

THE AUSTIN CANONS IN ENGLAND IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

THE settlement of the English Church in the century after the Norman Conquest demands more attention than it has hitherto received. Our historians are engrossed with the story of the archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm and beyond a brief record of the national synods which assembled during this period their narrative tells us little or nothing of the real settlement that was taking place. It was the time when the future lines of diocesan and parochial organization were being laid down. When the extant episcopal registers begin in the thirteenth century, we find that the diocesan arrangement was much as we find it now. But there are many problems on which more information is needed. The territorial spheres of work for the archdeacons have been settled, but what was it that caused the exact divisions which existed in the archdeaconries down to 1535? We find the rural deaneries of varied sizes, and to-day containing very varied numbers of parishes. The earlier episcopal registers shew them as most important areas of diocesan organization. The clergy of each deanery seem to be responsible for the well-doing of their brethren, as the men in the hundred were responsible for the peace of the hundred. Such an organization suggests an English origin, but our historians tell us nothing about it. Our parochial system also bristles with points of which no serious attempt has as yet been made to find an explanation. We do not seem to realize how chaotic diocesan organization must have been in the century from 1066-1166. An idea seems to prevail that a fairly perfect organization existed in early English times, and that all went on smoothly under the Normans, except for those controversies which chiefly concerned the bishops. But there is no evidence to support such an idea. The little we do know seems to suggest the contrary. When Lanfranc in 1070 came to

England there were Norman bishops at Dorchester (Remigius 1067), Winchester (Walkelin 1070), and London (William 1051). Selsey and Elmham received new bishops, Stigand and Herfast, that year. Giso of Wells and Leofric of Crediton were foreigners, and the saintly Wulfstan of Worcester was not acceptable to Lanfranc. York was vacant through the death of Ealdred and Durham through the death of Ethelwin. Then came the great change of the bishops' stools in the last quarter of the century, Sherborne and Ramsey to old Sarum, Selsey to Winchester, Lichfield to Chester and to Coventry, Elmham to Thetford and then to Norwich, Wells to Bath and Crediton to Exeter. All these changes tended to inefficiency and certainly disturbed very seriously whatever diocesan organization had prevailed. The parochial clergy must have been left very much to themselves. No strong centres made their influence felt throughout the diocese; the people in their parishes—huge parishes with outlying hamlets separated by dense woods and dangerous swamps—the subject English and the French strangers, must have been much in need of an organized ministry and the instruction which such a ministry would provide. It is a problem therefore of very great interest to enquire whether it is possible to discern what went on in the country places, and how the church slowly developed into definite order, an order such as we observe to exist when first the episcopal registers come to our assistance. The evidence which exists calls for very cautious usage, but evidence certainly exists from which we can look back and perceive what must have been, and how the Church thrived even in those early years of the reign of Henry the first. Naturally the evidence which the Domesday Survey offers us comes first in the order of our records, and this is really very considerable. It deserves much more serious attention than as yet has been given to it. Only the surface of it has been skimmed. It was no part of the duty of the Commissioners to mention the churches in 1084, unless the Saint to whom the church was dedicated was endowed with land. A resident parish priest, however, would almost certainly have been so endowed, and therefore I am inclined to draw some conclusions from the silence of the Survey. I think it shews that the clergy were not nearly so numerous as the churches. The three terms by which the clergy are mentioned, sacerdos, presbyter, capellanus, the

status in the diocese of royal chaplains who were parish priests and king's legates, the differences of rank of the churches themselves, when carefully explained, will also help on this enquiry. Whatever had been the order and the organization of the early English Church, it must have suffered during the second half of the eleventh century, and it is therefore of the greatest interest to attempt the discovery of the forces which brought about its restoration.

Now the clergy were divided into two rival classes of the regular and the secular, and this division was further complicated by rival nationalities. The regular or monastic clergy were Benedictines. No other form of monasteries as yet existed in England, and the number of Benedictine monasteries in the country at this time is well known and the list is not long. They were about fifty in all. In the diocese of Worcester there were only five, and in that of Bath and Wells only four. Nor did the monastic clergy assist in the spiritual work of the diocese. In all the reforms of Lanfranc not a single hint is to be found that any duty rested on the monks to concern themselves with the spiritual welfare of the lay folk who lived on the monastic estates. Their influences, as far as one can judge, only reached but a short distance beyond the precincts of the monastery. The age when they acquired the advowsons of distant churches and created vicarages and made money out of the endowments left for the parish churches had not yet arrived.

Nor could the influence of the cathedral churches, the mother churches of the dioceses, have been very great. Canterbury, Winchester, Worcester, Norwich, and Durham were in the hands of the Benedictines, and the recent changes of the bishops' seats had largely diminished the influence which the clergy of these cathedral churches could have formerly exercised. In the diocese of Bath and Wells the cathedral church had lately been changed from Wells to Bath, from a church of secular canons to a church of Benedictine monks. The influence of the latter had not begun, the influence of the former, such as it may have been, was seriously diminished. The secular clergy were, however, in possession of most of the cathedral churches and of nearly all of the parish churches. To a great extent the secular clergy were English, and certainly English in their sentiments, and certainly

therefore not in sympathy with the new reforming Norman bishops who had come to rule over them. Nor must we be led away by the term *Minster*, and imagine that there were numerous small isolated monasteries in the kingdom. In the time of Beda we know that there were settlements of a vague kind of monasticism, but the head of these houses was as often as not married and the churches had been handed down from father to son, and they had by this time fallen into the hands of those who were called secular clergy and were as often as not married men. The term *Minster*, as we have it in *Ilminster*, *Charminster*, *Axminster*, *Banwell Minster*, *Cheddar Minster*, seems to denote a church to which a resident priest was attached. The several *Whitchurches* in the south-west of England are all called *Album Monasterium* and as often as not *Whytminster*.

But the secular clergy had got out of touch with the authorities of the Church, and their benefices had in many cases become hereditary; and this fact made reform all the more difficult. At Wells and at Crediton, bishops Giso (1061–87) and Leofric (1046–72) had endeavoured to cope with the worldliness of the secular clergy by providing the clergy of the cathedral churches with refectories and dormitories and imposing upon them the rule of St Chrodegang. These are the only instances in England of Secular Canons becoming canons of any recognized order. It was the first practical step to enforce celibacy on the parish priest, and, though it was not a success, it led the way for the introduction of those canons whose work in the Church is the subject of this paper.

The Canons Regular of St Augustine had become so assimilated in the ordering of their houses, and in their daily lives, to the Benedictine monks, that it is necessary to keep our minds quite clear as to their exact character and position. They were not monks, and though in process of time they became more and more like to monks, yet there was always an essential difference. In a house of Austin Canons the majority of the members were in Holy Orders, and all were supposed to be preparing for Holy Orders. This we must keep clearly in mind, because it was quite different in a Benedictine or any allied monastery. The question always demanded in reference to the admission of a novice into a house of Austin Canons is—*'si sint habiles ad suscipiendos ordines.'* They were to bear in

mind that the canons must—‘in missis celebrandis, in omnibus serviciis regularibus in choro . . . ociositatem devitare.’ During his year of probation enquiry is to be made—‘si religioni congruus, habilis ad suspiciendos ordines et ad ministrandum in ordinibus bene dispositus’. They were men in Holy Orders gathered together for a community life, and having a certain recognized discipline. But they were not monks. Innocent II made this quite clear in 1131 when at the Council of Rheims he said the regular clergy consisted of Monks of the Order of St Benedict and Canons of the Order of St Augustine. Let us briefly then trace the growth of this Order.

The term ‘canon’ seems to have been given originally to those clergy who were the *familiares* of the bishop, and who at first lived in the same house with him. Such clergy would be under supervision, and therefore they were men who would live a fairly disciplined life. St Augustine of Hippo and St Eusebius of Vercelli were conspicuous for the zeal they shewed in the training of their clergy, and St Augustine in one of his letters to some turbulent and worldly-minded nuns described a rule of life which formed the basis for a future rule for the clergy. But there is no evidence that St Augustine drew up a rule for the disciplined life of the canonical clergy. His *Regula ad servos Dei* in the Benedictine edition of his works is prefaced by a warning that it contained sentiments and phrases which he actually used and cherished, and had on that account only been added to the complete edition for what it was worth. The Council of Aachen 816 was the first of a long series of efforts made by the bishops for the reform of the diocesan clergy. It is said that Unwan, archbishop of Hamburg, 1013–29, was the first to gather congregations of clergy under the rule of St Romuald the hermit, 910–1027, who, Damianus tells us, was the first who taught ‘plures canonicos et clericos qui laicorum more seculariter habitabant praepositis obedire et communiter in congregatione vivere’. The eleventh century was full of this effort, but so far not a word is said of the rule of St Augustine. Among the most active of the bishops of that time to deepen the spiritual life among the clergy was Ivo, bishop of Chartres, 1090–1116, the pupil of Lanfranc at Caen. He is said to have reformed the monastery of St Quintin at Beauvais as a seminary for secular canons, and to have restored

the order of St Augustine, and the historian Sigeberht records that the canonical order founded by the Apostles, and afterwards by the blessed Augustine, began to flourish again under bishop Ivo. In 1085, Philip, bishop of Troyes, founded a new clergy-house, and from bishop Ivo received not the Order of St Augustine, but the rule of the house which he had founded at Beauvais. In 1095 Lutosdus, dean of Toul, founded an Abbey for Canons Regular, and here, for the first time, we hear of the rule of St Augustine. That it had but lately been drawn up is clear because pope Urban II confirmed it in 1096. The historian Anselm of Havelberg, 1129, is careful to say that the Canons Regular were not monks, and pope Benedict XII, in his bull 1339, mentions the rules and constitutions of the Canons Regular, but says nothing of the letter of St Augustine. It seems clear that the Canons Regular were clergy under the direct superintendence of the bishops, and that the idea that St Augustine was the author of their rule arose at the end of the eleventh, or beginning of the twelfth century, and partly from a desire to place the Canons Regular in a similar position to the Benedictines, whose admiration for the Rule of St Benedict was then at its height.

It would appear therefore that Ivo himself drew up the letter *Regula ad servos Dei*. No one of that age was so versed in the writings of St Augustine, and if his master, Lanfranc, could improve and expand St Benedict's rule for the monks, why should not he expand and put into a practical form the teaching and the precepts of St Augustine for the clergy who worked under his direction?

The Canons Regular or Austin Canons were clergymen gathered together in a clergy-house and living under some rule in order that they might attain to a loftier ideal of Christian life. The example of Hugh, bishop of Auxerre, 1136, is pathetic. He is said to have given his canons many churches and their tithes—'ea conditione ut per singulos annos tota Quadragesima in refectorio communiter comedant.' And this connexion between the bishop and the Austin Canons continued to the eve of the dissolution of the Monasteries. The head of each house was a prior, and the abbot of all the houses in the diocese was the bishop. Not till the end of the fifteenth century, when they had become assimilated in almost every way to the Benedictines, did

the priors aspire to and obtain, as at Bruton, the dignity and title of abbots ; though indeed, in the case of some houses that followed the example of the Paris house of Canons under Hugh St Victor, the head, in addition to his title as head of the canons of his priory, claimed at the very outset and for other reasons the title of abbot.

Such were the men for whom is claimed in the present article the honour of having done more than any other organization to establish the English Church in the country districts. They were the new clergy, clergy who were celibates, who lived a community life in a clergy-house, and whose ministerial work in England in the first half of the twelfth century is entirely ignored. They were in sympathy with the bishops, they were in sympathy with the new Norman lords, many of whom were the founders of their houses, and they possessed an earnestness and intelligence certainly rare at that time among the parochial clergy.

Now the statements made above call for corroborative evidence, and that evidence we obtain from a careful examination of the charters and documents that record the foundation of these houses. Let us see what was the story of their establishment in England. It is uniform, and in all the houses of Austin Canons established before the death of Henry II the story is almost identical. It centres in a desire to provide for the spiritual wants of the people, and the steps that were taken to carry it out.

The first of these houses, and there were fifty-four of them founded in the period mentioned, was that at Colchester founded in 1096 by Ernulf, an earnest priest who, living just outside the walls of the city, saw how great was the need for missionary effort among the people. To him and to his like-minded brothers in the faith, canons serving God, the church of St Julian and St Botolph at Colchester, and the churches of Greenstead, Fordham, and Heathfield were given. The parishioners shared with the canons the use of these churches; they were the buildings in which the canons ministered for the good of the people. To induce some of these canons, ten years afterwards, to settle in London, the church of the Holy Trinity and St Leonard was given them, and in the bull of pope Pascal II, confirming in 1116 this foundation, it is mentioned as the first house of Austin Canons in England, and we have in the bull an exact description of the work these canons had to do—to them, says Pascal, has been committed

by our father 'dispensatio Verbi Dei, praedicationis officium, baptismum et reconciliatio paenitentium'—in other words the exact work of all missionary priests placed in charge of districts not as yet fully organized by the Church. Ernulf is said to have been a hermit priest at Colchester, and this term is remarkable, because in several other instances it is used, and it seems to be almost a technical term for a solitary priest attached to a church which was not prebendal and collegiate.

Colchester was, in the reign of Henry I, in the circle of political order and civilization. Let us now go across to the wild districts in the far west, where the dioceses of Hereford and Lichfield, between the dense forests and dangerous swamps, looked down the valleys and across the open wold to the lands of the then unconquered Welsh. Here, in Herefordshire and Shropshire, in districts thinly populated, wild and dangerous, we find contemporary foundations of distinctly missionary character. The revolts of Earl Roger and Earl Hugh of Shrewsbury against the stern rule of William the Conqueror and the hated rule of his son, the Welsh wars of William II, the invasion of Welshmen into Worcestershire in 1088, burning and harrowing and destroying as they rushed through Herefordshire and crossed the Severn, makes it certain that the Church in those districts could not then have been very efficiently organized. It was there, amid this desolation and in face of this danger, that Ralph Mortimer founded, about 1100, by consent of Gerard, bishop of Hereford, a house of Canons Regular at Wigmore. An earlier attempt had been made at Shobdon, and Ralph had endowed a church there with three prebends. But the times were too dangerous, and the district needed men of greater energy and discipline than were found generally among the secular canons; and so the Austin Canons began at Wigmore. Now it must be noticed in the account of all these foundations that the endowments were churches. Estates are sometimes mentioned, and especially in later times, but they are the exception. Enough land was given for their support and what was added was to be the sphere of their labour. This is not the case in the story of monastic foundations. In early cartularies of the Benedictines you hardly ever find such items. The age when the monasteries acquired the advowsons of distant churches

had not yet arrived. The Austin Canons came first, and churches were given them not as means of enrichment but to be scenes of ministerial work. It will be noticed also that these churches are either in the vicinity of the priory or grouped round some mother church where one of the canons of the priory had been settled for the purpose of work. To Wigmore were given the churches of Wigmore, Shobdon, Cleobury, Leintwardine, Nene, Higley, Burley, North Lydbury, Presteigne, Aymestrey, Byton, Bredwardine, Leinthal Earls, Kinsham Ford, More, Rathlinghope, Cardeston, a string of churches almost from the Wye to the Severn, and a group of dependent churches including Hopton Wafers and Marmle round the mother church of Cleobury Mortimer.

When again we cross the Severn into the diocese of Coventry, we find another house of Austin Canons settled at Haghmond. It is an instance of the northern of the two dioceses pushing through the forests that divided Staffordshire from Shropshire and establishing a missionary outpost a little north of Watling Street. Haghmond was founded, it is said, by William Fitzalan of Clun in 1110, though the Cartulary of Haghmond gives the date of the foundation as 1099. The Benedictines and the Secular Canons at Shrewsbury were not likely to do much. Greater confidence was placed in the Austin Canons. The churches attached to Haghmond are mostly north of it, Stanton, Grimshall, Shawbury, and Hadnall. Shropshire also had two other houses of Austin Canons at Wormbridge and Lilleshall. They were both on the eastern side of the Severn and in districts remote, on account of the forests, from the centres of diocesan life. Each had its group of churches given it as essential to its foundation, and Wormbridge was founded by the same William Fitzalan who was the founder of Haghmond.

Lilleshall, though only founded in 1145, calls for special attention, because it was founded by the last of the secular canons of St Alkmund, Shrewsbury. He yearned for better things, and Pope Eugenius allowed him to use his prebend of Lilleshall for that purpose. The priory was founded in the forest of Lilleshall, and the churches of St Michael Lilleshall, St Alkmund Salop, and Atcham, were given to the canons.

If now we travel south-west by the Roman road that ran from

Uriconium to Abergavenny, we come to a narrow strip of Monmouthshire running north-west between Brecknockshire and Herefordshire, bounded on the east by the Black Mountains and on the west by the hills of Brecknockshire. Here, at a place known as Llanthony, a place which possibly recalls some scenes of former activity of the Celtic church, there settled, in 1103, William, an attendant of Hugh de Lacy, and Ernisius, chaplain to Queen Maud. It was on the land which, in 1084, was recorded as belonging to Roger de Lacy. It was debateable land, reckoned in Domesday as part of the land of Hereford; and as yet it was unsettled whether it formed part of the diocese of Hereford or part of the diocese of Llandaff. The two proposed to live the life of hermits, which I take to mean of priests living alone, content to minister to those who came to them. Archbishop Anselm, however, persuaded Ernisius to change his 'contubernium duorum' into a 'coenobium multorum'. So Ernisius became the first prior and they gathered 'viri religiosi' from Merton, London, and Colchester; and the church they built was consecrated in 1108 by Urban of Llandaff and Rheinhelm of Hereford.

All down the valley toward Abergavenny they laboured, and their churches were those at Llanthony, St Martins Comyowte, St Cleddoc's, Ewyas Lacy, St Martin's Trewyn, and as far as Kenderchurch across the river Dove. Robert, the second prior, became bishop of Hereford, and is described as 'vir simplex et rectus, in artibus liberalibus magister emeritus, et in divina pagina ita praedicator catholicus sicut in fidei articulis sufficienter eruditus'. Fifteen years afterwards the foundation was removed to the second Llanthony, close to the city of Gloucester, because of the violence of the Welshmen of Brecon. But in both places the character of the endowment was the same—sufficient land for the sustenance of the canons, and groups of churches in Gloucestershire, where they might minister to the country folk around.

Let us take another instance in the house of Austin Canons established by Walter Giffard, bishop of Winchester, on his manor of Taunton in Somerset. There had been for 200 years a settlement of resident priests there. In 904 Eadward arranges with Denewulf, bishop of Winchester, for the protection of the

clergy of Taunton—‘*pro perpetua libertate illius monasterii*’. In the time of Edmund Ironside, i. e. 1016, there was said to have been a college of resident priests there. In 1084 the college consisted of two priests who held land under the bishop of Winchester. The foundation, therefore, of bishop Gyffard, in 1121, swallowed up the college of secular priests and became the home of a house of Austin Canons. Its subsequent history tells us a good deal of the relationship of the bishop to these houses in his diocese. To the Austin Canons of Taunton were given all the churches in Taunton and the dependent churches of Lydeard St Lawrence, Kingston, Angersleigh, Bishops Hull, Pitminster, Ash Priors and Trull, Wilton, St George’s in the Castle, Stoke St Gregory, St James’s Taunton, Staplegrove, and Ruishton. Over these the bishop was to exercise his ordinary jurisdiction, and the archdeacon had the power to visit them.

Another foundation in Somerset is of special interest, because originally it was a royal chapel of king Ine and existed, as early as 704, as the monastic church of St Aldhelm at Bruton. Little work was being done by the Church in the eastern border of Somerset in the first half of the twelfth century, and Bruton was part of the possessions of the Mohun family. William, the first earl, decided to found there a house of Austin Canons. This he did in 1142, and to enable him to accomplish his wish, William, the king’s chaplain at Bruton, surrendered the historic church of St Mary and St Aldhelm, and here earl William established his canons. As at Colchester, so here, the church was a double church, the parishioners using especially the north aisle. The equipment of the house was similar to that of other foundations. A group of churches near to Bruton was given to the house, and the spiritual work of the district was carried on by the canons at Pitcombe, Redlynch, Wyke, Witham, Brewham, Shepton Montagu, Milton Clevedon, and St Lawrence’s Creech-Hill. There were also, among the earlier gifts to it, three other groups of churches, in Normandy at the ancestral home of the family, at South Petherton, and also at the extreme west of the county of Somerset; and the annals of the house in subsequent times record the going forth of canons from Bruton to serve in these distant churches, and the danger they incurred

from the freer contact with the outer world to which their duties exposed them.

Nor is this missionary and ministerial effort of the Austin Canons confined to two or three localities in England. Far to the north and to the east of the city of Carlisle, and a short time after Henry I had established the Austin Canons in that city, Robert de Vallibus settled, in the wild district of Lanercost just within the Roman wall, a small house of these earnest clergy and gave them—'canonicis regularibus Deo ibidem servientibus'—the churches of Brampton, Farlam, Irthington, Walton, and Kenerman. Carlisle itself is worth a notice. For when it was rebuilt in the days of William II, the king placed in charge of the spiritual needs of the city, in 1093, William 'ecclesiastici ordinis homo locupletis admodum'. Here Henry I founded a bishopric and gave to Athelwald, the prior of the Austin house at Nostell, whom he made the first bishop, the church of St Mary which William had built, and, at Athelwald's request, founded there a house of Austin Canons with the wealth which William had left. To them also were assigned the churches of Newcastle, Warkworth, Robery, Winchingham, and Corbridge.

At Barnwell in Cambridgeshire the original grant of Picot would have settled Austin Canons in 1092 at St Giles's Church under the Castle. Owing, however, to political troubles Picot's full intention was never carried out, and in 1119 Peverel, his heir, settled them at Barnwell and gave them the churches of Caldecot, Comberton, Bourn, Rampton, Madingley, Guilden Morden, Harston, Hinxton, and others.

At Twynham and at Plympton we have instances of churches of secular canons being given over to Austin Canons, William Warewast, bishop of Exeter, turning the seculars out of Plympton because they would not give up their wives; and to the canons regular were assigned groups of churches near Plympton and also in various parts of Cornwall.

At Leedes, in 1119, Robert de Crepito Corde founded a house and gave to the canons 'omnes ecclesie baroniae de Crevequer'. At Ixworth the parish church had been destroyed, apparently at the Conquest, and had not been repaired. Here, in 1087, William Blunden founded a house of this order, rebuilt the parish church, and assigned it to the canons with other churches and their

dependent chapels in the neighbourhood. Geoffrey of Clinton, Henry's chamberlain, founded the church of Kenilworth and gave it to these canons with three churches in the vicinity, and Simon bishop of Worcester witnesses the charter.

The same facts come out in the story of the foundation of the Austin Houses at Dunmow, Thremhall, St Dionysius at Southampton, Giseburn, Newnham in Hertfordshire, Norton in Cheshire, and Stone in Staffordshire. In some cases it is the desire of the bishops to impose a stricter discipline on the clergy, and so the secular prebendaries give way to Austin Canons. In some it is their desire to repair the waste places and to provide for the spiritual needs of the district, and so ruined churches are repaired and a house is built and the Austin Canons are introduced. But one fact comes out in every foundation deed throughout England in the twelfth century, that where a house of Austin Canons is established there have been assigned to them at the very beginning a number of churches, generally in the immediate neighbourhood of their house or in groups, as 'capellae dependentes' centred round the mother church, as spheres for ministerial work and as essential to the fulfilment of the purposes of their Order.

The men then were priests, or men training and suitable for priest's orders. They settled down, few in number but sufficient for the district they had to serve. The most prominent items in their early charters are not the mills and the manors, so much in evidence in early monastic charters, but the churches where they had to serve. It may be said, however, that the parochial interests of the parish do not come into prominence in the annals of these houses. This is certainly true. But we could not expect it otherwise. The records were those concerning the house and the men that lived in it, and naturally such records only refer to the fortunes of the house and the lives of the men who inhabited it. In later times, as at Taunton in the fourteenth century, we find particular canons assigned to particular churches, and as scattered houses attached to groups of parishes were built, the prior of the mother house became known as the prelate of these scattered convents or monasteries. Moreover within these houses we find a freedom which was never sanctioned in Benedictine monasteries. A canon might bring in a stranger to

dinner if the prior gave him permission. The sick of the parish had not to wait outside for food. They were taken in and nursed in the priory.

It seems clear, then, that in the early decades of the twelfth century the Austin Canons did a great work for the English Church. They assisted more than any other religious organization to reorganize the dioceses and to provide for the spiritual need of the country parishes. However closely assimilated they became in later years to the monastic orders, they should not be classed with them. Had they kept their first estate and remained in subjection to the bishops, who were originally and intentionally their abbots, they would not have suffered at the Dissolution of the Monasteries. They were not monks. In the twelfth century they were as much the disciplined side of ecclesiasticism as in the thirteenth century the Friars were the active side of monasticism. They were not confined to their house. They had horses on which they could visit their more distant cures. At Bruton the temptation was too great. They got themselves dogs and went off to Selwood. At Carlisle alone did Austin Canons form the Chapter of the bishop, but all through the centuries of their later existence, the bishop not only was recognized as being in a special relation to the houses of Canons Regular in his diocese, but also did visit and reform as no monastic house would have allowed. We have only to consider those parishes, scattered as they are all over England, the churches of which were given to the Austin Canons, to perceive how largely they helped on the settlement of the English Church. Whatever may have been the organization in earlier times, to a very great extent it must have been in abeyance in the time of Henry I. The great monasteries and the larger prebendal and collegiate churches were possibly centres of spiritual effort in their immediate neighbourhood, but the restorers of the remote and smaller churches were undoubtedly those earnest and energetic clergymen, the Austin Canons of England.

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