

Clay, Rotha Mary., The Hermits and Anchorites of England. Methuen & Co. London, 1914.

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## VIII. ORDER AND RULE

What sawest thou before thee when didst vow thyself to this manner of life?—Rule of St. Aelred.

Do you now ask what rule ye anchoresses should observe? Ye should by all means, with all your might and all your strength, keep well the inward rule, and for its sake the outward. . . . The outward rule may be changed and varied according to every one’s state and circumstances . . . it is only a slave to help the lady to rule the heart.—Ancren Riwle.

The eremitical life, it has been truly said, “was once a career, and not the abdication of all careers”. Recluses were therefore set apart for their vocation, whether they were regular or secular clergy, nuns, or men and women who had as yet taken no vows. A monk might become a hermit by permission of his abbot, but he could only be admitted to the order of an anchorite by the joint consent of his superior and of the bishop. A lay person required the sanction of the bishop before taking either step.

### I. HERMITS

The place of the hermit in the ecclesiastical system is hard to define. There were many kinds of solitaries—all, perhaps, of a less conventional and canonical type than other churchmen,—but all, in theory at least, recognized by the Church. Some were in close touch with a monastery. The monk Bartholomew and the lay-brother Godric were both under the ægis of the Benedictine house of Durham, the prior of which exercised the right to “create” hermits. The secular clerk naturally turned to the bishop for licence, institution, or ordination. He might be admitted to minor orders, or even to full orders if the cell were sufficiently endowed for it to be accounted a benefice. Robert of Lilbourne, for example, after being made successively acolyte, sub-deacon, and

deacon, was ordained priest on the “title” of five marks a year from his patron, Robert de Hawkwell. Unlettered hermits were also licensed, for episcopal recog-

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dition was required even by civil law. The vagrancy statute of 1388 exempts “approved hermits having letters testimonial of their ordinaries.”<sup>1</sup> Such approval is frequently entered in episcopal records, e.g. the Bishop of Sarum gave J. Spensar letters testimonial that he had received the habit [the clothing, and therefore state, of a Hermit].

The ceremony of receiving the habit was a feature in the Office of Benediction (Appendix B). The candidate appeared before the bishop, bare-headed and barefoot, carrying on his left arm the scapular and other garments suitable to the profession of a hermit. During the service the old garments were put off, and the new ones, after being blessed, were put on with appropriate prayers. The hermit signed a deed of profession, made a vow, and received a charge as to his future manner of living.

Some English hermits belonged to a branch of Augustinians<sup>2</sup> called “the Order of St. Paul the first Hermit”. In 1431 Richard Spechysley took the following vow at Hartlebury :—

y[I] Rychard Spechysley sengleman not wedded promytte and solemne a wowe make to god, to hys blessed moder Marie, and all the seyntes of heuene yn presence of your reverent Fadyr yn cryst Thomas by the grace of god busshopp of Worcestre fulle and hole purpose of chastity perpetually to be kept by me after the Rule of seynt poule yn name of the fadyr and sone and holy gost amen *et faciat heremita cruce super cedula.*

Similar instances occur elsewhere, but chiefly within the last fifty years of hermit-life in England ; e.g. Robert Michyll and John Smith were professed before the Bishop of Ely in 1494 ; John Ferys took the vow at Norwich (1504) ; John Colebrant received the habit from the Bishop of Rochester (1509). Geoffrey Middleton, Richard Fury, and Nicholas Heage, all of Sarum diocese, likewise joined this Order. The Lydence Pontifical (1521) contains the special service for admission into the Order of St. Paul<sup>3</sup> (see Appendix B). The habit worn by its members is shown in Fig. 6.

Various Rules of Life are extant, including the following :—

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(a) *Regula Heremitarum* (Cambridge MS.), sometimes ascribed to Richard Rolle.



FIG. 6.—Hermit of the Order of St. Paul.

Illustration: Fig. 6.—Hermit of the Order of St. Paul.

(b) *De pauperate, statu, et vita Heremitarum* (Bodleian MS., fourteenth century).

(c) *Rule*, called “of Pope Celestine,” a manuscript which

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belonged to the House of St. Mark, Bristol. It begins : “Thyes are the notable rewles of the lyfe heremiticalle . . . made by Pope Celestine”. The preface and much of the matter are similar to (b).

(d) *Rule*, called “of Pope Linus” (Lambeth MS., fifteenth century, bound as fly-leaf into a Carmelite work). It begins : “Lyne owre holy fadyr [Pope][sic] of Rome he ordeyned thys rowle to all solytary men that takys the degre of an heremyte” ; and ends : “ Thys is ye charge of an hermygtis lyffe”.

(e) *Episcopal Charge*, or form of living [paid employment] (Pontifical, sixteenth century, see Appendix B).

These documents contain directions about times of labour, eating, sleep, silence, and worship. Obedience in the monastic sense was not required. “The hermit should make obedience to God alone, because he himself is abbot, prior, and prefect in the cloister of his heart.” To Almighty God he may, if he so desire, vow poverty and chastity before the bishop, but not by any man’s commandment. Minute instructions are given as to the repetition of the Creed, Lord’s Prayer, and Angelic Salutation, at the set hours. He was to hear Mass daily, if possible, and to

be houselled [administered the Eucharist] once a week. Regulations concerning food, dress, etc., are referred to in the chapters which follow.

Although celibacy was doubtless customary among those professed as hermits, it was not obligatory. It is recorded that “John Shenton, Armett, and hys wyffe” took charge of the ornaments of the chapel at Derby bridge (1488). Nor is this a mere instance of laxity of discipline. When it was notified to Archbishop Arundel that Adam Cressewill, after taking a hermit’s vow, had married a certain Margaret, the archbishop adjudged that the reception of such a habit did not *de jure* bring upon any one a tacit or express profession of religion, nor include in itself holy orders, so as to preclude a subsequent contract of “marriage which was instituted in Paradise”. The Adam of 1405 was, therefore, declared to be effectually bound and held to the observance of the marriage.<sup>4</sup>

In theory, the solitary was canonically appointed and

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placed under definite rule, but every age has its free-lances. The difficulties connected with due order and discipline were as old as sixth-century monachism. The Benedictine Rule declares that there were not only hermits trained in the monastery, but also self-appointed ones, some of whom roamed from cell to cell. Self-constituted or wandering solitaries were bound to interfere with parochial, monastic, or episcopal rights. When Archbishop Thurstan was granting a charter to the priory of Holy Trinity, York, he inserted this clause : “Let no hermit or anyone else presume to construct a chapel or oratory of any kind within the territory of that parish church, without the permission and free consent of the prior and chapter”.<sup>5</sup>

The Church prohibited hermits of irregular life or belief. About the year 1231 the Bishop of Lincoln excommunicated Elias, a monk notorious for excesses, and a chaplain was admitted in his place to Mirabel hermitage in Stockerston. In 1334, heresy and schism are recorded both in north and south. The Archbishop of York issued a mandate forbidding anyone to listen to the teaching of Henry de Staunton, hermit.<sup>6</sup> The Bishop of Exeter took proceedings against a peculiar person named William, who had set himself up as a hermit at St. David’s chapel in Ashprington.<sup>7</sup> Two years later Ranulf, an apostate friar, being “a heretic in the habit of a hermit,” was examined by theologians, and convicted of holding false doctrines ; but the prisoner was released by death.<sup>8</sup>

Sometimes, indeed, the habit was assumed by mere beggars :—

“William Blakeney, *shetilmaker* . . . was brought into the Guildhall . . . for that, whereas he was able to work for his food and raiment, he . . . went about there, barefooted and with long hair, under the guise of sanctity, and pretended to be a hermit, saying that he was such, and that he had made pilgrimage . . . and under colour of falsehood he had received many good things from divers people.”

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The impostor, who had lived by fraud for six years, was condemned to the pillory (1412).<sup>9</sup>

The desire to be independent of authority led some persons to seek the solitary life. William Stapleton, clerk, left St. Benet's, Holme (where, as he confesses, he had often been punished for laziness), went to London, and purchased from Cardinal Wolsey a dispensation to be a hermit. The truth was, that his whole mind was set on necromancy. He used enchantments in digging for hidden treasure, and practiced spirit-raising. When he returned to Norfolk and showed his licence, his friends motioned him to go about his "science" again, saying they would help him to his habit. This runaway monk was intimate with Wolsey (to whom, in 1528, his long letter is addressed), Cromwell, More, and the Duke of Norfolk. Whether he became solitary or sorcerer does not appear.<sup>10</sup>

Even authorized hermits were apt to upset the parochial system, if persons resorted to their chapels to the neglect of their parish church. A long-standing grievance at Hinxton was met by an agreement between the vicar, wardens, and parishioners, and William Popeley, hermit of Whytford Bridge. Tithes and dues were commuted for fixed oblations at the principal feasts, when the bridge-chaplain must, like all other parishioners, make his oblations. The vicar was to say mass yearly at St. Anne's chapel, and in return for his labour, should receive 4*d.* and a good dinner from the hermit.

## II. ANCHORITES

Turning to the stricter order, we find that the permission of the bishop of the diocese was required before any person could be enclosed. A notable exception was Wulfric of Haselbury ; for "without any appointment of the bishop, with no solemnity of benediction, but by the authority of the Holy Spirit who dwelt within, he buried himself with Christ in a cell close to the church". A canon of St. Edmund (1233) enacted that anchorites should not be made without the bishop's special approval ; and Lyndwood, commenting on this clause, observes that assistant bishops may not give the

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requisite licence, nor may an abbot enclose a person on his own authority.<sup>11</sup>

It was also necessary to obtain the consent of the incumbent and patron of the church to which the person was to be attached. Henry III permitted Celestria to be enclosed at his chapel of Kingesham (probably Kingsholm in the manor of King's Barton at Gloucester), the sheriff having signified that this would not be detrimental to the Crown. The approval of the patrons was not sought by the parishioners of St. Michael's, Bristol, and the chronicler of Tewkesbury therefore records that : "Both the townsmen of Bristol and the anchoress intruded into the cell (*reclusagium*) of St. Michael on the hill without Bristol confessed that they had acted presumptuously and contrary to justice, and sought forgiveness from Robert, the Lord Abbot".

The prefatory note to the Sarum Office declares that no one ought to be enclosed without the will of the bishop, who was to cause the candidate to be

instructed and warned how he should examine his conscience and consider his motives, whether he is setting himself to please God, or to acquire gain or the praise of man. Nor was the applicant accepted without close investigation. A commissary was appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the case, not only as to the suitability of the proposed place, but as to the person's estate, whether maiden, married, or widow, and, above all, concerning her character. Sometimes the mandate included permission to induct the candidate, should the examination prove satisfactory. The following charge was given by the Bishop of Worcester concerning Lucy, who was eagerly desirous to inhabit the cell upon St. Brandan's Hill, near Bristol :—

“John by the mercy of God Bishop etc. greeting, to our beloved son Master John de Severley, Archdeacon of Worcester, peace and blessing.

“Lucy de Newchirche has approached us many times with earnest and humble devotion, as was clear to us from her appearance and demeanour, asking to be enclosed in the hermitage of St. Brandan at Bristol in our diocese. But as we have no knowledge of the life and conversation of the said Lucy, we commit to you, in whose trustiness, diligence, and caution we have full confidence, an enquiry

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from men and women worthy of credit with regard to the conversation of this Lucy, and whether you would consider her to be of pure and praiseworthy life, and whether she excels in those notable virtues which ought to prevail in persons who give up the life of the world. And if at a day and time appointed, at your discretion and in accordance with law and reason, for her examination, you should find her to be resolutely and firmly set on the pure purpose with regard to which we have burdened your conscience in the presence of God, we commit to you our power, so far as by the divine law we can, of enclosing her, either personally or by deputy as an anchoress in the aforesaid hermitage.”<sup>12</sup>

Since the bishop himself had been impressed by Lucy's earnestness, it is probable that she was enclosed. Barrett cites a deed referring to land near St. Brendan's which the anchoress held. Who the petitioner was does not appear ; but two years previously a certain Lucy de Newchurch, from the diocese of Hereford, obtained a papal indult to choose a confessor who should give her plenary remission at the hour of death.

The would-be anchoress might be some maiden “without the habit of a nun” who desired to devote herself to religion in the village where she had been brought up, as, for example, Matilda de Campden, who sought to be enclosed in the churchyard at Chipping Campden. She might be one who, like Emma Sprengnose of Shrewsbury, “from childhood always affected, and still affects, the solitary life”. She might be already in a convent. A nun of Stainfield, Beatrice Franke by name, petitioned the Bishop of Lincoln to be enclosed at Winterton Church ; the Abbot of Thornton, therefore, released her from her previous vows

and proffered to her new vows at high mass in that church. The anchoress might even be some matron. A curious case is that of the vowess Emma Cheyne—"late the wife of the recluse of Bury St. Edmunds, aged sixty-eight years and professed for twenty-two years in the order of widowhood and daily persevering in honest conversation"—who dwelt at St. Peter's, Cornhill.<sup>13</sup>

The applicant might be one of the regular or secular clergy. William de Pershore, priest, sought permission to be enclosed in the parish of Wickwar, and he was given a dispensation to

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ENCLOSING AN ANCHORESS

Plate XXVIII : Enclosing an anchoress.

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build a little house for that purpose, subject to the consent of the rector as patron of the church. Robert Cherde, a Cistercian monk of Ford, who desired to become a solitary at Crewkerne, brought letters from his abbot, and made his petition in person before the bishop at Wells.

In certain cases it was thought advisable to fix a period of probation. In May, 1403, the Bishop of Exeter commissioned the Abbot of Hartland and Rector

of Southill to place Cecilia Moys in a house in the cemetery of Marhamchurch, assigning her until Christmas as a time of probation.

The ceremony was performed by the bishop or his deputy. The Bishop of Lichfield empowered his Suffragan, Robert *Prissinensis* (1376) to administer Holy Orders, etc., and to enclose anchorites.<sup>14</sup> Episcopal prerogative might, however, be overruled by papal privilege. Richard Gilbard, an Augustinian canon of Longleat, obtained licence “to choose and remain in any hermitage in the realm in order to lead therein a solitary life” (1399).<sup>15</sup> The Mendicant Orders were free from episcopal jurisdiction. John Toker, a Franciscan, gained permission to be enclosed, without licence of his superiors, at Buckland ; he was fifty years of age and had been a friar since he was thirteen. Carmelite recluses were professed before the Provincial of the Order. Again, the Abbot of St. Albans enclosed members of the community at will. He himself celebrated the solemn mass when (at the instance of Edward IV and his queen, and “at the supplication of divers magnates dwelling in the king’s household”) Elizabeth Katherine Holsted was admitted to the anchorage at St. Peter’s.<sup>16</sup>

As a general rule, however, the bishop was, by virtue of his office, the guardian of every solitary in his diocese. The Archbishop of York made himself responsible for a religious refugee from Scotland. The nuns of Coldstream having been dispersed (probably in 1296, when Edward I made his headquarters in their house) Beatrice de Hodesak, for this just and reasonable cause, left the nunnery by permission of the bishop and prioress. She afterwards, with the licence of Archbishop Thomas, became an anchoress at Sprotburgh, near Doncaster, at the house adjoining St. Edmund’s chapel by the bridge. It

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had been founded by Lord Fitzwilliam, who provided yearly for each of the women five quarters of corn [grain]. When Beatrice settled there about the year 1300, her companion was that Sibil de Lisle who had been enclosed in 1294 by the Abbot of Kirkstall. Beatrice probably died before 1328, when the Dean of Doncaster was commissioned to enclose Joan, daughter of William of Easingwold, who desired to live with Dame Sibil.<sup>17</sup>

There are numerous liturgical forms for the enclosing of anchorites. The earliest extant seems to be that entitled *Ad recluendum Anchoritam*, in a fragmentary twelfth-century Pontifical.<sup>18</sup> Of later examples, Cambridge has several—the Clifford Pontifical (Plate XXVIII) at Corpus Christi College, the Chichele Pontifical at Trinity, the Sarum Manual at St. John’s, and the Russell Pontifical in the University Library. In this chapter we draw chiefly upon three published offices, namely, those found in the Exeter Pontifical belonging to Bishop Lacy (1420-55), the York Pontifical of Archbishop Bainbridge (1508-14), and the Sarum Manual (printed in 1506).<sup>19</sup>

The “Order of enclosing servants or handmaidens of God,” according to the Sarum Use, provided that the candidate before being admitted to the cell, should fast and make his confession, and should keep vigil throughout the preceding night. On the morrow the bishop or his commissary made an exhortation to the people and to the one who was about to be enclosed, and the

office opened with versicles and psalms. The celebrant proceeded to mass, which included special prayers. After the Gospel the *includendus*, having offered his taper to burn upon the altar, stood at the altar-step and read his profession in a clear voice. He then made the sign of the cross with a pen on the roll, and placing it upon the altar with bended knee, prayed. Next came the sprinkling and blessing of the habit, in which the newly-professed was clad. Whilst he lay prostrate before the altar, the celebrant chanted over him *Veni Creator Spiritus*, when, Mass being finished, all, including the novice who carried his taper, moved in procession

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towards the cell. The bishop advanced, and, taking him by the hand, led him to his habitation, whilst the clerks chanted a litany. The bishop, having hallowed the altar and house, went out and brought in the *includendus*, and after solemn prayers and benedictions, he—now the *inclusus*—was left alone. The bishop recited the antiphon in a loud voice, audible, may be, in the utter silence of the cell, the door of which had been firmly shut. After united prayer for the solitary, the procession formed again and returned into the church.

The Exeter Office bears a general resemblance to the foregoing. The opening rubric directs that the would-be recluse, if a clerk, should prostrate himself barefoot in the midst of the choir ; if a layman, he should lie outside the gate of the choir ; if a woman, in the western part of the church, where women are wont to worship. Having recited certain psalms and a litany, the bishop and his ministers should come to the prostrate person, with cross, thurible, and holy water, and after sprinkling and censuring him, the bishop, with another venerable person, should raise him up. Holding a taper in each hand, the candidate should listen devoutly as this lection was read from Isaiah [26:20] : “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast”. The Gospel was taken from St. Luke[10:38] : “Jesus entered into a certain village : and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard His word,” etc. Having read the form of profession, the candidate should kneel at the altar-step, repeating thrice : “Receive me, O Lord, according to Thy word”. After further prayers, “let the bishop make a discourse to the people, explaining the manner and form of living of a recluse, and let him commend the person about to be enclosed to the people that they may pray for him”. The Mass of the Holy Spirit was now celebrated, by the *includendus* himself, if he were in holy orders, but if not, by the bishop or by another priest. The bishop, having led the novice to the door of the *recluserium*, was to enter, and consecrate the whole house by prayers, holy water, and censuring. He should then go out to the waiting person and say : “If he wishes to enter, let him

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enter". The bishop then began to perform rites which were designed to impress upon the devotee the fact that in a strict sense he was henceforth dead to the world. The office of extreme unction was performed, with the commendation of the soul, lest death should anticipate the last rites. "These things being done, let the grave be opened, entering which, let the recluse himself, or another in his name, sing : *This shall be my rest for ever*". Dust was scattered with the words : *From dust wast thou created*, etc. Before going out, the bishop made a final exhortation, and the door of the house was built up.

"We left her, as is believed, in peace and calm of spirit, in the joy of her Saviour" : so it was reported of the nun Beatrice (p. 92), who almost from her youth had craved for this life.

In this solemn manner the self-dedicated person was admitted to the "order" of an anchorite, as it was termed. It was "in the order of an anresse" that one Margery made her profession in 1521 in the church of the Blackfriars, in the following words :—

"I sister Margerie Clyute offereth and giueth myselfe to the mercie of Godd in the order of an Anresse to lyue in his seruice after the rule of an anresse and here in the presence of you worthy father in Godd Thomas Bishop of Lydene<sup>20</sup> I make myne Obedience to the worshipful father in Godd lord Ric. fitz James Byshop of London and to his successours".

This word "order" often occurs in documents, but, in the *Ancren Riwe*, recluses were warned against using the term in a limited sense : "If any ignorant person ask you of what order ye are, as ye tell me some do . . . answer and say that ye are of the order of St. James," that is to say, of those who keep themselves unspotted from the world.

The recluse's Rule of Life consisted of friendly counsel rather than rigid regulations. Several such books of instruction were written in England for English women—by an abbot, by some unknown churchman, by a layman-hermit, and by an Augustinian canon.

(a) *Rule of Aelred* (twelfth century).—The *Regula, Informa-*

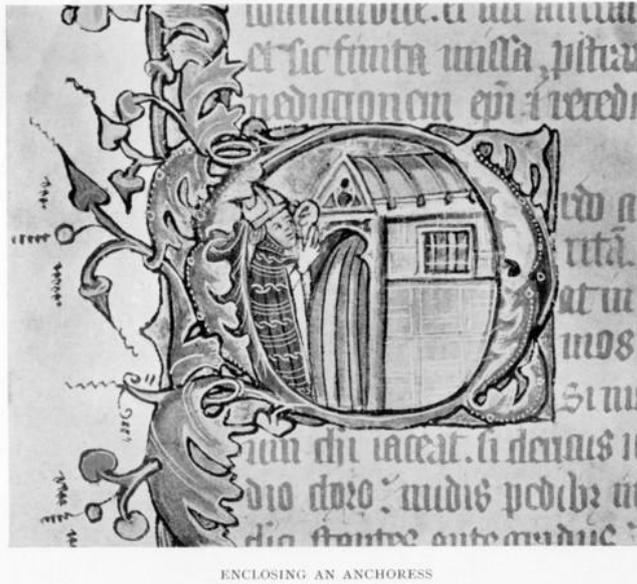


Plate XXIX : Enclosing an Anchoress.

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cio or *Institutio Inclusarum*<sup>21</sup> was compiled by Aelred of Rievaulx, “a man glowing with enthusiasm for the solitary life”. It is dedicated to his sister, who had long besought him for a form of living. He says in his preface that being her brother after the flesh and in spirit he could not refuse her request, but he would she had asked one wiser and more experienced than himself : “Natheles after that simple felynge that god bath youen me I shal write to the a forme gadert out of holy fadirs tradition”. The first chapter is entitled : “How the eremitical life was appointed”. Looking back to the ancients, many of whom dwelt alone in the wilderness, Aelred inquires wherefore this life was undertaken. Some, he says, find it harmful to live in a crowd, and profitable to be in solitude ; finding in the world a freedom of loveliness and possibility of wandering, they think it safer to be confined within a cell. Aelred gives wise counsel on spiritual and material matters, extracts from which will be found in succeeding chapters. After giving some details as to dress, he adds : “These things, dear sister, I have written at thy request concerning the manner of outward conduct, not on account of zeal for antiquity, but for the shortness of our time here on earth ; setting forth a certain form of life adapted for weaker sisters, leaving to the stronger ones to go forward unto fuller perfection”. The humble abbot concludes with a personal plea : “If any one shall have profited by the discourse of this book, let her render back to me this return for my labour and study : that she may intercede for my sins with my Saviour whom I love, with my Rewarder for whom I look, with my Judge whom I fear”.

(b) *Ancren Riwe*<sup>22</sup> (thirteenth century).—The Rule bearing this name is a handbook of devotion, conduct, and household management. The author was familiar with Aelred’s work and quotes from it (p. 122). He was the personal

friend of those for whom he wrote—"my dear sisters, women most dear to me". He enjoins the three-fold vow of obedience, chastity, and constancy of abode. They must be guided by an inward

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law—that of love which regulates the heart. Mere outward rules might vary according to each one's estate and circumstances. The precepts contained in the book are, he declares, written for themselves alone : other anchoresses must not say that he, by his own authority, makes new rules for them. The regulations may be changed at will for better ones : "In regard to things of this kind *that have been in use before*, it matters little".

The question of authorship has yet to be solved. It was formerly attributed to Richard Poer, Bishop of Salisbury (1217-29), but the evidence is insufficient. The preface to one imperfect Latin copy, preserved at Magdalen College, Oxford, states that Bishop Simon of Ghent (1297-1315) wrote it for his sisters, anchoresses at Tarrent, but this is clearly a translation and the original English work is of considerably earlier date. The researches of Prof. Koelbing and Dr. Thummler will doubtless contribute much to the question of date and authorship. Their critical edition is to be published by the Early English Text Society (see note on p. 100).

The writer was a man of high ideals, a practical person, with sound judgment and clear insight. A marked gift of sympathy is shown by his tender, delicate, and understanding instructions. Careful thought and infinite labour were bestowed upon the work :—

"In this book read every day, when ye are at leisure—every day less or more ; for I hope that if ye read it often it will be very beneficial to you through the grace of God, or else I shall have ill employed much of my time. God knows, it would be more agreeable to me to set out on a journey to Rome, than to begin to do it again. "

(c) *Form of Perfect Living*<sup>23</sup> (fourteenth century).—This treatise was written by Richard Rolle for his friend, Dame Margaret. It is an intimate spiritual letter rather than a set rule. The second chapter (often found as a separate tract) deals with the solitary life, its peculiar trials and joys. Of its mystical teaching the following is a specimen :—

"For that thou hast forsaken the solace and the joy of this world, and taken thee to solitary life . . . I trow truly that the comfort of Jesus Christ and the sweetness of His love, with the fire of

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the Holy Ghost that purges all sin, shall be in thee and with thee, leading thee and teaching thee how thou shalt think, how thou shalt pray, what thou shalt work, so that in a few years thou shalt have more delight to be

by thyself and speak to thy love and thy spouse Jesus Christ, that is high in heaven, than if thou wert lady here of a thousand worlds. Men ween that we are in pain and penance : but we have more joy and very delight in a day than they have in the world all their life. They see our body, but they see not our heart, where our solace is. If they saw that, many of them would forsake all that they have, for to follow us.”

(d) *The Scale (or Ladder) of Perfection*<sup>24</sup> written by Walter Hilton, an Augustinian canon who died in 1396. It deals with the life of action and of contemplation, but especially with the latter. He addresses it to a woman “closid in a hous,” and reminds her that the cause of her bodily enclosure is that she might thereby the better come to a “ghostly closynge”. Since her estate required of her to be contemplative, it behoved her to be right busy both night and day with travail of body and of spirit, in order to come as nigh as she might to that life.

(e) *Book for Recluses*<sup>25</sup> (fifteenth century), containing advice based upon various reasons for embracing this life, whether (1) intention of living at her own will without labour, (2) fervent repentance, (3) avoidance of sin, or (4) desire for Divine contemplation. The first counsels of the preface aim at changing the purpose of any whose first motive had been temporal solace, comfort, independence, acquisition of goods. The remainder of the book is entirely devotional. The first part contains plain teaching drawn from the Old and New Testaments. Prayer is illustrated by David and Hezekiah, Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha ; repentance, by David, Peter, Mary Magdalene, and “the publican asking mercy”. The second part is a call to praise, and treats of the excellence and might and goodness of God as maker and keeper of all things. There is pathos in the suggestion made to one so straitly shut up that she might stir her heart to praise by thinking upon the merry noise of birds in their sweet song, the delight of flowers and fruits, the usefulness of beasts, which follow without fail the

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law of nature and are every year marvellously renewed to the behoof of man. But chiefly was she to meditate upon “the glorious Passion of our Lord”. The third part, which is unfinished, contains sacramental teaching.

The Order and Rule have necessarily been dealt with only in outline. Details of the outer life will now be considered, whilst an account of the inner life with its trials and discipline is reserved for a subsequent chapter.

*Note on the “Ancren Riwle”.*

Since going to press Professor Gollancz has called my attention to a fourteenth-century version of this Rule, recently edited by Joel Pählsson (*The Recluse*, University of Lund, 1911). The original is found at Magdalene College, Cambridge (MS. Pepys, 2498). It is addressed to men and women, and several of the intimate touches of the *Ancren Riwle* are omitted, e.g. allusions to the circumstances of the three sisters (see pp. 97-8, 105-6, 109, 131, 136 of this

volume). In place of the homely allusion to the scullion Slurry, the Camb. MS. preaches the patient endurance of insolence from underlings. "Our lay-brethren" and "our order" are not mentioned, but the religious of the later version include friars. The Camb. MS. inserts passages which are wanting in the Cottonian ; but the full practical directions found at the end of the latter are given in briefest outline. The compiler describes himself as "him that drew it out into this language".

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Footnotes~

1. Statute 12 Ric. II, c. 7.
2. The "Augustinian Hermits" of "Friars Hermits of the Order of St. Augustine" have nothing to do with our subject ; they were mendicants living in community.
3. See also Exeter and York Pontificals.
4. Lambeth, Reg. Arundel, Pt. I, f. 438 *b*.
5. *Cal. Doc. France*, ed. J. H. Round, 443.
6. Dixon, ed. J. Raine, *Fasti*, I. 421.
7. *Ex. Reg. Grandisson*, Pt. II, 751-2.
8. *Chron. Edw. I* (Rolls, 76), I. 365.
9. H. Riley, *Memorials*, 584.
10. *L. and P. Hen. VIII*, IV (2), No. 5096 ; *Norfolk Archaeology*, I. 59.
11. W. Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, ed. 1525, Lib. III, f. CLV. CLVI.
12. Reg. Thoresby, f. 21.
13. Pat. 28 Hen VI., Pt. i, m. II. The veil widow may have dwelt in the anchorite's cell, without being actually enclosed. [Or, the recluse and his wife may have been married prior to her husband's enclosure, so that the wife, who might not have been enclosed, lived quietly, modestly, and physically separately from her enclosed husband. She might also have lived at the monastery as a devout lay person. In earlier times, husbands and wives could both join a monastery, taking simultaneous vows of chastity and living chastely.]
14. *Staff's Coll.*, N.S., VIII, 131.
15. *Pap. Lett.*, V. 200.
16. *Chr. S. Alb.* (Rolls, 28, Pt. VI.) ; *Registers*, II. 202.
17. *Northern Reg.* (Rolls 61), 196-8 ; Raine, *Fasti*, 380 ; Reg. Romeyn, f. 46 ; Reg. Melton, f. 175.
18. B. M. Cott. Vesp. D., XV., f. 61-5.
19. *Liber Pontif.*, ed. R. Barnes ; *York Pontif.* (S.S. 61) ; *Sarum Man.* (S. S. 63) ; see Appendix A to this volume.
20. In 1495 the Bishop of Lydda was Suffragan to Bishop Blyth of Sarum. This Thomas Lydensis owned the Pontifical mentioned elsewhere.
21. L. Holstenius, *Codex Regularum*, III. 186-239. Also English paraphrase, Bodl. MS., 423, f. 178-92 : "Here endith the Reule of a Recluse that seynt Alrede wrote to his suster". Another copy, Vernon MS., is transcribed by

- Horstman in *Englische Studien*, ed. E. Kölbing, VII. 304-44.
22. *Camden Soc.*, O.S. 57 (1853) contains original and translation ; latter reprinted in 1905 by Abbot Gasquet (*King's Classics*).
  23. C. Horstman, *R. Rolle*, i. 3-49.
  24. First printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1494. Latest edition, 1901.
  25. B. M. Harl. 2372.

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