The Sale of Combe.

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IN looking through the large *Liber Albus* I have noticed several early charters, which, so far as I can make out, are unpublished, and if I am right in this, shall probably ask the leave of the Society to print them in our transactions. The most important of these charters is the one printed below.

It may be well to mention that this register, written about the middle of the 15th century, is of very different importance from the other two. They are originals; cotemporaneous records in different hands, this one, a copy of the chapter muniments, was apparently completed at the time it was made. As I do not find any notice of this charter in the index, one is left in some doubt whether there may not be other unknown documents, and it would be well that the registers should be calendered.

As this charter was unknown to one of our Members, who is, perhaps, the person best acquainted with the documents of the Conqueror's reign, I made a copy of it for him; and, not improbably in consequence of this an article appeared in the *Saturday Review* of Dec. 2nd, 1876, which pretty fully and clearly explained the charter.

Lib. Alb. II. 254 f. Bæc[1] be Cume

✠ Her cyð embe þ land æt Cume þa biscop Giso of Sumorsetescyre pæs on piltune inn þære stænena[2] cyrcean on þære upfleringe to foren Eadgyþe þere hlefdian Edweardes cyncges lafe mid Willelmes cyncges geleafan þ adzor þuredes sunu moste hyt sellan ⁊ gyfan þ land æt Cume Gisan b̃ ⁊ hi purþan sæhte þ se b̃ gef him. vi. marc. goldes and sceolde þ land gan inn to þā b̃rice. æt pelle eall spa hit stode mid mete and mid mannū ⁊ mid eallū æhtan spa spa hyt hym on handa stod on æcce yrfe ærdæg ⁊ æfter ⁊ his gebedredene[3] sceolde beon bynnan þam mynstre ⁊ his fæder ⁊ his meder ⁊ his gespustra ⁊ his sunu. a tha hpile þe crystendom. punede on engle lande on gepittnæste þære[4] manna þe þær mid pæron. + Sæxi preost + Kyppincg pr̄ + Brihtmær pr̄ + Godric diacᵇ + paldere diacᵇ + Sumorlæte subdiacᵇ + Herdincg + pulfpeard hpite + ægelsig Stipeard + Alfpold burþen + vitela + Alfpold + Brihtric doddasunu[5] + Brixi ceolsig sunu[6] + Godpine hos. Leofpine godpinessunu + Leofpine Edpines sunu + Sipeard godmannes sunu + Agamund + Ælfric lange + Ælfric Ælfheges sunu + þiederic goldsmiþ + Ægelsig Goldsmiþ + Nordmann ioñs sunu + Ægelric coc + Rabel coc + ⁊ pis[7] pes gedon on þone podnesday binnan hlenctene[8] þaman[9] sang Reminiscere miseracionum tuarum Domine. on þam vi geare þæs þe Willelm cyng rixode ⁊ Mathylð his gebedde. ⁊ Rotb̄ æþeling hyre sunu ⁊ landfranc arceb̄ ⁊ þaylce[10] geare gepiten þa tpegen biscopes Stigand arceb̄ ⁊ leofric b̃ of Exacestre. ⁊ þa pæs agan fram Xpes gebyrdtide þusen geare ⁊ lxxii geare on þæt xi geare. þæs[11] he Giso b̃. feng to rice.

Professor Earle has been so kind as to give the following translation. He remarks that the language of the charter shews that it must be of nearly the date it purports to be, and that the copy made in the 15th century is so nearly

(1), boc; (2), stænenan; (3), gebedræden; (4), gepitnesse þæra; (5), doddansunu; (6), ceolsigessunu; (7), þis; (8), lenctene; (9), hwæne man; (10), þy ylce; (11), þæs þe.

accurate—some of the slovenlinesses having probably been in the original—that he cannot think it a mechanical scribe's work, but must suppose that the language was understood at the time of transcription, even if imperfectly.

Here sheweth about the land at Combe. When Bishop Giso of Somersetshire was at Wilton on the up-floor before Edith the Lady, King Edwards relict, with King William's leave that Adzor Thureds son might sell and give the land at Combe to Giso the Bishop. And they came to an agreement that the Bishop should give him 6 marks of gold, and the land should go into the Bishopric at Wells altogether as it stood, with meat and with men, and with all chattels, just as it on his hand stood, perpetual now and for ever. And that there should be a service for him in the Minster, and for his father, and his mother, and his sisters, and his son, for ever, the while that Christendom should continue in England. On the witness of the men who were present + Sæxi, priest; + Kippincg, priest; + Brihtmær, priest; + Godric, deacon; + Waldere, deacon; + Sumorlæte, sub-deacon; + Herdincg, + Wulfweard White; + Ægelsig, steward; + Ælfwold, chamberlain; + Vitela; + Alfwold; + Brihtric, son of Dodda; + Brixi, son of Ceolsig; + Godwine hos. Leofwine, son of Godwin; + Leofwine, son of Edwin; + Siweard, son of Godman; + Agamund; + Ælfric Long; + Ælfric, son of Ælfheg; + Thiederic, goldsmith; + Ægelsig, goldsmith; + Nordman Johnsson; + Ægelric, cook; + Rabel, cook. And this was done on the Wednesday in Lent when they sing Reminiscere miserationum tuarum domine[12] in the 6th year that King William reigned, and Mathylda his consort, and Robert Atheling their son, and Landfranc, Archbishop. And the same year died the Bishops, Stigand Archbishop, and Leofric Bishop of Exeter, and then was gone from the time of Christ's birth a thousand years and seventy-two years at that the 11th year since Giso's accession to the bishopric.

(12). Ember Wednesday.

Domesday records that Combe St. Nicholas belonged to the Bishop, having been in the time of King Edward the property of Azor, here called Adzor, and Arsere in the ancient history of Wells by the Canon. He is identified by the writer in the *Saturday Review* with Adzurus' *dapifer* to King Edward in the Waltham Charter of 1062. This document shews where the transfer was made and when, the price and other conditions of the bargain. The date, Ember Wednesday in Lent (Feb. 28, according to the *Saturday Review*), is fixed by the first words of the introit at mass, the same as in the printed Sarum missal and the Roman missal now. As the beginning of Lent must be before Lady-day, the date of this deed shews that the year began at Christmas, or on the first of January as now, for if it had begun at Lady-day, the beginning of Lent, 1072, would still have been on the 10th year of Giso, who was consecrated at Rome on Easter Day, April 15th, 17 Kal. Maii, 1061, according to Hickes' *Thesaurus*, part i. p. 177, where he gives a *fac-simile* of the very curious diploma of Nicholas the III, dated 7 Kal. Maii of the same year, which is preserved among the Chapter Muniments.

It may be as well to note that the exact date of Archbishop Stigand's death is stated in the *Saturday Review* to have been hitherto uncertain. With regard to Leofric, Le Neve states him to have died Feb. 10, 1073, and Mr. J. B. Davidson places his death in 1071, in a memorandum on some boundaries near Dartmoor from the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, which he has been so good as to send me.

The price was 6 marks of gold. It is difficult to make out what this was, apparently a trifle over three pounds weight avoirdupois. The goldsmiths were present who, on the part of the seller and purchaser, weighed and assayed it, and possibly lent it, an early instance of banking, which in later times grew out of the goldsmiths' trade.

The principal witness was the Lady the Queen, the widow of Edward, who seems to have lived in quasi-regal state at the

Nunnery, which she had built anew of stone instead of wood. Her steward and chamberlain, *Burthen*, Bower Thane, akin to the Harem Pacha, of Bishop Strossmeyer, were witnesses, as well as various friends of her late husband, all, as is remarked in the *Saturday Review*, bearing English, and not French, names, thus giving a national character to her court, and to this transaction also, though Giso had been one of Edward's foreign chaplains. Here also the wife of William is designated by an expression by no means uncivil or improper, but which puts her below the Queen Dowager, and it is remarkable that Robert is called Ætheling.

The bargain was made before the 26 witnesses in the up-flooring of the church. This the writer in the *Saturday Review* states to be triforum. We hardly know enough of the plan of an English church at the time of the conquest to be sure of this. The reader must be careful not to make up his ideas of what cathedrals were then by what they are now, with long choirs and vaulted aisles to nave and choir. The long constructional choirs were then, or soon after, beginning to be developed and extended out of the semicircular apse at the end of the nave, in the chord of which the great altar of the church was placed. There was usually a transept just in front of the altar. At Exeter and Lincoln this transept occupied the place of the present transept, and it is probable that this was generally the case elsewhere. It lay between the apse and the nave, which opened into the transept with a great arch, and the aisles on each side with lesser arches, as they do now. In the great Basilicas at Rome, the patterns of other churches, there were no galleries or triforia. Viollet le Duc, at page 180 of the first volume of his charming architectural dictionary, gives a section of a Basilica, which had over the aisles galleries on wooden beams, not upon arches or vaults, similar to those of London churches, like S. James, and in such a gallery it is possible that the sale may have been transacted. If this be objected to, on the ground that architectural taste had not as

yet been sufficiently developed in England, the only alternative seems to be that the up-flooring was a raised gallery or loft in the centre of the church, such as in later times was called rood loft, and in earlier times ambo, and of which the history is given in a curious dissertation of J. B. Thiers *sur les Jubés*. On this loft the Epistle and Gospel were read on feast days and the musical parts of the service chanted, and here also—possibly enlarged for the occasion—coronations were celebrated. That the up-flooring was not a room in the monastery; but something in the church, such as we have been describing, is plain from the account of the troubles at Glastonbury in 1083, between Thurstan and his monks. He misgoverned them and put them wrong. Florence of Worcester tells us that he did this about the service, by teaching them a new-fangled chant, brought from Fécamp, in Normandy, instead of that to which they had been accustomed, and which is called the Gregorian chant. In consequence of these ritual troubles the secular power was brought in. The abbot sent for laymen, and they came fully armed into the Chapter-house and terrified the monks, who fled into the church and locked themselves in, but the doors were broken open and the Frenchmen broke into the choir, and some of the knights went on the up-floor and shot down with their arrows toward the halydom (sanctuary), so that on the rood, which stood above the altar, they stuck many arrows, and the wretched monks lay about the altar, and some crept under it, and three were killed and eighteen wounded. These very uncomfortable proceedings in the course of the great ritual development of the latter half of the 11th century, give a picturesque idea of what the up-floor must have been.

The first among the lay witnesses was Harding, the ancestor of the House of Berkeley, who is described as the Queen's *pincerna* in the Waltham deed, where Adzor himself comes next to him as the King's *dapifer*. Godwin also appears here, with *hos* after his name, the last letter looking like a contraction, in the Waltham deed he was the Queen's *dapifer;* and Brihtric,

Dodda's son, the latter having been at Waltham.[13] Last of all come two cooks, Ægelric and Rabel. It is not to be supposed that the nuns of Wilton employed men cooks. They must have been those of the Lady ; and their presence gives savoury ideas of the capital fish dinner (fit for the fast day) she must have given to all the company, with which the proceedings closed. The afternoon mass being taken as early as possible to enable the company, after performing the religious duties of the day, thoroughly to enjoy itself in the old English fashion at the very late dinner, or, rather, as we should say, luncheon, suitable for Lent.

Combe is stated in Domesday to be worth £18 ; and it was worth £10 in King Edward's time. The Bishop had, therefore, very considerably improved it. I conceive that these pounds weight of silver were a good deal smaller than the pounds of gold mentioned above. If it be correct, as stated in Rees' *Cyclopædia*, that gold was to silver as the proportion of 12 to 1, we cannot make out that the price could have been more than five or six years' purchase on the unimproved value.

Giso is stated to have increased the number of canons, and appointed one Isaac, by the name of a provost, to be their governor. This officer was in later times called the Provost of Combe, and appears to have possessed Combe, Winsham, and other property (mentioned in Collinson, vol. ii. 475-6), subject to £6 13*s.* 4*d.* for each of the 15 Combe Prebendaries and his Vicar. He had then a seat in choir, not apparently one of much importance, but no seat, if I remember right, in Chapter. The property again improved, the Provostship became a very rich benefice ; and when, at the Reformation, the revenues of the deanery were dissipated, it was abolished, and the revenues, with those of the sub-chanter, used to re-endow the deanery. Up to the changes made 40 years ago, Wells was thought to be one of the best deaneries which an ill-endowed Bishop might well

(13). The reader will remark that the first Leofwine has no cross before his name, this is probably an omission of the transcriber in the Register.

hold in commendam. Mr. Freeman, in his discourse on the Antiquities of Wells, in volume XII. of our Proceedings, dwells on some of the perplexities concerning the office of Provost between Bishop Giso's time and 1234, when Bishop Jocelin completed the ordination of the Provostship. An attempt seems to have been made to treat it as a family estate, which was defeated after a great deal of trouble and some loss.

We are indebted to our associate, Rev. John Earle, Professor of Anglo-Saxon, for his learned emendations, and I in particular for the critical accuracy with which he detected two blunders which I had made in transcription, for which the only excuse that could be made was that, my time was limited.