

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

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## IX. CONCERNING THE BODY

A bird sometimes alighteth on the earth, to seek his food for the need of the Resh. . . . Even so, the pious recluse, though she fly ever so high, must at times come down to the earth in respect of her body-- and eat, drink, sleep, work, speak, and hear, when it is necessary, of earthly things. --Ancren Riwele.

Although the true solitary was chiefly occupied with the affairs of the soul, either he himself or his neighbours were bound to take thought for his bodily needs. The possession of a little plot of land enabled the hermit to be more or less independent, but the anchorite could not maintain himself. The hermit's absorbing interest in his garden was even supposed to become an obstacle to his spiritual progress. In the *Hortus Deliciarum*, compiled by a German abbess in the twelfth century, the ladder to perfection is depicted in symbol, with the climbers and their respective hindrances. Among men of religion, the hermit is foremost, although his *garden* has proved a stumbling-block ; whilst the anchorite is kept back by sloth, represented by a bed.<sup>1</sup>

### I. FOOD

The early hermits lived a primitive life as tillers of the soil, and their food consisted of herbs, roots, grain, and fruit. Godric of Finchale used to refuse the gifts of food offered to him, and cultivated his garden as long as he was able ; we read of his planting and grafting, and of his crops. He also kept cows, and in his old age, lived almost entirely upon milk. Robert of Knaresborough was another hermit-husbandman. He fared frugally, but one day he was left hungry, for robbers invaded his dwelling and stole his bread and cheese. After a time he was granted as much land as he could dig, and later, as much as he could till with one plough. He was also given two horses, two oxen,. and two cows. Robert's parable was an ear of corn (p. 153) ; and the miracles ascribed to him are

--101--

the miracles of a farmer. He tames the wild cow, and yokes to his plough the stags which trample his corn :—

Hertes full heghe of hede an horn  
Vsed to come to Robertt corn . . .  
He wentt and wagged att them a wand  
And draffe thise dere hame w<sup>t</sup> hys hand.

This legend and also that of a counterfeit cripple, who begged a cow from St. Robert, were depicted in a window set up in Knaresborough church in 1473.<sup>2</sup>

In some cases the hermit had no land to cultivate. Richard Rolle, for example, was homeless. At first he was provided with food and shelter by Sir John and Lady de Dalton, but when they died, he became a wanderer, dependent upon alms. Ill-clad and ill-shod, he suffered severely from exposure. At times he subsisted on mouldy bread, and had but a scant supply of water. Yet Richard did not refuse proper sustenance when it was provided. He had eaten and drunk of the best, not for love of good food, but for nature to be sustained in God's service. He would not appear unto men to fast, but conformed himself to them with whom he dwelt, fearing lest he should feign holiness, and win praise. He advised the contemplative not to attempt too much fasting, lest "for febilnes of body he myght not synge".<sup>3</sup> Enemies were therefore not slow to say that he would not abide but where he might be delicately fed ; whilst as a matter of fact he frequently suffered exhaustion from abstinence.

Flesh was rarely tasted by the hermit. It was lawful to partake of it on the three great festivals, and on the four following days ; also in time of sickness, or strenuous work— "for grete labore past or labor for to come yf nede ax yt". At the commandment of the bishop or patron, he might indulge in meat for a single day. He was directed to fast three days in the week, and on Friday upon bread and water. He was also required to observe seasons of abstinence, namely, forty days before Christmas and Easter, and nine days before Whitsunday and Michaelmas.<sup>4</sup>

--102--

In one Rule interesting directions are given under the heading *Of provision in his cell* :—

"If a hermit dwells in a borough, town, or city, or nigh thereto, where each day he can well beg his daily food, let him before sunset distribute to Christ's poor that which remains of his food. But if he abides afar, as in a country village or a desert spot one or two miles from the abode of men, let him make provision for one week strictly from Sunday to Sunday, or he may begin on another day of the week ; and if aught remains over, let it be given to the poor forthwith, unless on some ground he can excuse himself in the sight of God, as that he is sick or weak, or

that he is tending a sick man, or is busy at home with works bodily or spiritual which are well pleasing to God.”<sup>5</sup>

This encouragement to town hermits to beg their bread was mischievous. Langland complains that there were false hermits living in idleness and ease by others' travail (p. 61-2). More than one Rule, however, devoted a clause to manual labour, and impressed the apostolic saying : “He that laboreth not, owght not to ete”.

Anchorites, on the other hand, could not support themselves. There are, indeed, two chapters in Aelred's Rule (VI., XI.) to the effect that the recluse should live by the labour of her hands, or, if she were not in want, bestow the price upon the church or the poor. But if either sickness or tenderness did not allow this, let her, before she is enclosed, seek out certain persons from whom day by day she may receive food.

The bishop was careful not to license anyone unless he was satisfied that sustentation was secure and permanent ; indeed, if the solitary were in want, the burden of maintenance fell upon the bishop, as in the case of a clerk ordained without a title.<sup>6</sup> Archbishop Arundel granted permission for the enclosure at Broughton (Lincolnshire) of the monk John Kyngeston, “according to the appointment and disposition of certain venerable friends of his”.

Maintenance was provided in money or in kind. The allowance varied according to the person's estate. During the century 1160-1260 royal pensioners<sup>[1]</sup> were usually granted  $\frac{1}{2}d.$  or  $1d.$  a day ; but Adam, a recluse at Gloucester, had the liberal dole of  $2d.$  a day, paid out of the farm of the city.

--103--

The ample yearly allowance of 100s. was made to the anchoress of Iffley, who also frequently received oaks for her fire. Other donors gave smaller sums, even  $1d.$  or  $2d.$  a week, supplemented, perhaps, by food, fuel, or clothes. In some cases, anchoresses received a grant of corn [grain], but this was often commuted for a money payment.

The recluse lived on simple foods, chiefly vegetarian. The rules direct that she have potage made of herbs, peas, or beans, furrity sweetened with milk, butter, or oil, and fish seasoned with apples or herbs. On Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, Lent meals only were allowed. During Lent she might have one kind of potage daily, but on Fridays only bread and water. No flesh or lard was eaten except in great sickness. The hour of the meal was noon, but in Lent, not until after vespers.<sup>7</sup> Langland says that he will give alms to anchorites “that eten nought but at nones, and no more ere morrow”.<sup>8 [2]</sup>

The inmate of a cell which was dependent upon a monastic house usually received a corrody, or fixed allowance of food and clothing ; thus in the computus rolls of Worcester Priory are entered the portions of bread and ale given out to two recluses. About the year 1235 it was ordained that the anchoress of St. Michael's church at St. Albans should enjoy the corrody left to the abbey by Adam the Cellarer. At Whalley the provision seems liberal. The sum of  $3d.$  a week was paid to the three inmates of the cell, who received every week

seventeen loaves such as were usually made in the monastery, and seven loaves of an inferior sort (each loaf to weigh fifty shillings sterling), with eight gallons of beer. At the feast of All Saints they were given ten large stock fish, one bushel of oatmeal, and one bushel of rye. For the lighting and warming of the house oil, turfs, and faggots were provided.<sup>[3]</sup>

Some persons contributed towards their maintenance. Agnes Booth or Shepherd (a nun of Norton Priory) was enclosed at Pilling in Garstang, a chapelry of Cockersand. Eight years later, in 1501, the following entry occurs in the rental : “M<sup>d</sup> yat Annes Scheperte hasse payn to James y<sup>e</sup>

--104--

Abbott of Cokersand for her lyuing—ii<sup>s</sup> ii<sup>d</sup> to me & vi<sup>s</sup> viii<sup>d</sup> to ye Convent”.

The necessaries of life were sometimes provided from the manor-house. The ladies for whom the *Ancren Riwle* was written were maintained in an unusual degree of comfort :—

“For ye take no thought for food and clothing, neither for yourselves nor for your maidens. Each of you hath from one friend all that she requireth ; nor need that maiden seek either bread, or that which is eaten with bread, further than at his hall.”

The writer adds emphatically that “many others know little of this abundance, but are full often distressed with want”.

The recluse was warned not to grumble at her meat and drink, were it ever so stale ; if it were actually uneatable she might ask for more palatable food, but reluctantly and tactfully ; for it were a sin to cause men to say : “This anchoress is dainty, and she asks much”. Only sheer necessity should drive her to make a request : “yet humbly shew your distress to your dearest friend”. If fragments could be spared from her meals, she should send them secretly to poor women and children who had laboured for her. Waste, untidiness, and neglect of household duties were forbidden. The category of faults to be confessed included these : “Dropping crumbs, or spilling ale, or letting a thing grow mouldy, or rusty, or rotten ; clothes not sewed, wet with rain, or unwashen ; a cup or a dish broken, or any thing carelessly looked after which we are using”.

## II. CLOTHING

In a convent it was customary, for uniformity’s sake, that all should be attired alike ; “but wherever a woman liveth, or a man liveth by himself alone, be he hermit or anchorite, of outward things whereof scandal cometh not, it is not necessary to take so much care”. Foolish people, supposing that the “order” consisted in kirtle or cowl, would question recluses about the colour and cut of their garments, as though religion were a matter of a wide hood, or of a black, white, or grey cowl.

As the visible sign of separation, however, a habit was essential. No man felt himself a hermit until he had assumed some distinctive dress. Even that most unconventional of

--105--

solitaries, Richard Rolle, when about to flee from home, persuaded his sister to send to him in the wood two garments and his father's raincloak, whereof he fashioned a habit and hood. Putting off his own clothes, he put on his sister's white tunic. Above this he wore her grey tunic, thrusting his arms through the holes which he had left by cutting out the sleeves ; and over all he drew on the cloak, "so that, in some measure, he might present a confused likeness to a hermit". Sir John de Dalton then provided him with "garments suitable to a hermit". Long afterwards, when he was established as a hermit, his friends removed a tattered habit, mended it, and put it on again, whilst he was in spiritual absorption.<sup>9</sup>

The Rules direct that the hermit's dress be according to the bishop's ordinance ; it must not too closely resemble that of any order, lest it cause offense. "Let hys clothyng be humyle and not curius. . . . And yf he wyll of devosyon were next hys flesh a cylyce it ys lauffull." He was to wear plain shoes without hose, or else go barefoot. In his coat or kirtle, girded [belted] with a cord, he slept, and he was at length buried in it : "and he shall be graved whan he ys ded in hys habyt as he gothe".

The habit varied as considerably as did the office. It usually consisted of loose garments of sober hue, caught up with a cord. A wall-painting at Rampton shows a hermit with sleeved surplice, tippet, and skull-cap. Another type of dress is shown in Fig. 6.

There was no regulation dress for the anchoress. Against the winter she was to have a pilch, a thick garment made of skins ; and in summer, a kirtle with a black mantle. The head-covering was not to be of fine texture or varied colour, but of a mean black. If the ladies dispensed with wimples, they should have capes and veils. Clothing was to be simple and serviceable. "Because no man seeth you, nor do ye see any man, ye may be well content with your clothes, be they white, be they black ; only see that they be plain, and warm, and well-made—skins well tawed ; and have as many as you need, for bed and also for back." Underclothing was to be of coarse linen or woollen material. Shoes must be thick and warm, but in summer recluses were at liberty to go barefoot.

--106--

They might wear no ring, brooch, ornamented girdle, or gloves.

The male anchorite probably wore some clerical garb. Symon, of Allhallows, London Wall, is represented in the frontispiece of his book as a priest (Fig. 7).

Offerings were sometimes made to the recluse in the form of garments. Wulfric of Haselbury, scantily clad in his chilly cell, received a welcome gift from Bristol :—

"The man of God was very frequently benumbed with extreme cold, to such a degree that a certain man from the neighbourhood of Bristol, being warned by a vision, sent to him a new covering of foxskin wherewith he should cover himself. For the Lord said to him in a vision : 'My servant Wulfric is tortured with cold, but thou, indeed, art pleasantly warm ; get up as quickly as possible and send this covering with all speed'. And so it was done."

But mantles which men might make, mice might mar. As Wulfric sat one day in his cell, he observed that his cloak had been gnawed by a mouse. "May the mouse perish which has thus presumed to damage my mantle!" The words were no sooner uttered than, behold, the creature, starting out from the wall, fell dead at the feet of the recluse. Seized with compunction, Wulfric called the priest and humbly confessed that his thoughtless curse had slain the mouse. The priest exclaimed in reply : "Would that a like anathema might utterly exterminate all the mice of this district!"

By a will, dating from the time of King John, a super-tunic of *bifle* was left to Dame Lucy, who was enclosed in the churchyard of Bury St. Edmunds. The anchorite of Colemanschurch in London received from a canon of St. Martin's two fur garments. Geoffrey le Scrope made a substantial legacy to the anchorite of Holy Trinity, Lincoln, namely, 20<sup>s</sup>., a tunic furred with *calaber* with a double hood, and a cloak furred with *gris*. A priest of Lynn made a grim gift to the anker in the friary (1504) :—

" I beqwethe to the seid Fryer William a blak vestment and a blak clothe steynynd with an ymage of deth. And I wyll the sam cloth be set vpon my hers in the day of my buryyng. Item I beqwethe to the seid Fryer William a red cloth that lyeth on my bed."<sup>10</sup>

--107--

About the recluse's toilet a word must also be said. Some of the extreme ascetics with their unchanged haircloth-shirts seem almost to have gloried in dirt and squalor. So absorbed were they in an ideal of holiness that they ignored the practical needs of the poor body. It was well that rigid discipline included immersion in cold water. The Rules gave no encouragement to personal neglect. One directs : "Wash yourselves as often as ye please". Another quotes a saying of St. Bernard : "I haue louyd pouerte but y neuer louyd fylth".[I have loved poverty but I have never loved filth.]<sup>11</sup>

### III. PROPERTY

To forsake all was the initial step of the hermit's career. The rhyming chronicler puts typical words into the mouth of Ive, the companion of Robert of Knaresborough :—

I wyll forsake all thatt I se  
Fadyr and frend and folowe the  
Gold and goods ryches and rentt  
Towne and toure and tenement  
Playng and prosperyte  
In pouerte for to won wyth the.

But although the recluse's renunciation of the world included houses and land, fresh grants were made to him for his maintenance. St. Robert gave up his own inheritance ; but, as hermits, both he and his successor, Ivo, came to possess considerable property, held in trust for the relief of the poor.

The solitary was sometimes the owner, but usually the life-tenant, of the cell. He frequently granted it to some religious house, e.g. Geoffrey, hermit of Mosehude (a place not identified), granted his house there and all his possessions to the Knights Templars. Personal property he might dispose of at will. Robert, an inmate of the Cripplegate cell, London, was ministered to during the last months of his life by William de Wyntreburn, who received by the old man's will the sum of 30s., three messuages, and sundry small rents. William, hermit of Linstock, owned six cattle and a little money. He bequeathed two cows to Carlisle Cathedral, in the precincts of which he wished to be buried ; another he devised to his parish church of Stanwix ; the price of a fourth was to be divided amongst the priests and clerks who should conduct

--108--

his obsequies. Twenty shillings was to be expended on the bridge over the Eden, and a few legacies were made to friends.

Hermits were, as we have seen, sometimes married men, or widowers, and family claims were not disallowed. There is a reference in the Bridlington Cartulary (c. 1220) to the hermit's wife, and also to their son who did homage for his father's land at Bridlington. Thomas Wyllcys, of Ewelme, left 20s. to his daughter. Simon Cotes (p. 63), whose will is witnessed by his son, left to him all moveable goods ; but his house and chapel at Westbourne, built upon ground which he had inherited, he bequeathed for the use of a successor who should carry on his work.

Whilst the hermit might own his three acres and a cow, the anchorite might not possess such things as would tend to draw the thoughts outward. Enclosed women were warned against becoming absorbed in household cares. There are women, says Aelred, who are busy gathering worldly goods, cattle and wool, and in multiplying pence and shillings. They arrange food for their beasts, and at the year's end they reckon their number and price ; then follow buying and selling, which lead to covetousness and avarice.<sup>12</sup> The *Ancren Riwe* is still more explicit :—

“Ye shall not possess any beast, my dear sisters, except only a cat. An anchoress that hath cattle appeareth as Martha was, a better housewife than anchoress ; nor can she in any wise be Mary, with peacefulness of



heart. For then she must think of the cow's fodder, and of the herdsman's hire, flatter the heyward, defend herself when her cattle is shut up in the pinfold, and moreover pay the damage. Christ knoweth, it is an odious thing when people in the town complain of anchoresses' cattle. If, however, any one must needs have a cow, let her take care that she neither annoy nor harm any one, and that her own thoughts be not fixed thereon."

Trading is condemned : "an anchoress that is a buyer and seller, selleth her soul to the chapman of hell". She was forbidden to gather alms in order to give away.

The alms of visitors or passers-by were dropped into a box placed near the cell ; Langland says that "at ances there a box hangeth". Hoccleve refers (c. 1411) to this popular form of largesse :—

--109--

To every chirche and recluse of the toun  
Bad hem eeke of golde geue a quantite.<sup>13</sup>

The hermits and anchorites of Lynn were regularly assisted from the funds of the Trinity Guild. Among the expenses incurred at John Paston's burial in 1466 was an alms of 40*d.* to the *ancors* of Carrow by Norwich. Small annuities were sometimes provided. In the schedule of charges incumbent on St Alban's Abbey in keeping the anniversary of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, occurs this entry : "Item to a ankes at Sent Petur chirch, a nother at Sent Mich. the seid day, yerly, to euerych *xxd.*". Alms were frequently bestowed upon these religious women of St. Albans.<sup>14</sup> When the prioress of St. Mary de Pré was paying certain estate-charges, she set aside a few pence by way of charity (1487-9) : "Item spente at the ankers of Seint Petres whan I sawe the fermours indentures of Bemond *iiijd.*". When passing through the town in 1502 Elizabeth of York gave 3*s.* 4*d.* to the anchoress of St. Peter's, and the following year, 26*s.* 8*d.* to the anchoress of St. Michael's.

During the fifteenth century, alms were so liberally bestowed that money became a snare. A Harleian MS. (2372) of that period shows that the anchoress was tempted to live in comfort, to receive poor folks and pilgrims, and to support needy cousins :—

"Some Recluses in these dayes [dwell][sic] nat in wildernesses but in the citees that they may there receyue large almes wher of thei may holde greet meynee [i.e. company][sic] and helpe and promote more largely her kyn and her freendes than thei myghte in othir estat and lyue more delicatly than thei were likly haue doon in seculer plyt."

[A]lthough the *Ancren Riwle* speaks disparagingly of "rich anchoresses that are tillers of the ground, or have fixed rents," the recluse did, for the sake of maintenance, retain houses and lands and receive rent for them. Not infrequently she made over her property to a religious house, accepting in lieu thereof a



definite allowance for life ; thus the abbey of Oseney made yearly payments to Childlove, anchoress of Faringdon. Margaret, of St. Edward's, Norwich, issued charters, sealed with her own seal, whereby she conceded land to Langley Abbey,

--110--

and the abbot in return granted her 6*s.* a year.<sup>15</sup> If such agreements were not kept, a plea might be sent to the itinerant justices, or a petition lodged in chancery. The case of Cecily, recluse of St. James's, Colchester, is entered on the Assize Roll (1272) ; the abbot of St. Osyth's, who had not fulfilled his promise to pay her an annual rent of five quarters of wheat, undertook to do so, and to pay arrears. Aline of Wigan fell on evil days. Her benefactor, Sir Robert Holand, being involved in the rebellion of 1321-2, forfeited his property ; hence "la povre recluse" lacked the sum of 30*d.* which he had granted annually for her sustenance. Aline, unable to obtain her allowance from John Travers or John de Lancastre, who had charge of the forfeited lands, at length appealed to the King for restitution. The law recognized the right of enclosed persons to hold property, if need be, and to defend it.<sup>16</sup> The learned judge Littleton, writing in the time of Edward IV, declares that albeit the recluse could not leave his cell to appear in court—"for this kind of Order always dwells separate and apart from civil life"—yet he could appear by attorney, on the principle that "inability suspends the operation of the law".<sup>17</sup>

If the solitary fell into a condition of helplessness, the bishop constituted himself her guardian. When Dame Joan of Blyth was weak and poverty-stricken, Archbishop Wichwane took her under his protection, and arranged for the administration of her affairs, lest she should suffer loss. "She is now fallen into sickness, so that she scarcely possesses things needful for her bodily welfare, and has been obliged to give up those lawful occupations in which she formerly spent her time." The archbishop deputed the vicar to look after his poor parishioner and her household, directing "that in all things both with regard to persons and goods, while she survives or when she is taken away from our midst, they be kept in all honesty and always treated with discretion, as we will that an account shall be required of you concerning the matter".

--111--

Although goods and chattels could be disposed of at will, they seem usually to have been given for pious purposes. Robert, the anchorite of Hartlip, gave a silver chalice to the cathedral church of Rochester. Two enclosed monks of Westminster Abbey caused it to be enriched with paintings.<sup>18</sup> Brother John Myrmouth spent 26*s.* 8*d.* upon an altar-piece for St. Benedict's chapel. The more famous Brother John London provided a painting above the altar of St. John Baptist ; he is also named among the benefactors of Syon monastery. Dame Agnes Vertesance, of St. Michael's church at St. Albans, bestowed upon the shrine of St. Alban a gold ring.<sup>19</sup> An inventory of the goods of Allhallows, London Wall (1501) includes this item : "A grett paxe with iij Images of sylver by the gyffit off the Anker". Successive recluses were liberal donors to the fabric

fund. The sum of 4s. 6½d. was paid by “the ankyr Syr Symon of the gaynes of a stande of ale whiche he gave to the cherche”. On another occasion he gave 9s. 3d., “the gyft of dyuersse [divers] men and women of ther dewocion at dyuersse tymys”. When a new aisle was being built, he lent 32s., and gave 32s., besides supplying the scaffolding.<sup>20</sup>

The treasures of the cell were usually of a devotional character, consisting of sacred vessels, rosaries, and relics. A set of beads (*i Par Pater Noster Geinsid de gete*) was left to the anchorite of Westminster by Lord Scrope ; another, of *mestylden gauded with Calsedonys* was given by a Norwich citizen to the anker of the White Friars. The relics of the parish church at Tavistock included “a little cross of silver, the gift of John Armytt in which is a piece of the holy cross” ; and there the anniversary of the donor, John the hermit, was kept.

The possessions of the solitary might, however, be given to friends, or even sold. Sir Brian Stapelton owned a silver basin with an image of Our Lady in alabaster which had belonged to the anker of Hampole.<sup>21</sup> Another testator (John de Dodyngton, canon of Exeter and rector of Crewkerne) mentions in his will “a cup with a cover, formerly the property of one Stephen, a recluse” (1400).<sup>22</sup> Thomas Coke, the

--112--

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[Plate XXX: Tomb of Roger and Sigar, Hermits.]

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anchorite-priest, dwelling in Kexby chapel, sold a missal and a great portifer to Sir Thomas Ughtred, who agreed that the priest should have them in his keeping during his lifetime.

After the death of Margaret, anchoress of Richmond, a dispute arose respecting the disposal of her property (1490). It was settled that, after her debts were paid and the anchorage (which belonged to the burgesses) repaired, the remainder of her goods should go to the Grey Friars, from whom she had received the habit ; whilst the effects of her successor were to pass to Easby Abbey. In some cases the enclosed person was able to make a will, witness that of Katherine Dytton, of St. Albans (1437).<sup>23</sup>

#### IV. BURIAL

In early days it was customary for the cell to become the tomb of its tenant, whether hermit or anchorite. We read in the lives of Bartholomew, Godric, and Robert how each was buried in his oratory in a tomb prepared by himself, which had for years served as a solemn reminder of the end.

Sometimes, however, the solitary was buried elsewhere. Tynemouth Priory claimed the body of Henry of Coquet. When Roger of Markyate died, his body was borne to St. Alban's Abbey and was placed with honour "in an arched tomb built into the south wall of the church, hard by the choir of the brethren". In the same spot Sigar of Northaw was also buried. When Henry III visited St. Albans in 1257, he gave offerings at various shrines, including rich cloths for that of these famous monks.<sup>24</sup> Over the recess of their traditional tomb (Plate XXX) is the inscription :—

Vir domini uerus iacet hic Heremita Rogerus  
Et sub eo clarus meritis Heremita Sigarus.

Human remains have frequently been found on the sites of hermitages. In the Hermitage Field at Tarporley, the plough turned up a stone coffin containing a skeleton. Local tradition tells of a burial-ground at Oath Farm, in or near a field called Chapel Five Acres. In 1328 the sick recluse of Oath petitioned that when he died he might not be buried

--113--

in his cell *as the custom was*, but in Aller churchyard or elsewhere.

During the fifteenth century it seems to have become usual to bury the hermit in his parish church or in any other cemetery that he willed. One of the hermits of Newbridge in Ickburgh desired to be interred in Munford church porch, another at the Chapel-in-the-Fields, Norwich. Robert Leake of Blythburgh was buried before the font. There is at Wellingham a monumental brass inscribed *Hic iacet enim Thomas Leeke Heremita* ; this is clearly the memorial of Thomas Leek

who at the beginning of the sixteenth century was hermit of Weasenham, close to Wellingham.

In the case of the enclosed person, the tomb was sometimes prepared before his admission to the cell, and lay ever open to his gaze (p. 96). The same custom prevailed when the *Ancren Riwle* was written. The anchoress was bidden not only to meditate upon death but actually to scrape up earth every day out of the pit. "She . . . hath her death always, in a manner, before her eyes." At the close of the fourteenth century, one of the Westminster recluses was buried in the oratory adjoining his chamber, in a leaden coffin with iron clasps. The keeper of Westminster Palace suborned a plumber of the convent, who, after flinging the mortal remains into the well in the cloister-cemetery, removed the coveted chest to the palace. Divine retribution fell on both partakers in this act of sacrilege.

Few churches have preserved monuments of the solitaries who dwelt under their shadow. The tradition that Lady Laurretta was buried at Hackington church under the large stone on the altar steps is recorded by Hasted. There is at St. John's, Lewes, the curious memorial of Magnus the Dane.<sup>25</sup> The inscription (which is supposed to date from the thirteenth century) is built into the wall on fifteen stones arranged in a double semi-circle.

CLAUDITUR HIC MILES, DANORUM REGIA PROLES ;  
MANGNUS NOMEN EI, MANGNÆ NOTA PROGENEI :  
DEPONENS MANGNUM, SE MORIBUS INDUIT AGNUM,  
PREPETE PRO VITA, FIT PARVULUS ARNACORITA

which may be rendered : "Here is enclosed a soldier of the

--114--

royal race of Denmark, whose name Magnus bespeaks his noble lineage : laying aside his high estate, he assumes the demeanour of a lamb, and exchanges a life of ambition for that of a lowly anchorite".

In Lower Quinton church (Gloucestershire) is the tomb of Joan, Lady Clopton, who (from the use of the word *clauditur* in her monumental inscription) is supposed to have been enclosed there after the death of Sir William Clopton. The fine brass lies on an altar tomb at the east end of the south aisle. The costume shows the veiled head-dress with the *barbe*, the sign of widowhood. In the chancel of Faversham church is the brass of William Thornbury, the vicar, who is said to have been preparing to become a recluse in 1472. The meaning of the inscription is obscure, but it seems probable that he retired to live in solitude in his "chapel and parvise situated in the corner of the churchyard," described in his will.<sup>26</sup>

The year 1846 saw the death of two recluses at Allhallows, London Wall. The sum of 6s. 8d. was paid by the churchwardens "ffor the Berynge of the nue Ancker, that is to say, for the grete Bell for his knyll".

--115--

Footnotes~

1. L. Eckenstein, *Woman under Monast.*, 246.
2. Dodsworth, *Church Notes*. (Rec. S., 34), 158. The glass is said to have been removed during the last century (? into Lincolnshire). Further information will be welcomed by the writer.
3. *Fire of Love* (E.E. Text. S.), 25-6.
4. Bristol City Library, MS. 6 (cf. Appendix B).
5. Bodl. Rawl. MS., C. 72.
6. Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, Lib. III.
- [1]. Royal Pensioners were retired, loyal servants of the king. The king was entitled to place a number of retired servants in monastic houses where the monastic house was expected to maintain them (a corrody) for the rest of their lives. This could lead to trouble, especially if resources were tight. Sometimes negotiations required to the king to pay a dowry or lump sum to help sustain the pensioner.
7. Reg. Inclus., cap. XIX. ; Bodl. MS., 423, f. 182.
8. *Piers Plowman* (E.E.T.S., 38), Text B., pass. VI., 147-8. But in summer two meals were permitted, see Ancren Riwe.
- [2]. There was one official "meal" in monasteries. But there was often a bit of bread and wine or beer served in the morning, especially for the young or ailing. There was also a bit of something to eat in the evening. The anchorite's sustenance patterns were likely more austere than for regular monastics. But they may still have been allowed light refreshment in the morning and evening.
- [3]. Sometimes when food allowances seem high it is because the recipient of the corrody is responsible to make sure a servant or servants working for them are also fed and clothed from their allowance. I do not know if that is the case here.
9. Officium, *York Breviary* (s.s., 75), App.V.
10. *Wills*, Bury St. Edmunds (Camden S.), 105.
11. Bristol MS. ; cf. Bodl MS., "Paupertatem dilexi, sordes numquam".
12. Bodl. MS., 423, f. 178.
13. *Piers Plowman* (E.E.T.S.) B., xv. 208. *Reg. of Princes* (E.E.T.S.), 156.
14. Dugd., II. 202 n. ; 360 ; for bequests see *Herts Genealogist*, I., II.
15. B.M. Add. ch. 14558, etc.
16. Cf. case of W. Lucas, who appealed in Chancery for repayment of loan, C. Welsh, Churchwardens' *Accounts of Allhallows*, XXX., XXXI.
17. Coke, Littleton's *Institutes*, ed. Butler, II.
18. Stanley, *Memorials*, ed. 1868, p. 609.
19. B.M. Cott. Nero D., 7, f. 137.
20. Welch, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, 52, 56-9, 68.
21. Test. Ebor. (S.S. 4), I. 199.
22. Ex. Reg. Stafford, 379.
23. Somerset House, Reg. "Stoneham," f. 31. b.
24. *Gest. Abb.* I., 101, 105, 184 ; *F. Amund.*, I., 433.

25. M.A. Lower, *Hist. of Sussex*, II. 25.
26. See *Arch. Cánt.* XI. 26-9, plate, p. 27.

-end chapter-