same time. The monks submitted their case to the Bishop on March 24th, 1287 and the Rector did the same on March 31st, 1288. (4) That same day the Bishop decided that the Convent was exempt from all tithes on the old demesnes and newly broken land, as well as on home-bred stock in Hawling, but that the Rector was to receive a mark a year in compensation. In lieu of 'housebote and heybote' (5) the Rector was to have six cartloads of underwood; and, instead of turning eight oxen on to the Convent Common, four was to be his limit.(6) The Prior and Convent of Worcester confirmed the ordinance

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- (1) Regis, Godfrey Giffard, f. 470-3, cited by Landboc, I. n. 272.
 (2) *ibid*, and c. f. Trans. R. Hist. S. Vol. II New Series, pp. 82-83.
 (3) Landboc, II, 330-1.
 (4) *ibid*, I, 273-4.
 (5) 'Housebote' i.e. right of tenant to take house repairing wood. 'Heybote' i.e. right to take wood for fences.
 (6) *ibid*, I. 276

on June 24th, 1288 (1) and Pope Nicholas IV gave his confirmation on July 15th, 1291.(2) Sometime afterwards, Simon of Overbury received a grant of £5 a year 'for his services.' (3) This pension may have been earned by making the Hawling settlement an easy affair, but it is much more likely that it was promised to him to secure his resignation in the interest of a young friend, or nephew, of the Abbot's. This boy, John de Wickewane, was aged fourteen and was described as 'clerk' by the Bishop when he was presented to the Rectory of Hawling at the instance of the Abbot on Oct. 12th, 1293. The real custody of the Church, and the boy, was vested in Henry, Rector of Stanton; (4) but the lad was assured of a certain income and the wherewithal to meet the costs of his education. Thereafter, his patron, or uncle, could expect no more trouble over the tithe question.

Three years later the Abbot was still mindful of the welfare of his own kinsfolk or of people from his native place, for on June 20th, 1296 he granted to Walter de Wickewane and Alice his wife a messuage two yardlands, a cottage, dovecote, arable land and grazing for four oxen

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- (1) Landboc, I. 274 and 277.
 (2) *ibid*, II, P. 330-1
 (3) *ibid*, I. 272-3.
 (4) Register, Godfrey Giffard, 434.

in the Abbot's pasture, all at Yanworth at the very reasonable rental of 32/- a year, 20/- of which was payable to the Prior. (1)

In 1290, the Abbot and Convent were in serious trouble with the King from which the Archbishop of Canterbury managed to extricate them by obtaining the royal pardon on June 27th. Their offence lay in accepting, without licence, sundry houses, lands and rents, contrary to the Statute of Mortmain. The list of such property is impressive and helps to explain how the Abbot managed to raise the money to meet his creditors and to carry out his plans. Between the passing of the Statute in 1279 and the pardon granted in 1290, the Abbot and Convent had received the following property:- 12 messuages, 30 acres, and 5/- a year rents, all in Winchcombe; in Cotes, one mill and 17 acres; 5½ acres in Greet; 1 messuage, 13 acres and 3/8 in rents in Gretton; 6 acres in Frampton-in-Winchcombe; 1 messuage and 2½ acres in Hawling; and three acres in Sudeley. (2).

With an income such as the above property indicates,

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- (1) Landboc, I. 129-30. It is of interest to note that William, Archbishop of York, 1279-85 was surnamed Wickwane, and may have been a close kinsman of the Abbot.
- (2) Landboc, II, 106 - 109.

it is not to be expected that the Bishop could find much to correct when he visited the Abbey on Tuesday, the Conversion of S. Paul, 1291. Godfrey Giffard stayed two days 'at the expense of the house' and preached the monks a sermon on the text 'Arise, O Jerusalem, and stand upon the height' (Baruch V.5). (1) The Bishop was still using the identical text when he visited S. Augustine's, Bristol, during August in the same year! (2)

If he had deferred his visit until the next winter he might have seen the community at Winchcombe wearing the black skin caps that the Pope, Nicholas IV, had in his mandate of July 7th, 1291, granted them leave to use, that their almost wholly shaven heads might receive some protection from the cold. That this concession extended the use of the same caps to the hours of worship within the Abbey Church is apparent, since the Pope strictly enjoined the monks to remove them during the reading of the Gospel and the Elevation of the Host at Mass. (3)

The same obliging Pope made a re-grant of all former Privileges that had fallen into disuse through "simplicity and ignorance" on August 30th, in the same year. The businesslike mind of Walter de Wickwane was much concerned

(1) Regis. Godfrey Giffard, p. 382.

(2) *ibid.*, 393.

(3) Landbooc, II. 87

about this time to bring past rights and exemptions to real use, for the success with which he met in the dispute with the Rector of Hawling in the previous year had turned largely upon long-standing concessions in the matter of tithes on the Abbey demesnes. It is probable that, during those negotiations, those same Privileges had been called in question, so the Abbot determined to leave nothing in the future to chance and to fortify his position with a general renewal. (1)

This year closed with two journeys by the Abbot. He was among those present when a settlement was at last reached between the Bishop and the Prior and Convent of Worcester, between whom there had been almost continuous discord. (2) The General Chapter of the Benedictine Order took him to Salisbury on the 11th September, where he joined in the discussion concerning the new Gloucester College for the monks at Oxford. (3)

The unexpected demands likely to be pressed upon the Monasteries at this time called for ready cash. This was not always available and recourse had to be made to others who were better off - sometimes other monasteries, sometimes moneylenders. On November 7th, 1293 the Abbot had

(1) Landbooc, II, 89-90

(2) Regis. Godfrey Giffard, 393.

(3) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. I. 129-130, also see Trans. R. Hist. S. Vol. X. 4th Series, 195 ff.

to raise money from abroad, for he acknowledges to the King that he owes £20 to Fredk. Ventoure and his fellows, merchants of Lucca, to be levied in default of payment on his lands and chattels in Gloucestershire. (1) The debt was soon wiped off, however; and the Abbot ready to embark upon an extension of the Abbey gardens. For this he had to obtain permission from the King, on Sept. 4th, 1294, in order to stop up a public highway, Peticfue's Lane, which ran between the two gardens in the possession of the Convent. In compensation for this advantage the Abbot was called upon to provide another road, serving the same purpose, on his own grounds. (2)

In 1299, it was the Abbot's turn to be owed money by a fellow Abbot. On March 30th in that year, the Abbot of Bruerne was in Walter de Wickewane's debt for the sum of £166. 13. 4. (3) Presumably this was paid off by the transfer to Winchcombe of a messuage, a carucate of land, and ten acres of wood in Gerndene, long owned by the Abbey of Bruerne. The necessary licence to alienate in mortmain was issued by the King, on May 16th, 1299 (4) and the licence of John de Sudeley was given about the same

(1) Cal. C. R. 1288-96. 329.

(2) C. R. R. 1292-1301, 87 and Landboc, II, 105-6

(3) Cal. C. R. 1296-1302, p.299

(4) C. P. R. 1292-1301, 416 and Landboc, I, 295-6. The Abbot of Bruerne's Grant (undated), Landboc I, 293-4

time because he was still in receipt of the service rent of "a pair of boots, a monk's girdle with knife, sheath, and needles and case appendent" from Bruerne Abbey, which had been granted the property on those terms by John's ancestor, Otuer, in fulfilment of a vow to maintain two monks in that Cistercian Monastery. (1)

On September 15th following, John de Sudeley demised for 60 years to the Abbey of Winchcombe, in consideration of £60 down, a plot of land with underwood called the 'Warren,' under Londeley. (2) He also gave the monks full permission to repair the water-pipe from Honiwell, at their pleasure; but they were to make good all digging-damage in seed-ground and meadow. For wanton damage done by John, or his representatives, 6/8 was to be paid for each day in which he neglected to repair the breakage. (3) The right to dig stone from Londeley and Kintestone was conceded by Ralph de Sudeley about the same time. (4) The century closed with the purchase from John Waupol of Wenlond, of a capital messuage, lands, and services of freemen and villeins in Throp. For this estate the Abbot paid £100 (5). It is obvious that by now the Convent was not merely solvent,

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- (1) Landboe, I. 292 - 3.
 (2) C. P. R. 1292 - 1301, 436.
 (3) Landboe, I. 239.
 (4) ibid, II, 149 - 150.
 (5) ibid, II, 155 - 6. (Royal Licence, ibid 112 - 113 and C. P. R. 1292 - 1301, 457, dated Nov. 16th, 1299.)

but in possession of sufficient funds to secure property of the above costly nature. Such increasing prosperity provided no mean testimony and compliment to the business ability of the man in whose hands lay the direction of the Abbey's affairs and whose rule was as yet scarcely more than half completed.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

When the fourteenth century opened all was well in the Abbey of Winchcombe, at least Bishop Godfrey Giffard found nothing for him to correct or comment upon when he made his last Visitation on the Wednesday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, (Sept. 14th) 1300. (1)

Six months afterwards, the Abbot and Convent were called upon to entertain more illustrious guests when, on March 22nd, the King and Robert Winchelsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, stayed on their way to Hayles for the burial of the remains of the Earl of Cornwall. (2)

It was from Hayles, next day, that the King granted the Convent leave to receive in mortmain from John of Bledington a messuage in Fleet Street, in the Parish of St. Bride's, London. (3) This acquisition must have proved very convenient every time that the Abbot went to London on business or to attend the meetings of Councils and Convocation.

In the next month the Abbot found himself in a very serious position. He was excommunicate for complying with the King's demands for money for the Scotch and French wars! Despite the support that he had recently sought

(1) Regis. Godfrey Giffard, 531.

(2) C. P. R. 1292 - 01, 580, and Annal Mon. IV. 549.

(3) *ibid*, 581.

and obtained from Pope Boniface VIII in the two Confirmations, dated January 23rd, 1301 which placed the Abbey under the Papal protection (1) and granted exemptions from secular exactions by Kings and all others, (2) he had been compelled, as he admitted to the Pope in his letter of April 18th, to meet the demands made upon him, through violence and dread of the loss of the Abbey's temporalities. Confessing his inconstancy, he pledged the House to obedience. (3)

Reconciliation must have soon followed, for on Nov. 7th, the Archbishop of Canterbury, having heard complaints about the excessive length of, and expense involved by, the visits of the Bishop's Official to the monasteries of the diocese, commissioned the Abbots of Winchcombe and Pershore to prevent the recurrence of the scandal. Their duties, in this respect, did not burden them any longer than 1307; as in that year Pope Clement V reversed the decision, and the Official and his many servants had to be lodged notwithstanding any orders made by the Archbishop. (4)

By the end of the year the long episcopate of Godfrey

(1) Landboe, II, 91

(2) *ibid*, 81

(3) *ibid*, I, 254-5. (The Pope, Boniface VIII, published in 1296 the famous Bull "Clericis Laicos" by which he forbade the clergy to pay, and the secular powers to exact, under penalty of excommunication, contributions, taxes, etc. from the revenues of the Churches.)

(4) Trans. R. Hist. S. Vol. 2. p. 86

Giffard was clearly nearing its close. He was a dying man, and, as the Archbishop knew, beset by a powerful rival for power in the Prior of Worcester. To protect the property of the Bishop and to secure the restitution of what had even then, been seized, Robert Winchelsey instructed the Abbot of Winchcombe and the official of the Archdeacon to act for him, on January 10th, 1302, just sixteen days before the Bishop of Worcester died. (1) Between the death of the Bishop and the episcopate of the next, which began on October 28th, the See was in the custody of this same Prior of Worcester who determined to carry out a visitation of the monasteries in the diocese. From Tewkesbury he was forced to turn away because the Abbey gates were closed against him. The Abbot there thought that, as he had already been visited twice within a short space, once by his own late Bishop and once by the Archbishop, that was enough. Besides, fees were demanded on each occasion, a very relevant objection to a third expensive visit! Nothing daunted, the visitor went on to Gloucester, where the two houses both refused to allow him to enter; and from thence to Winchcombe which also shut its gates. (2) Later on, he managed to get a judgement against the Abbots of Gloucester and Tewkesbury for their action, but there

(1) Liber Albus. p. 61

(2) Annal Mon. IV, 551

is no mention of any proceedings taken against Walter de Wickewane.(1)

The next Bishop, William de Gainsborough, visited the Abbey on June 6th, 1304, and found nothing about which to complain. (2) He obliged the Abbot in 1305 by ordaining to the Priesthood, one, Robert Michel of Winchcombe, "notwithstanding a blemish in his eye." (3)

The Abbot must have been well off about this time since two large sums had been loaned to laymen. On October 28th, 1302 John Giffard of Weston-under-Edge was owing as much as £110, having pledged his lands and chattels. Similar security was accepted for a loan of £106. 13. 4, to John de Sudeley on May 19th 1303. This latter debt appears soon to have been wiped off.(5)

The liberality of this last loan was probably regretted when, two days later, an expensive and unprofitable guest was quartered on the Abbey by the King. This was John Yatingden, possibly a veteran of the wars, who came with horse and groom. (6) Edward I, was thus tardily exercising the privilege that he claimed of sending to each of

(1) Annal Mon. LV, 556 (1303)
(2) Register Bishop William Gainsborough, xiii.
(3) ibid, 22.
(4) Cal. C. R. 1296- 1302. 607
(5) ibid, 1302 -7. 78
(6) ibid, 1302-7. 88

the royal Abbays a 'guest,' whenever there was a change of Abbot. This right provided a pension for a royal servant at no charge to the King, but formed an unwelcome tax on the unfortunate Abbey.

John de Yatingden was lodged out in a house to himself, but daily he fetched his allowance of food and drink from the Abbey, or dined there off his two loaves, two dishes from the best course and the two gallons of ale provided for him and the groom. Each year he received a robe, "after the pattern of the esquires'," and had three bundles of litter for his bed. The groom's robe and the keep for the horse were estimated at 26/8 a year. (1)

Before that year was ended, two other similar guests turned up. First, Simon de Trewyk was sent by the King on August 1st, (2) and he stayed until January 26th next, when the Abbey managed to get him sent on to St. Albans. (3) The other was William de Kent, sent on November 10th (1303), but he was not admitted, (4) as the Abbot must have had, by this time, enough trouble with the old soldiers in the monastery. There seems to have been something very much wrong with William, because nobody wanted him. When at last, in January 1304, a billet was found for him among

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 139 - 40
 (2) Cal. C. R. 1302-7. 1000
 (3) ibid, 195
 (4) ibid, 111

the monks at Colchester, nearer his home, (1) it proved to be for a very short duration, for two months later he was sent off to the Prior and Convent of Merton. (2)

Walter de Wickewane was present at Gloucester for the funeral of the Abbot, John Gamages on April 17th, 1306. (3)

The year 1307 was a fortunate period for the Abbey where property in Enstone was concerned. On February 3rd, an exchange of land took place between the Abbey and Henry de Williamsote, lord of Asterley and Kiddington, by which the monks acquired all lands belonging to Enstone Manor, outside of the lord's enclosure there and his demesne at Asterley, and the right to assart and enclose waste in Enstone manor 'as they will.' In exchange, the Convent released its right within the enclosure at Asterley and gave the lord of the manor licence to assart in Kiddington and Asterley. (4) Still pursuing their policy of rounding off their estates there, another exchange was made on March 25th, with Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick; by which the Abbot had the Earl's permission to enclose waste and assart lands in Wichwood Forest in the Manor of Enstone.

(1) Cal. C. R. 1302-7, 194

(2) *ibid*, 203.

(3) *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii S. Petri Gloucestric.* R. S. Vol. I. p.41

(4) *Landbooc*, II, 205-6.

The Earl received in turn the Abbey's permission to enclose a corresponding area in Spelsbury. (1)

Adjacent to these lands lay Wychwood Forest, in which, on June 16th, the Abbot and Convent obtained the King's licence to assart 115 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres, in fee simple, at the very reasonable rental of 4/9 $\frac{1}{4}$ a year. Unfortunately for the Convent, all hope of repeating such a bargain appeared to be eliminated by a proviso restraining the Community from holding any more of the waste land than had been granted to them by this licence. (2) However, Enstone had been by no means fully exploited. There remained, as yet, the benefice which was in the Abbey's patronage. To this the attention of the Abbot had been directed for some time. A petition for appropriation met with Pope Clement V's support and, on August 2nd, 1307 he gave the living to the Abbey. He was moved by the reasons that the Abbot and Convent framed, for they declared that they were impoverished to a dangerous degree by the flocking of the poor and faithful to the monastery for the necessities of life, by sundry oppressions and creditors draining the supplies needed for hospitality and alms-giving and the work of completing the Abbey. The Pope stipulated that a secular priest was to be appointed to the Church, but, even after

(1) Landboc, I, 301-2

(2) C. P. R. 1301-7, 531, and Landboc, II, 125-7.

his stipend had been paid, the monks could look for a generous profit as the living was worth much more than the 40 marks a year at which it had been assessed for taxation. (1)

It was, however, one thing to obtain the authority to appropriate and quite another to enter into possession, as the Abbot found. Though the legal formalities were put in hand without delay they, and the satisfaction of those with vested interests in the benefice, took some time to complete.

By September 12th, 1307 the Benedictine Abbot of Bardney had been appointed executor by the Pope and he was then in possession of the above Bull, together with instructions formally to notify the Bishop of Lincoln, (in whose diocese Enstone was) the parishoners and others interested that the Pope had authorized the appropriation. As soon as the present Rector resigned or died the Abbot of Bardney, by his chosen deputy, Richard of Reading, was to give public notice and let the Abbot of Winchcombe take possession of the Church and of its emoluments. The Bishop of Lincoln was warned not to interfere and was threatened with suspension for the first week of his opposition and

(1) Cal. Papal Reg. II, 27, and Landbooc, II, 43-45. The reasons advanced to obtain the Appropriation are more conventional than specifically related to fact.

excommunication for the next such week. The actual induction of the Abbot of Winchcombe, or his proxy, into the Church was entrusted to the Abbots of Tewkesbury, Hayles, and Bordersley.(1)

Preparations for the publication of the appropriation were settled by the Abbot of Barney's commission to Robert of Wych, and Nicholas, Rector of Twining to see that due notification was made in Enstone and the neighbourhood, as soon as the benefice was vacant.(2)

The Bishop of Lincoln was opposed to a living in his diocese passing into the absolute possession of a Monastery elsewhere and, despite the warning given to him, published a general Inhibition against any persons entering on a Church in his diocese without his permission and as long as the present incumbent was in possession. This declaration was clearly intended to hinder the entry of the Abbot of Winchcombe.(3) In addition, the Bishop went to considerable trouble to oppose the matter at Rome, where, however, he received scant satisfaction. In fact he was bluntly informed by Thomas, Cardinal of St. Sabina, that his permission was not even necessary as the Abbey was the patron and had the benefice appropriated to

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- (1) Landboc, II, 212 -6.
 (2) ibid, 224-5.
 (3) Landboc, II, 217-8

it by the Pope, that the Inhibition was considered there to be discreditable and to have been a hindrance and that there was peril in provoking the Pope by his conduct in this and certain like cases. (1) The failure of the Bishop of Lincoln to oppose the entry of the Abbey in to the rectory left but one obstacle remaining, and this proved to be even more serious than an angry Bishop. As noted above, the appropriation could not take effect while the present Rector was in possession, and he, William de Haustede, was by no means backward in appreciating his position to the full. On March 11th, 1307 he had resigned the benefice of Enstone, (2) almost five months before the Pope's appropriation of the benefice to the Abbey. Probably there was some illegal factor in his tenure, for he was also in possession of Rolenden Church in the Archdiocese of Canterbury. Immediately afterwards, he left for Rome and obtained the Pope's dispensation to hold both, on June 14th, 1307; being then provided to the Rectory of Enstone "with the title of 'commendam,'" and with licence to retain also the Church of Rolenden. (3) He was thus well fortified for bargaining with the Abbot who, doubtlessly, was anxious to have the Rector gone. These nego-

(1) Landboe, II. 218-9.

(2) *ibid*, 224

(3) Cal. Papal Reg. 1305-42, Vol. II. 24, and Landboe, II, 222-4

tiations were very protracted, and it was not until January 1st, 1309 that the Abbot was able to secure his induction by proxies. One of the proxies was Robert de Owdeby, monk of Winchcombe, the other, John de Wickewane who, sixteen years before this had been presented to Hawling at the age of fourteen, had now become Rector of Bledington with the support of the Abbot.(1) A little later, on December 6th, 1309, the reasons for the late Rector's opportune retirement became obvious. He had been bought out, and at a very stiff price! The terms, to which he made the Abbot agree, secured to William de Haustede 80 marks a year for his life. Now the living was assessed at 40 only, but the Rector knew its real worth, and he determined not to lose by helping the Abbot into his Church. Having made certain that the money would be paid to him he was, presumably, able to go off to his other parish in Kent.(2)

On December 21st 1309, John de Twywell was presented by the Abbot and Convent to be first 'Vicar' of Enstone, on the nomination of the Bishop of Lincoln. The right to nominate had been conceded to the Bishop in compensation for the surrender of episcopal claims, at a vacancy. By the terms of the bond to this effect, dated December 24th, 1309, the Abbot and Convent had to present the Bishop's

(1) Landbooc, II, 225-7.

(2) *ibid*, I, 259-260.

nominee within a month, otherwise the Bishop could provide a Vicar. During a vacancy in the See, the nomination was to be exercised by the Chapter of Lincoln. Enstone was no longer the great living it had been as a Rectory, for henceforth the Vicar received 15 marks a year,⁽¹⁾ but even so it was a trifle better than most of the vicarages in the control of monastic rectors, which averaged about ten marks.

The costs of the appropriation were borne by Walter the Mason, who was in receipt of a corrody in the Abbey,⁽²⁾ Nevertheless, the Abbey was experiencing difficulty in meeting its liabilities, for the Abbot was owing Hugh de Norman-ton the large sum of £200 on December 4th, 1309. ⁽³⁾ However, within the Abbey all was in order when the Prior of Worcester visited it on the Friday after the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin in 1308, ⁽⁴⁾ (during the vacancy in the See from September 17th 1307 to October 13th, 1308) for that ecclesiastic had no adverse comments to make.

The problem of the ownership and collection of tithes was perennial. In the Winchcombe district, the tithes of Gretton and the Stanleys were very involved, as they were

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 309-311. Royal confirmation of this bond issued on June 8th, 1310. C. P. R. 1307-13, 230. The Licence to appropriate Enstone Church issued Feb. 26th 1309. C. P. R. 1307-13, 152.
- (2) see above pp. 107-8
- (3) Cal. C. R. 1307-13. 236
- (4) Sede Vacante, 122, J.W. Willis Band, Worcestershire Hist. Socy.

shared, in varying proportions by the Convent, the Vicar of Winchcombe and the Rector of Toddington. For example, the Abbey had the tithes of corn, hay and lambs in Gretton, the Vicar of Winchcombe had the lesser tithes, except from one and half virgates; and the Rector of Toddington had the corn and hay from six other fields. In Middle-Stanley, the greater tithes went to the Abbey and the lesser to the Vicar; but, around the Stanley "where the Court House was," there the monks had all the tithe from one field, but the rest were divided in the proportion of three to the Abbey and one to the Rector, save the tithes of lambs where the proportion was two to one. It is not surprising that disputes were bound to arise at the autumn collections between the three different groups of collectors, who were often in error concerning the portions due to their masters, and that losses and scandals ensued. With the object of preventing a continuance of these troubles the parties concerned agreed to amend and simplify the matter on September 30th, 1310. The agreement provided the Abbey with all the tithes of corn, hay, lambs and live death dues in Gretton, and made the tenants there parishoners of Winchcombe. The Vicar received the lesser tithes and dead death dues there, and the Rector had everything and everyone in the Stanleys. (1)

(1) Register of Bishop Walter Reynolds, p.22 ff. R.A. Wilson, Worcestershire Hist. Society, 1927, and Landboe, II, 554-7

The same Bishop cleared up a similar dispute between the Abbey and the Rector of Haselton and Yanworth, Elias de Gayton, on March 29th, 1313. (1) This friction had been long-standing, as both parties were before the Arch-deacon's Official as far back as December 13th, 1299, (2) but, as the Rector remained obdurate, the Pope commissioned the Abbot of Evesham to settle the matter. His enquiry resulted in the apparent submission of Elias on July 27th, 1301, (3) yet the Rector still continued to press his claims to the annoyance of, and detriment of the Convent. The trouble was that the Rector had plenty of precedents for his claims, for, since the appropriation, the Abbey had lost control of the benefice through their negligence and simplicity and by the practice of the Abbots in presenting their own nephews who, taking advantage of their kinship and the suffrance of the bailiffs, had unlawfully occupied lands, etc. belonging to the Abbey. Elias was, not unnaturally, loth to lose what he held to be his long existing rights. (4) Common friends brought the conflicting parties together, and the Abbey secured the corn tithes and live death-dues, while the Rector had most of the rest. (5)

In the following Michaelmas the Convent presented

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- (1) Landbooc, II, 337.
 - (2) ibid, 344.
 - (3) ibid, 342
 - (4) Register Walter Reynolds, 69.
 - (5) Landbooc, II, 339-340

another Rector, Robert de Alne, to the Parish as Elias had resigned in order to receive, on the Wednesday after, a corrody from the Abbey. It included a chamber near the Abbey, food and clothing for himself and groom, and 'keep' for a horse...Provision was made for this to continue if he went away; and, if he so desired, he could have £20 a year instead of everything specified in the corrody, on giving adequate notice. (1)

The last considerable acquisition of property was the grant to enable the Convent to enclose 60 acres of waste on their manor at Enstone, out of Wychwood Forest, despite the prohibition of 1307, on June 12th, 1311.(2)

Many smaller grants were received by the Convent during the reign, among which were a yardland in Honeybourne; 5/- rent in Windrush; and 16½ acres in Gretton from Elias le Botiler, on December 2nd 1292; (3) 19/4 rent in Throp on March 26th, 1300; (4) 20/3 rent, a messuage, an acre of wood and a carucate of land in Cotes and Throp, from John le Brun on May 9th, 1303; (5) land in Twining; and a messuage and land in Cotes on February 1st, 1306. (6)

The corrodies and various maintenance grants were

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 317^a 8.
 - (2) C. P. R. 1307-13. 351.
 - (3) Landbooc, II, 123.
 - (4) ibid, II, 114 and C.P.R. 1292-1301, 497.
 - (5) C. P. R. 1301 -7, 141
 - (6) ibid, 414

not very beneficial to the Abbey. John West had given all his land for his corrody, (1) but John the Mouse had one on the strength of his service. (2) For 40 marks, Robert de Sutton, Rector of Dursley, secured a splendid corrody which included accommodation for two horses and a groom, but the Abbey would only support the one horse. It would appear that he felt the cold, as he bargained for 30 horse loads of large firewood to be delivered to his chamber. (3) A grant of a robe a year and "food with us" was made to Richard of Snowhill on July 15th, 1310. This was given for his past services at home and abroad and in anticipation of his further attention to business, and it was to continue until a suitable benefice could be found for him. (4)

Another Abbey servant, John the Messenger, also had the promise of maintenance during service and in his old age. The grant, dated August 11th, 1311 included the usual 'robe a year' to the value of 10/-, and a further 3/4 for boots. (5)

From 1300 onwards the Convent did not escape the imposition of royal guests and claimants. John le Blak, in consideration of his long service for the King and his father, and being now too infirm to continue as an envoy,

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- (1) Landboc, I. 129.
 (2) Sept. 22nd, *ibid.*
 (3) *ibid*, 298-300
 (4) Landboc, I. 143
 (5) *ibid*, 314-15

was sent to Winchcombe on January 10th, 1310. (1) He received a fairly substantial grant; that is, if he and the William le Blake, also described as 'sent by King Edward II,' are one and the same person, as is most probable. William's grant, made on March 26th, 1310, provided for the possibility of his wanting to sell the amount of food allocated to him when he was away and not able to consume it. (2)

Claimants of another type, for whom the monks were compelled to provide, were two clerks seeking benefices. William de Merton, at the request of Prince Edward, had to be paid an annual pension of 5 marks by the Convent, from Monday before St. Barnabas 1307, until he had been found a living by them. (3) On March 26th, two years later, John de Hertulle had Papal authority for his demand that he be appointed to a benefice at the next vacancy among the Convent livings, saving to Haselton or to Twining. Until the monks were able to satisfy him, they had to grant him a mark a year. (4)

Apart from these outgoings, which were devoid of any compensations to the monks, there were other ceaseless demands from both King and Pope. Aid was requested for the

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- (1) Cal. C. R. 1307 - 13, 241.
 (2) Landboc, I. 313.
 (3) Landboc, I, 296-7
 (4) *ibid*, 305-6.

war against Scotland, on January 23rd, 1310, (1) and, because the Abbot's response was not immediate, a clerk was sent by the King on May 1st, in the next year, to see into the reasons for the delay. (2) Knights' service proved expensive and tended to increase. As far back as 1166, the Abbey was called upon to provide for two at a charge of 4 marks; (3) while, in 1300, a Jury found that Enstone was held by the Abbey for two knights' fees. (4) Moreover, between 1282 and April 17th, 1311, Walter de Wickewane rendered military service thrice in the Welsh campaigns and four times in the Scottish. During the same period he had to contribute yearly a tenth of spirituals and temporals to the Pope. To the King he paid "sometimes a half or a fifth, more frequently a ninth, or an eleventh, or a thirteenth of temporals. Every year there came one, sometimes all the oppressions fell in a single miserable year, to the total amount of £1, 500." (5)

(1) Cal. G. R. 1307-13, 261

(2) *ibid.*, 357

(3) Knowles, M.O. 712 (in 1159 7½ marks.)

(4) Landboc, II, 180.

(5) Walter de Wickewane's Constitutions, in MS. Cotton, Cleopatra, B.ii., fol. 216-219b., Landboc, II, lvii, Dugdale, II, 304-9.

CHARTER TWELVE.

Despite the burdensome taxation already mentioned and the relatively slender income of the Community, - it had been assessed at only £110 a year in 1291 - (1) Abbot Walter de Wickewane was able to undertake a considerable amount of building in and around the Abbey.

In the Abbey Church itself, he had the Presbytery vaulted and added Chapels to the north side. Timber was obtained in large quantities for the construction of sixteen granges and sheepfolds, some of which may have been erected on the more distant demesnes. (2)

The cost of this must have been considerable and, although William de Cherington had given £40 towards the work(3) and Pope Nicholas IV the grant of an Indulgence of a year and forty days for penitents who visited the monastery on the feasts of the Virgin and St. Kenelm, probably in aid of the same cause, (4) expenditure outstripped receipts during one period, so that the Abbot was compelled to divert to the Sacrist, who was responsible

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- (1) Pope Nicholas Tax. Rec. Com. 45, 228, 233. (There were other sources of revenue not included, e.g. 40 sacks of wool sold at an average of 13 marks a sack. Cunningham, Growth of English Industry and Commerce, I, 640.)
- (2) Landboc, II, lvii-lviii (where MS. Cott, Cleop. B.ii, fol. 216-219b (and Dugdale, II, 304-9) is conveniently summarized.)
- (3) Landboc, I, 299 n. (and above MS. fol. 230d and Dugdale 308.)
- (4) Cal. Papal Reg. I. 541 (quoted by V.C.H. II, p.68.) year 1291.

for the work, funds usually allocated to other uses. Thus the tithes of Sudeley, the heriots and some of the tithes of Winchcombe, and 4/- a year out of the rent of a shop owned by the Convent within the North Gate of Gloucester were made over for this purpose. (1) Without doubt the position would have been eased if the Abbot had been able to secure the fruits of Enstone Church, appropriated in part for this very reason, but little or nothing could be looked for from there while the ex-Rector continued to live and draw his large pension.

Nevertheless, the initiative and ability of the Abbot were neither confined to, nor exhausted by, the above work prosecuted in the face of so many difficulties, for he managed at the same time to increase the amount of help given to those who were dependent upon the Abbey and to raise the standard of living for his brethren within it.

The Constitutions that he drew up for the government of the monastery bear witness to the not inconsiderable assistance regularly rendered to the poor in the district, though it is probable that some of the doles may have been made prior to his time and that he has not included all that was given away in a year. What he did was to ensure

(1) Landbooc, I. 299 n.

that the Obedientaries responsible for such charities had income settled upon them adequate for the due discharge of their obligations. (1)

Twice a year corn was given to the poor, From St. John's day (December 27th, until St. John Baptist's day (June 24th), the Kitchener made his dole of grain, (2) and there was another on each of the first three Thursdays in Lent, made by the Pittancer. (3)

The Almoner distributed a dole of some kind every Monday in the year to the poor, charged on the tithes of Winchcombe Parish Church and on the sheaves from Gretton and Stanley. (4) On St. Martin's day, cloth was given out and, about the same time, flesh provided out of the proceeds from the sale of the Convent's sheepskins and hides. (5)

The Pittancer gave another dole worth 13/4 on St. Brice's day (6) and a similar sum was forthcoming from the Kitchener on the 29th December (St. Thomas of Canterbury). (7) Property in Twining and Sherborne brought in

(1) MS. Cott. Cleop. B. ii, fol. 216-219b. summarized in Landboe, II, lvii-lxi. (All future references to the Constitutions will be those in the Landboe.) X

(2) Landboe, lix.

(3) Landboe, II, lxi.

(4) *ibid.*, lviii.

(5) *ibid.*

(6) *ibid.*, lxi.

(7) *ibid.*, lix.

an unspecified sum for a dole that was made by the latter official on November 22nd. (1)

The constant presence of pilgrims and travellers made demands on the hospitality of the Abbey and, towards the cost of this, the Abbot allocated 6d a year out of the rents of several houses in the town and the entire rent of 'Littlemeadow.' The hostiler was expected to spend not less than a penny a night on fuel for the lower hostelry where the less eminent guests were accommodated.(2) When important people stayed they were, as a rule, set at the Abbot's table, and the charge borne by him. Abbot Walter de Wickewane did his best to mitigate the exceptional Lenten austerity, for he provided the Kitchener with the funds to obtain 20/- worth of fish for the two Tuesdays in the fortnight following Septuagesima. This supplemented their normal fare of eggs and milk during the fast period. (3) Property in Cotes was allocated to the same official to buy fish for other times. (4) It

(1) Landboe, II, lix.

(2) ibid

The Almoner was the official primarily concerned with the distribution of alms. The Pittancer provided all the materials for the pittances or extra dishes which supplemented the normal monastic fare on Feast days. The Kitchener was responsible for all the food from the time it came to the kitchen until it reached the refectory. The hostiler was in charge of the guests' accommodation.

(3) Landboe, II, lix.

(4) ibid.

would seem that at other times flesh did not always appear on the table even when it was permitted to the monks, so the Abbot set aside that meat should be provided on four days in any week between Trinity and Holy Cross at a charge of 2/6 on lands in Throp and Cotes. (1) From 1309 onwards, for two days within three weeks of Advent, Septuagesima and Quinquagesima Sundays the Subcellarer had to provide paste for nine pies (picae), without diminishing the normal rations of bread. (2)

The Corndene property recently acquired by the Abbey was employed by the Abbot as the place to which the monks were sent for the periodic blood-letting. They went up there in groups perhaps three to five times a year between Easter and All Saints, and, after the operation, remained to recuperate for four days. What had once been a routine practice for their health had by this time become the occasion for a break from monastic strict discipline and a period eagerly looked forward to by the younger monks at least. While away, they were allowed two cups of beer daily, and a 4d pittance was added out of lands at Cotes. But all was not playtime, the daily hours had to be said and at least one mass heard for the souls of the Abbot's parents and the dead. It was left to the

(1) Landbec, II, lxx.

(2) ibid, lxi

Kitchener and the Refectorer to see that precautions were taken against recourse by the 'invalid' monks to Taverns and also against their "dropping in" to see their brethren at the Abbey. From 1309, it was permitted that the novices might go with the others to be bled, but they were forbidden to go out for morning play! (1)

Provision was also made by the Abbot for a considerable number of masses. The Kitchener, to whom the rent from the lands assarted at Enstone was paid, had to celebrate thrice every week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, for the Abbot, his parents, and all faithful souls, and, on Saturday, in honour of the Virgin. The Almoner, from 1307 onwards, celebrated mass for the souls of Bishop Godfrey Giffard, William de Cheltenham and others. (2)

The Infirmarer, because he received the rent from the houses left by William de Cheltenham in Gloucester, said a mass on every Wednesday for the soul of William, whose name henceforth was entered in the Missal Commemoration list, in lieu of the chaplain originally required at St. Mary de Crypt Gloucester. (3) After the death of the ex-Rector of Enstone, when the Abbey at last secured its 80 marks, three masses were to mark the two days on which the money was received. (4) A special mass, with two Chanters, was sung

(1) Landboc, II. lx.

(2) *ibid*, lviii.

(3) *ibid*, lix.

(4) *ibid*, lxx.

on the anniversary of William de Cherington who had given £40 towards the Abbey building fund. His memory was further honoured by a repast for the monks which the Pittancer provided out of the 28/8 granted by the Abbot. (1)

A little light is thrown on the working of the domestic finances within the Abbey by these same Constitutions. The Prior, for instance, was permitted "to winter 30 sheep of the Lady Chapel" with the Abbot's, in return for houses in Mill Street. (2) Clearly both monks possessed sheep and regarded them as a sound investment, as indeed they were in the days before Consols and other gilt-edged investments, for wool brought in a very good price. In sheep, the Prior had obviously invested some of the Chapel capital. The transaction shows too, the concern felt by the Abbot that the Prior should not gain at his expense. When each was thus looking to his own there was little chance of their accounts getting muddled!

Mention is made too of the persons responsible for the collection of some of the revenues. The Abbey Bailiff went round the town to collect the rent for the Obedientaries and to execute distrainments. When he was so engaged, a

(1) Landbooc, II. lxi.
 (2) *ibid*, lx.

brother accompanied him, no doubt as a precaution and check. (1) The Sacrist had his own Collecting Clerk as well; for both of whom provision was made in the Abbey. (2) There was also a Brevitor, who had a clerk, and these had the same fare as the obedientaries while they were not out on business. (3)

The duty of keeping the records of the various business transactions was entrusted to the Succentor who was obliged to enter them up in the Landboc. (4)

The death of Abbot Walter de Wickewane, sometime before the end of May 1314, brought to a conclusion a strenuous and very prosperous period of service. Under his wise and able guidance the Abbey had been rescued from debt, numerous and crippling demands met, large and valuable properties acquired, the Abbey enlarged and its inmates' existence rendered more tolerable. To the very last, despite what must have been a fair age, the Abbot showed no signs of diminution in his powers, and his concluding transaction on behalf

(1) Landboc, lx.

(2) *ibid*

(3) *ibid*, lxi.

(4) Quod nulla littera sigillo conventuali, quodcum que contigat, aliquando extra claustrum deferatur; priusquam per Succentorem aliumve per eum in Landboc, seu aliis locis, prout negotium requiret, scribatur, ex toto, quibus diebus iste ordinaciones legantur. Constitutions. Landboc, I. 55-56 n.

of the monastery was entirely characteristic of the man's whole life and his unwavering devotion to the welfare of the Abbey. This was the purchase, for £40, of the custody of the Abbey during vacancies. (1)

For the repose of his own body and soul he did not omit to make provision. It was his desire that he should be laid to rest before the Altar in one of the Chapels that he had built, and that masses should be said there perpetually for the repose of his soul. (2) For the souls of all whom he might have wronged, by any acquisition or otherwise, and of all the faithful, he left the tithes of sheaves and hay near Cockbury and Gretton, presumably to provide for masses. (3) On his own Anniversary, mass was to be said and 30/- expended on a repast for the brethren. (4)

If a tribute is needed to this able and pious man, no better can be found than in his own words, devoid of all unjustified boasting, with which he concluded his Constitutions. "Thus all things touching the House have a prosperous consummation and its state on all sides abides in peace." (5)

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- (1) Landbooc, II, lxi. (This concession excluded the escheator during an inter-regnum.)
 (2) *ibid*, lviii.
 (3) *ibid*, lxi.
 (4) *ibid*, lx.
 (5) *ibid*, lxi

CHAPTER THIRTEEN.

On May 31st, 1314 the news of the death of Walter de Wickewane was brought to the King at Newminster, by Richard de Idbury, the Cellarer, and William de Preston, the Sacrist, to whom Edward II gave licence to the Abbey to elect a successor. (1) The Convent thereupon proceeded to elect Thomas de Sherborne, their Prior, as the next Abbot. Notification of the choice was made to the Bishop of Worcester, and the royal assent given on June 25th, (2) and, on the 10th of the next month, the temporalities were ordered to be restored by the escheator, as the election had been confirmed by the Bishop. At the same time the writ 'de intendendo' was issued to all knights, freemen and tenants of the Abbey. (3)

The appointment of a man who had served as Prior under the late Abbot promised well for a continuation of that prosperous policy that had marked the long reign of Walter de Wickewane so it is not surprising that, when Bishop Walter Maidstone (1315-17) visited the Abbey in 1315, he found nothing to correct. (4)

In fact the Abbey was prospering, for Edith, widow of William the Smith, of Cotes, was giving and selling, on

(1) C. P. R. 1313-7. p. 119

(2) *ibid.*, 126

(3) *ibid.*, 155

(4) *Worc. Epis. Regs.* fol. 24. c. f. V. C. H.

peralities followed on the first of the next month. (1) Within two years, the new Abbot was deeply involved in business affairs. The first of which was another dispute with the Vicar of Winchcombe, William de Preston, who was, it would seem, that same monk who had accompanied Richard de Idbury on his first journey to court in 1314. He had been appointed Vicar, in 1317, (2) by the Abbot and Convent, the Patrons and his bretheren, but that did not prevent him from entering into a dispute before the Bishop, who, in 1318, commissioned the Abbot of Cirencester and Master John de Bloyon, Official, to act for him jointly or separately in the matter. (3) As no more is heard of the matter, whatever was the trouble, it was presumably smoothed out without much difficulty.

On March 16th, in the same year, the Abbey obtained the King's licence to acquire the Manor and advowson of Rowell, near to Winchcombe, from the Benedictine Abbot and Convent of St. Evroult at Ouche, in the diocese of Lisieux, Normandy. (4) In exchange for this, by licence obtained on March 25th, 1319, Winchcombe undertook to pay

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- (1) C.P.R. 1313-7, 481
 (2) T. E. Meurig-Davies, 'A Handbook to Winchcombe Parish Church,' 30.
 (3) Register of Bishop Thomas Cobham, (1317-27) E. H. Pearce, 1930.
 (4) C.P.R. 1317-21, 121 and Landbooc, II. 121-2. The licence cost 40/-. (The Manor had been granted to St. Evroult in 1081. Domesday Survey of Gloucestershire, C. S. Taylor, p. 144) In the Survey Rowell was assessed at 10 hides and valued at £10 p.a. both in the time of King Edward and the year of the Survey, when its population was stated to be 21 males.

ibid. 244-7
 1310-2

an annual rent of £20 to St. Evroult, charged on the Manors of Admington and Dry Marston. (1)

At Enstone, various local landowners held claims and rights to the lands recently assarted by the Convent. These were gradually persuaded to renounce them. John of Weston, Lord of Bloxham, released all his rights on May 31st, 1320; nine days later Walter de Shoyngton proved equally generous and the next day Robert de Trillowe fell into line. (2) On the Sunday after February 2nd, 1321, Henry the Spicer also waived his claims, (3) and by July 7th, 1322 William de Leie, the last such owner, had been persuaded to make concessions. (4) All these remissions appear to have cost the Abbey 100 marks. (5)

From the time when it had been granted by King Edward the Confessor, Winchcombe and St Peter's Gloucester had

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- (1) C. P. R. 1317-21, 322, and Landbooc, II, 122-3. (The licence cost Winchcombe 10 marks.) [It would appear that St. Evroult had more than the £20 a year; as the Manor, but not the patronage of the Church, of Bledington was assigned to them in 1319. Note kindly supplied by the Rev. Stephen Liberty, D.D., Vicar of Bledington.] Dugdale, II, 312, cited by V. C. H. states that £500 was also paid at the time of the transfer.
- (2) Landbooc, II, 208 - 210.
- (3) *ibid.*, 207 -8
- (4) *ibid.*, 211-2
- (5) Dugdale, II, 312, which payment, I conclude, to have been made in consideration of these concessions.

shared the expenses of and profits from a fishery at Framilode on the River Severn. Towards its upkeep, Winchcombe was bound to provide the small timber and Gloucester the large. (1) The Abbot and Convent sought and obtained licence to alienate their share to Gloucester on Oct. 28th, 1320, in exchange for an annual payment by Gloucester of £4, together with quitance of the 20/- that Winchcombe had been paying to St. Peter's for its Yanworth Manor ever since the time that it had been purchased from the Advocate of Bethune. (2) The Abbot of Gloucester gave his formal quitance for the rent on Yanworth on March 25th, 1321 (3) and he released all rights in that Manor in Hilary Term, 1322. (4)

The sale was probably forced upon Winchcombe by reason of the recent heavy costs involved in the purchase of Rowell Manor and living and the Dnstone transactions. Certainly the Abbey was in debt about this time to Gloucester for its share of the upkeep of the fishery. However these debts were all paid off and a receipt obtained from the Abbot of Gloucester on November 30th, 1323 (5) and the

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- (1) Hist. et Cart. Mon. S. Petri. Glos. Vol. III. p. 276, and Landboc, I, 226.
 (2) C. P. R. 1319-21, 516, and Landboc, II, 116.
 (3) Landboc, II, 317, and 354-5.
 (4) *ibid*, 330
 (5) Landboc, I. 331-2

whole matter was wound up by a general quitclaim from Gloucester, dated December 1st, 1323. (1)

In the midst of these exchanges of property, the Abbey was called upon to entertain its Patron, the King, when he came there on Dec. 17th, 1321; having journeyed from Cirencester where he had spent the previous two days. However, his stay was not protracted, as he reached Worcester by January 2nd. (2) King Edward III, shortly after his accession, stayed in Winchcombe from December 17th to the 18th, 1327. (3)

The Abbot and Convent saw even less of their Diocesan than their King, for Thomas de Cobham does not appear to have visited the House at all during his episcopate, 1317-27; (4) but, on June 5th, 1322, Robert le Petit, Bishop of Clonfert, came to the Abbey in his stead (5) and ordained to various Orders 102 candidates. (6) Of these, 59 received the Sub-diaconate, 20 the Diaconate, and 23 the Priesthood. (7) Among them were three of the monks from the Abbey: Nicholas de Eynesham made Sub-deacon and

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- (1) Landbooc, II. 328
 (2) C. P. R. 1321-4. 44.
 (3) C. P. R. 1327-30, 104-5.
 (4) THOMAS DE COBHAM, 'Itinerary' 254-5, E. H. Pearce. S.P. C. K.
 (5) REGISTER OF BISHOP THOMAS DE COBHAM, 125. E. H. Pearce, Worcestershire Historical Society, 1930.
 (6) THOMAS DE COBHAM, 74.
 (7) ibid, Appendix I. 253

Richard and Ankerus de Tewkesbury made Priests. (1)

Despite his deposition from Clonfert, Robert le Petit came again to the Abbey two years later and held another Ordination. (2)

The next Bishop of Worcester, Adam de Orleton, 1327-33, proved to be far more concerned in the state of the Abbey - probably to the Abbot's dismay - for he framed fresh Ordinances and made corrections on July 12th, 1329 after his thorough visitation. (3)

He demanded stricter conduct in the matter of the daily and nightly offices, and ordered every priest-monk to say Mass daily at which the younger monks were to take their proper part.

He complained that there was far too much talking going on, especially in Church, Cloister, Refectory and Dormitory; some of it with women, religious and otherwise. It should be permitted only when necessary, and then should be brief and in the proper place and at the right time. The hours of silence were to be strictly observed, under pain of the offender's loss of his allow-

(1)

REGISTER OF BISHOP THOMAS DE COBHAM, 126-7.
Bishop Pearce (THOMAS DE COBHAM, 77) traces 156 of the ordinands to their monasteries during this episcopate. Eleven came from Winchcombe. When this number is compared with those from other Houses some light is thrown on the relative strengths of the respective communities. There were from Tewkesbury and Pershore 10 each; Gloucester, St. Peter's, 9; Hayles 6; Great Malvern 5; and Little Malvern 2.
Sede Vacante, 261
Worc. Epis. Regis. Orleton, fol. 31d.

(2)
(3)

ances.

The monks were bidden to stay in the Abbey and spend their time in meditation, study, reading, writing and in repeating their offices, but not to wander about the town and countryside alone. The younger brethren were forbidden to go out at all. The habit of many in sitting about and drinking after dinner and supper was especially condemned.

All needless extravagance was to be corrected and, instead of the monks throwing away the fragments or portions of the Refectory or Infirmary fare, or giving it to favoured servants of the House, the bits were to be collected for the Almoner to dole out to the poor. Offences in this respect, without the Abbot's leave, entailed forfeiture of a sum equivalent to the amount lost to the Almoner, because "such an one is a Judas, the traitor, a thief tampering with the things put in the bag."

Corndene, so lately appointed as a pleasant place for the monks to spend their time after bleeding, was put out of bounds for that purpose. It would appear that laxity in the discipline had increased; so a more suitable place had to be found, where food and comforts in moderation might be provided without risk of abuse.

Turning to particular officers; the Bishop enjoined the Abbot to govern with supreme wisdom, by the Rule; and,

to ensure that the monastic finances were kept in good order, he ordered that all the obedientiaries responsible for moneys should render accounts before the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Two Treasurers, each with a key, were to be appointed to administer the common fund for the Convent. The obedientiaries were, at the will of the Chapter, to make contributions as necessary. Apparently the Abbot had secured to his own use some of the property that belonged to the brethren for he was ordered to restore rents alleged to have been taken from them. Another cause of complaint appears to have been that the Abbot indulged in the private sale of wood, wool, sheep, lambs, and even corrodies without the Convent's consent. This had to cease, and, to regulate such matters, the common seal was to be held in safe keeping (1) and only used in the presence of the Chapter which was to settle all business by a majority vote. Trustworthy bailiffs were to be appointed to the Manors, and these and the monks concerned were to render accounts by tally, with schedule or indenture attached. These faithful obedientiaries were not to be lightly removed by the Abbot without cause. The rules for the appointment of the Prior and Cellarer were

(1) It was not unknown for more than one seal to be in use in an Abbey, a patent opportunity for fraud. c.f. CHRONICLE of JOCELIN of BRACKELOND, p. 60. Chatto and Windus, 1931.

to be strictly observed. Thus the Abbot, who appears to have extended his domination beyond justifiable limits, was prevented from discharging efficient officers in favour of those more likely to prove compliant to his schemes and extortions. Moreover, the Abbot was no longer to appropriate to his own use the food of the Infirmary.

In the matter of the servants of the Abbey, drastic reductions were ordered, superfluous men being sent away; and, to those who remained, no suspicious gifts of clothes etc. were to be made, but their wages and allowances paid punctually. Cuts were to be made in the matter of the monastic stables. None but the esquires might have horses, saving the power of the Abbot to grant one to a deserving inferior for business.

To ensure that these Ordinances were obeyed the Bishop, at the request of the Abbot and Convent, made some fresh appointments but those officials did not work well with the Abbot, so, shortly after December 7th, 1329 the Abbot removed them and appointed others in whom he had more confidence, pleading that his privileges had been infringed. (1)

The Abbot had some suggestions to make, of these the Bishop approved and they were incorporated in the

(1) Werc. Epis. Regis, Orlton, fol. 11. c.f. V.C.H. p.69

Ordinances. These included provision for a solemn celebration of Mass on Corpus Christi and for the mention of the Abbot's name in the mass and its insertion in the Missals. Ten marks were allocated for a commemoration on St. Mary Magdalene's day. On each anniversary of his death, five marks were to be spent:- 3 for a refectio and two for the poor and commemorations of the souls of himself, Bishop Adam, Abbot Walter, Walter the Mason and all the faithful. The requisite funds were set aside for this during the Abbot's lifetime.

The Abbot also agreed with the Bishop that the proceeds from Enstone Church should help the Convent in urgent necessity and that any repugnant or litigant monk should forfeit his share from that source. The Pittancer, who held the Church at Enstone under the Abbot, should make the following quarterly payments:- 10 marks to the Kitchener; 60/- to the Sacrist on St. Kenelm's day; 6/8 to the Vicar (of Enstone); 6/8 to the Archdeacon of Oxford for sequestration (sequestri commode.) (1) The Pittancer was liable for the repairs to Enstone Church, but if the proceeds from the income exceeded the anticipated 80 marks, the surplus was to go towards the Convent

(1) Enstone was in the diocese of Lincoln and the Archdeaconry of Oxford.

expenses; but when the income from there fell below that sum, it was to be made up to the Pittancer out of monastic money, without demur. The obligations of the Abbey to the poor of Enstone were recognised by the grant of 9. qrs. of corn. (1)

A list of those servants employed by the Convent at about this time makes imposing reading. There were at least 28 men and boys on the pay roll and their total remuneration amounted to £5 5. 8. a year. This does not include the Abbot's own staff which numbered over 15, and cost their employer £6 3. 8; but several of these would appear to have served the Convent as well, although listed with the Abbot's men, e.g. the Abbey Smith and the Carpenter. Moreover, the Abbot appears to have paid higher wages than did the monks, for the Abbey Cook received but 4/- a year while the Abbot's Cook was paid 6/8. (2)

(1) A summary of these ordinances is printed in Landbooc, II, lxxii-lxxiv.

(2) Landbooc, I, 363-366

The list of the Abbey Servants is as follows:-
 Provider for the Cellarer, 6/8; The Porter, 5/-;
 The Underporter, at the Abbot's will, because the Porter ought to pay him, 3/-; Master Serjeant of the Church, 4/-; Subserjeant of the Sacristry, 3/-; Refectory Serjeant, 3/-; Master Serjeant of the Infirmary, 4/-; Under-Serjeant 3/-; Convent Cook, 4/-; Buyer for the kitchen, 4/-; The General Serjeant, 3/-; Convent Platterer, 3/-; Abbot's Platterer, 2/-; Guest Hall Serjeant, 4/-; The Under-Serjeant, at the Abbot's will because the Serjeant ought to pay him, 3/-; Stabler, 3/-; Master Brewer, 4/-; Two Underserjeants, 6/-; Master Baker, 4/- extras, for bolters, 3/6 and 2 white fleeces at shearing time; Two Underserjeants, 6/-; Winnower, 3/6; Every wood-carrier, 3/-; every carter, 3/-; Kit-
 (list continued at foot of next page.)

Certain workers and craftsmen are not mentioned in the list although their services must have been constantly engaged, e.g. masons, one of whom was Walter, in the Abbey service for over thirty years.

The annual pay roll was, therefore, considerably higher than the above total would lead us to believe and must have imposed a heavy burden on the monastic resources.

During this reign of twenty-four years little substantial extra income was derived from grants made to the monks. If the Landboc records are complete, pious offerings showed signs of a severe slump.

Shortly after 1317, William Aderwyne made over his fulling mill at Cotes and his lands around the town, in all about 6½ acres, to the Convent 'in puram et perpetuam

chen door Porter, 2/-; Swineherd, 3/-; Master Tanner, 5/-; Under Tanner, 3/-; Carpenter who finds the tubs, 3/-; 'Parlour' Serjeant, 2/-.

The Abbot's Servants:- Butler, 13/4, Sumpter, 6/8; Esquire, 10/-; Messenger, 6/8; Padgroom, 6/8; Chaplain's groom, 6/8; Cook 6/8; Cellarer's Esquire, 6/8; Cellarer's groom, 6/8; Underbutler? (probably paid by the Butler); Farrier, 10/-; Abbey Smith, 13/4; Smith's boy, 3/-; Abbot's Miller, 5/-; Carpenter, 13/4; Every Manor Serjeant, 10/-.

"The Chamberlain ought to pay his own serjeants."

Landboc, I, 366.

elemosinam.' (1) Edith, widow of William the Smith of Cotes, whose benefactions during the last Abbot's short reign have been noted, was, in 1317, still well inclined towards the Convent. She granted an acre and a meadow on May 3rd, and, on July 25th, added eleven butts and some land on Patcombe Way, all in frankalmoigne. (2) Three years later, on the first Sunday in Lent, John de Spoenley gave a tenement opposite the Monastery Gateway (3) and Thomas de Teynton quitclaimed his rights in the property in 1333. (4)

On Easter Eve, 1325, John de Sudeley mortgaged 40 acres of his meadowland between Foddington and Wormington to the Abbot for £136, undertaking that if the ground was not redeemed in his lifetime it should become the Abbot's absolutely. In the meanwhile the interest was fixed at 6 marks (5) This reasonable rate appears to have been more than he was able to raise, so the land passed to the Convent 'in perpetuum elemosinam' as soon as the royal licence was obtained on October 7th, 1329. (6)

Apart from the above grants and acquisitions, very little came in for the specific purpose of maintaining

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- (1) Landboe, II. 455
 (2) ibid, 476-8
 (3) ibid, 393-4
 (4) ibid, 410
 (5) ibid, 284-6
 (6) ibid, 120 and G. P. R. 1327-30, p. 450

the Abbey services. The solitary gift for the provision of lights in the Lady Chapel was that made by Walter, son of the Miller of Tewkesbury, on July 17th, 1321. He gave the Convent a messuage in Bete Street, Wincheombe. (1)

Very little other business was transacted. Five agreements with tenants are recorded between 1317 and 1328. (2) It is possible that there may have been some slackness at this time in keeping the accounts and records, or silence considered more prudent, as the above dealings are certainly less than might have been expected in so lengthy a reign. Nevertheless, though the acquisitions were down in number and value there was no diminution in the demands made on the Abbey during this period. The heavy exactions of the Papacy are unrecorded by the Wincheombe monks, but there is evidence in plenty for the claims made upon the Abbey by King and Bishop. On January 26th, 1332 the King requested assistance from the Abbot and Convent to enable him to meet the costs of the marriage of his sister to the Count of Guilders. This was an unusual appeal and, if met, was not to create a precedent. But the King took no chances, for a clerk came with the request and had his instructions to put the Abbot's reply into writing. (3)

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- (1) Landbooc, II, 468-9
 (2) *ibid*, 283, 349 - 358, 360
 (3) Cal. G. R. 1330-3. 587

It would appear, however, that payment was anything but prompt, since it was not until Feb. 12th, 1333 that the King was able to record a promise from Winchcombe of 20 marks. (1)

For his wars, Edward III had demanded and received 40 days' service of two knights, in the persons of John de Sourdeval, Piers de Sourdeval, Thomas de Holdernesse and William de Whytbyk. (2) He levied in great urgency, a Tenth for his campaign in Scotland, on November 11th, 1334 (3) and, on January 16th, 1339 followed it up with a demand for a levy on wool. (4)

The usual, or perhaps more than usual demands were made for pensions for clerks and others from the Abbey. The first came on July 17th, 1316, because of the new creation of an Abbot. This was for Richard of Worcester, clerk, and he was to be provided with a benefice. (5) Until he was satisfied the Abbey had to go on paying him 5 marks a year. (6)

On April 22nd, 1317 William Deveros was sent to the Abbey by the King, 'to receive the necessities of life,' (7)

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- (1) Cal. C. R. 1330-7, 91, and C. P. R. 1330-4, 422, dated June 16th, 1333. (Evesham paid 40 marks & St. Edmunds, 12.)
- (2) Landboc, II, 229
- (3) Cal. C. R. 1333 - 7. 356.
- (4) ibid, 1337-9. 634
- (5) ibid, 1313-8. 424, & Landboc, I. 297.
- (6) Landboc, I. 297-8
- (7) Cal. C. R. 1313-8, 462

and two years later, on August 12th, William de Chanter had authority to present himself for similar sustenance.(1)

But these three pensioners were as nothing compared with the next royal request. This was that the Abbey should make provision for a woman, Maude de Sydenham, granting to her the daily allowance of a monk, a suitable robe yearly and a house outside the Abbey Gate. The Abbot and Convent displayed marked reluctance and hesitation in complying with the novel demand, for, while they had themselves sold corrodies to women before this, it was the first time that the King had sent a woman to them. With their silence in the matter Edward III grew impatient and, on November 28th, 1320 sent another demand to which he expected an answer bearing the Convent seal. (2) Under this compulsion the Abbey made a substantial grant, which they ante-dated to February 3rd, 1320; probably to excuse their delay. Maude was no small drinker. She demanded her two gallons of beer a day. Her appetite was of a similar order:- two full dishes of food from the Abbot's cellar as well as two more of Convent pottage. To illuminate her house in Vinyard Street, she drew 12 lbs of Paris candles; and kept warm with two seams of firewood

(1) Cal. C. R. 1318-23, 208

(2) *ibid*, 344

delivered every week. Her bedding litter was renewed thrice a year, and her annual robe and pension cost the monks three marks. Altogether, Maude must have been a heavy drain on the Abbey resources. (1) The death of one of the King's pensioners did not bring any lasting relief to the monks, as no sooner had such an one gone hence than the King presented another in his stead. When John de Martynghden died, it was not long before John Goez was sent to replace him. He stayed with the monks from December 20th, 1327 until his death c. 1340, (2) but his maintenance was far less burdensome to the Abbey than Maude's. For one thing, his thirst was much less, a mere gallon and a half of beer a day was enough for him. Nor did he eat as much, for he made 1½ full dishes from the Abbot's kitchen suffice. Straw for his bed was changed but twice in the year, "if needful;" and his annual suit was to cost but half a mark. (3) After his death, the King sent the Convent another guest on March 4th, 1340. This was Thomas de Holford, king's yeoman, who had earned his pension for good service 'on either side of the sea.' (4) Many of these guests lived too long for the monks' pockets. There was John de Yatenden

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- (1) Landbec, I. 358-9
 (2) Gal. C. R. 1327-30, 241
 (3) Landbec, F. 358
 (4) Gal. C. R. 1339 -41, 455

still with them in 1320, after a sojourn in Wincheombe of over seventeen years, during which he had enjoyed ample accommodation for himself and groom. On June 24th, 1320 the Abbot and Convent revised his agreement with them and managed to cut it down somewhat; the groom and horse were sent away, but a mark a year had to be conceded to him. (1) It may well be that he was getting past hersemanship and needed 'little extras' in his old age.

The monks' burdens evoked little sympathy from the Bishops. Rather did the Diocesans add to them, for from time to time the Abbey was expected to find livings for clerks sent by them. Bishop Thomas de Cobham, for example, having to make provision for poor clerks, bethought himself of the Abbey and its patronage; so he sent a request, on March 14th, 1318 for a benefice for Walter Weston of Stratford, and commissioned the Abbot of Evesham to see that something was done in the matter. (2) Three years later, on May 25th, he commissioned the Abbot of Cirencester to see that Winchcombe provided William, the son of William de Stown, with a living. (3) It was an easy and convenient way of getting deserving clerics advanced, but it bore hardly upon the Abbey with its limited

(1) Landbooc, I. 339-40. For the original grant see above, p. 126.

(2) Register of Bishop Thomas de Cobham, p. 272.

(3) *ibid.*

patronage, so hard pressed by the frequent royal demands of a similar nature.

With all these outgoings the Abbot and Convent must have been embarrassed on many occasions, though clear evidence of financial distress is apparent only twice during the reign. To Robert Dastyn of Dumbleton, £60 was owing for corn supplied to the Abbey; but he was not harsh in pressing for settlement and was content with a bond drawn up on August 29th, 1321 by which the monks undertook to pay him £10 a year for six years. (1) Another bond was made with Robert Pope, Burgess of Gloucester, on October 6th, 1328 promising to settle for the £48. 4. 0 worth of cloth received from him in the previous year and for that sent in the year of the bond, valued at £27. 16s. 0d. (2) In an effort to make both ends meet the Abbot and Convent added to the already numerous guests by selling more corrodies and making grants. Most of these were settled for unspecified amounts and, as will be seen, some of them for 'a certain sum.' Possibly a few of these were granted by the Abbot alone and he wished to keep the business details from his brethren. There were complaints from the Bishop (Adam de Orleton) in his Ordinances of 1329

(1) Landbooc, I, 336-7

(2) *ibid.*, I, 3363

about this private sale of corrodies. After his visitation the traffic almost ceased and only one more was granted; but before it, some twenty-two corrodies and grants had been entered into by the Abbot and Convent, either singly or jointly.

Some of the guests had paid well for what they received. In 1316, John de Somery, Rector of Bishampton, bought himself good accommodation and the services and maintenance of a groom and horse, but the price is not disclosed. (1) When the Abbey was in urgent need he revised the grant and paid down 140 more marks on July 16th, 1320 for much more elaborate fare, fraternity and community. (2)

On February 24th, 1317 William Dousing, their woodward at Couridge, Twining and Stanton, ensured his maintenance, when disabled, by paying £20 and promising half of his goods when he died. The monks took care to see that they were at liberty to check his property from time to time, to make sure that he was not making away with their expected share, and also insisted that the accommodation might be withheld until they were fully assured that his incapacity was genuine! (3)

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- (1) Landboe, 320-3
 (2) ibid, 333-6
 (3) Landboe, I. 277-9

On August 10th, 1317 that same William Dastyn, with whom the Convent later entered into a bond, managed to persuade the Abbot to grant a corrody to Margery of Alderton, in consideration of 140 marks. It was a good price, but she expected much. Not only did she want her two gallons of beer, but also 6 pigs worth 3/- each for her larder, or two cows or oxen instead, every year. At Martinmas, she looked for 12 cheeses; on Ash Wednesday, 120 stockfish or 10/-, and 1,000 herrings or 8/-. Should her death occur within five years, then the Abbey's liability was continued for a year in Masses for the repose of her soul.(1)

For faithful service, Thomas Dogge of Hawling had a manorial servant's allowance and the promise of maintenance in his old age, on October 28th, 1321. (2) At that time no price was mentioned in the Abbot's grant, but, on August 9th in the next year, he released all his inheritance in Hawling to the Convent, (3) a transfer that was perhaps foreseen from the first.

On the Thursday after the Epiphany 1322, Robert Bernard of Dumbleton, secured a corrody 'for a certain sum of money' and he was given a chamber under the 'Royal Chamber', with "free access and egress, altogether respectable."

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- (1) Landboc, I. 329-30
 (2) ibid, 341-2
 (3) Landboc, II. 360-1
 (4) Landboc, I. 343-4

For half his goods at death, the Convent granted John of Radford Hall, on June 24th, 1323 a supply of corn and 2 acres of standing wheat, while well or infirm. (1)

The Abbot made Richard of Snowhill a grant which included plenty of food and a lodging, with the option of building his own chamber with Abbey timber. This, as the agreement of August 15th, 1324 shows, was for foreign and home service rendered and also because the Abbot was 'mindful of a sum of money' paid by him. (2)

Another of those who managed to obtain present succour for future payments was John, the Chaplain of Charlton Abbots. On October 18th, 1325 he bargained half of his property, on his death, for a corrody, but in the meanwhile he had to help in the Parish and attend to the Convent's affairs in their courts. (3)

In addition to the clerks sent by others for benefices from the Abbey, the Convent had to maintain William de Besco until they found him a benefice. Even then he expected to lodge at the monks' expense - if his living was near enough to allow him to go to and fro; but, if

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 168-9
 (2) ibid, 352-4
 (3) ibid, 356-7

too far distant to allow of this, the lodging and corrody had to be surrendered. (1)

The only corrody to be granted after the Bishop's Ordinance forbidding the traffic in such matters was that granted to John of Stratford on June 29th, 1332. The Convent allowed him generous fare and board (2), but took care to make him swear to surrender it on obtaining a benefice of greater worth. Until then, by an oath sworn before the Abbot, Prior, Precentor and Seniors in Chapter, he undertook to be "faithful, profitable, patriotic, and a safeguard to the Convent." (3)

The rest of the corrodies and grants were all made in consideration of unspecified sums, or for services expected or rendered. (4) Unless the sums paid were on a generous scale, or the services performed profitable to the Abbey, it is difficult to see how the Abbot and Convent could have benefited from their guests. It is true that ready money was obtained from some; but others showed a return only after their deaths, and, until then, they, as well as those who had paid ready money were living among the monks and the Abbey servants; in all, a

(1) Landbooc, I. 339 (March 13th, 1320)

(2) *ibid.*, 357

(3) *ibid.*, 359

(4) See Landbooc, I. 279, 333, 289, 338, 311, 354, given here in order of time, and date from 1317-1322.

numerous body, perhaps at any one time never numbering less than twelve. Such a body of secular people represented, in all probability, a half or a quarter of the Abbey's population, excluding the servants; - too great a proportion in a community dedicated to praise and prayer. The constant presence of so many persons, recently come in from the outer world, must often have given rise to conflicts, not only with the monks and their manner of life and Rule, but among themselves, and thus presented distractions and difficulties that must have far outweighed any pecuniary benefits derived from their payments.

Early in 1340, Richard de Idbury resigned, worn out by age and cares. He received a liberal provision from the Convent and was given a chamber in the Infirmary. (1)

Although he had served under Abbot Walter de Wickewane, he failed entirely to rule with the same degree of wisdom and skill. Some, perhaps even much, business was done apart from the knowledge and consent of his bretheren and in defiance of the Rule. Moreover, by the seizure of Convent property for his own use and profit he provoked discord and brought upon himself the Bishop's displeasure.

(1) Worcester. Epis. Reg. Bishop Wulstan Bransford, fol. 14, 34d, 38

This disgrace was made worse by the fact that Richard de Idbury had misused the trust and power with which the great qualities of Walter de Wickwane had invested the office of Abbot, towering as he had done above his fellows in ability and zeal and yet retaining their regard and affection.

When it came to bargaining with outside bodies, Richard de Idbury showed no great skill. His desire to obtain Rowell Manor and advowson was realized at far too high a price; that is, if he parted with £500 and Bledington Manor, as seems most probable.

For the comforts and well being of his monks he showed no concern, nor did he engage in building around the Abbey and Church. In falling thus far short of Walter de Wickwane's accomplishments in these respects it is possible, perhaps not unjustly, to see signs, not only of indifference concerning, but even of displeasure or worse with his monks.

If Walter de Wickwane's rule marked the high water limit of monastic prosperity, Richard de Idbury's unmistakably displayed the turning of the tide.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN.

I.

The decline in the affairs of the Abbey noted in the last Chapter became more marked during the reign of the next Abbot. For this the Prior and Convent were, in part, responsible because, when they had the opportunity to elect a fit man to rule, they chose instead an unworthy Abbot, and in such an unfitting and irregular manner that the Bishop was compelled to quash their election.

The licence to elect was granted by the King, on March 27th, 1340; as soon as William of Gloucester and William de Elmley, monks of Wincheombe, brought news to him of the cession of Abbot Richard de Idbury. (1) To their choice of William de Sherborne the royal assent was given on April 10th (2). However, there was trouble among the monks concerning the manner of the election, for Walter of Tewkesbury and Robert of Alderton, two of the brethren, and others bore witness to William de Boys, Rector of Twining and Examiner of the Court of Canterbury, (3) that it had been merely a pretended election, cut short by a decree of the Prior and others.

A lengthy altercation ensued when the Abbot-elect,

(1) C. P. R. 1338-40, 441.

(2) *ibid.*, 452.

(3) William de Boys, probably was identical with William de Bosco - clerk sent for benefice in the previous Abbot's reign.

Prior and Convent appeared before the Bishop's Commissary. The Bishop thereupon declared that he, with the counsel of legal assessors, found the election to be contrary to the form of compromise - uncanonical.

It was then declared to be null and void; and, with the consent of the Chapter, he suspended that body's power to elect. The Bishop announced from Alvechurch, on April 26th that he had provided the same William de Sherborne to the Abbacy, as "being worthy for his probity, ability and knowledge." (1)

Two days later, the King issued the mandate for the restitution of the temporalities to the Abbot, "who had been appointed by the Bishop of Worcester after he had, for lawful cause, quashed the election previously made of the said William in the Conventual Church, to which election the royal assent had been given, and who had done fealty to the King." (2) The Abbot, at last certain of his position, was installed by John de la Lowe, the Archdeacon, on the Bishop's authority, given from Bredon on May 13th. (3)

In the midst of this internal turmoil a minor dispute was being waged between the Abbots of Winchcombe and

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- (1) Worc. Epis. Registers, Bransford, fol. 35..
 (2) C. P. R. 1338-40, 477
 (3) Register, Bransford, fol. 35

Hayles over the lambs of the latter which had sought pasture in the Parish Church lands at Winchcombe. Under the seal of the Arch-deacon of Gloucester, the Abbot of Hayles agreed to pay 3/7½ damages, 'for that once.' (1)

Perhaps because the Convent was still unsettled after the election, the Abbot failed to attend the Chapter of the Order held at Northampton on September 11th-15th, 1340. His excuse was not accepted and he was pronounced contumacious. (2) Nevertheless, he found that he had been appointed to visit the Abbey of Chester; the Abbot of that house having been appointed Visitor for the monasteries in the dioceses of Coventry and Lichfield. (3) The Abbot, unlike some of the others appointed to similar functions, had performed this duty by the time that the next Chapter was held at Oxford on Sept. 9th-11th, 1343. (4) But he does not appear to have attended that meeting; instead, he must have sent a prector of sufficient standing. (5) Another duty was thrust on William of Sherborne for, on April 20th, 1340, while the election was still in dispute, he was appointed by the King to be one of the Collectors of the 9th Tax on lambs, fleeces and sheaves. (6)

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- (1) Landboe, II, 297
 (2) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. II. 18
 (3) *ibid.*, 16.
 (4) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. II. 21
 (5) *ibid.*, 19
 (6) C. P. R. 1338-40; 560

The business proceeded too slowly for the King, who was at war in France, and Edward III complained, on March 15th, 1341 that "by default of sending the proceeds of the same to him beyond the seas he had been compelled to make a truce with those of France." (1)

On September 29th, 1342 John Maltman of Wincheombe gave an acre of land to the Abbey Sacrist.(2) Such grants are rarely recorded at this time; due, in part, to a decided falling off in support given to the monks, and also through the efforts of the Convent to avoid payment of the fines for grants to receive property in mortmain. That some property had been received from time to time, and not always entered in the Landboc, is clear from the list of benefactions and grants made when the Abbot and Convent were granted pardon for having received houses from 14 different persons in Wincheombe and one each in Gretton, Cotes and Frampton; well over 40 acres of land and 9/- in rents in the above places on June 27th, 1344 at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury.(3)

(1) C. P. R. 1340-43. 153

(2) Landboc, II. 290-1

(3) C. P. R. 1343-5, 321 ff. (Several of the properties mentioned in the Pardon have already received notice above, but most have been omitted from the Landboc records.)

The two next years were marked by considerable lawlessness in the locality. Both Hayles and Winchcombe Abbeys suffered very considerably from the armed bands that were led by persons of some standing.

In 1345, Sir William Dastyn and others broke into the close and houses of the Cistercians of Hayles at Wormington, where they assaulted the servants and drove off horses, oxen, sheep and swine to the value of more than 100 marks. (1)

Winchcombe was more unfortunate in 1346, as an armed band of over twenty men, all named, and including four, Hugh de Beycyn, Thomas Symcykyns, John de Tredington and John Telemon, described as 'chaplains,' came quite openly and broke into the Abbey. There they assaulted monks as well as monastic servants and carried away a large quantity of the goods. Moreover, this attack was no mere raid, as the criminals established a thorough blockade of the Abbey, preventing both the conveyance of food to the monks and the performance of all acts of worship and charity.

The complaints of the Abbot resulted in a Commission of Oyer and Terminer being appointed on July 6th, 1346 (2), and, fourteen days later, there was a warrant out for the

(1) 'Pax' No. 226. Spring 1943. p. 33. Published by the O. S. B. at Prinknash Abbey, Stroud.

(2) C. P. R. 1345-8. 177.

arrest of Hugh de Beycyn and his confederates who were to be conveyed to the Tower of London. (1)

The Law, however, was not always on the side of the Abbey for, on March 8th, 1347 the Abbot's servant, John Godale and the cook, William, were 'wanted' for the crime of breaking into the Park at Hanley and into the Malvern Chase where they engaged in fishing and stealing deer.(2) The spirit of unlawful adventure had lingered on within the Abbey walls after the departure of the thieves and had driven these two men of the monastery some fourteen to eighteen miles in search of forbidden food. There was lacking either a firm hand within the Abbey or sufficient sustenance for the servants.

Nor were the servants the only persons to be abroad without the consent of their superiors. Simon de Lega, monk of the Abbey, had discarded the cowl and the restraints of religion about this time. Possibly the attentions of the four chaplains and their friends had alarmed him, or he too may have been short of food. However, the 'world' did not prove up to his expectations and he desired to be reconciled. He sought and obtained pardon from Pope Clement VI, who, in 1350, requested the Bishop of Worces-

(1) C. P. R. 1345-8, 182

(2) *ibid.*, 307

ter and Simon de Sudbiria, Papal chaplain and Canon of Lincoln, to carry out the ordinance "touching apostates." (1) If he was accepted at the Abbey, he must either have left again within a short time, as he is not among those named two years later, or he may have died in the Black Death.

In 1348, a terrible outbreak of bubonic plague, called the Black Death, spread from the ports of Bristol and Weymouth and raged throughout the country. For two years people died in great numbers, possibly one third of the population being wiped out. Probably Winchcombe Abbey was more fortunate than many others in escaping lightly, as there are no references to deaths among the monks at this time. At least three of the community, excluding the Abbot, whose names are mentioned at the commencement of the reign were alive when William de Sherborne resigned in 1352. On the other hand, the Abbot and Convent appear to have numbered but twenty in all, a rather smaller number than might have been expected, unless they were not all present in Chapter (Sept. 18th, 1352).

The long continuance of the visitation, which as a

(1) Cal. Papal Registers, Papal Letters, Vol. III, 392

rule took six or nine months to work out its virulence in any particular spot, seems to have demoralized society. More robberies took place, and several monasteries suffered loss. Winchcombe Abbey lost heavily when John de Val of Broughton broke into the Abbot's close at Admington and carried away goods, assaulted the servants and took them off as prisoners to Broughton. Against him the Abbot secured, at a charge of 29/-, a commission of Oyer and Terminer on April 10th, 1350. (1) By July 3rd, it would appear that the Abbot had secured some kind of judgement against him for damages, as John de Val was owing the Abbot £50 then, and the Bishop of Worcester a similar sum. (2) But that did not end the gentleman's troubles, for only after he had surrendered to the Marshalsea Prison on March 2nd, 1351 did he obtain pardon of outlawry for not appearing before the Justices of Oyer and Terminer. (3)

By this time the Abbot himself was in serious trouble. Reports of dilapidations and alienation of property at the Abbey were reaching the Bishop of Worcester. He entrust-

(1). C. P. R. 1348-50, 528.

(2) *ibid.*, 1349-56, 235

(3) C. P. R. 1350-4. 94

ed the Arch-deacon of Worcester, on June 4th, 1351, with the task of making an enquiry and visitation. (1)

Matters were carried a stage further when certain of the monks made their way to the Bishop in London and laid grave charges against the Abbot. (2) Thereupon the Bishop commissioned the Prior of Worcester to investigate the causes of the great dissension that had arisen between the Abbot and the Convent, (July 20th, 1352.) (3). The report must have been adverse, for the Abbot received a letter, dated from London, August 26th, 1352, as follows:- "To his beloved Son, Abbot of Winchcombe, health, peace, and blessing. Certain, your confraters, are come to us in London, gravely complaining of you; and, to our grief, relating that evil report is busy against you, not only among the populace, but amongst nobles and prelates, who are most urgent with us, according to the duty of our office, not to withhold a remedy. And for that we are anxious for the protection of your honour, and leth, by any steps (God knoweth) to put you to shame, it would greatly please us, seeing how things stand, if you can come to us in person, to defend your-

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- (1) Worc. Epis. Regs. Thoresby, fol. 28d.
 (2) *ibid*, fol. 52
 (3) *ibid*, fol. 51

self, if you can, in private and out of court, in order to furnish us with matter for your defence; or, we purpose, in person, to come down to you to see whether the outcry hath any ground of truth; or to commission others with full powers of ending a business to which we can no longer shut our eyes or pass by. If you will come to London, be here before the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, for beyond this, arrangements in this matter we shall in no wise defer. And we enjoin you in no wise to molest your confraters, because of their coming to us as aforesaid, nor other opponents on account of the premisses."(1)

To this invitation the Abbot does not appear to have responded; so the Bishop gave notice on Sept. 7th of his intention to visit the Abbey personally on the Thursday after the Exaltation of the Cross, and summoned all to appear and to give information upon the differences and excesses. (2)

On September 18th, 1352 the Bishop came to the Abbey, accompanied by Henry de Newbold, Official of Worcester; William de Honyton, Advocate of the Court of Canterbury;

(1) Worc. Epis. Regs. Thoresby, fol. 52, and Landboe II, xxiv -xxv.
 (2) ibid.

John de Wakeham, of Lincoln Diocese, and others. In their presence the Abbot and nineteen of his brethren assembled, and all took the oath, touching the Holy Scriptures. The Abbot read from a schedule concerning his case and offered his resignation. This way out of the crisis satisfied the Bishop, and the resignation was accepted as the late dissensions threatened to disperse the monks and ruin the monastery. (1)

There remained still, however, the problem of providing suitably for the ex-Abbot and of doing so in a manner that would leave the minimum chance of further difficulties arising out of his presence. The solution might have been to send him elsewhere for the rest of his days, but very few monasteries cared to receive a man after he had been turned out of his own community, particularly one who had held office and might prove too inconveniently wise for the peace of Abbot and monks.

The Bishop's solution was at once wise and compassionate, - fully in keeping with the caution, kindness and firmness shown in his letter to William de Sherborne. Having regard to the ex-Abbot's humility and wisdom displayed by his resignation, he ordained, on the next day, that he

(1) fol. 52-4. *Monks Epis. Regs.* Thoresby.
 (Three monks were present whose names have been noted above, viz.: William de Gloucester, William de Elmley, and Walter de Tewkesbury. William de Newynton was Prior.)

should have a place of honour in Choir and Chapter next to the ruling Abbot whenever he visited the Abbey and stayed in his allotted chamber for two or three days at Convent charge. If he remained beyond that time, he was to provide for his own maintenance. His expenses were to be borne by the grant to him of the profits of Twining Manor, where he was to live without let or hindrance. A commission of five, comprising John, Prior of Worcester; Thomas, Abbot of Hayles; William, Prior of Llanthony; John de Somery, Rector of Twining; and Walter de Sherborne, Rector of Stanton was appointed to see that he had his pension. In default of this the Abbey would be called upon to pay £40 to the fabric of Worcester; and, if the ex-Abbot was disturbed or hindered, the greater excommunication. The Abbot and Convent were empowered to correct any laxity or excess on his part, if reported, but they might not withdraw their procuration. (1)

Thus concluded the reign of Abbot William de Sherborne, - the most inglorious in the long history of the Abbey. Faulty in its inception, it closed in turbulence and with discredit. By twelve years of mis-rule the fortunes of the Abbey declined from bad to worse, and it was well

(1) Worc. Epis. Regs. Thoresby, fol. 54.

for the Abbey that he was removed from control when he was; for, had he continued in his office for very much longer, the Community would have been compelled to disperse through poverty and discord. The sorry heritage that he left to his successor, the debts and difficulties that had accumulated, almost overwhelmed an abler man and would undoubtedly have quite vanquished William de Sherborne, had he continued to bear rule.

With such an Abbot at its head, it was not to be expected that the pious would be moved to contribute with that same generosity that an able man like Walter de Wickwane had evoked. In fact, very little had come in to offset the losses occasioned by the Abbot's lack of ability and his unlawful depredations. On the other hand, apart from the current demands of Pope and State, which were met in the past and might well have been in this time, the specific calls upon the Abbey were not as heavy as in previous reigns.

On April 8th, 1347 the King demanded from the clergy a loan to assist the war with France. (1) Winchcombe was promised, on December 4th in that same year the repayment of its contribution which amounted to £19. (2)

(1) Cal. C. R. 1346-9, 268

(2) C. P. R. 1345-8. 340. (Gloucester Abbey lent £38; Great Malvern, £12.13.4: Little Malvern, £6)

Even this loan could not be met without borrowing, for the Abbot acknowledged that he owed £80 to Richard de Piri-to, on October 26th, 1348 (1) and he was in debt again by May 6th, 1352 for 13 marks, owing to the Prior of Llan-thony. (2)

There was a reduction, however, in the number of those sent by the King for maintenance in the Abbot and for grants from it. The usual demand for a pension until a benefice had been found was made at the time of the Abbot's appointment. John de Wynwyck was sent on April 24th, 1340 (3) and he was granted five marks a year; (4) but there are no other such claimants noted during the period.

On July 15th, 1344 the King demanded hospitality for Robert Wychard, as soon as his wife should die. At the time, she was living at Winchcombe, supported by the monks, who were disinclined to take on her husband on his bereave-ment. However, all their excuses were waived aside by a determined King and the monks bowed to the inevitable.(5)

The vacancy created by the death of Thomas de Holford was filled only after some uncertainty. John le Clerk, yeoman of the King's Poultry, was sent to the Abbey, on

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- (1) Cal. C. R. 1346-9, 593
 (2) *ibid*, 1349-54, 479
 (3) *ibid*, 1339-41, 478
 (4) Landbooc, I. 344
 (5) Cal. C. R. 1343-6, 448

January 4th, 1349 (1) but died before he reached there. This did not, however, relieve the monks, because John Dymock, yeoman, was sent on February 28th (2) but a change of plans resulted in his going to Gloucester instead. In the end Henry atte Naise was the man selected for the Abbey, and he, presumably, reached his destination. (3) Apart from these demands, the Pope requested provision for two clerks. The Abbey was called upon to present William of Bisley, M.A. to a benefice in 1343; but, because this collation was regarded as 'almost useless,' a similar request was sent to Gloucester Abbey. (4) Two years later, another clerk, Henry, called 'Benne of Winchcombe,' had the Pope's authority to receive a benefice of not less than 20 marks a year, if it had a cure of souls attached; but 15 marks would suffice, if without such a responsibility. (5)

Two rather heavy burdens were laid upon the Convent by the Abbot. The first, a grant of fraternity and £10 a year out of Rowell Manor, was made to John de Somery, Rector of Kinewarton, on March 14th, 1341. For this he had paid 140 marks. The transaction was most favourable

(1) Cal. C. R. 1346-9, 609

(2) *ibid*, 1349-54, 76

(3) *ibid*, 82

(4) Cal. Papal Regs. Petitions, 1342-1419. 61

(5) *ibid*, 96 & Cal. Papal Regs. Letters Vol. III. 206

to the Rector, who thereby received interest of more than 10% on his outlay, - a most advantageous Life Annuity. (1)

The other, in all probability an unpriced corrody, is entered as a grant 'for past and future services and advice.' It was made to Robert of Alne, Rector of Alvechurch, in 1350. His accommodation in the matter of housing, fuel and meat was most generous. Each Martinmas, he had an ox, worth 8/-, and four pigs, or 10/-. To his chamber was attached a stable and chapel, and a plot of land, not yet built upon near to St. Peter's Church, went with it. Against the winter, four wagons, each drawn by three horses, brought him fuel. (2)

II.

The election of Robert de Ipwell followed immediately upon the resignation of Abbot William de Sherborne. Presumably it took place in the presence of the Bishop. (3) The new Abbot was a monk of the House and of fairly mature age, having been ordained Priest by Bishop Thomas de Cobham at Tewkesbury on March 24th, 1319. (4)

It would appear that the Bishop had gone to the Abbey well expecting to depose one Abbot and appoint another,

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- (1) Landbooc, I. 3-5
 - (2) *ibid.*, 262-4
 - (3) Worc. Epis. Regs. fol. 53
 - (4) Register of Thomas de Cobham. Worc. Hist. Socty. E. H. Pearce, p. 544.

for steps had already been taken to secure the necessary licence for an election. This was granted on the day that William de Sherborne ceased to rule, September 18th, 1352, (1) and four days later the royal approval was granted for the election of Robert de Ipwell. (2) The mandate for the restitution of the temporalities followed on September 26th. (3) On the same day the Abbey was called upon to provide the usual pension for a King's clerk until a benefice had been found for him. (4)

The Bishop issued his mandate to the Arch deacon of Gloucester to place the new Abbot in his stall in Chapel and Chapter on September 28th. (5)

All this episcopal attention proved costly to the Abbot, for when he came to settle his dues on the day of installation he was unable to meet his liabilities by 20 marks. (6)

Unfortunately, this debt to the Bishop was no mere temporary embarrassment, but was merely one instance of the extreme poverty and distress in which the Abbot and Convent found themselves after years of misrule. So grave

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- (1) C. P. R. 1350-4. 328
 (2) *ibid.*
 (3) *ibid.*
 (4) Cal. C. R. 1349-54, 507.5
 (5) Landbee, II, xxvi.
 (6) Cal. C. R. 1349-54. 507.

was the situation that the monks were quite unable to adjust their affairs, and in their extremity they had recourse to their Patron, the King.

On July 24th, 1553 Edward III, with the consent of the Bishop, put the Abbey and all its possessions into the keeping of four Commissioners:- Guy Bryan, Master John Leach, William de Cheltenham and Robert Palet. These, with the advice of some of the more discreet of the monks were "to maintain the pious works of the house, find reasonable sustenance for the Abbot and Convent and the ministers thereof, and to apply the balance of the issues of the house in discharge of the debts and relief of the estate thereof." (1)

It was as well for the Abbey that its affairs passed into the control of these business men, for the community was in grave danger of dispersal. At least one monk had left. This was Thomas of Malmesbury. As his name is not among those who were called before the Bishop when Abbot William de Sherborne was deposed it may be that he was professed after that time, but more likely that he had gone away before then. Whatever his reasons were for leaving, he repented and desired to return. To this end he obtained Papal permission to be reconciled, on June 30th,

(1) C. P. R. 1350-4, 481

1553. (1) It would have been better had that permission been withheld, as he brought disgrace both on himself and his community by breaking into the house of Philip de Chebeseye at Winchcombe, damaging doors and windows and making off with some property. For this crime he was outlawed; but on giving himself up at Gloucester, he obtained pardon for his outlawry on May 19th, 1354. (2)

In January 1360, the Abbot and Convent received, what was at this time a rare benefaction, some land and a house, together with a rent of 1/2. This was granted by William de Framelsworth and his wife, on condition that the monks found one of their number to celebrate a daily mass for the souls of the donors in the Abbey Church. (3) Few people at this time were inclined to support the great Abbey; on the contrary, far more were disposed to rob it, even with violence.

Only a few weeks later (June 16th, 1360) a commission of Oyer and Terminer was evoked by the Abbot because John, Vicar of Winchcombe, and his Curate, John Panter with twenty-nine other townsmen broke down the Abbey gates, carried away the monks' goods and assaulted the servants.

(1) Gal. Papal Letters, Vol. III, 1542-62. p. 515
 (2) C. P. R. 1354-8, 44
 (3) *ibid*, 1358-61, 317, and Landbec, II. 119-9

Despite the fact that the Abbey was still under the protection of the King, 'for no small time' the monks were besieged by their attackers so that they and their men dared not go out to buy food and other necessities.(1)

To the troubles at their gates was added discord within. Between the Abbot and Convent friction had come into existence. Poverty does not make for peace and tranquility and under straitened circumstances such as obtained at the time, it was difficult for any Abbot to rule to universal satisfaction, so Robert de Ipwel resigned, probably early in October 1360.

His reign marked the lowest level of the Monastery's fortunes. For this, the Abbot cannot be held entirely responsible as he entered into control after the house had almost been ruined by his predecessor, and immediately afterwards he had the control of finance taken from him by the four Royal Commissioners. For sometime, then, his powers were almost entirely confined to the spiritual side of his office, but that was perhaps the most trying sphere of all, for some at least of the monks appear to have been long out of control and very impatient of discipline being liable, like Thomas of Malmshull, to break out and get into conflict with the law. Moreover compulsory freedom from financial responsibility did not bring escape from conflict with secular neighbours who paid little regard to the

(1) C. P. R. 1358-61, 420.

authority of the royal trustees of the Abbey, but saw only weakness in the Abbey's misfortunes and a favourable opportunity to harass the distracted Convent.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN.

The state of the Abbey when Robert de Ipwell resigned from office was so desperate that drastic measures in the appointment of his successor and the relief of the Abbey were necessary. Fortunately both the King and the Bishop proved themselves helpful to the Convent in its distress.

As soon as Bishop Reynold Brian of Worcester (1352-61) had certified that the Abbotship was vacant the King gave licence to the Prior and Convent to elect (1) and, at the same time, "out of compassion for the poverty of the Abbey whose faculties in these days scarcely suffice for the sustenance of the monks," he did not sequestrate the temporalities of the vacant Abbacy but allowed the Convent to receive the income. For the same reason he also waived his right to demand a pension for one of his clerks at the new creation. (2)

To avoid "the peril and inconvenience of discord" the Convent decided to leave the choice of the next Abbot in the hands of the Bishop who provided Walter de Wynforton, a monk of the Cathedral Church of Worcester

(1) C. P. R. 1358-61, 467. October 16th, 1360.

(2) *ibid*, 468

and a man whose capabilities must have been well known to the Bishop. The royal assent to this appointment was given on November 20th, 1360 (1), and the temporalities were ordered to be delivered on December 1st. (2)

It was a wise decision on the Bishop's part to bring in a monk from outside of the Community as Abbot.

Walter de Wynforton proved equal to the demands that were made upon him, for by exploiting existing property and rights to the full he not only avoided early collapse but even achieved a measure of security and prosperity for his House before the close of his thirty-five years of rule. Throughout this long reign his experience as Cellarer at Worcester must have proved invaluable to the Abbot. (3)

One of the first tasks confronting the Abbot was the exercise of the monastic patronage, when Rowell became vacant. A monk of the Abbey, William de Ludlowe was chosen and he was instituted to that cure on February 6th, 1361. (4)

By this time it was clear that the Abbot was a strong man and that he intended to reform the monks, so that troublesome monk and late outlaw, Thomas de Malmeshull (5),

(1) C.P.R. 1358-61, 493. The V.C.H. and Landboe, II. xxvii are in error in dating the appointment a year earlier.

(2) *ibid*, 497

(3) V.C.H. p.70 and Landboe, II. xxvii

(4) *Sede Vacante*, 209. *Ordination to Priesthood, Sede Vacante*, 314.

(5) See above, pp. 192, 193

again took to the road, this time in secular habit. His vagabond wanderings displeased the Abbot who, by letters patent, informed the King. Thereupon, Robert de Sedgeberrow and Henry de Walton were appointed to arrest him and to bring him back to the Abbey "to be chastened according to the Rule of the Order." (1)

A more serious problem was the renewed pestilence in the district, for the Black Death again broke out and many of the monks and conversi at Hayles died in 1361-2.(2) While there is no record of similar losses at Winchcombe at this time, it is most probable that the Abbey did not entirely escape the scourge and the acute difficulties that followed upon the loss of many of the monastic servants and labourers.

The Abbot had enough problems to meet without the extra expenses threatened by the rise in wages demanded by a much reduced labouring class which saw now that there was a greater call for workers than could be met, except by a lord prepared to pay well enough to attract those who were free to work where they liked. By way of compensating this new situation and overcoming the indebtedness of the Abbey he turned his attention to the benefice of

(1) Nov. Ist, 1361. C. P. R. 1361-4, 151

(2) PAX, No. 226. Spring 1943. p. 34

Twining. The rectory there had a good income that might well come to the monks, save for a comparatively small outgoing to a Vicar. The first step in the matter of appropriation was secured by the issue of the King's licence to appropriate on January 22nd, 1362. (1) But little further headway was made, and it was not until 1379 that the Abbey really secured a good hold on the living. In the meantime further burdens were laid upon the Abbey when, in 1363, Pope Urban V required the Abbey to provide, first Robert Pdeber with a benefice, (2) and then one for Henry Walker, of an annual value not less than £40. (3)

Into the midst of the worried community, the Prior of Worcester intruded when he visited the Abbey on May 19th, 1364, during an episcopal vacancy. (4) However he had nothing unfavourable to record, so the Abbot would appear to have been doing his best under the circumstances.

About the same time the Abbey suffered damage from a severe whirlwind. To enable the monks to carry out the necessary repairs the Pope granted an Indulgence of a year and forty days, for the next ten years, to all penitents who on the chief feasts of the year visited and gave alms to the Church of the Abbey. (5) This promising concession

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- (1) C.P.R. 1361-4, 142.
 (2) Cal. Papal Regs. (Petitions) 1342-1419. 431.
 (3) *ibid*, 457
 (4) *Sede Vacante*, 220
 (5) Cal. Papal Regs. 1V. 'Letters' 1362-1404, 41.

which was granted at Avignon on October 22nd, 1364, was probably made in response to the personal appeal of the Abbot who was out of this country at about the time; since, on January 24th, in the next year, the King approved of Richard de Walneford and Richard Bussellaas his attorneys for one year. (1)

While he was away, the Abbey obtained from the Vicar of Winchcombe, Philip, and William Sclattere, the Chaplain, 4 messuages, 2½ yardlands and two parts of a messuage in Dry Marston and Winchcombe and the reversion of one messuage, one yardland and one third of a messuage and yardland in Dry Marston - the total rental value being 13/4 a year. In return the Abbey undertook to keep a lamp burning daily at the Mass of the Blessed Virgin before Her Altar in the Abbey Church.(2)

At Michaelmas 1366, the first of several lawsuits commenced. It arose by reason of the refusal of John Nate, a weaver, to pay rent and give service for his holding. As the defendant did not appear on several occasions, the property was taken into the King's hand. At a later hearing, the Abbot proved to be without the deeds of the property. However, in the end, the Abbot established his right

(1) O. P. R. 1364-7, 56.

(2) *ibid.*, 176 and Landboec II. 127-9. Fine 5 marks.

to the property and the 4/- rent and three days boon service due from its tenants. (1)

In Michaelmas 1369, the Abbot, by his same attorney, Richard de Weinoford, took Richard and Agnes Webbeley to Court for the rent of a house. When the tenant's brother claimed the property as his, the Abbot was put to the trouble of proving that it had belonged to his predecessors from time immemorial. The verdict was for the Abbot with four marks costs. (2) A similar case opened in 1371 and was not settled in the Abbot's favour until 1379. (3) These actions, and perhaps there were more beside but unrecorded, display the conservative character of the Abbot, who, like his fellow ecclesiastical lords, was less able to change with the times than were the lay lords, but strove to maintain the rights and dues so long enjoyed by his corporation against the dissatisfied tenants and workers who expected to benefit from the conditions arising after the Black Death. His frequent recourse to law arose not out of harshness, but rather from a sense of responsibility to maintain that which had been given into his keeping, - the Lord's heritage, the holy House, and its means of support.

(1) Landbooc, II, 434-6.
 (2) Landbooc, II, 436-440
 (3) Ibid, 446-450

The Abbot was equally alert and vigorous where ecclesiastical rights were concerned, as Henry Benne, now Rector of Haselton, found when he sought to evade his responsibility to provide Yanworth with a chaplain for all services and sacraments and to maintain the chaplain's house "next the churchyard there." The Rector found himself called before the Bishop's Official and he hotly disputed the contention. The judgement, was given against him, and he found himself bound to perform all that had been demanded. (1)

The times were indeed difficult for the ecclesiastical land and property owners; robberies and evasions becoming more frequent. In self defence the Abbots of great houses were often banded together for joint action with the encouragement of the Pope. On May 15th, 1366 the Pope commissioned the Abbots of Evesham, Cirencester, and Hayles to aid the Abbot of Winchcombe for five years against unjust detainers of property and to act as Judges and Conservators when required in cases calling for restitution and in wrongs demanding summary and full investigation. In other cases they might employ ecclesiastical censure - calling in, if need be the secular arm. (2)

(1) Landbooc, II, 346-353. The Rector had been provided with a benefice from the Abbey. See page 189.
 (2) *ibid*, 83-7

By the time that the Commission had expired, the Abbot still had, apparently, good grounds for misgiving where his property was concerned, as he obtained, through the good offices of Master John de Branketre, the King's clerk, permission to fortify the Abbey and other buildings around it, on March 5th 1773. (1)

On the more distant manors various trespasses were being committed. At Admington unlawful fishing was going on, and against those responsible for it the Prior of Worcester ordered the Rural-dean of Campden and all rectors, vicars and parish priests to pronounce sentence of the greater excommunication on March 23rd, 1373. (2)

The prevailing unpopularity of the landlords at this time, and in particular the ecclesiastical corporations, had, no doubt, something to do with the paucity in grants to the Abbey. Until February 5th, 1375, when a licence was issued for the grant by Thomas Bishop, Chaplain of Weston-under-Edge, of a messuage, yardland and three acres of meadow at Honeybourne, worth 20/- a year for a light to be provided by the monks during High Mass at the High Altar in the Abbey Church, there had been no additions to the monastic property for the last ten

(1) Landbooc, II, 129-30 and C. P. R. 1370-4, 260

(2) Sede Vacante, 320

years.(1)

Unrest was still prevalent, frequently finding expression in damage to property and theft of goods. Commissions of enquiry were ordered on November 10th, 26th and 27th, 1377, on complaints by the Abbot of "felonies, trespasses, oppressions, extortions and other wrongs done to men and tenants of the Abbey." (2) The first and last of these commissions dealt with troubles around the Abbey itself, but the second took into account happenings at Cotes, Charlton-Abbots, Admington and Corndene, as well.

As an offset to these losses the Abbot and Convent at last managed to secure the appropriation of the benefice of Twining, on October 6th, 1379, from Henry Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester (1375-95). If the reasons that satisfied him were genuine, and the history of the last few years certainly supports the monks' laments, then the Convent's resources certainly stood in very desperate need of speedy augmentation. Compulsory ceaseless hospitality, costly lawsuits, barren lands, services, and rents reduced to almost half by deaths of tenants and servants in the pestilence, the ruin that had befallen the Monastery and its Manors in the frightful gales and by dilapidation and

(1) C. P. R. 1374-7, 70 and Landbcc, II, 124-5

(2) C. P. R. 1377-81, 90, 93, 91.

the various corrodies and debts had brought the Abbey to a dangerous degree of poverty. (1)

To avert the threatening disaster the income from Twining Church was annexed to the monastery, save for a 'fit portion' reserved for the Perpetual Vicar and an annual pension of 20/- to the Bishop to compensate him for the loss of revenue sustained, because the Abbot and Convent were deathless rectors who never lapsed in their tenure. (2)

The Prior of Worcester confirmed the appropriation(3) and a renewal of the out-of-date Royal Licence was issued on February 8th, 1380. (4) The Pope gave his approval on April 26th, 1384. (5)

In accordance with the scheme whereby Benedictine Abbots carried out visitations of other Houses of the Order, Abbot Walter de Wynferton received authority to visit John, the Prior of Worcester, on August 30th, 1380, and he went there on September 17th. (6)

For failing to pay the £5 that he owed the Abbot, William Willeye was outlawed, but he obtained pardon on February 1st, 1384. (7)

(1) Landboe, II, 97-8

(2) *ibid*, 100.

(3) *ibid*, 101

(4) C. P. R. 1377-81, 434.

(5) Landboe, II, 78.

(6) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. III, 236-7

(7) C. P. R. 1381-5, 368

In the following year, two others received pardon for their outlawry; Adam of Upton on February 12th (1) and William Smythe of Bibury on June 21st. (2) Their crime was trespass, and they were probably not unconnected with the recent disturbances on the Abbey property.

About this time William Coutenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, visited the Abbey, and on November 7th, 1384, he confirmed the Convent's titles to the Parish Churches of Winchcombe, Rowell, Sherborne, Twining and Enstone; and also the right of the Abbey to draw an annual pension of 20/- and tithes from the Manor from Bledington, 10/- from the Church and tithes from the Manor of Mickleton, two parts of the great tithes of Stanton, tithes of Dry Marston Manor and those of Hawling, Haselton, Charlton-Abbots, Yanworth and Kinewarton. (3)

About this time, a heated dispute waged between the Abbot and Convent on the one hand, and Thomas Power, Vicar of Wincheombe, on the other. Power protested against his liability to repair the chancel and windows of the Parish Church, despite the fact that judgement had been

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- (1) C. P. R. 1381-5, 521
 (2) *ibid*, 573
 (3) Landboe, II, 12-14

given against a former vicar, John Brighthampton, c. 1360, (1) on this same matter. Bishop Henry Wakefield ordered Power to carry out his duties in this respect, but the Vicar refused and was excommunicated. (2) Thereupon he appealed vainly to the Archbishop of Canterbury and next to the Pope, who ordered a discreet and quiet investigation of the matter by the Abbot of Gloucester and the Archdeacons of Worcester and Gloucester. (3) When the Archdeacon of Gloucester retired from the case, the Abbey appealed to Rome, not being satisfied with the remaining auditors. The Pope appointed Andrew Baret, Papal Chaplain, to hear the case; and he, being satisfied that there existed sufficient grounds for the appeal, cited Power to appear before him. (4) However, the hearing was delayed by the absence of the necessary deeds, which were demanded, either in the original or certified transcripts, (5) and by the failure of Power to present himself, towards the close of 1386. (6) Meanwhile, Baret had quitted the Roman Court on other business, so the Pope appointed John de Chamberis as his deputy. (7) The Proctor for

(1) See above, pp. 193-4.

(2) Landboc, II. 67-68

(3) Landboc, II. 68

(4) *ibid*, 69

(5) *ibid*, 50

(6) *ibid*, 51

(7) *ibid*, 48 & 70

the Abbey, Richard Drayton, appeared before this Auditor and charged Power with contumacy for non-appearance. Power then appointed as his Proctor, first Bernard de Pisis and afterwards John de Scrivain; but in the meantime Thomas de Walkington was deputising for the Auditor.

At last, both parties appeared and each denied the others contentions, backed up by such evidence as they could furnish. Another delay then occurred, and when the case was resumed before John de Chamberis, only Drayton, the Convent's Proctor, was there. When both sides did meet in the Court, it was to hear that the case had been decided against the Vicar, and the former judgement against his predecessor pronounced binding on Power.(1) The appeal to Rome cost Power 90 florins in gold, but this sum Drayton swore was far short of the expense to which his clients had been put. (2)

So far from being daunted by this reverse, Thomas Power embarked on another appeal to the Pope. He and the Abbey again employed the same men as their Proctors; but the Auditor, this time, was John Trefnant, Canon of St. Asaph (3) who became Bishop of Hereford in 1389. After several delays, due to the absence of one or other of the

(1) Landboc, II. 53-4 and 70-72

(2) *ibid*, 54

(3) *ibid*, 56-7 and 72

tion,(1) and the public document was drawn up at the Proctor's request by William Bray, Notary. (2) Thus ended a costly and protracted lawsuit that benefited nobody. One may ask whence did the Vicar secure the funds for these several actions and the encouragement to persist in his opposition to the Convent? The frequency with which the townsfolk are found associating themselves with their clergy in attacking the Abbey and annoying the monks may point to, at least, a deep and practical sympathy that may very likely express itself in helping their Vicar in the prosecution of his cause at Rome.

While the above case was being dragged out in Rome, a similar issue was at stake between the Vicar of Sherborne, Roger, and the Abbot and Convent. The suit was heard in the King's Courts, and afterwards referred to two judges acceptable to both the parties. The Vicar had to bear the cost of the repairs and rebuilding of the chancel of his church, as his predecessor Reginald had been commanded to do by Bishop William, on an order of the Bishop's Official based on the findings of the two Judges, dated July 15th, 1387. (3)

Although it was illegal for the monks to farm or let

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- (1) Landboe, II, 75-6
(2) *ibid.*
(3) *ibid.*, 281-4

their tithes out to laymen because of exactions, the Abbot and Convent procured a Papal Indult from Pope Urban VI. on November 21st, 1387 which enabled them to do so without the licence of the Bishop. (1) The scope of the Indult extended also to the fruits of their appropriated chapels and other benefices and their pensions and other possessions. Unfortunately the monks met with such resolute and successful resistance from the Bishops that they were not able to put the Indult to practical advantage, and it was not until June 1430, that Pope Martin V. emphasised the terms of the concession in a decree that was issued by his successor Eugenius IV; in March 1431.(2)

On January 11th, 1388 the Pope issued a warning to all who unjustly detained the possessions of the Convent, and he commanded the restoration of the goods which ranged from tithes, lands, mills and rents to books, domestic utensils and ecclesiastical ornaments and sacred vessels. (3) It would appear that these robberies were at their height about the time of the last appeal of the Vicar to Rome when, no doubt, feelings ran high in the town providing a ready pretext and opportunity for those

(1) Landboe, II. 38-40. See also G. G. Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion, Vol. III, p. 187

(2) Cal. Papal Regs. Letters, Vol. VIII, 1427-47, 383

(3) Landboe, II. 138

who wished to enrich themselves at the expense of the monks.

The Abbey received a visit from John, the Prior of Worcester, on April 19th, 1390. He came on to Winchcombe from a similar visit to Tewkesbury on the previous day. These visitations were not in connection with his responsibilities as guardian of the vacant See, but by reason of his appointment by the General Chapter of the Benedictine Order on a citation dated 14 days previously.(1)

Welcome news to the Abbey was the King's promise, on March 27th, 1391, to restore the Hundreds to the Abbey and Convent, immediately on the death of Sir John Atte Wood to whom the Hundreds had been granted for life by King Edward III. The grant included the farming of fairs and markets in Winchcombe and the holding by the Abbey Steward of the usual Courts and View of Frankpledge. (2)

The grant was again issued on June 11th, 1391 with the addition of benefit from "waifs and strays, chattels of felons and fugitives."(3)

The final order for restitution of the above, at the original rent of £50, was granted on February 6th, in the next year. (4)

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- (1) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. III, 236-7.
 (2) Cal. Charter R. 1341-1417, 320-1.
 (3) ibid, 323, and Landbooc II, 16-18
 (4) Cal. C. P. R. 1389-92. 446

For ten marks paid to the King by the Convent, licence was granted them on May 20th, 1392 to receive in mortmain from Robert Busshel of Broadmarston five messuages, three virgates and 12½ acres of meadow and pasture land in Dry-Marston, Cotes and Winchcombe for the provision by the monks of two tapers weighing twelve pounds to burn daily before the High Altar at Mass in the Abbey Church for the good estate of the donor's and his ancestors' souls. (1)

The right of granting Sanctuary to those fleeing from their punishment was upheld by the King on May 28th, 1392 when he ordered the Sheriff "not to trouble or grieve" the Abbot for having harboured some men guilty of beating William Smythe to death. (2)

In May, 1393, one of the Winchcombe monks, Thomas Euston, had the dignity of Papal Chaplain conferred upon him by Pope Boniface IX. (3)

During the vacancy in the See that followed the death of Bishop Henry Wakefield, the Prior of Worcester carried out a visitation of Winchcombe Abbey, deputing his Precentor, John Hatfield, to act for him on May 20th, 1395. Once again the Prior found that all was in good order and had

(1) C. P. R. 1391-6, 71

(2) Cal. C. R. 1389-92. 464.

(3) Cal. Papal Regs. Letters, Vol. IV. 1362-1404, 286

no comments to make. (1) Shortly afterwards, the Prior heard that the Abbot of Winchcombe had died there on June 22nd. (2)

Thus ended a rule of thirty-five difficult and troubled years. Extreme poverty had dogged Walter de Wynforton for many of them. The long delay in the appropriation of Twining deprived him of extra income when most urgently needed. Costly lawsuits involved him in no little trouble because the sympathy of the Winchcombe people lay with their Vicar and expressed itself in violence and robberies. Pestilence upset the social and economic situation, depriving the Abbey of servants and safe tenants and, perhaps, reducing the number of monks.

All these problems were faced and endured until, in the end, the Abbey was set on the path to security, if not prosperity. Abbot Walter de Wynforton had achieved more for the house of his adoption than had several of his immediate predecessors who had been professed monks of the Abbey. His was a wise and profitable infusion of new blood into the Convent.

(1) Sede Vacante, 359.
(2) *ibid*, 366.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN.

John Honybourne, Prior of Winchcombe, wrote on June 22nd, 1395 to inform the Prior of Worcester that Abbot William de Wynforton had died. A week later, after the burial of the late Abbot, the monks obtained the conge d'elire from the King. (1)

At a meeting in the Chapter-house on July 3rd, the monks decided to elect their next Abbot on the following Tuesday. The election was preceded by the Mass of the Holy Spirit at the High Altar from which service the monks proceeded to the Chapter House where, having sung the Veni Creator Spiritus and read the royal letters of conge d'elire and the Constitutions of the General Chapter, they warned all excommunicated and interdicted persons to retire before conducting further business. The actual choice of Abbot was by compromise; the Prior and six other monks being instructed to elect by sunset that day either from among themselves or others of the House. For this purpose the electors retired to the Refectory and, after protracted deliberation, made choice of their Cellarer, William Bradley.

(1) The process of election is recorded in *Sede Vacante*, 365-8. Licence to elect granted on June 29th, 1395. C. P. R. 1391-6, 591

The decision was made known to the rest of the community assembled in the Chapter house by one of the electors, together with a formal declaration that "the said William was a man wise and discreet, to be commended for his science of letters, in his life and habits, professed in the Order of St. Benedict in the said monastery, in Priest's Orders and of lawful age - inasmuch as he exceeded the age of thirty-six years, of free birth and begotten in holy matrimony, very prudent in spiritual and temporal matters and having no impediment that ought to prevent his election."

Thereupon, while singing the Te Deum, the Prior and the eighteen monks conducted the Abbot-elect to the choir of the Abbey Church where the result of the election was made known to the assembled clergy and people. When the new Abbot was formally called upon to assent to his elevation he asked for more time to consider his reply; but, after Vespers that day, he "bowed to the Divine Will and assented."

To the Prior of Worcester, who was guardian of the spiritualities of the diocese, pending the appointment of the next Bishop, the news of William Bradley's election was conveyed by two of the community, (1) and to that

(1) Sede Vacante, 366-367

same Prior the King sent the royal assent on July 9th.(1)

On July 18th, Thomas Power, Perpetual Vicar of Winchcombe, read the mandate in the Abbey Church by which he had been commissioned to cite all opposers of the election to appear before him or his deputy in the Parish Church of Twining. As there were no opposers the Abbot took the oath and all was in order. (2)

The King restored the temporalities to the Abbot on July 24th,(3) and sent along one of his clerks for the pension payable on the new creation. This clerk, John Bathe, however made over his interest to John Bradley, with the King's approval, on February 23rd, 1396.(4)

The new Abbot was not left long in peaceful possession, for the northern property suffered trespass and the Vicar of Alveston, John Jonkyn, was called to answer for his misdeeds. He did not appear at first, but on October 20th, 1396, he obtained pardon for his contempt. (5)

Two grants of property were made to the Abbey about

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- (1) C. P. R. 1391-6, 591
 (2) Sede Vacante, 368.
 William Bradley had been professed before Abbot Walter de Wynforton on the feast of St. Benedict 1366 and later promoted to Holy Orders. *ibid.*
 (3) C. P. R. 1391-6, 607
 (4) Cal. C. R. 1396-9, 290
 (5) C.P.R. 1396-9, 120

this time: on October 13th, 1395 Richard Busshel, for the sum of six marks paid into the hanaper by the Abbot and Convent, was granted licence to give one messuage, two tofts and three acres of meadow and pasture for eight oxen in Winchcombe and Sherborne towards the maintenance of the Abbey.(1) Two years later, on May 26th, a similar licence was granted, on payment of 60/-, for the conveyance of another messuage, two tofts and half an acre in Cotes by the same donor for the provision of two tapers to burn daily before the High Altar at High Mass in the Abbey Church. (2)

A few months later, on September 15th, 1397 the King gave his receipt for a loan which he compelled the Abbot and Convent to make. It was for 100 marks, a similar sum to that which the Abbey of Tewkesbury had contributed at the same time.(3) On March 8th, 1398 King Richard II visited Winchcombe, having left Worcester the previous day. Six days later he was at Gloucester, and from thence he progressed to Bristol.(4) It was from this latter city that on March 24th the King granted licence to the Abbot and Convent, for £10 paid into the hanaper, to appropriate

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- (1) C. P. R. 1391-6, 631
 (2) C. P. R. 1396-9, 139
 (3) C. P. R. 1396-9, 180
 (4) *ibid*, 317

in mertmain the Vicarage of S. Peter's Winchcombe, on condition that an appropriate sum was distributed yearly among the poor parishoners. (1)

The consent of the Bishop of Worcester, Tideman de Winchcombe, (June 1395-June 1401) was obtained at his Manor of Hillingdon on May 6th, 1398 on the petition of the Convent showing that, although the Church had long been annexed to the monastery, on its finding a vicar, and that the first Vicars were content with their position, succeeding Vicars with abettors had tried to shake off their responsibilities and even stirred up the parishoners and that costly lawsuits in the Roman Court and elsewhere had ensued. No doubt, these complaints referred in particular to that turbulent Vicar, Thomas Power. Moreover the burdens of entertaining great Princes (the recent visit of the King was apparently still troubling the House,) and the unfruitful seasons and murrain among the cattle, together with many debts, had reduced the house to insolvency unless help was forthcoming. (2)

(1) C. P. R. 1396-9, 329

(2) Landboe, II. 139-142 and Cal. Papal Regs. Letters, 1396-1404, Vol. V., 197-8
Tideman de Winchcombe was a monk of the Cistercian Order, in charge of Beaulieu Abbey; Jan. 6th, 1391; Bishop of Llandaff 1393 (C. P. R. 1391-6, 121 & 319.)

At this time the annual income of the Abbey was assessed at 800 marks and it is difficult to see how the situation was to be greatly relieved by the appropriation of Winchcombe which was valued at only 50 marks when a secular priest had to be paid out of it. Of course the fact that the next priest and his successors were removable at the will of the Abbot and Convent went far to ensuring the good behaviour of those clerics and promised to relieve the monks from any more expensive lawsuits. By the terms of the appropriation the Bishop of Worcester received an annual pension of 2/-, in lieu of first fruits.(1) The Prior and Convent of Worcester confirmed the transfer on June 9th, 1938,(2) and the Pope granted his Confirmation on the 28th June in the following year. (3)

The appropriation of the Vicarage, as is to be expected, did not meet with the approval of the Vicar and town-folk and, under the direction of that man of action, Thomas Power, they vented their feelings against the monks by vigorously ringing the bells of the Parish Church during the hours when the community were engaged in worship. As the Abbey Church and the Parish Church were very close, the noise greatly disturbed the Convent. The Abbot and

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- (1) Cal. Papal Regs. Letters, Vol. V. 1396-1404, 197-8
and Landboe II, 139-145
(2) Landboe, II. 144
(3) Cal. Papal Regs. as above.

Convent appealed to the Pope, who, on July 14th, 1399 commissioned the Abbots of Evesham and Pershore and Richard of Winecombe, Archdeacon of Gloucester, to enquire into the matter, and "if they find the above to be the case to ordain that at night, namely after the ringing of the monastery bell for the Curfew (pro Ignitegio), until in the morning the bell is in the monastery for prime, the bells shall not, without evident necessity, be rung in the said Church, and that even at other times, and especially during such divine offices, they shall be rung moderately; and to inhibit the Vicar and Parishoners from acting otherwise. (1)

The Archdeacon held his own enquiry on March 22nd, 1401 and, apparently finding that the nuisance had been committed, put the Vicar, Priests, Clerks and Parishoners under pain of excommunication for failing to observe the Papal ordinance. Absolution was reserved to the Archdeacon. (2)

In the midst of these negotiations and subsequent disturbances the Abbot received on July 1st, 1398 the grant from Pope Boniface the IX of an indult to wear the Mitre, Ring, Pastoral Staff and other Pontifical Insignia

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- (1) Landbooc, II. 31-40 and Cal. Papal Regs. Vol. V. 1396-1404, 439.
 (2) *ibid*, 34-6.

in the Monastery and other Churches, even when the said churches are not fully subject to the Abbey, to give Solemn Benediction after Mass, Vespers and Matins, save in the presence of a Prelate or Legate of the Holy See and to bless and reconcile cemeteries, Chalices, Robes and other ornaments in monasteries and priories subject to him. (1)

On July 1st, 1401 licence was obtained for 5 marks, for the gift in mortmain by Richard Busshell of a messuage and toft in Winchcombe to keep the obits of Kathleen, his late wife, and of Richard himself and to support other charges and works of piety. (2) The Priors of Worcester were quick to exploit this temporary jurisdiction in the diocese which became theirs on a vacancy in the bishopric. When Tideman to Winchcombe died on June 13th, 1401 the Prior commenced to visit the religious houses and, within a month, he came to Winchcombe. (July 12th, 1401) (3) As he recorded no complaints it may be presumed that he found everything within the monastery in good order.

During the above vacancy in the See, the Abbot of

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- (1) Landboc, II. 41 and Cal. Papal Regs. Vol. V. 1396-1404, 161-2. The Landboc, in the marginal notes, wrongly ascribes the Indult to Boniface VIII and gives the date 1303, tempo, Abbot William de Wickwans. This error has misled several local historians.
- (2) C. P. R. 1399-1401, 538
- (3) Sede Vacante, 384

Pershore, Nicholas, titular Bishop of Dunkeld, Scotland, was obtaining; and he raised two monks of Winchcombe to the Priesthood and two more to the Diaconate at Worcester, on September 24th, 1401. (1) By the year 1402 the annual revenue of the Abbey had risen to one thousand marks; but, even so, the monks looked for more money, and in that year petitioned Boniface IX for the appropriation of Bledington. This was valued in the same year at 25 marks. On December 1st, 1402 the Pope gave his consent and ordained that the Abbey, after the departure of the present Rector, might appoint or dismiss at will the Vicars of Bledington, and that either seculars or religious persons could hold that office. (

(2) The Royal licence, costing the Abbey 25 marks, was issued for the appropriation on February 8th, 1405, conditional upon a competent sum being assigned to the Vicar and the poor. (3) However, Richard Clifford, Bishop of Worcester (1401-7), interposed in favour of the insecure Vicars, in 1406, and ordered that they should have the status of Perpetual Vicars with an income of 10 marks, per annum. (4) The Bishop had already secured an annual pen-

(1) Sede Vacante, 369

(2) Landbooc, II, 42-3, and Cal. Papal Regs. Vol. V., 1396-1404, 497.

(3) C. P. R. 1401-5, 491.

The Abbey appears later to have 'leased' or 'demised' the parsonage to laymen. As late as 1537 it was leased to Thomas Freeman of Campden.

On the seizure of the English property of foreign houses Bledington Manor passed to Evesham. Note supplied by Dr. Stephen Liberty, Rector of Bledington.

(4) Worc. Epis. Reg. Clifford, fol. 76.

sion of 10/- from the benefice for himself, and a similar sum from Mickleton in the parish of Quinton, as he stated in his confirmation, when he visited the Abbey about November 16th, 1404. (1)

Sometimes the Vicars themselves sought to get away from their cures, as did John Bradley of Sherborne. He was a B.C.L. and also a B. Canon Law already; but he desired to study at an University. His application to the Pope was successful, for in March, 1405, he obtained an Indult to leave Sherborne for five years and meanwhile, farm or rent the fruits of his benefice to clerks or laymen. (2) As he had already obtained the pension allocated to the King's clerk at the beginning of the new reign and was of a similar name to the Abbot, it may well be that he was a close relative to William Bradley, and so not likely to meet with any serious opposition to his application for absence.

The year 1405 was a busy one for the Abbot. On April 11th, he was cited to visit the houses of his order in the diocese of Worcester, (3) and later, he was called in to arbitrate in a dispute concerning heriots that had led to rioting at Shipston-on-Stour. William Bradley 'found' for

(1) Landbooc, II. 14-16

(2) Cal. Papal Regs. Vol. VI. 1404-15. 7.

(3) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. III, 238-9

the Prior of Worcester in the matter of the best animal at the tenant's death. (1)

The royal abuse of forced purveyance had weighed heavily on the resources of the Church under King Richard and his successor Henry IV, until Parliament compelled the latter monarch to behave in a more constitutional manner. Relief from the constant peril of these exactions came to the Abbey of Winchcombe on May 12th, 1405 in a general charter sent to the Guardians of the Peace for Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire wherein the Abbey was specially mentioned and its goods declared safe from compulsory sale to the King and others. (2)

The Abbey was fortunate in that the son of the late Richard Busshell was as kindly inclined to the monks as his father had been. On April 28th, 1407, the young Richard made over to the Convent:- 9 acres of land, 6 acres of meadow and 6 acres of wood in Cotes and Throp-by-Winchcombe, "to find a lamp burning daily at the time of the celebration of masses of Saint Mary" at the Chapel Altar of the Blessed Virgin in the Abbey. (3) A grant on similar lines came to the Convent in the next year when, on

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- (1) Landboc, II. xxviii, citing Noake's, 'Monastery of Worcester,' 90.
 (2) Landboc, II. 134-6
 (3) C. P. R. 1405-8, 319.

November 27th, 1408 for the sum of 5 marks paid into the hanapar, Robert Vileyn was permitted to give the Abbey in mortmain a messuage, 28 acres of land, 2 acres of meadow and 8/- rent in Windrush to provide a lamp burning daily in honour of the Holy Trinity before the Altar of the Holy Trinity in the Abbey Church and for masses for the good estate of the donor's soul and ancestors'.(1)

By the year 1410, the Abbot and Convent had grown weary of continually producing their title deeds and documents to the Bishops who questioned their right to various churches and property. The conveyance of such documents was attended, they maintained, by considerable danger of damage and molestation, and they desired that the Pope would confirm the patents of the Bishop of Lincoln, 1375; the Archbishop of Canterbury, 1384; and the Bishop of Worcester, 1404. Pope John XXIII accordingly issued a Bull, as requested, on May 6th, 1410 and ordained that the production by the Convent of the Bull at the Archbishops' and Bishops' Visitations shall suffice and be equivalent to the original deeds. (2)

Except for the coming and going of pensioners sent by

(1) C. P. R. 1408-13, 40

(2) Landbec, II. 8-10 and Cal. Papal Regs. Letters VI. 1404-15, 219.

the King the affairs of the Abbey during the rest of the reign were singularly peaceful. John Croyser arrived for life maintenance on Dec. 26th, 1415. (1) He filled the place of the late Walter Yonge who had obtained maintenance on November 23rd, 1403 when John West gave up his pension to him(2) This John West had been with the monks for many years, having been sent to the Abbey in 1368.(3)

The Abbot, on the other hand, was particularly busy in his later years. In 1413 he was trying to recover £5 owing to him by Simon Bradeford, "that was the parysshprest" of Yanworth. That defaulting cleric would not appear before the Justices of the King's Bench and was outlawed, but on October 17th he obtained pardon. (4) In the previous year, Abbot William Bradley, together with the Abbot of Winchester, presided at the General Chapter of the Benedictine Order held at Northampton on July 9th. (1414) (5) The Presidents appointed proctors to represent their Order in England at the Council of Constance, which met in the same year. (6) At this Chapter Abbot William Bradley was made one of the collectors of the contributions paid by the monasteries, his area being the dioceses of Bath

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- (1) Cal. C. R. 1413-9, 298.
 (2) ibid, 1402-5, 284.
 (3) ibid, 1364-8, 482.
 (4) C. P. R. 1413-6, 83
 (5) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. III, 260-1
 (6) ibid, III. 94 & 97.

and Wells, Exeter, Worcester and Lichfield with Coventry. In his accounts rendered to the next Chapter, he showed that he had paid 32/11 himself, in this triennial tax of a farthing in the mark (1). His expenses for this service were computed at 15/-. (2)

Together with the Abbot of Westminster, the Abbot of Winchcombe presided at the next General Chapter at Northampton, on July 5th, 1417, and, although chosen again to fill the same office in 1420 and 1421, he was absent from those meetings; his functions being performed by the Prior of Worcester.(3)

This Chapter of 1421 was convened by the orders of King Henry V. who informed the Presidents on March 25th that certain reforms were desirable. (4) The two Presidents then wrote round to their brother prelates on April 1st, summoning them to meet the King at Westminster.(5)

Abbot William Bradley, who, judging by his absence from the General Chapters, had been in failing health for some time, died on December 28th, 1422. (6)

The reign was marked by an absence of trouble and expensive disputes, except for the demonstrative bell ringing

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- (1) Chapters of the English Black Monks, Vol. III. 173
 (2) *ibid*, III. 177
 (3) *ibid*, III, 260-1
 (4) *ibid*, II. 165
 (5) *ibid*, II. 166
 (6) Landboe, II, xxviii

at the time of the appropriation of the Vicarage of Winchcombe, and this outbreak appears to have been speedily smothered beneath the weight of a Papal Bull. Property acquired, though not extensive, was by gift, and cost the Abbot and Convent nothing beyond the licence charges. The most valuable additions to the monastic revenue were derived from the two appropriations. That the finances of the Abbey were well administered is evident by the increased income shown between the years 1398 and 1402, when it rose from 800 marks in the former year to 1,000 in the latter; an increase that cannot be entirely due to the profits derived from the Vicarage of Winchcombe which was worth only 50 marks a year, and available to the monks only after the present Vicar had ceased to hold office. It is very probable that the real monastic income was far in excess of that revealed at the time of the applications for appropriation, as the monks were not likely to plead poverty on one hand and boast wealth on the other. The revelation of assets then, as now, was to invite increased taxation - at no time an incentive to advertisement.

The same upward trend to prosperity is evidently carried a stage further in this reign so that the succeeding Abbot was able to take up his cares with a lighter heart than had been the experience of several of his immediate predecessors.

CHAPTER SOUVENTIEN.

The licence for the Prior and Convent to elect another Abbot was issued by the King on January 2nd, 1423. (1)

The Chapter met on January 13th, and fixed the election two days hence. On the appointed morning, immediately after the Mass of the Holy Ghost had been sung at the High Altar, all the monks went to the Chapter House. Here the Gospels were brought forth, the Holy Ghost invoked and the Constitutions of the General Council "Quia Propter" were read and explained. The Prior then admonished all excommunicate, suspended, interdicted and disqualified persons to withdraw.

The actual election was very brief, for immediately, "without wine," all votes, except his own, were given to John Cheltenham. The Te Deum was chanted and, to the ringing Abbey bells, the Abbot-elect was borne to the Church, despite repeated resistance on his part.

After prayer the Prior requested a monk, James Cambridge, solemnly to publish the election in English to

(1) C. P. R. 1422-9, 16, and Landboe, II.3

the assembled clergy and people.

Sometime afterwards on the same day John Cheltenham was found in the Infirmary Chapel from whence, after repeated request and vehement excuses, he was persuaded to go with his brethren to the Chapter House and make his consent in writing. (1)

The Decree of Election was then drawn up by John Turry of Malmeshull, Notary Public, who attested that he himself had been present throughout the proceedings from the Mass to the written signification of assent by the elect, and it was sealed with the Convent seal that same day in the presence of William Ayze, Vicar of Winchcombe, and John Tewkesbury, Chaplain.

Notice of the result of the election was sent by the Convent to the Bishop without delay, together with a prayer for his Confirmation by Benediction and the bestowal of the Pastoral Staff, etc. (2)

On the 19th of the same month the Prior and Convent gave their sealed testimonial that the Abbot-elect was a monk of the house who had been professed by Abbot William Bradley, in 1409; that he had received all

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- (1) The details of the Process of Election are set out in the Register of Bishop Philip Morgan of Worcester and summarized in Landboc, II, xxviii - .
- (2) Landboc, II, xxx

Orders, including the Priesthood and that he was sound in life and learning, having studied at Oxford. (1)

The usual citation of opponents to the election was made in Winchcombe and neighbouring Churches; but none came forward, and the certificate to this effect was sealed by the Bishop's Official, John Buryman, on February 3rd, and it reached the Bishop in London on the 6th. (2)

The Bishop then appointed David Pryce, Advocate of Canterbury, to sit in the Cloister of St. Paul's by the Chapter House (with the leave of the Bishop of London) on February 8th, presumably to hear of any objections. On that same day the Bishop of Worcester confirmed the election (3) and four days later the King restored the temporalities. (4)

The Abbot received Benediction at Worcester on March 8th (5) and, on the 16th, the Archdeacon of Gloucester installed the Abbot in Choir and Chapter House and enjoined the brethren and 'conversi' to render him obedience. (6)

Abbot John Cheltenham was called to rule a community of only twenty; the number of monks showing an increase

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- (1) Landboe, II, 7-8
 - (2) *ibid*, 1 and xxx
 - (3) Landboe, II, 3-4
 - (4) *ibid*, 6 and C. P. R. 1422-9, 47 and 81
 - (5) Dugdale, 298 and Landboe, II, xxxi.
 - (6) Landboe, II. 4-6.

of one on those listed at the time of his predecessor's election in 1395. Their names are given in Bishop Morgan's Register and are as follows:- John Bryan, Prior; Thomas Overbury, Richard Wiche, Thomas Raggeleye, Richard Stanley, Thomas Cirencester, James Cambrugge, Thomas Norton, John Cleve, Thomas Brightwelton, John London, Henry Chalburn, John Tredyngton, William Winchcombe, William Navent, Thomas Tewkesbury, Thomas Gloucester, Thomas Elkington and Walter Hereford. These all took part in the election, but there was one other, Brother Chaddesley, who was away at Rome on Convent business and thus unable to respond to the repeated formal requests at the doors of the Choir, Cloister and Chapter House for his presence before the new Abbot was chosen. (1)

On February 18th the King awarded the usual pension on a new creation to William Alberton, clerk of the Privy Seal Office, tenable until the Convent found a benefice for him. (2) He held the pension until June 3rd in the next year when he made it over to his cousin Richard Hendre. (3)

The Abbot was apparently unwell soon after his election

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- (1) Landboc, II. xxix.
 (2) Cal. C. R. 1422-9, 56
 (3) Cal. C. R. 1422-9, 152

as he was absent from the General Chapter of the Benedictines held at Northampton on July 5th, 1423 and so unable to preside at its deliberations "tanta infirmitate tunc temporis detento" (1), but his proxy was accepted. (2) His absence did not mean that he escaped other offices, for he was made Collector of the Tax, (3) but he managed, later in the session, to secure his release and the burden was laid on the Prior of Worcester. (4) The same Chapter appointed him Visitor in the Worcester diocese, and instructed the Abbot of Evesham to visit Winchcombe. (5) His favourable report was rendered by his proxy, (John Cheltenham was again absent) (6), to the next Chapter, held at Northampton, on July 1st, 1426. (7)

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry Chichele, visited the diocese of Lincoln and inspected the Abbey's claim to the appropriation of Enstone in that diocese, giving his 'Dimmissio' on October 6th, 1424 at Olney. (8)

Only one case of heresy (Lollardy) in a country parish during the 15th century is entered in the Bishops' Registers, and that concerns one, John Walcote, Curate of

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- (1) Chapters of the English Black Monks, II, 159
 (2) *ibid*, 137
 (3) *ibid*, 139
 (4) *ibid*, 155
 (5) *ibid*, 148
 (6) *ibid*, 160
 (7) *ibid*, 166
 (8) Landboe, II, 103-4

Hazelton. In 1425 he was arrested by the orders of the Abbot of Winchcombe and sent to Bishop Morgan for trial. After admitting his errors he was reconciled to the Church. (1)

In response to John Cheltenham's request, Pope Martin V granted him the privilege of a Portable Altar on December 20th, 1426. (2)

Within the Abbey all was well, for the monastic finances were at last in sound order and its monks content. The Abbot of Evesham had reported very favourably to the General Chapter in 1426, but higher praise still was forthcoming from Thomas Polton, Bishop of Worcester, when he visited the Abbey on Oct. 16th, 1428. In his report, which John Cheltenham was proud to preserve in that record that he compiled and which now constitutes the second volume of the LANDBOC, the Bishop declared that he had found the Abbey "to be out of debt, prosperous, peaceful and an example to other monasteries and a great comfort and relief to himself." Because he was perhaps disturbed by the influence of the Lollard reformers, he concluded by exhorting all to abide by the

(1) Worc. Epis. Regs. Morgan, fol. 46d

(2) Landboe, II, 547

Rule and "to turn their eyes from novelties." (1)

Such a testimonial was a tribute, not only to the work of the last two Abbots, Walter de Wynforton and William Bradley, but to John Cheltenham as well. These three men had ably served their brethren and so completely redeemed the misfortunes that the times and Richard de Idbury and his predecessors had brought to the house that the monastery was enabled to complete the remaining century of its existence in a manner far more creditable than many houses of equal or greater importance.

The same Bishop confirmed the Convent in its tithes etc. on the exhibition by the monks of the Papal Bull discharging them from the necessity of producing their original documents. As this Confirmation is dated October 20th, 1428 at Winchcombe, it would appear that the Abbot and Convent entertained their Diocesan for longer than usual. (2)

In 1430 a bond of association was settled between the Abbot of Winchcombe and Prior William of Coventry by which a monk sent by either house was to receive the

(1) Landboe, II, 499-500
(2) ibid, 497-8

same treatment and privileges during his stay as he would have had in his own monastery, and if he should die he was to be accorded the same honours as a monk of that community.

When tidings of the death of a brother in one house reached the other, a Solemn Mass with Placebo and Dirige was to be said and the name of the departed monk entered in the Martyrology. If the head of the Monastery departed then his soul was remembered at Mass for a month and his anniversary kept. Every year the Mass of the Holy Ghost was to be celebrated for the quick and dead of both houses.

On the first visit after his creation the Abbot or the Prior was to be received with a Procession. Each Superior was empowered to absolve a brother in the other house during the absence of the Abbot or Prior of the Monastery, and precedence in Chapter might be surrendered to the visiting Prelate. (1)

During the interregnum that occurred after the death of Bishop Thomas Polton in August 1433, the Prior of Worcester was guardian of the Spiritualities of the diocese and he soon began his Visitations. He came to Winchcombe

(1) Landbooc, II, 548- 550
 About 1077 Bishop Wulfstan had formed an association between the heads of Worcester, Evesham, Gloucester, Pershore, Bath Chertsey and Winchcombe for mutual loyalties and benefits.
 Vita Wulfstani, (C.S.) xl.

on October 19th and stayed there for one night. The absence of any comments would seem to indicate that, like his late Bishop, he found everything entirely satisfactory. (1)

Two years later the Abbey and many other houses had the doubtful privilege of contributing to a loan demanded by the King, who, on July 9th (1435) undertook to repay the £26. 13.4 that Winchcombe had provided. (2)

For several years the Abbot and Convent had been spared the expense and trouble of litigation; but in 1440 a controversy arose between the Abbot and Benedicta Pryde, Abbess of Polesworth, concerning the tithes of Admington in the Parish of Quinton. The Abbess contended that they were hers at Common Law and that she had enjoyed peaceful possession for over thirty years. The Abbot emphatically denied this contention, maintaining that he had possessed them since the gift of King Kenulf and that he had been confirmed by Bishops and Popes in his ownership. The contending parties agreed to abide by arbitrators and their cases were argued by William Vance, (or Vauce i.e. Vaux) LL.B. for the Abbot, and Gregory Newport

(1) Sede Vacante, 430

(2) C. P. R. 1429-36, 467. Gloucester lent £40 and Cirencester £30

for the Abbess. The decision was given in the Abbot's favour, but he had to husband his demesne. If he let to laymen, then half of the tithes were payable to the Abbess. The adherence of the Abbess was guaranteed by the bond of two laymen for £40.(1)

The old association of the monastic tenants at Cow-Honeybourne with Evesham had been broken for several years by reason of the discord and disturbances that arose when they sought to assume their proper precedence in the procession formed on Whit-Tuesdays to go to Evesham Abbey. The people of the adjoining parishes proved to be so hostile that the Cow-Honeybourne people, one representative from each house, deemed it expedient to forego their rights and refrain from taking cross and banners. Though they no longer processed, they continued to pay the customary offering of a farthing to the monks of Evesham.

On January 2nd, 1442 Pope Eugenius ordained that, as the Cow-Honeybourne men had not processed to Evesham for the last 26 years, they should not now resume this practice yet they ought to continue their ancient payment.(2)

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- (1) Landboe, II, 543-5 for the ancient settlement see above, p. 7.
 (2) *ibid*, 537-9 and Cal. Papal Regs. Letters, Vol. IX, 1431-47, 279

The complaint of William Elmley, Cistercian monk of Hayles, that after living laudably within his Abbey for several years he had been unlawfully and unjustifiably imprisoned for about a year as an evil doer, only obtaining liberty through the help of friends, brought a mandate from Pope Nicholas V. which empowered the Abbot of Winchcombe and the Official of the Bishop of Worcester to compel the Abbot and Convent of Hayles to restore him fully to his rights and privileges under the pain of ecclesiastical censure. (1)

Illegitimacy and servitude had always been regarded as a bar to promotion to Holy Orders; but, unlike many other similar obstacles, it was avoidable by a Papal dispensation. Some time prior to 1452, the Abbot had received two men into the Abbey; one, Nicholas Upton, who was the son of a married man and an unmarried woman, and the other, Henry Staunton, who was himself a serf and the son of a serf. For both of these dispensation was obtained from Pope Nicholas V. on June 27th, 1452 by which they were permitted to receive all Holy Orders and to hold any benefice, with or without cure, wont to be

(1) Cal. Papal Regs. Letters, Vol. X. 1447-55, 307-8

governed by monks, and even to be raised to a priory or the abbatial dignity.(1) It is possible that the standard for the admission of monks to the Abbey was being lowered in view of the fact that between the commencement of this reign and the previous one the community had remained at almost precisely the same strength, and might even have shown some signs of decrease about this time.

The reign of Abbot John Cheltenham was brought to a close by his death in November 1454, after a rule of over thirty-one years. During his time the efforts of his two predecessors came to fruition, for his conservation of the monastic estates and peaceful guidance delivered the Abbey from the heavy indebtedness that had burdened the rule of many Abbots. To his able wisdom, rather than to the benevolence of laymen the credit must be freely given for this; as, with the exception of the Manor of Eycote and rights in Rendcombe, North Cerney and Woodmancote which came by some undisclosed means into the Abbot's possession at Martinmas 1429,(2) the grants of property were very few during this long reign.

(1) Cal. Papal Regs. Letters, Vol. X. 1447-55, 592, and see also G.G.Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion, Vol. III, 338.

(2) Landbooc, II, 509-10. The Earl of Warwick quit-claimed the Abbot concerning Eycote etc. Sept. 10th, 1429. ibid, 511.

For several houses and sundry small parcels of land in Alne, leased for 70 years to John Attewood and his wife and son in February 1435, the Abbot secured but a poor rental, 24/3 a year and heriots and suit of court from each tenement. He did however retain the right to refuse permission to them to sublet. (1)

(1) Landbooc, II, 562-4

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN.

I

When Abbot John Cheltenham died, the Community chose their Prior, William de Winchcombe, to succeed him. To this election the royal assent was forthcoming on December 11th, 1454 (1) and on New Year's Day the temporalities were restored to the Abbot. (2) It was a reign of twenty years of internal peace, save for one dispute over tithes; in contrast with the disturbed state of the Kingdom, so soon to be riven by the Wars of the Roses. The Abbot was called upon to assist his monarch in the early days, but his interest was merely financial. On November 2nd, 1457 William de Winchcombe was among those magnates deputed to examine ways and means of raising the money needed to put the King's finances in order and to meet the royal creditors. (3) It was the only personal service rendered and for the rest of his time the Abbot attended to the affairs of his House and those were by no means burdensome; in fact, the efficient rule of his predecessors had straightened out most of the problems and all that was required was a superior capable of keeping things together - a role that was well within William de Winchcombe's capacity. On October 3rd, 1457 the Abbot

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- (1) C. F. R. 1452-61, 208. (The licence to elect was issued on November 22nd. *ibid*, 199.)
 (2) *ibid*, 230. The Abbot received his Benediction at Alvechurch.
 (3) *ibid*, 390

and Convent exchanged 103 acres of their poorer land in Yanworth for 63¼ acres of pasture in the possession of John Clifford and his daughter and son-in-law, and the monks took care to stipulate that if they were at any time evicted from the new lands they might re-enter upon their original territory and also secure £200 in damages.(1) If such precautions were deemed necessary where some lay people were concerned, there yet remained a few still well disposed towards the Convent and prepared to augment its income. On March 24th, 1460 the Abbot and Convent obtained the King's licence to acquire in frankalmoigne possessions to the value of £20. (2) It was, however, the only grant of the kind during the reign of William de Winchcombe.

As a matter of fact the Abbey was anything but badly off for, sometime between 1454 and 1468, Abbot William decided to provide the people of Winchcombe with a church of their own. During the previous King's reign (Henry V.) the townsfolk had worshipped in the nave of the Abbey Church, using it as their Parish Church. Presumably their own, St. Peter's, being too ruinous for worship, though the dilapidated chancel appears to have been used as a chantry chapel. It was this Chancel that the Ab-

(1) Landbooc, II. 550-2
 (2) C. P. R. 1452-61, 600

bot restored; no doubt expecting the layfolk to follow his lead and rebuild the rest. They certainly commenced the task, but the £200 at their disposal was insufficient for its completion, so Ralph Boteler, Lord Sudeley, came to their rescue and finished the work. (1) Probably the Abbot was anxious to have the townsmen worship elsewhere than within the great Abbey; and, at the time, his action appeared both wise and generous, but it proved to be the undoing of the great monastic Church. When the Dissolution came the people of Winchcombe preferred to retain their splendid Church rather than to buy the vast Abbey Church unlike the townsmen of Tewkesbury and Great Malvern, when faced with a similar choice.

By Canon Law monks were forbidden to accept the cure of souls in a Parish but this regulation was often circumvented by a Papal dispensation. William Upton, one of the monks, secured permission from Pope Pius II, on November 19th, 1460 "to receive and retain for life any benefice with or without cure of souls wont to be governed by secular clerks, even if a parish church or its perpetual vicarage or a hospital and to resign it simply or for exchange as often as he pleases." (2) Such dispensations were seldom, if ever, issued before the fifteenth

(1) Leland, ITINERARY, VOL. V. 54-55

(2) Cal. Papal Regs. Letters, Vol. XI, 1455-64, 586

century, and even then were not common. In the next year the young King Edward IV visited the Abbey on August 26th, (1461), and soon pressed on to Oxford. (1) His troubles were his own and he left the monks undisturbed except that, out of the £38 a year that they paid to farm the three Hundreds and the Town, ten marks went directly to John Cliffe, King's minstrel, for life from November 5th, 1462. (2) In the next year, 20 marks were payable to Edmund Molyneux, an esquire; (3) and, four years later, another minstrel, was drawing ten more marks. (4)

The Rector of Hawling, Hugh Ward, disputed the sharing of his tithes with the Abbot and Convent and the matter was placed before the Bishop of Worcester, John Carpenter (1444-1476). By his award, dated April 13th, 1464, pronounced in the presence of the Rector and Thomas Twyning, Abbey Cellarer, the Monastery was declared to be free from tithe payments on wheat, hay, pasture, increase of grazing animals, wool, lambs, geese, porkers, flax, hemp, pigeons, milk, calves, eggs, apples, herbage, wood and brushwood on the demesnes in Rowell, Spoonley, Hawling and Cutsdene. On these demesnes the tenants were to pay their tithes and death dues to the monks, who al-

(1) O. P. R. 1461-7, 70.

(2) *ibid.*, 221.

(3) *ibid.*, 268.

(4) *ibid.*, 1467-77. 44

so obtained their right to the tithes, emoluments and death-dues of Rowell Church. The Rector received the tithes and death-dues of Hawling Parish and all the inhabitants in the area were to go to the Parish Church for the Sacraments. He was also allowed an annual pension of 30/- for his services and exemption from the ancient yearly payment of a similar sum to the Convent. Because he agreed to accept £3 then and there, the Abbey was empowered to withhold their 30/- pension from the Rector for two years. Thus concluded the last conflict between the Abbots and Convent and the clergy and people of their demesnes. (1)

For the rest of the reign of Abbot William de Winchcombe all was tranquil. The Winchcombe people had their Church under the Convent's nominees who were too insecure in their tenure to risk it by disturbing the peace; the monastic finances were sound; the government of the monks beyond reproach, and work and worship were performed without interruption, in marked contrast to the disturbed affairs of State. In short, the Abbey was fulfilling its true purpose.

Under the next two Abbots, Thomas and John Twyning, the Abbey continued to enjoy fourteen more years of quiet prosperity.

(1) Landboc, II, 540-3

Thomas Twyning was elected soon after the licence had been obtained from the King, on April 14th, 1474. (1) He had previously been Cellarer of the Abbey (see above, 1464). As soon as confirmation of the election had been received from Bishop John Carpenter of Worcester the order for the restoration of the temporalities was issued on May 22nd, (2) and the Abbot received his Benediction on August 22nd, 1474. (3) His reign was entirely uneventful and short, lasting but less than three years. The next Abbot, John Twyning, had been the Prior of the House. The licence for his election was issued on March 10th, 1477; (4) and the royal assent given on the 27th of the same month; (5) the temporalities being restored to him on the 8th of April. (6) He was one of the three Abbots chosen to receive the fealty of Thomas Compton, the New Abbot of Cirencester, on behalf of the King in December 1478. (7)

During 1480 the King was interested in building the Chapel of St. George at Windsor Castle. For that purpose he obtained quarried stone from the Abbot and Convent of Winchcombe, to the value of £100. This was taken

(1) C.P.R. 1467-77, 440

(2) *ibid*, 442

(3) Dugdale, II, 298

(4) C.P.R. 1476-85, 38.

(5) *ibid*, 33.

(6) *ibid*, 34.

(7) *ibid*, 131.

The Landboec II, confuses the two Abbots in one reign, Abbot John Twyning (1474-88) because of an error in Dugdale
(continued at foot of next page)

in payment for a licence granted to the monks on October 30th, 1480 to enable them to receive in frankalmoigne lands, rents, services and other possessions to the value of £20 yearly. (1)

Abbot John Twyning died in 1488, in the House of the Carmelites at Oxford, and the licence to elect his successor was issued on May 30th. (2)

II.

The Prior and Convent chose as the new Abbot a young monk of the house, Richard Kidderminster. He had been admitted into the Abbey at the age of fifteen, and four years later, November 6th 1479, he was sent by the Chapter to the Benedictine Gloucester Hall, Oxford. (3) He was thus about twenty-eight years of age when elected to preside over the fortunes of the Abbey in which he had dwelt for about five years after his return from the University. The Confirmation of his election by the Bishop of Worcester was issued on July 10th, 1488 (4) and, five days later, the King restored the temporalities to him after he had done fealty. (5)

It was an excellent appointment, for Abbot Richard Kidderminster proved to be the most illustrious of all

II, 298 (see above) where John Twyning receives Benediction.

- (1) C. P. R. 1476-85, 220
- (2) *ibid.*, 1485-94, 228 and Dugdale II, 298
- (3) Landboc, II, xxxii-xxxiii
- (4) *ibid.*, xxxiii
- (5) C. P. R. 1485-94, 237

the Abbots. He was essentially a man of affairs of State and Abbey, a great scholar, an eloquent preacher and an active controversialist without failing in those religious qualities that befit a true Abbot. His friendship extended to men of widely divergent interests and sympathies, all of whom recognized the greatness and wisdom of the Abbot.

The first outside task laid upon the Abbot was that of collecting the tax of a penny in the mark from all the Benedictine houses. This was levied by the General Chapter held at Northampton in 1486 to aid the King. By the time that he was required to hand in his returns for audit (1492) he had procured £517. 17s. 7d of which his own Abbey had rendered 65/6 and Evesham 112/10. (1)

King Henry VII granted, on March 30th, 1509 to the Abbot and Convent in mortmain the "manor and lordship of Sudeley with the advowson of the Church or Chapel of Sudeley and 20 messuages, 400 acres of land, 80 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood and £20 in rents in Sudeley, Toddington, Stanley, Greet, Gretton, (Catesthorpe) Throp and Naunton, sometime of Ralph Boteler and Alice his wife." (This former owner, who had assisted the townsfolk of Winchcombe to build their Church, had

(1) Chapters of the English Black Monks, III, 192-194

espoused the Lancastrian cause in the recent Wars of the Roses and so forfeited his estates to King Edward IV in c. 1469.) Also all the lands of the King within the said Manors and Towns, the Castle excepted, to hold for ever at fee farm by the yearly rent of £60 with courts and all other privileges and exoneration from repairs and support of the Castle." (1)

Three weeks later the royal donor died at Richmond, from whence the funeral started for London on May 9th, with great pomp.

When the funeral train reached Charing Cross the body was censed by the Abbots of St. Albans, Reading and Winchcombe (2) In the next year Richard Kidderminster preached before the next King, Henry VIII, at Greenwich, for which service he received 20/-. (3) This introduction to Court and the King's notice brought the Abbot into the royal service. In February 1512, he was given 800 marks to defray his expenses as ambassador to the Pope on the King's behalf. With him went the Bishop of Rochester and the Lord of St. John's, i.e. the Prior of St. John of Jerusalem in England. These received £800 each, for the 160 days spent in the errand. (4) While at Rome, the Abbot appears

(1) G.P.R. 1494-1509, 599.

(2) "Pre-Reformation England," Maynard Smith, 1938. p.5.

(3) V.C.H. p.71

(4) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. II. pt. II, 1449

to have preached at least once before the Pope.(1)

On his return, Richard Kidderminster was appointed to visit "various monasteries," including Durham and its Prior, Thomas Castell (1494-1519) in March 1513.

The next year saw the Abbot very much before the public eye. On Sunday, February 4th, (1514) the day before the opening of Parliament, the Bishop of London, Fitzjames, appointed Richard Kidderminster to preach at St. Paul's cross. The Abbot delivered an impassioned harangue on the immunity of clerks from secular tribunals; declaring that the "Act 4 Henry VIII, by which murderers, robbers of Churches and housebreakers were deprived of their clergy (status), unless they were in Holy Orders, was against the law of God and the liberties of the Church; that all the Lords who were parties to that Act had incurred the censures of the Church, and that all clerks who had received any manner of Ordres were exempt from temporal punishment. (3) The Abbot was fortified by a Bull of Pope Leo X. that he had brought back with him from his recent visit to Rome which declared that, both by human and divine law, laymen had no power over ecclesiastics. At the time, feeling was running very high in the City against the Bishop who had recently imprisoned Richard Hunne for

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. III, 154. King to Benet, July 10th, 1531. "...who has preached sundry times before the Pope!"

(2) Chapters of the English Black Monks, III, 234-5

(3) L. & P. Hy. VIII. Vol. II. pt. I, 351.

heresy and this man had been found later hung under suspicious circumstances. An uproar was provoked by the sermon, and when Parliament met, the Abbot was severely censured. The King agreed to a debate on the matter at Blackfriars on March 10th. There the Crown case was argued by Dr. Henry Standish, a friar-observant of Greenwich, who declared that the clerics had been tried in the King's Courts for 300 years. Abbot Kidderminster replied that "there was a decree of the Church expressly to the contrary, to which all ought to pay obedience under pain of mortal sin; and that therefore the trying of clerks in the civil courts was a sin in itself." The counter argument was that no decree of the Church had any force in England until it was received there. To this there was no reply that was not very dangerous; but a supporter of the Abbot, with more zeal than learning, quoted the text of the recent sermon "Nolite tangere meos christos" attributing the words to our Lord, suffering thereby the correction that they were not Christ's but David's! (1) This debate merely increased the uproar, and Convocation's summons to Standish to answer for his opinions did nothing to ease the situation. He sought the King's protection from the wrath of his brethren. Henry VIII, af-

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII. Vol. II. pt. I, 351, et vide Pre-Reformation England, 86-87

ter another fruitless debate at Blackfriars, summoned an assembly which included Judges as well as Bishops and other divines. The opinion of this gathering was that the action of Convocation in citing Standish, rendered the clergy guilty of 'praemunire.' In dismay Wolsey knelt before the King and disclaimed on behalf of the clergy any intent to derogate from the royal prerogative, at the same time imploring him to be mindful of his Coronation Oath and to defend the rights of the Church. Convocation ultimately tendered the King an apology and withdrew its attack on Standish. (1)

If Richard Kidderminster was on the losing side, he had, at least, emerged with a not inconsiderable reputation and undiminished favour with exalted personages. In the next year (1515) Wolsey received his Cardinal's Hat. Richard Kidderminster was present at the formal reception of that mark of honour. With him were several bishops and the Abbots of Westminster, St. Alban's, Bury, Glastonbury, Reading, Tewkesbury and the Prior of Worcester. (2) About this time, other great and rising men noticed him. Longland, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln (1521-47), the most eloquent preacher of his time, dedicated five of his Court

(1) Pre-Reformation England. 87-90.

(2) L. & P. Hy. VIII, II. pt. I. 303

Sermons to the Abbot in 1517, praising his "singularis eruditio" and other qualities. (1) At the end of 1519 and the beginning of 1520, Cardinal Wolsey made an attempt to reform the English Benedictine monks. For this purpose he convened a meeting of prelates at his Westminster house on November 12th, 1519 where the proposed reforms were discussed. As Richard Kidderminster was, with the Abbot of Westminster, presiding over the Chapter of the Black Monks, he is certain to have been one of those who were present. Wolsey followed this meeting up by instructing the Presidents to summon a Chapter at Westminster on February 26th, 1520 (2) and the Abbots sent the citations out on November 24th, 1519. (3) The Prior of Worcester received his in December, and paid the bearer $\frac{3}{4}$ for his services. (4) It is uncertain what exactly Wolsey proposed by way of reformation, but the monks certainly thought the terms too strict and nothing came of the plan.

While the reform business was in hand, the Abbot was also engaged in the production of a counter-blast to Martin Luther's teaching and reforms. This he published

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- (1) Dugdale, II, footnote 299
 - (2) Chapters of the English Black Monks, III, 117
 - (3) *ibid*, 119-20
 - (4) Journal of Prior Moore, (1518-36) 96

in 1521, under the title "Tractatus contra Doctrinam M. Lutheri." (1) In the late Autumn of 1525, Abbot Richard Kidderminster resigned his office, but he appears to have remained for most of his time at the Abbey. (2) Perhaps it was during this less busy period that he found time to compile the history of the Abbey and its Abbots from the neglected and tattered documents in the Library. (3) (See Introduction.)

Retirement did not mean that Richard Kidderminster lost touch with events, or indeed that he was permitted to do so. On October 21st, 1529 he wrote to Cromwell as follows:- "I beg you to write two or three lines of the prosperity and welfare of my Lord (Wolsey) and ye should do more for my comfort than I can express. You know my true hearty mind and service towards him and my prayers for his continuance. Our unkind neighbour, Mr. Huddleston, still continues his old malice against our poor monastery, regardless of my Lord's injunctions. I hope he will not forget his poor house of Winchcombe and I beg you to remind him of it secretly." (4) Richard Kidderminster, like Thomas Cromwell, remained loyal and friendly towards the tottering Cardinal in the hour of his

(1) Dugdale II, 290.

(2) L. & P. Henry VIII, Vol. IV. p. 779

(3) Dugdale II. 299

(4) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IV. p. 2677

great peril; but men like Huddleston, perceiving that the Abbey's great Patron's power was waning, took advantage of the situation to annoy the monks.

The question of the King's divorce brought the Abbot into the affairs of the Court once more. His signature was attached to a petition asking Pope Clement to hasten Henry's release from Katherine of Aragon, dated July 13th, 1530 (1) and he was marked down in the next year among "such persons as be well learned...and not abiding in the University of Oxford. (2) In a letter from the King to Benet, dated July 10th, 1531 proposing that the Divorce be committed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, it is suggested that the Abbots of Westminster and Hyde and the "late Abbot of Winchcombe, a man of remarkable learning and experience, who has been at Rome and preached sundry times before the Pope," should also take part in the proceedings. (3) The King was clearly not unmindful of Richard Kidderminster's favourable attitude to the question of the divorce nor of the fact that the late Abbot was respected at the Holy See.

By this time, however, the Abbot was in failing

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- (1) I. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IV. p. 2929.
(2) *ibid*, Vol. V. p. 6
(3) *ibid*, p. 154

health; after all he was at least seventy-one, and his active life must have taken toll of his strength. To Cromwell he wrote from Winchcombe on November 3rd, 1531 asking him "not to impute his neglect of writing to obliviousness or negligence, but to his great age and sickness." He intends to supply by hearty prayer for his welfare the omission of his duty in writing. The increase of Cromwell's honour and authority, of which he daily hears is more to his comfort than he can express...Cromwell's labours and kindness will be considered by the Abbot and Convent." (1) By this time Cromwell had taken over the Patronage of the Abbey, but it is very doubtful if Richard Kidderminster would have been so pleasant towards the Minister if he could have foreseen his later attitude towards the House and its monks. He was spared that revelation; for before the year was out, "he gave way to fate to the great reluctance of all who knew the virtue and piety of the man," (2) and he was buried in the Abbey which he had, so ably ruled and distinguished in his life. (3)

The sympathies of Richard Kidderminster were divided. He possessed friends among the restrained supporters of

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. V. p. 238

(2) Antony a. Wood, quoted Landboe, II. xxxv.

(3) Dugdale, II. 299

the New Learning as well as among the conservative churchmen. Colet and Erasmus were both on close terms with him, and between the former scholar and the fiery die-hard conservative Fitzjames, Bishop of London, (1506-22) he formed the only link, as those two were often at enmity but fortunate in that they shared a common friend. (1)

His wise rule and wide reputation as a scholar increased the numbers of his monks to 27 before the close of the century.(2) It has been said that "by his encouragement of virtue and good letters he made the monastery to flourish so much that it was equal to a little university." (3) If this was the case, most of the teaching must have been conducted within the Abbey as there were very few graduates among the monks at the Dissolution of the Abbey. "Without further evidence it would be difficult to say whether there was any such revival of learning at Winchcombe as 'at Canterbury. " (4)

At the Abbey itself some building was undertaken, particularly a "maine stone wall, ex quadrato saxo," (5) and in the Town several buildings bear his initials 'R.K.' to this day, as well as a door now preserved in the Vestry

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- (1) Pre-Reformation England, p. 455.
 - (2) Cant. Epis. Regs. Morton, fol. 171d.
 - (3) V. C. H. 71, quoting Brown-Willis, Mitred Abbeys.
 - (4) Gasquet, The Eve of the Reformation, 22-6.
 - (5) Ieland, Itinerary, pt. V. p. 54

of the Parish Church. The succeeding Abbot was fortunate to have the friendship and influence of Richard Kidderminster to support him for the first few years of his reign; and matters might have proceeded less stormily later, had the late-Abbot been there with his wisdom and valuable contacts.

CHAPTER NINETEEN.

The Conge d'elire for the election of the last Abbot of Winchcombe was issued on November 9th, 1525 on the resignation of Richard Kidderminster. (1) On the same day Thomas Ekynton, the Infirmarius, and William Omersley, the Precentor sought the King's assent to the Community's choice of Richard Anselm as the next Abbot. (2) This was granted on December 2nd (3) and, on the 18th of the same month the temporalities were restored. (4)

What was perhaps the last bequest of any fair value came to the monks on June 30th, 1528 by a Will made about six years before by Sir William Compton. He left to the Abbey "his wedding gown of 'tynsen satin,' to make a vestment, that they may pray for the souls of his ancestors," and £20 to be put into the "box of the Abbey of Winchcombe to make defence for all such actions as may wrongfully be taken against his wife or his executors." He also desired that two chantries be founded at Compton "to do daily service for the souls of the King, Queen, my lady Ann Hastings, himself, wife and ancestors." The Chantry priests were to be appointed by the Abbot of Winchcombe, or, failing him, the Abbot of Evesham. (5)

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IV, 779

(2) *ibid*; 'Anselm' was his name in religion.

(3) *ibid*, 805

(4) *ibid*, 813.

(5) *ibid*, 942. ('tynsen,' i.e. tinselled or gold embroidered)

The correspondence of the late Abbot Richard Kidderminster with the powerful Minister, Thomas Cromwell has already been noted. Very soon after Richard Kidderminster was dead, the new Abbot commenced to write to Cromwell, supplicating for the exercise of his influence on behalf of the Abbey. In his letter of January 12th, 1432 the Abbot desired Cromwell "to be favourable to me and my poor monastery in the matter between us and Mr. Hastings." The Abbey property was clearly at stake, but the law was not enough; influence was necessary as well, and even when that was exercised by one who was supposed to be favourable to the monastery it had to be gained at a price. The time was passing when the monks were a power of themselves; now, to an increasing degree, they depended upon the favours of influential outsiders to whom they blindly committed their cause, hoping for the best. So the Abbot goes on to write, "What direction you take in it we shall be glad to obey. If you think it a matter in conscience, let us pay for it, so that we may also have the land, as we have had it so long and the law is with us."

Cromwell could do much for those in his patronage. Of this the monks were well aware, hence the almost-cringing note with which the appeal concludes. "We thought to have seen you at Christmas last - you have

obliged us so much." His absence clearly perturbed the Abbot who hastened to add a postscript "I have nothing to send you now, but by Midsummer next, I will provide you with a good horse." (1) An after-thought perhaps, but not the least bit irrelevant where Thomas Cromwell was concerned!

When King Henry VIII called on the monks of Winchcombe to abjure the authority of the Pope in this realm he found them as willing to do so as were the majority of their monastic brethren elsewhere. There was not one among the Abbot and twenty-four monks who sought a martyr's crown on an issue between the Supremacy of Pope or King, when put to the test on August 23rd, 1534. (2) Not that the Abbot was a craven prelate; far from it. When the matter of the King's divorce was before Convocation on March 26th, 1533 few dared to take the side of the unhappy Katherine; the vast majority were for the royal despot, but "the Bishops of Rochester and Llandaff (a Spaniard), the Abbot of Winchcombe, and a couple of doctors of divinity (all except perhaps the Abbot, bound to Katherine by ties of service) seem to have been alone in openly opposing the divorce." (3)

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. V. No. 716

(2) *ibid.*, Vol. VII, No. 1121, (42)

(3) English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries, p. 112.

L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. VI, 311. (3)

The King's assumption of the Supreme Headship of the Church and delegation of the widest powers to Thomas Cromwell as 'Vicar General' bore hardly upon the Abbey. Cromwell was intent on harrying the monks everywhere, and one of the devices employed by him was to appoint as local clergy men who held views very different from those long cherished by the monks. To Winchcombe, Cromwell sent an industrious and violent cleric, Anthony Saunders, with instructions to lecture the community. Naturally the monks were unwilling to assist him in the dissemination of his doctrines; so, on February 3rd, 1535 this 'Curate of Winchcombe' wrote as follows to his powerful patron: "As you have appointed me to be a pastor at Winchcombe to preach the Word of God and read it to the monks, I desire you to help me of the manifold lets and burdens which hinder me in the performance of my duty." He goes on to complain of the size of his parish, with its population of 2,000 and the hindrances of the Abbot who allows, "any communication in his company and monastery, as long as not the Gospel." It would appear that my Lord Abbot only bore with his visitor while he confined his conversation to pleasant 'small talk'; but when the 'Curate' became earnest for the 'enlightenment' of his monastic parishoners, then the Abbot changed the subject or moved away.

Another of Anthony Saunders' difficulties was that the Abbot would not allow the schoolmaster-chantry priest (who also held somewhat advanced views akin to these of Saunders) to act as his assistant and so set him free to rove around the greater houses in the district where his views were most likely to be welcomed. Plaintively he concludes "if I am sent for by gentlemen to preach I cannot go because I have none to help me. Please appoint me a coadjutor that I may set forth the King's title (as Supreme Head of the Church) and pluck down that great "dur" (?) of Rome." (1)

In September 1535, Cromwell announced that he was about to hold a general visitation of the Universities and religious houses. But he had already practised for this at Winchcombe. The Vicar General was himself at the Abbey on July 26th, 1535. (2) He was by no means taking a rest from matters of State, but was accompanied by others who were gaining experience that was to prove of service when the general visitation commenced. It would seem that these gentlemen interviewed the monks separately and tried to find out all that they could about the Abbot and the rest of the brethren in a manner similar to the procedure

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. VIII, 171. ("dur", i.e. 'door' in the sense of barrier.)

(2) *ibid*, Vol. IX, No. 4

of an episcopal visitation. Winchcombe Abbey was not without some who were eager to air their grievances; in particular one, John Horwood, who generally used the name "Placet" or "Placidus" by which he was known 'in religion.' He was full of complaints and suggestions, and just the type of man whom Cromwell wanted; in fact, an ideal man to leave behind after he himself was gone - one who would report to him everything that went on in the Abbey.

It was not long after, that this "Placet" sent in his first of many such reports. On August 20th, 1535 he wrote referring to the recent visit of the King's Commissioners and that he had then disclosed some matters that "my conscience compelled me to speak of." He was anxious to know how far he could go in the matter the "ceremonies for exalting the Bishop of Rome" that troubled him. He followed this up by seeking authority to seize any books about Purgatory, and mentioned particularly one 'freshly limned and fair written,' of which the matter is but "dry dreams," also one that he considered to magnify the Pope to the level of the Holy Trinity. He then proceeded to make a few suggestions; that his brother Overbury should be commanded to preach the Royal Supremacy every Sunday before the Convent and have his chamber, books and fire;

and that he himself should have authority to compel every monk to preach it and teach it to others. (1) There can be no doubt that Cromwell found a very useful agent in this unctuous prig; but what a dull diet of sermons would the monks have had, if authority had been indeed taken out of the hands of the lawful Abbot and vested in Placet! The Supremacy of the King was hardly edifying to those who were already beneath the heel of his agent, Thomas Cromwell. However Placet stuck to his contention, even though he became decidedly unpopular with some of his brethren.

On September 9th, 1535 he was again writing to Cromwell. "For the love you have for the increase of faith and the destruction of Papistical creatures, set forth the word. The King is Supreme Head of the Church of England, next to God, to whom we owe love and obedience and his dearly beloved wife, Queen Anne, and all their posterity. The truth is not proclaimed so fully as it ought to be. I am counted a wretch because I have made a little treatise against the usurped power of the Bishop of Rome which I shall shortly send you. Some of my brethren are as glad as I am to do this."

Cromwell, when he was at Winchcombe, appears to have

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX, 134-5. ("This was pretty well for a subordinate. One asks in amazement if his request was granted, what amount of authority was left to the Abbot? Clearly none at all." Lollardy and the Reformation in England, Vol. II, p. 64. James Gairdner, 1908.)

made some criticisms of the importance with which the monks invested their three-fold vows, for Placet goes on to write, "At your being here you discreetly declared the efficacy of our three vows, in which we trust too much." There was a purpose, however, behind this flattery; he wanted concessions from Cromwell beyond the relaxations that his own influential position had wrung from his harassed Abbot, so he writes on; "Whereas it pleased you, considering my infirmity to excuse my rising at midnight (for Matins). I am informed by my master, the father Abbot, that this has caused some grudging in the Convent. He knows that I cannot endure the straightness of the religion; the customary abstinence, the frater and other obediences. Will you grant me, then, a capacity to take a benefice without changing my habit, if my master or any man can see in my wretchedness an aptitude to take a cure? My lord of Chester knows where I might have had a living if I would take it, but my trust is in you and my master, the father Abbot, who is very good to me. I have a cure, under him, of a little village, 40 souls. Such a thing were most quiet for me, which I may serve and keep my bed and board and go to my book in the monastery. Neverthe-

less the value of this cure is not £4 a year." (1)

Cromwell was now exploiting the dispensing powers formerly exercised by the Pope, and his agents were not slow to take the fullest advantages of this. Placet wanted both "to have his cake and eat it," for he desired the emoluments of a beneficed clerk as well as the advantages of his monastery where he lived, thanks to Cromwell, very comfortably, undisturbed by nightly offices. Clearly the little living already in his possession was not sufficient for him, and he had been casting his net far and wide for more money, preferably where he could still stay on in the Abbey.

He wandered about to his own advantage, or on Cromwell's work, and soon afterwards he visited the Vicar General when the Court was at Waltham, where he received some instructions and probably met the notorious Commissioner, Dr Layton, who was responsible for many of the most unpleasant and unsavoury reports on the monasteries and nunneries. When Placet came to make his next report, he refers to his recent visit and the deep impression then made upon him.

"You cannot love your servant Dr. Layton too well.

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX, 321 and 322.

I have diligently remembered everything you spoke to me when the King was at Waltham." He then goes on to tell of the success of his 'salvage campaign' among the shelves of the monks' library, where he had "sought out many wolde (old) bookys and ragyde pamphylions 'de Purgatorio'." Presumably these he consigned to the flames, well knowing that his "father Abbot, who is very good to him," was powerless to prevent this gratuitous destruction.

At the time of writing Placet was short of money and his device for means of obtaining some from Cromwell is both ingenious and amusing. Let his own words speak for themselves. "The Abbot of Winchcombe owes me £10. 13.4d which I give you with all my heart, begging you to lend me 40/- to save my honesty and pay my debts and place me where I may have meat and drink, or I shall be compelled to beg." (1)

Advent was drawing near and Placet, not anxious to undergo the austerities of the frater during that time of fasting, was determined to supplement the meagre monastic fare from elsewhere if he could coax the wherewithal from his Patron.

He was not beyond resorting to sly practice in his efforts to undermine the Abbot's position. About this

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX, 723. He signs himself "John Horwode, aliter Placett, secundum Papisticos." !

time he wrote a letter in the name of John Parsons, or on his behalf (at any rate, the handwriting is similar to Placet's) complaining that the Abbot will not allow the man to go into the town to earn his living. This prohibition is assumed to be due to the fact that Parsons "had waited on one of his monks in London, who by your command (Cromwell's) brought you certain books." (1) No doubt the Abbot was far from kindly inclined to one who had assisted Placet (for probably he was the monk in question) in removing parts of the library of the House. Parsons could be touched, but Placet, with his powerful backing from Cromwell, was beyond the reach of his master's discipline.

His discontent was growing apace, as the last letter that he wrote to Cromwell indicates. By the end of the year 1535, he was openly disowning canonical obedience to the Abbot, and was prepared, with Cromwell's assistance, to interpret the regulations in a manner entirely to his own convenience. At finding excuses to rove abroad, he was expert. "I beg you (Cromwell) to dispense me to instruct the poor people there (St. James called Gretton). [Probably this was his poor benefice of 40 souls] or in

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX, 1137

in any other place belonging to this monastery, to live for and obey their Prince as Supreme Head. I was never sworn to the Abbot at his 'installation,' nor ever intended to be, though I will never be disobedient as far as God commandeth me." Of course this last sentence was sheer humbug, as Cromwell must have known well that Placet had sworn obedience to the Abbot "and his successors."!

He then produces another excuse: "I beg also that I may succour my poor father and mother and visit them in their sickness, although the Rule be contrary. The people think more of unlawful ceremonies or breaking the Abbot's commandment, for which they require absolution of me, the ghostly father, than of true faith in the blood of Christ." In conclusion, he turns to complain of the many Psalms said in the Offices, fifteen before Matins. But how did that trouble him, if he was dispensed from attendance? Moreover he desires, "that no man be compelled to say Mass, or take any hire as trentals." (1)

If Placet had had his way, he would have done nothing at all in the monastery beyond eat and sleep there and go out and round the countryside feeding the people on the stale Supremacy of the Kingly tyrant. At last, he seems to have found his cure of souls and to have left the Abbey.

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX. 1145

He had signed the acknowledgement of the King's Supremacy in August 1534, but his name was not included among those who received pensions in 1539. Placet probably obtained his 'capacity' to discard the monastic habit and become a secular priest, as did so many of the inmates of the smaller monasteries that were being suppressed about this time. By so doing he was a trifle too hasty, for if he had remained with the brethren until the end, he would have had both a pension and a capacity. Possibly Cromwell was becoming tired of his agent's constant demands for dispensations and thought it better to place him where he would be less frequent in his correspondence. If this was so he was entirely successful, as Placet wrote no more.

The departure of this tiresome, disgruntled and whining monk must have been a profound relief to Abbot Richard Anselm; but there were others bent on similar lines, as Placet had already informed Cromwell. While these were probably but a minority among the monks, they were troublesome to a degree out of all proportion to their numbers. They were just as arrogant as Placet, not hesitating openly to rebuke the Abbot and to carry their complaints to higher authority.

On the same day that Placet wrote his second letter to Cromwell, September 9th, 1535 the Abbot wrote about one of his monks, Dan Peter, who was already on his way to Cromwell to denounce the unfortunate Superior for a technical offence. "On Tuesday last, " Abbot Richard writes, "I declared to my brethren the Injunctions sent to us; among others that the Abbot should read and declare to his brethren every day one part of the Rule which he had professed and refer it to Christ's doctrine. I showed them that this article pertained to me, and that, though I was not prepared to read it immediately, I should be ready to do so on Monday or Friday following. Upon this, the Wednesday (viz. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin,) because I did not read, my brother, Dan Peter, came to me requiring me to license him to 'cum on' (to you). I, demanding why, he said, because I have broken the Injunctions in that I have not read this day and because I had invited one to dinner this day, the Prior and also the Chaunter. This he showed me before all my brethren as the reason why he wishes to come to you. I submit myself entirely to your decision and so to order my brother if it may stand with your pleasure, that I may live the more quietly in time to come." (1)

(1) D. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX. No. 314, p. 105

Probably little correction was administered to brother Peter; certainly not sufficient to deter others from open rebellion. So the unfortunate Abbot had more to complain to Cromwell about, when he wrote again on December 7th, 1535. "On Thursday in the first week of Advent, two of my brethren, Dan Walter Aldelme and Dan Hugh Egwyne, ate flesh, contrary to custom. I called them before me and my brethren in the Chapterhouse and imposed penance, which they refused to obey, saying that they would eat flesh next Friday if they might have it. I told them that imprisonment was the punishment for disobedience, which they little regarded; and I have committed them in custody till I hear further from you." (1)

Did Cromwell support the Abbot? On the contrary, both these law-breakers were still in the Abbey four years later as his trusted agents, watching to see that the Abbot did not make away with any of the property prior to its confiscation! No doubt they continued to raid the larder or purchase flesh in the town during the periods of religious fasting. The friends of Cromwell, like Placet and other rebellious elements, could get out of their monastery, with the Vicar General's permission; but that was more than the rest of the Community could do. After the visit of Cromwell and his friends to the Abbey

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX. 934.

in mid-Summer, the restrictions imposed by him were very vexatious. The monks were virtually prisoners within the Abbey precincts. Accordingly, towards the end of 1535, they asked that the Abbot might have licence to take one or two of his brethren with him as chaplains when he went out of the monastery and that he might send any of his brethren to preach the Word of God abroad. They desired that the Abbot might receive women of nobility and others of sad and good conversation, being friends, mothers, or kinswomen to him or his brethren, to his hall at dinner or supper, and that women might come into the Church for divine service.

As the monks were limited (by the Injunctions) to the use of one gate, they reminded Cromwell that, of the two gates of the monastery, one opened on to the town where there was always a porter, and the other into the fields. If this were shut, corn and hay would have to be carried half a mile about. They also prayed that the Church doors might stand open at Mass and Evensong. (1)

Clearly Cromwell was intent on reducing the monks' influence over the people to nothing; for what could they do as prisoners, unable to go out to preach or defend themselves against the criticism of men like Placet, who

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX. No. 1170

seized every opportunity that freedom of movement gave to disparage the Abbot and his Rule? Even relations were forbidden to come to the House, and the Monastic services were denied to those who formerly came. The field was entirely free to that creature of Cromwell's, Anthony Saunders, 'Curate of Winchcombe,' who, not content with wandering around among the laity, intruded his person and doctrines into the monasteries of Winchcombe and Hayles. He was far from welcome to the heads of these houses, and they obstructed him with every device at their command. Of this he wrote to Cromwell on November 2nd, 1535, "Whereas you have appointed me to read the pure and sincere word of God to the monks of Winchcombe, to preach in the Parish, which is the Abbot's impropriated benefice, to "scrape the sur of Rome out of the hearts of men", and to set forth the title of our Sovereign and Master, our supreme civil head in earth of this his politic body of England, I have small favour and assistance amongst the Pharisaical papists. The Abbot of Hayles, a valiant knight and soldier under Anti-Christ's banner, resists much, fighting with all his powers to keep Christ in his sepulchre. He has hired a great 'Golyas, a sotle Dunys man, yee a greate clerke' as he sayeth, a B. D. of Oxford, to catch me in

my sermons." (1) It was a brilliant move on the Abbot's part. Anthony Saunders could scarcely object to uphold his own words after his discourse was ended. A few defeats where his new doctrines were concerned, especially in the presence of derisive opponents, and well he might retire discomfited to pour out his woes to Cromwell.

Where the Winchcombe monks were concerned he was in no better case. They found excuses to stay away from his diatribes; after all, who can blame them? They were quite as well able to read the Scriptures, and presumably they had been doing so before Saunders arrived on the scene. It was not so very long before this that that great scholar Richard Kidderminster had ruled the monks, and he would have been unlikely to allow them to ignore such a duty. What Saunders desired was that they should meekly imbibe and digest his own interpretation of Holy Writ. So he went on to ask Cromwell to compel them to attend on his discourses and to appoint a convenient hour in the forenoon for him to read to the monks. "They do not come in due time, they set so much by their Popish service."(2)

Anthony Saunders was a biggoted Protestant innovator of the worst kind, whose novelties and harsh views brought

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX, 747.

(2) *ibid.*

him into disrepute and even danger of his life. (1) Even the Sheriff of Gloucester, Thomas Bell, had nothing good to say of him and his friends James Ashe, Parson of Staunton, the Warden of the Grey Friars of Worcester, and the Bishop's (Latimer) two chaplains Benet and Garret. In a letter to the Bishop of London, dated June 9th, 1536 he protests against those 'Preachers' of the Bishop of Worcester, describing them as "disorderly and colorable." So they were, if Sir Garret's tone was any indication of the rest. In a sermon preached at Gloucester on the Sunday next before May Day he said, "if the Purgatory priests do pray with their tongues till they be worn to the stumps their prayers shall not help souls departed. (2) He also said that "the Mass was no help to departed souls." It was cold comfort for those who, believing otherwise, had made provision for such welfare for their own and ancestors' souls.

However, there was one among the Abbey monks who appears to have delighted in Saunders' sermons. He was Hugh Egwyn Cooper, one of the flesh-eating pair, and he praised him to Cromwell, when he wrote on November 2nd, 1535. But first he had to begin with a violent and lengthy tirade against the Anti-Christ Pope, passing on next to denounce

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. IX, 747

(2) *ibid*, Vol. X. No. 1099, p.463

a preacher at the Abbey who held contrary views. "This ill opinion our 'balyd bacheler' is not ashamed to preach openly in the pulpit, with many other ill opinions, as of Confession, which he advocated in a sermon on the 17th Sunday....By these means they try to prevent the sincere and pure preachers of the Word of God, as our parish priest Master Anthony, who takes great pains with us for being heard."

All this listening had unsettled brother Hugh Egwyn. He wanted to leave. Obviously, he was in the minority in his views, and the rest were not too sociable; so he begs Cromwell to deliver him 'de isto carcere,' for he was "enticed here by fair promises when not fully fourteen years old." It is quite likely that he was admitted to the Abbey at that age; so had Richard Kidderminster been, but in all probability he was merely one of the pupils at the Abbey school who later declared or shewed an aptitude for the monastic life, then held to be a not unusual vocation.

The letter concludes with a sweeping denunciation of his brethren. "There is nothing in their living sounding to virtue. Never saw less charity, more envy, less piety of living and more impurity; less quietness and more unquietness." He has known men not to speak to each other

for half a year, "yet they boast of their goodness. (1) More attention might be given to his views if he had been a man with greater experience of similar monasteries, but as he had been nowhere, except to Oxford, where he obtained his B.A., since the age of fourteen his slanders can be easily discounted; though the mud-gathering Commissioners must have found him a ready help. Incidentally he did not have the courage of his convictions and leave that 'evil prison'; as he was still there when everyone had to depart.

In the next year the Abbot and Convent were greatly embarrassed by the high handed demands of the King, who had granted a lease of the monastic pastures at Frampton to Edmund Coningsby, of the royal chamber, "to have the same to him and his assigns for 50 years." If that grant went through, the sheep farming, so profitable always to the Convent, would suffer; so the Abbot wrote to Cromwell on March 27th, 1536 "Please remember the bargain that is betwixt us and Sir John Allen, knight and Mayor of London, for our 'woles' (wools) for years to come, at a certain price, upon pain of forfeiture of our lordship of Sherborne. If we sell our leas and pastures where we breed our lambs we cannot perform our contract. Please inform the King of this and suffer us to hold our pastures or dissolve

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. VIII, No. 1367.

the bargain. (1) Only the intervention of a highly placed friend could ward off the demands of the absolute monarch, and for that assistance the Abbey was soon paying, as will be seen below.

When the rebellion known as the 'Pilgrimage of Grace' broke out, the King was glad to summon what forces he could to meet him at Amptill; but as the peril subsided these orders were countermanded by letters under the privy signet on October 12th, 1536. Thus the Abbot no longer found himself under the obligation of turning out his menfolk, but "meanwhile they were to keep a look out for seditious persons and strong vagabonds who may be scattered abroad by the defeat of the rebels." (2) With these same rebels the monks must have had the deepest sympathy, for they were contending for much that was to the advantage of every monastery still in existence after the recent suppression of the smaller houses.

The continual interference of Cromwell with the affairs of the Abbey has been noted. Hitherto this has been exercised in virtue of his capacity as Vicar General, but on March 13th, 1538 Cromwell formally accepted the

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. X. No. 564. p.221

(2) *ibid*, Vol. XI. No. 670

position of High Steward of the Monastery. On the following day the Abbot wrote his thanks for this signal honour and pointed out that the fee was "but £5" (worth, however, about £150 p.a. in our money). In addition to this, Cromwell could count on a "pratty manredde," so he would be able to have some "200 -300 men at his commandment to serve the King." (1) The post was really a sinecure, as it involved the holder in no other real duties beyond the exercise of his influence on behalf of the House. Cromwell was not, as a matter of fact, any better off, as he had received various gifts for his interventions before this: without which, as the monks knew well, little would be done for them. He drew 50/- for the half year on December 31st, 1536 (2) and apparently was still in receipt of a similar sum in 1539.(3)

The failure of the Pilgrimage of Grace quickened the activities of the Visitors to the larger monasteries; many of the houses being compelled to make 'voluntary surrenders' of their possessions to the King; the monks either going out into the world with pensions and capacities or, in rare cases, gaining temporary shelter

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XIII, pt. I, 505. (Cromwell was High Steward of several other Convents as well; e.g. Godstow, the Abbess of which informed him that, "the office is only worth 40/-, but it will place 25-30 men at your command." vide 'English Monks etc. p.58-9.

(2) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XI, Appendix 16.

(3) ibid, Vol. XVI, pt. 2.

in surviving houses. Among those that still stood there was a growing fear that their period of survival was very limited. Under these circumstances much business was conducted with a view to turning convertible property into ready cash against the day when the bretheren were turned adrift. This traffic in monastic property was not unattended with considerable risk, both to the vendors and the purchasers. The former were under suspicion and, anyhow, usually watched to prevent such sales and leases; and the latter were cautious where parting with their money was concerned unless they had an indisputable title to their purchases.

Winchcombe had made a grant of its London property to William Mounslow, mercer of London and probably a cousin or nearer relative of the Abbot, and Richard Rowndall, lawyer of the Temple, on June 23rd, 1538; but it was not concluded until the consent of Cromwell could be obtained. He sent his permission to his two agents among the monks, Dan Walter Aldelme and Dan Hugh Egwyn on December 31st, 1538 conditional upon the grant having been made without any "manner of craft or colour." When these two received this letter they were rather concerned about executing its instructions, holding up their reply for six days while they considered the situation. Even after that interval

they dared not proceed for several reasons, as they pointed out to Cromwell in their letter on January 13th, 1539. These objections were: (a) "because it might interfere with a bargain of wools made between Sir John Allen and the Convent; (b) because they do not know what Cromwell means by the words 'colour or craft;' (c) because one of them was bound in £3,000 and the other in £2,000, to procure no such letters before any surrender or suppression; (d) and because they perceive crafty conveyance between the Abbot and them." They suggest that Cromwell's servant, Mr. Draycote, should be directed to examine the whole matter. (1)

The reasons advanced by these timorous agents were not very sound. The sale of property to another wool merchant when they were having business dealings with a leading figure in that trade was perhaps tactless but hardly of great moment. The enormous sums of their bonds would certainly make for caution, but it was a little late in the day to commence seeing 'crafty conveyance.' Obviously, they were only too anxious to shelve the whole matter on to the shoulders of Mr. Draycote. Very soon afterwards the Abbot was writing to Cromwell in great distress on receipt of his letter of January 21st, 1539 probably concerning the above transaction.

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XIV. pt. I, No. 63

The Abbot sent his reply that same day by brother William Jerome, late Cellarer. He was clearly much concerned about something and his short note is decidedly cringing in tone. "If he be found an offender," he writes, "he prays God send him condign punishment," and then he proceeds to beg favour for the monastery. (1)

The Abbot may just as well have left the last sentence unwritten. The fate of the Abbey was sealed and the vultures were gathering to tear the carcass apart, as soon as the death blow had fallen. Bishop Latimer knew well what was in the air and he was anxious for his friends to do well when the time came; and even before, if it were possible. He wrote from Hartlebury to Cromwell on January 18th, 1539 to put in a good word for his friend Squire Tracy. "He wishes "that there were many like Mr. Tracy, as he is given to hospitality, and always ready to serve the King on commissions and other ways." He wanted Cromwell to write to the Abbot and Convent of Winchcombe "that he (Tracy) may have his lease of the demesnes renewed, as others have, without condition." (2) On August 24th, 1539 Mr. Richard Tracy had his lease and wrote to tell Cromwell that he had secured all the demesnes, with barns and implements of husbandry for £40

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XIV, pt. I. No. 108.

(2) *ibid*, No. 84.

yearly, according to the extent in the King's records of the valuation of monasteries." He had done very well indeed for himself, but what a poor outlook it would have been for the monks had they had a real opportunity of continuing in their Abbey!

However, Tracy, and many of the monks believed that the end was near and he was only too anxious to secure what else he could for himself; so he went on to request that, "if the Convent surrender, which some think they are minded to do, he wishes to have the mansion place, with houses of office and garden, either for rent or purchase as he has no dwelling with tillage." (1)

On receipt of Cromwell's letter, brought to the Abbot by Mr. Draycote, Richard Anselm made a last desperate appeal for the existence of his Abbey. He wrote on August 17th, 1539, saying that "he trusts he has not done anything against the law of God and the King to merit the suppression of the monastery." (2)

He had not been guilty of any such misdemeanour, but that did not help him or the brethren. The King wanted the monks' possessions, and that was all that mattered - they

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. 14, pt. 2, p. 79

(2) *ibid*, No. 58

had to surrender and accept what they could obtain.

On December 23rd, 1539 two days before Christmas, the monks left their Abbey; and the religious life that had endured on that spot almost continuously for nearly seven hundred years came to a close. (1) A pious King established the monastery and a grasping tyrannous monarch swept it away and the bulk of its wealth into his own treasury.

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. 14, pt.2, No. 728

CHAPTER TWENTY.

I

When the King took the possessions of the monks of Wincheombe into his own hands he made provision for the dispossessed religious by assigning to them pensions of varying amounts and by granting to them permission to accept any positions in the Church normally occupied by the secular clergy.

The Abbot, Richard Anselm, surnamed Munslow, left his Hall, assured that he would draw £100 a year and 40 loads of firewood out of Depewood. John Hancocks, Prior, sexton and master of the Chapel was awarded 28 a year. This was considerably less than that awarded to his Abbot; but, whereas the Abbot was a great lord and had lived in his own splendid apartments with his many retainers in much state the Prior was merely an ordinary monk living the common life of the brethren, thus the provision for subsequent life was scaled accordingly. This same consideration determined the pensions awarded to the rest.

William Craker, senior Chanter: William Blossom, Almoner and Pittancer; William Bradley, Hostiler; Richard Freeman, B.D.; John Whalley, sub-Prior and Infirmarer; Walter Cooper, sub-Chanter; Hugh Cooper, B.A. (these last two monks were those who ate flesh in Advent);

Richard Boidon, Kitchener and sub-Cellarer and George Foo (or Roo) all had pensions of £6. 13.4d. The rest: Richard Parker, William Trentham, William Horwood, third Prior, Richard Williams, Walter Turbot, chaplain, Richard Bannister, keeper of the Library, and Christopher Chawnfat all had pensions of £6 a year by the award of the King's Commissioners: Robert Southwell, Edward Carne, Richard Gwent, John London, John ap Rice, William Berners, Richard Poulet, John Arnold and Richard Rich; dated, December 23rd, 1539, the day on which the Abbey was surrendered.(1)

Hayles Abbey received a visit from the same gentlemen the next day. The Abbot, Segar, twenty-two monks and seventy servants being evicted that very day. They too had their pensions; ranging from the Abbot's £100, to £1. 6. 8. (2)

After these labours the Commissioners were ready to move on elsewhere. On January 4th, 1540 they informed Cromwell that they "had despatched Hayles and Winchcombe and are at Gloucester, where they have taken the surrender and are travelling for a new order to be set there...will now go to Tewkesbury and conclude with the shire." (3)

What happened to the Abbot and his brethren when the

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- (1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XIV, pt. 2. No. 728
 (2) Transacts. Bristol & Glos. Arch. Socy. Vol. XXIX, (1927) p. 65
 (3) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XV. No. 19

great Gate door slammed behind them and they were adrift in the world which was already overflowing with homeless monks from all the great houses that the King had suppressed? They had their pensions and, presumably, some ready cash in their pockets with which to hire lodging; but some at least would want something to do and to live more fully than as idle pensioners. Fortunately we are able to trace the subsequent careers of a number of the ex-monks.

The Abbot, at least, had little to worry him; certainly far less than had burdened his life in the Abbey. The blow had fallen and no longer would he feel the suspense that had preceded it, nor be called upon to rule as best he could, turbulent and disobedient monks aided and abetted as they were by powers greater than his own. His feelings must have been akin to those of his brother Abbot of Beaulieu, who declared, "Thank God I am rid of my lewd monks."! (1) Now his money was his own, not so much perhaps as it had been; but enough to manage on. Things were a great deal more certain now. For a time he was without a living, but in 1541, the Crown gave him the Rectory of Notgrove. (2) To this was added a prebendal stall at Gloucester on November 14th, 1546; but, by

(1) English Monks, etc. p. 252

(2) Trans. Vol. XLIX, 86-7

taking this last office, he lost £20 of his pension.(1)
 On September 27th, 1554 he was instituted to the Rectory
 of Radwinter, Essex, at the presentation of Lord Cobham.
 These benefices he retained until his death in October
 1558. (2)

The Prior, John Hancocks, appears to have stayed near
 the Abbey, for Leland mentions that he talked with him; (3)
 but he too appears to have accepted a living in 1554, the
 Rectory of Shipton Oliffe, not far away, and to have held
 it until his death in 1562. (4)

William Jerome (alias Blossom) went further afield
 for his living to augment his pension. He was probably
 Vicar of All Saints, Canterbury in 1550, and died eight
 years later as Vicar of St. Paul's in the same city.

William Kenelm, (alias Bradley?) went to Quinton.
 His name is found as one of the witnesses to a Will, dated
 1547. He does not appear to have taken a benefice anywhere.
 Richard Michael (alias Freeman, S.T.B.) became Curate of
 Gretton in 1548, and then moved to the Vicarage of Ebring-
 ton which he held until his death in 1574. (5)

(1) English Monks etc. p. 251, n.

(2) Trans Vol. XLIX, 86-87; c.f. Newcourt, Repertorium,
 II, 479.

(3) Leland 'Itinerary,' p.54

(4) Trans. Vol. XLIX, 86-87

There is some uncertainty in identifying monks' names
 in 'religion' with their appropriate surnames. The
 Landbec, Vol. II. xxxv iii, differs from the above
 list:-

(5) alias, Williams.

Richard Angel (Angelus) (alias Parker?) became Perpetual Curate of Charlton Abbots in 1551. (1)

William Mawre, (alias Trentham) who became Rector of Preston-Bagot in 1555, and died in 1561; or (Horwood) later Rector of Madresfield in 1541-8, and Rector of Wormshill, Kent in 1548, until his death in 1568. (2)

Walter Aldhelm, (alias Cooper) became a Chantry-Priest at Hereford Cathedral from 1545 to 1548.

Hugh Egwin, (Cooper) B.A., stayed near his old haunts and became, in 1540, Stipendiary of Winchcombe.

Richard Bernard, (alias Williams?) accepted the Curacy of Yate in 1540, and took a wife. (3)

Walter Bede (Turbot) the Chaplain, went to Haselton as Rector in 1546, and took the Rectory of Stowell in 1559, holding it until his death in 1573.

Richard Ambrose, (alias Boiden) went as Curate to Cound, Salop, and became Rector of Woolstanton until 1572. (4) Another monk who did not go far away from the district for his benefice was Richard Martin (alias Banister) who, in 1541, became Stipendiary of Ashelworth. (5)

George Leonard (alias Rowe, Roo, or Foo) did not leave

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- (1) alias Freeman, B.D.
 (2) alias Blossom.
 (3) alias Boiden
 (4) 'alias Banister' in Landboc II, xxxviii.
 (5) 'alias Parker,' ibid.

the town of Winchcombe at all, but became Vicar c. 1541-59.(1)

Christopher Benedict, (alias Chaunfut or Chalfont) went to High Wycombe as Master of the Hospital there. His name would indicate that he was a native of those parts. He later became Rector of Upton, Bucks, (1546-53) when Queen Mary again enforced celibacy on the clergy, and deprived the married ex-monks of their livings and wives. This former monk of the Abbey was unfortunate as he had married. However, his pension would continue to be paid to him. (2)

Wherever the former monks had taken livings in the patronage of others than those by whom the pensions were paid, they were able to draw both the emoluments of the benefice and the pension. Thus ex-monks were decidedly better off on these terms than the clergy who had never been professed in a monastery.

Beside the Abbot and the seventeen monks to whom £250 a year was paid in pensions, there were others whose interests had to be met. In and around the Abbey ninety laymen

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- (1) The dates given are those listed in 'A Handbook to Winchcombe Parish Church' Meurig-Davies. The authority quoted in the above text gives 1544-51.
- (2) The list quoted above is taken from "The Dispossessed Religious of Gloucestershire," G. Baskerville. Trans. Vol. XLIX. pp. 86-7. I prefer his association of names and persons to that in the Landboec as foot-noted

were employed. These were 'rewarded' by the grant of a year's wages. (1) Some, particularly those engaged on the land in various ways would readily find fresh work when the new owners were settled in, but the domestic servants would not be needed to the same extent as in the days of the monks who were notorious for their swollen households.

In addition to those mentioned above several other people had received salaries or pensions from the monks. Their vested interests were compensated or honoured. Edward Draycott, Esq. the servant of the Abbey and Cromwell as well had a pension of £2 a year. Nine others also received sums varying from £4 to 13/4.

The monks and the above were still receiving their money in September, 1552, when a Commission enquired closely into the payments and the continuing existence of the pensioners, as relatives were not unknown to continue in receipt of the pensions after those to whom they had been awarded were dead.

By 1552, at least one monk had found his pension increased; this was Richard Boiden who became a Chantry Priest at St. John Baptist, Gloucester. When the chantries

(1) English Monks etc. p. 286 ff.
 There were 70 laymen to 22 monks at Hayles, and 144 laymen to 39 monks at Tewkesbury. c.f. Savine, "English Monasteries on the Eve of the Reformation," Vol. I. p. 221

were suppressed, he was out of office once more and therefore eligible for further compensation. It was not a large pension, £4; but with his first award of £6. 13.4, he was receiving the equivalent of about £320 of our money. When he became Rector and had the living, plus the two pensions, he was very well blessed.

The Abbot's reduced pension was also noted by these Commissioners.

One other pensioner listed with the Abbey servants ought to be noted. He was Humphrey Dicks, the Schoolmaster, who continued to draw his salary of £10 a year.(1) He taught in the Grammar School attached to the Abbey where six singing boys were maintained out of a grant made by Joan, wife of Sir John Huddleston. (2)

II

These various pensions and rewards made an impressive total; but the monastic income was equal to the charge. When the Abbey fell into the hands of the King the clear annual value was assessed at £766. 10 7/4.(3) Out of that sum, he could show a handsome profit. In fact, when the property was put under the Crown Bailiff and worked as a profit making concern, with no monks to support and un-

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- (1) The details of the above pensions are taken from Trans. Vol. XLIX. pp. 98-110
 (2) Savine, English Monasteries etc. Vol.I. p.231. e..f. V.E. II, 411.
 (3) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XV, 139,(1v) Nov.7th,1540

necessary servants to maintain, the income increased, so that, by 1540, it had risen to £945. 3. 11¼. (1)

What was the extent of the properties of the Abbey? In Gloucestershire the monks held the manors of Winchcombe, Twining, Sherborne, Stanton, Snowhill, Honeybourne, Dry-Marston, Admington, Yanworth, Hazelton, Rowell, Hawling, Charlton Abbots, Naunton, Framptom and Cotes-in-Winchcombe, and Sudeley; the Hundreds of Kiftesgate, Holford and Gretestanð; rents in Winchcombe and Gloucester; the Rectories of Winchcombe, Twining, Stanton and Bledington. In Oxfordshire they owned the manor of Emstone, and in Warwickshire that of Alne. (2) Most of these possessions, including the Rectories, were farmed out, so the monks had drawn a fixed income from those to whom they were let.

When the King's Commissioners went carefully into the monastic property, in 1535 they scheduled many of the sources of income enjoyed by the Winchcombe monks.

The quarry at Barrington brought in a rent of 6/8 a year. (3) Fulling mills are rarely mentioned in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, only 13 in all; but Winchcombe possessed two at Cotes, worth £2. 10. 0 a year. The revenue derived from the Abbey corn mills amounted to

(1) V. C. H. p. 72

(2) *ibid.*

(3) V. E. II, 459, c.f. Savine, p. 124

£6 19. 4d. (1)

The market at Winchcombe brought in only 3/- a year from rents of stalls, tolls etc; but it was probably farmed out. (2) The Fisheries in the possession of the Convent were a sound source of revenue, being valued at £4 a year. (3)

As the Abbey was responsible for the Courts of the Hundreds and Manors, the monks derived a small profit for their work. It amounted to about £4. 4. Od. (4)

The demesne revenue of the Abbey, excluding woodlands, was assessed at £142. 1. 8d (5) and a larger additional sum must have been forthcoming from tenants' rents.

From the Alms of the faithful, the monks derived £11. 8. 4d, which, unlike the rest of their income, was tax free. (6) At this time the shrine of St. Kenelm was no longer so popular or profitable. The income from this treasure was not worth entering up, unlike that of the Precious Blood of Hayles which brought in £10 a year to its custodians. The former shrine was quite eclipsed by the latter. (7)

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- (1) V. E. II, 460, Savine 126. Cornmills at Tewkesbury paid £18. 10s.
 (2) *ibid.* Cirencester paid the Abbey there £7 for the markets.
 (3) Savine, p. 130
 (4) *ibid.* Curial Income of Tewkesbury amounted to £28. 18. 3⁴d
 (5) Savine, p. 146
 (6) *ibid.*, p. 235, Tewkesbury, £36. 0. 10d
 (7) *ibid.*, 103. Thomas a Becket, £36. 2. 7., Walsingham £260. 12. 4d

Beside the upkeep of the Abbey, its monks and their many servants, there were others to be paid for duties performed. At Winchcombe the stewards, bailiffs, receivers and auditors numbered fifteen, (1) and their salaries, less keep, expenses and liveries, amounted to £21. 11. 2d. Some of these were, no doubt, but part-time agents who performed similar duties for other monasteries. (2)

The final totals for 1535 are as follows, tabled with other monastic returns for comparison:- (3)

ABBAY	General Income			Temporal Income		
	Gross	Net		Gross	Net	
Winchcombe	£ 812. 3 2¼	£ 759	11 11¼	£ 710 5 2¼	£685	19 8¼
Hayles	£ 407 10 7	£ 360	5 9			
Tewkesbury	£1478 7 11½	£1319	6 5½	£1057 15 3½	£990	4 2
Gt. Malvern	£ 453 4 0¼	£ 306	4 1¼	301 6 6¼	£239	10 6¼

The income of the Abbey has been reviewed at the time of the Commission and at the Dissolution, but no consideration has yet been given to the question of debts. The monks were, as a matter of fact in debt, but to no great degree. This is not surprising, for very few people would advance credit to a corporation whose existence from day to day was decidedly uncertain.

When the Abbey was dissolved there were four credi-

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- (1) Savine, 250; Hayles, 7; Tewkesbury, 47
 (2) *ibid*, 245-8. Tewkesbury, £55. 19. 3d; Gt. Malvern, £29. 4. 8d.
 (3) V.E. II. 456-61.

tors:- Rowl Morton who was owed £13. 6. 8d.; Anthony Ayleworth £20; The President of Corpus Christi, Oxford, £20 and Sir John Allen, \$536. The current debt was very small, £15, 3. 4d. When the end was in sight it is scarcely to be expected that the monks would concern themselves very greatly where their creditors were concerned; so the King's Commissioners had to settle the accounts out of the proceeds of their legalized robbery.

On the other hand, the monks were owed £20. 13. 4d, by the executors of the late Lord of Berkley for the wardship that he had bought from the monks. (1) Again in this case, the impending dissolution would be no incentive to prompt settlement; but the Commissioners, knowing all about the debt, were in an even better position to extort payment than the monks had been.

III

As soon as the monks had left their home the King converted their entire property to his own use and advantage. Portable property presented no great problems. If the report spread around the County by William Wodlow, who was seized by the Sheriff at Tewkesbury about February 8th, 1540 had any truth in it, "the King had a horseload of plate out of Winchcombe Abbey and portion of every rich

(1) Exch. Augm. O. M. b.v. 494. vide, Savine, p. 214

man of the town of Winchcombe," and "two malt 'syffes' full of plate were brought to the tallbooth at Tewkesbury, taken for the King from the rich men of the Town." (1) Certainly the Commissioners scheduled a "Myghter" (mitre) Garnyshed with silver gilte, Ragged peerles (pearls) and Countersette Steones," among the "Juelles Reserved to Thuse of the Kinge's Majesty." (2) Except, perhaps, for some books from the Abbey Library and small trifles, it is unlikely that the monks managed to reserve to themselves any of the treasures of the House, as the King possessed a good inventory drawn up by the Commission of 1535, and he well knew what was of value in the monastery.

Until the property was sold or given away, certain portions of the actual buildings were left in the custody of Sir John Bridges (Lord Chandos) and were assigned by the Commissioners to remain undefaced. These portions included "the late Abbates lodging leading from the Northgate to the Southgate of the Frayter with Kitchyne, Buttre, Pantre and lodgings within the same bounds. All the Lodginge on the West side of the Courte from the Northgate to the Southgate with Bakinge and Bruynge houses. The late Abbot's stable, Barnes, Oxhous and Shepehous."

The remaining property was "deemed to be superfluous"

(1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XV, 183
 (2) Landboc, II. xli.

and thus was soon destroyed including the "Church with the Isles, Chapelles, Steple, Cloister, Chapterhous, Dormytory, Frater, Fermery, Library with Chappells and Lodgings to them adjoyninge an alle oder above not reserved."

The main buildings were roofed with lead, a metal much prized. That remaining upon the roofs of the "Church Quere, (Choir) Isles, Chapelles, Steple, Library, Halle, Cloister, and Galery with Gutters in oder places" was estimated to amount to some 121 'Foders.' (1)

Ultimately the property passed to Lord Seymour, the first proprietor; and the demolition of all the buildings went on apace notwithstanding the assignment to maintain certain sections. When the roof was gone, the elements soon began to ruin the interior. To natural destruction was soon added the activities of the local human agents, and several testimonies to their work are still to be discerned incorporated in various buildings still standing in and around the town.

When Browne Willis visited the site in 1714 it was so levelled and ploughed that he found it impossible to conjecture the precise lay-out. (2)

To Sir Thomas Pope, of London, a grant in fee for £1204. 3.4d was made in June 1540, whereby he obtained the

(1) Landboe, II. xli. A foder - about 2,400 lb.
 (2) ibid.

Manor or Lordship of Enston, Oxon, except the Rectory. (1)

Sir John Bridges, the "King's Fermor," obtained a twenty-one years' lease of the "mansion called Corneden, alias Cornedon, in Winchcombe Parish, and pasture upon Cornedene Hill, a messuage called 'le Amery' and pasture upon the downs of Charlton Abbots, and the common of Snoweshyll, Gloucestershire, and certain parcels of the demesne lands of Sudeley Manor," on July 2nd, 1540. (2)

Sherborne was leased to Sir John Allen and, in 1551, it was sold to Thomas Dutton, ancestor of the present Lord Sherborne. (3)

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- (1) L. & P. Hy. VIII, Vol. XV, 831. (14)
(2) *ibid*, Vol. XVI, p. 721.
(3) Landbooc, II, xlii-xliii.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE.

Conclusion.

After reading the foregoing chapters of this history an impression might have formed that the monks of Winchcombe Abbey were, on the whole, a tight-fisted land and property grasping community of men far more concerned with the increase and retention of their worldly possessions and the defence of their rights and privileges than with the diligent and worthy discharge of those obligations and functions by which alone their manner of life could be justified.

In support of this contention their great possessions, the appropriation of benefices in their patronage and their treatment of tenants and others within their demesnes is cited as evidence.

But all these features were characteristic of and common to all monastic bodies of similar or greater size whose history has been investigated. That all other communities acted in the same manner is, of course, no defence against the charge of worldliness; but it is, in part at least, an explanation. The conduct of monastic business, the lives of Abbots and monks and the discharge of religious duties must be judged by the standards and conditions obtaining at the time and not by present day

ideas of how and what the monks ought or ought not to have done. The prevailing fashions of those times in such matters exercised a much more profound influence over the minds of the monks and everyone else than did the stricter ideals of simplicity and poverty that once attracted and inspired their remote brethren. To the strictures and lamentations of critics the monks were deaf, for these were voiced, as a rule, long after the offenders had been rolled in their robes and laid to rest.

In considering the lives and activities of the monks, it is always necessary to remember that they were not members of an exotic and alien clique foisted on to a populace with whom they were absolutely out of touch and sympathy. Rather the contrary, for centuries the monks were a legitimate and integral part of everyday society. Their presence and work excited none of the wonder and comment then that is associated with and aroused by monks in modern England. The black-robed Benedictines passed to and fro in Winchcombe without the least attention being paid to them, for they were part and parcel of the life of the community. Everyone knew of their manner of life, its aims and ideals were fully understood, and, for the most part, deeply respected.

Not a few men from the town and district embraced the monastic state, as the names of Abbots and monks so

amply testify. This form of life was, and remained for centuries, worthy of the most careful consideration by any young man who was starting out in life. If he possessed the qualifications requisite at the time, life in Winchcombe Abbey usually offered many attractions and to the acceptance of the tonsure he would often be urged by parents and relatives who were not indifferent to the real value of the religious life and the degree of respect and veneration which it commanded in the popular estimation and, perhaps in some cases, not least to those advantages and benefits that might accrue to themselves by reason of the association thereby established with the greatest land-owning body in the district.

Such a corporation, composed not of strangers and foreigners but of the sons of the townsmen and such as dwelt on the Abbey demesnes, possessed an intimate knowledge of the district and the people in it. This close association with the people was at once a great asset and liability; for while the Abbot and Convent could sum up any given situation accurately and act accordingly, the way lay open to the abuse of favouritism towards such as stood in close relationship to the more influential members of the Convent. Most of the lesser dealings and acquisitions must be interpreted in the light of this intimacy between monks and people. Contacts so close brought much

of the smaller property into the possession of the Abbey. When the time came for local laymen to make their Wills and provide for the pious benefactions that custom demanded, few were likely to be unmindful of the great Abbey that dominated the town and in which their sons and friends served.

Moreover, the monks were well informed where opportunities for a quick business deal were present. How otherwise, could Prior Thomas have been so prompt in taking up the land on which he could engage in speculative building, c. 1206; or be aware of just the right moment in which to offer relief to 'hard up' neighbours in exchange for their remaining assets? This knowledge of local affairs worked both ways. The people knew their monks. When a hard-pressed countryman had to raise money on his lands, it was to the monks that he turned for a fair deal, even from the out-lying places like Cutsdean and Toddingten.

When consideration is turned to the larger possessions from which the monks received most of their income, it will be seen that many of these were received by them at the foundation of the house. Why should they not be so endowed? After all, the monks did not ask to come to Winchcombe in the first instance. It was because King Kenulf wanted a splendid Abbey and, perhaps a community as large

as three hundred, that he established them there. They were designed to add lustre to his Mercian capital, and why should he do this cheaply? If he founded an Abbey, then it was his bounden duty to see that the monks did not starve. Provision had to be on an adequate scale, according to the standards of life prevailing at the time. Certainly some 105½ hides dotted around a large area were not an over-lavish endowment, as Abbot Richard Kidderminster afterwards pointed out.

Later, acquisitions were made, but every one of them was by honest purchase at prices that were rarely, if ever, bargains. Hawling, Haselton and Yanworth manors cost the monks £208 and a rent of £9 a year in 1221; Dry Marston manor was no gift at £753. 6. 8d, in 1250; and Rowell manor cost £20 a year and, in all probability, the manor of Bledington was thrown in as well, in 1319. To these manors the monks were fully entitled, as rightfully as any possessed by the lay lords, so that the complaints of jealous laymen and future critics have little sound substance. By these purchases the monks were enabled to meet some of the many charges made upon them and at no time does income appear to have greatly exceeded expenditure. In the Domesday Survey the Abbey income was about £72; in 1194 it stood at about £59. 15. 11d for the half year leaving a credit balance of only £3 10. 6d, but

that was probably the result of a good season; in 1291, the assessment for Pope Nicholas was £110. After this the large acquisitions began to augment the income and it rose, in 1398, to £533.6.8d; by 1402 it was still higher, at about £666. 13. 4d. When the Commissioners 'took stock' in 1535, they assessed the net general income at £759. 11. 11½d, and by the end of 1539, the income stood at £766. 10. 7½d. These figures would probably represent as much as thirty times their value in our present day money.

That the above incomes were derived through harsh pressure exerted by cold-blooded business men on poor tenants, is most unlikely, for when a real business man, the Crown Bailiff took over, after the departure of the monks, he soon wrung a higher income from the estates, despite the leasing on easy terms of many of the lands by the monks. His figures in 1540 showed a profit of £945. 3.11½.

The monks had many charges upon the income, not least for their own maintenance in a world in which the standards and cost of living were steadily increasing. The community, after the first dispersal must have been few in number; and also about the early twelfth century, if the state of the other monasteries is any indication of that obtaining

at that time in Winchcombe. When, after the fire of 1151, the monks were homeless the numbers are unlikely to have shown an increase. From 1352, when there were twenty in the Abbey, the numbers remained fairly constant:- twenty in 1395; one more in 1423; twenty-six, when the Commissioners came round in 1535; and eighteen, when the monks were sent away.

In addition to the monks there were many officials of high rank responsible for stewardship and accounts. These had to be paid and losses met when these same officials failed to carry out their duties in a proper manner. In and around the Abbey was an enormous retinue of servants, all drawing wages and many living on the premises. Corrodians, pensioners and the old soldiers, clerks and others sent by Pope, King and Bishop had to be provided with money and/or board and lodging. Many pilgrims came to the Abbey and received hospitality, and the poor had much regular and intermittent assistance. All these claims had to be met out of the income.

Moreover, the upkeep of the Abbey and Church was a very great expense. After every disaster repairs were necessary. When the Church was struck by lightning in 1091, the tower and interior needed restoration. The fire in 1151 meant that an entirely new Abbey and Church had to be built and the work was still in hand in as late as 1206.

When the ecclesiastical fashions demanded a Lady Chapel, the monks built one in the Churchyard, in about 1275, and twenty-five years later it was thought well to vault the Church ceiling and add side chapels. After the great whirlwind in 1364, the monks had to turn to extensive restoration work again.

While all these current and other irregular expenses were being borne, Popes and Kings demanded money in by no means inconsiderable amounts. Did not Abbot Walter de Wickewane lament the presentation of several demands in one single year, amounting sometimes to as much as £1, 500?

In such times of financial stress, to what other source of additional income could the monks turn than to the benefices in their patronage? These were 'fair game.' Shorborne was appropriated in 1224; Enstone in 1307; Twining in 1379, after a period of Abbatial misrule; Winchcombe in 1398 and Bledington in 1402. Usually a competent sum was reserved for the poor parishioners and a stated amount for the Perpetual-Vicars who followed the last of the Rectors, and the Convent had the rest. If this method of raising money is regarded today as mere exploitation it was not looked upon as such in those times. Every other Abbey did the same and, in some cases, appropriated every one of their benefices.

Winchcombe, however, left some Rectories, e.g. Hawling. Precedents in plenty existed for profit making out of churches. The lay lords had been doing it for years, just because their ancestors had built the churches on their manors and regarded them as revenue producing concerns. Without doubt the parishoners of a parish Church that had been appropriated by an Abbey were as well, if not better off than their fellows where a lay lord secured a clerk to 'run' the church in his interests and at the lowest possible cost to himself.

The monks appear to have treated the clergy fairly well. What lay lord could have been persuaded to receive into his house and make provision for a clerk whom he had presented to a benefice when that clerk could no longer hold office because his affairs had become hopelessly insolvent? Yet the monks of Winchcombe thus provided for the Rector of Twining and Bledington in 1276. If the Abbots and Convent had already proved themselves unduly harsh towards the clergy would so many of them have bought corrodies in the Abbey? Men do not pay for their retirement in old age in an uncongenial atmosphere.

Monastic money raising was not, as a rule, a soulless affair. Often the monks would reduce rents and soften their terms in cases of evident necessity; but where the monks do appear to have been after their 'pound of flesh,' and

sometimes they were, the attitude arose from their corporate consciousness. As a community they had long held their possessions and they fully expected to continue in that tenure indefinitely. They were very conscious of their responsibilities to the past and the future and proud of it, particularly where hard-won rights and privileges were concerned. Thus, on occasions, they proved very tenacious, and tended to lag behind the lay lords in making concessions that the changing times demanded. Everywhere, monastic bodies were extremely conservative so that, when the tempo of progress increased, conflicts ensued between the people who demanded liberties and rights and the monks who desired to remain firmly on the old terms. These divergent views and the struggles to make them realities furnish the main causes of the outbreaks of lawlessness that have been noted from time to time; particularly when plagues and economic distress had weakened restraint among the unfortunate tenants and others in the monastic demesnes.

For the raising of the monastic income and its prudent expenditure the Abbots were ultimately responsible, as superiors of the monastery. Prior to c. 1180, when the separation of the Abbatial and Conventual revenues took place to avoid the sequestration of the entire monastic income during an interregnum, the connection of the Abbots with all the

finances was more intimate, but always their counsel and example set the pace for the rest of the monastic business men. Although these Abbots were the spiritual heads and carried out their religious duties, on the whole, very well, they were usually sound financiers as well; contrary to the general impression that spiritual minds are often incapable of conducting worldly affairs. Abbot Crispin for instance possessed a first hand knowledge of the Abbey's estates. But even the best of the Abbots were not without their faults. Walter de Wickewane who, possibly, did more for the Abbey than any other Abbot was probably guilty of nepotism. Did he not present his very juvenile kinsman to Hawling Rectory and place other relatives into monastic property on very easy terms? Richard Kidderminster, whose tremendous learning shed much lustre on the monastery, spent far too much of his time in the royal service. But when Abbots were weak or frankly wicked, the state of the Abbey soon reflected the effects of their misrule. A sequence of such reigns, as those of Richard de Idbury and William de Sherborne, almost ruined the Abbey morally and materially. Two at least of the monks were thoroughly out of hand and house; and the finances had to be taken over by four laymen because they had been so neglected and misused by the Abbots and their accomplices among the obedient-aries. When Robert de Ipwel, a monk of the house, could

not restore order as Abbot, stronger measures were necessary and the Bishop appointed as Abbot a monk from outside, Walter de Wynforton, who was able to restore everything and put the Abbey on the firm foundation that endured to the end.

In times like the above, the Bishops were often compelled to intervene, and it was well for the Abbey that they were entitled to do so. Had the Abbey gained exemption from episcopal visitations there would have been little possibility of sufficiently speedy interference from elsewhere to avert disaster. As it was, Bishops were able to frame ordinances and remove at least two of the less worthy Abbots. Inefficient and weak as some of them were, only one Abbot, William de Sherborne, was charged with serious offences. Compared with many other Abbeys of similar age, Winchcombe was fortunate in its chief officers.

Of the next grade in the monastic system, the Priors, little is known. Priors Thomas and Gervase were busy in the conduct of affairs during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries; but, for the most part, it was not until some of the Priors became Abbots that the names, characters and great qualities of these men were recognized.

Of the monks practically nothing is known. One can count their numbers at infrequent intervals; but, except

for the occasional admission of a lad into the Convent with his dowry, or where one breaks out or conflicts with the law, they remain at most, just names of men swallowed up in the silence of the cloister.

That silence is as it should be. Men do not enter on the religious life seeking publicity. Their service and life is hidden with God and all activity dedicated to that end. The very nature of the religious life makes for silence. Against that silence, stands out every business dealing and legal dispute. These latter affairs receive notice and have chief place in any history; the real life and work of the monks went on continuously without comment. While Abbots ascended to and descended from their stalls, and Kings came and went, the monks filed seven times at least in a day into the great Church for Masses and Offices. That life of silence and devotion was not one that made an appeal to many minds at any one time and, as time went on, it appealed less in the face of increasing opportunities and counter attractions; but always it demands recognition and respect, and of this most of the monks at Winchcombe were well worthy. When they were not, then the Bishop stepped in and restored the true level of devotion again. When the early age at which many were received, probably for education, into the Abbey and taken straight on into the

Convent without much choice is taken into account, it is remarkable that so few became a disgrace to their Order.

It was when ordinary monks broke their habitual reserve and began to write individual letters to men like Cromwell that the end of monasticism was in sight. Under his encouragement of subversive behaviour, discipline was undermined, so that the monastic system might possibly have collapsed from within, without waiting for the death stroke delivered by the King.

The cause of the removal of the monks from Winchcombe lay far from the monastery; but the weakness that made the end possible was shared by Winchcombe as well as by every other monastery. The possessions were too great for those few men whose once great influence had declined. They were unable to protect what they held and people, shaken by the influx of new ideas and bewildered by the bold strokes of the royal tyrant, were unable or unwilling to assist the monks, as the broad acres, fine churches, and buildings with their costly contents were swept into the yawning treasury of a spendthrift King while the leaders of the Church bowed themselves before their 'Supreme Head', impotently or obsequiously beholding the destruction by him of their choicest and noblest citadels.

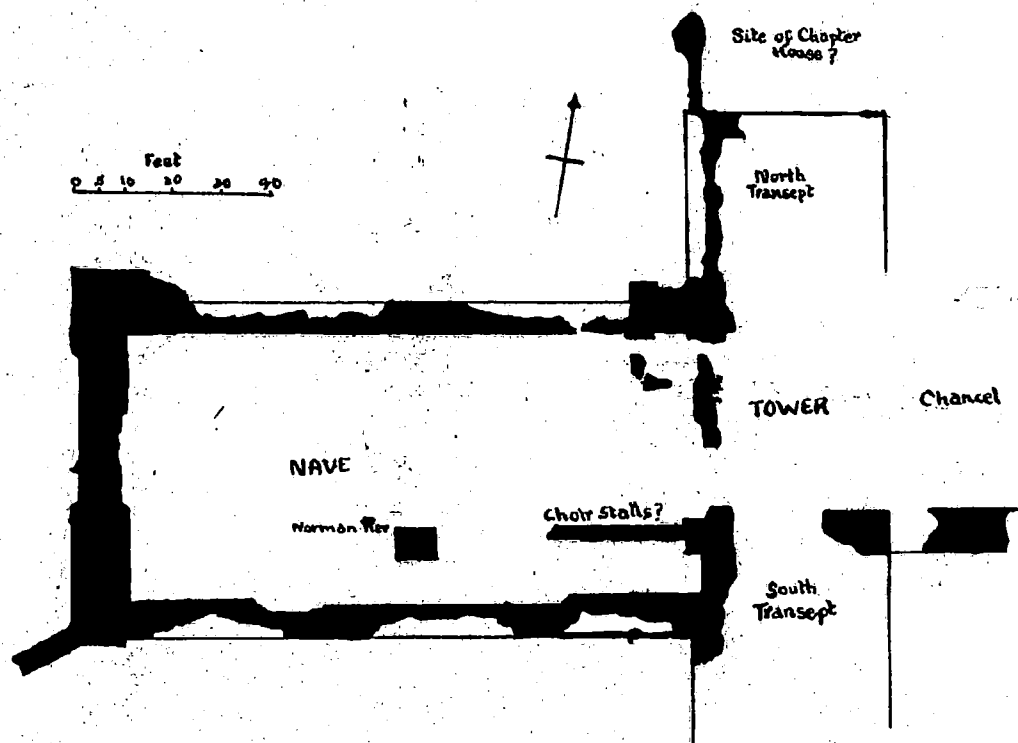
APPENDIX.

Excavations.

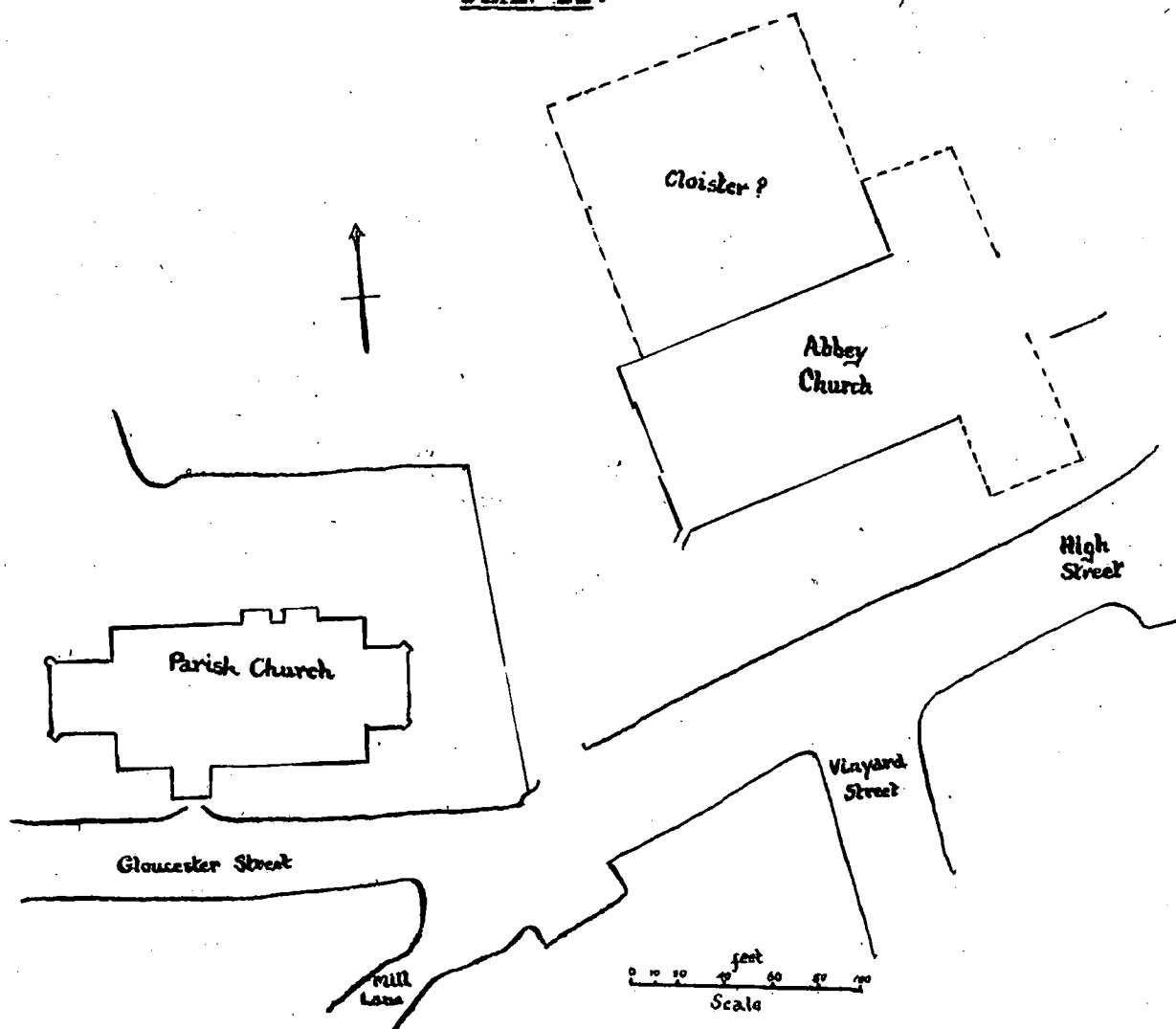
During the Spring of 1893 Mr. E. P. Loftus Brock F.S.A., carried out some excavations on what he conjectured to be the site of the Abbey. Preliminary trenching revealed the presence of considerable foundation work. This was exposed as far as practicable and furnished the general outline of the nave, parts of the transepts and a fragment of the chancel. All traces of the precise position of the other buildings were obliterated, chiefly under great masses of plaster and other waste. (1)

PLAN I.

The Foundations
as excavated. (1)

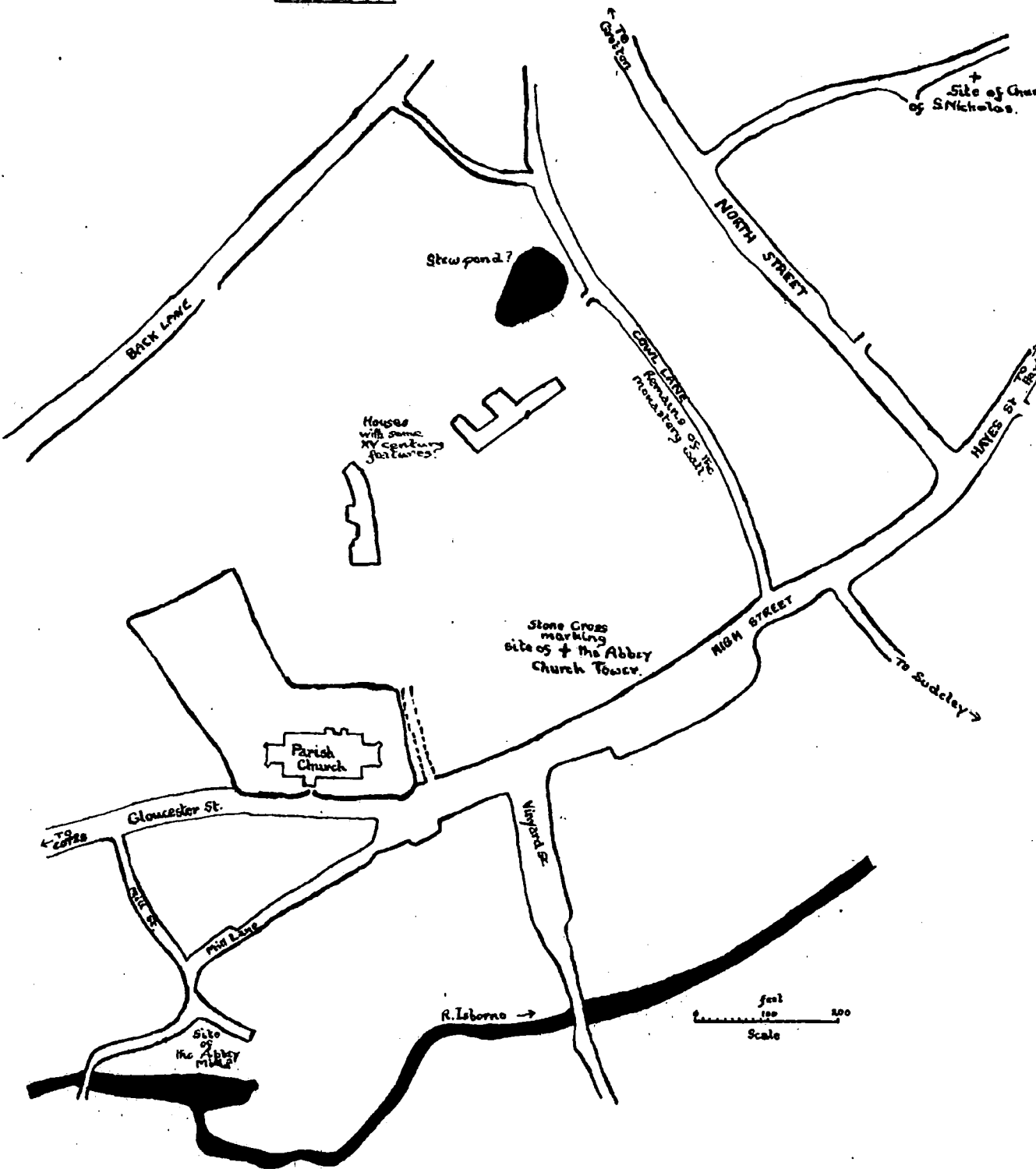


(1) Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc., 1893; XLIX, 163-72, plan 163.

PLAN II.

The above plan shows both the Abbey and Parish Churches on the same scale. The width of the Nave of the Abbey Church, 28 feet, was only three more than that of the Parish Church. The Naves of the Abbeys of Great Malvern and Pershore are almost equal in width to Winchcombe. The Cloister must have been on the North side of the Church as there was not sufficient room to the South.

PLAN III



Plan of part of the town showing some monastic features.

WINCHCOMBE DISTRICT.


EYESHAM + Honeybourne + Mickleton
 + Hidcote

+ TEWKESBURY + Stanton
 Gretton + Toddington
 Greet + + HAYLES
WINCHCOMBE + + Sudeley
 Postlip + + Rowell
 Charlton Abbots + + Hawling

+ Sherborne
 + Windrush



+ CIRENCESTER

 Scale five miles to one inch.

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