

CHAPTER XIII
THE CISTERCIANS IN ENGLAND: I
THE FIRST FOUNDATIONS
RIEVAULX AND FOUNTAINS

I

Although Cîteaux was in existence before either Tiron or Savigny, the latter were the first to increase. Both were situated on territory subject to Henry I, and Vitalis, the founder of Savigny, and Geoffrey, his immediate successor, both Normans by birth, were known to the king.¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that the brown monks and the grey should have been the first harbingers of the great invasion. The first to come were the monks of Tiron. Robert fitz Martin, c. 1113–15, approached Bernard of Tiron and received from him a group of twelve under an abbot, Fulchard; these he settled in west Wales on the banks of the Teifi near Cardigan, and constructed for them the abbey that became known as St Dogmael's.² This, together with its two cells of Caldey and Pill, founded later, was the sole offspring of Tiron in England and Wales, and its remote situation effectually prevented it from attracting attention or securing influence. Fifty years later, St Dogmael's had a close bond with the Cistercians of the neighbourhood, and thus entered into the life, and incurred the hostility, of Gerald of Wales.

Almost equally remote was the first plantation from Savigny. This was at Tulket, near Preston in Lancashire, on the land of Stephen of Blois, count of Boulogne and later king of England. Negotiations had apparently been begun with Vitalis, but the settlement was made under his successor, Geoffrey, in July 1124. Three years later the monks were given a more extensive and promising holding in Stephen's forest of Furness, and here they settled in the July of 1127.³ The first abbot, Ewan or Yvon "of Avranches", was possibly an Englishman by birth, and he was subsequently

¹ Vitalis preached in England (*Vita*, ed. Sauvage, 374–5); Geoffrey: "gratiam... maxime apud Henricum regem Angliae seniore[m] inven(er)it" (*Vita*, ed. Sauvage, 402).

² *Vita b. Bernardi Tironensis*, 1426. The passage often cited from Symeon of Durham, *Hist. Reg.* II, 247, refers to Kelso. For further information regarding Tiron and St Dogmael's, v. *The History of St Dogmael's Abbey*, by E. M. Pritchard, and an article by H. M. Vaughan, *The Benedictine Abbey of St Mary at St Dogmael's*, in *Y Cymmrodor*, xxvii (1917), 1–25. The erection of the priory into an abbey took place in 1120; v. *Calendar of Documents preserved in France*, I, 353–4. Kelso in Scotland, near the Border, was an early plantation from Tiron.

³ Symeon of Durham, II, 267.

for a time third abbot of Savigny itself.¹ Furness was to enter in more than one way into the religious history of the north, and to be mother of a numerous family, but for the moment the situation of the place, with the high moors between it and Yorkshire and the midlands, caused it to remain unnoticed. In the next twenty years a number of other Savigniac colonies came to England and south Wales. Several of these houses became later well known when they had joined the white monks, but their scattered forces, arriving at the same time as the more numerous Cistercians, produced no independent impression at the time.²

Contemporaneously with the first arrivals, a movement in the inverse direction was beginning to take place. From the outset Englishmen had been found among the groups of reformers abroad, and the fame of Stephen Harding must have served as an attraction to his countrymen. We do not know when the first Englishman entered Clairvaux, but William, the future first abbot of Rievaulx, must have been there in very early years, for he was Bernard's amanuensis for the celebrated letter to his nephew, Robert of Châtillon, c. 1116–19.³ It is possible that he is to be identified with the William, a whilom pupil of Henry Murdac at York, who joined with Ivo, a fellow-pupil and later a fellow-monk at Clairvaux, in saluting their old master, to whom Bernard addressed the eloquent invitation quoted in the preceding chapter.⁴ Murdac, as is well known, responded and became one of the most distinguished Cistercians of the age. If the suggested identification be not correct, there were two Englishmen named William at Clairvaux, and the second may also have returned later to his native country.⁵ Ivo, for his part, persuaded Bernard to write to another friend, Thomas, the young provost of Beverley, inviting him to leave all and become a monk. Thomas promised, but in spite of a second long and warm letter failed to keep his word.⁶ Yet another northerner of distinction to find a home at Clairvaux was Richard, a native of York, who after following Henry Murdac as third abbot of Vauclair, succeeded him again as sixth abbot of Fountains;⁷ and mention has already been

¹ Evanus de Abrincis appears first in the list of abbots in the Register printed in *Monasticon*, v, 246; cf. *Furness Coucher Book*, 1, 8–10. The observations of the late compiler of this list (p. 10) are based on some misconception. Robert of Torigni, *de Immutatione Ordinis Monachorum* (PL, CCII, 1312 seqq.), speaks of "Evanus Anglicus, qui parvo tempore eidem monasterio [sc. Savigny, c. 1139] praeftuit". The *Chron. Manniae*, s.a. 1134, gives his name as Yvo, and it is possible that Torigni's adjective refers merely to his sojourn in England.

² The following were the Savigniac houses: Furness (1124), Neath (1130), Basingwerk (1131), Quar (1132), Combermere (1133), Buildwas, Calder, Rushen [Isle of Man], Stratford Langthorn, Swineshead (1135), Buckfast (1136), Byland (1138) and Coggeshall (1140).

³ *Bernardi Vita Prima*, I, xi (PL, CLXXXV, 255).

⁴ Ep. 106. The date is perhaps c. 1125.

⁵ In ep. 320 [ed. Mabillon] a *frater Willelmus, qui est filius noster dilectissimus*, is sent to Fountains in 1138–9. The Trinity College Gale MS., however, followed by Walbran, and the Brit. Mus. MS. Arundel 51 read *Gualterum* (*Memorials of Fountains*, 82).

⁶ Ep. 411, addressed *Bonae spei juveni Thomae*, and ep. 107. The date cannot be fixed.

⁷ *Mem. Fount.* 108. He was Precentor of Clairvaux, according to this account.

made of Philip, the prebendary of Lincoln.¹ Circumstances had thus brought it about that among Bernard's most trusted disciples was a small group from York and its neighbourhood, and this goes far to explain why the distant north was chosen for the first transmarine foundation of Clairvaux.

From more than one point of view the north of England was a field ready for sowing. Despite the spread of monasticism after the Conquest, it was still largely virgin soil. If in 1130 a line had been drawn across England from the mouth of the Welland to the estuary of the Mersey, the district north of it would have been found to contain only five abbeys, the cathedral priory of Durham, and two or three smaller houses. And if much of the land was moor and crag, the wide dales and wooded valleys offered many sites peculiarly suited to the pioneer cultivation of the Cistercians. In the north, too, the spiritual atmosphere was congenial. In the early decades of the twelfth century a renaissance, intellectual and religious, was taking place at York itself and other centres, which were at last recovering from the Scandinavian invasions and the more recent harrying of the Conqueror, and the earnest, somewhat stern northern piety, which until the Reformation and afterwards was to remain a different thing from the religious sentiment of the south, was beginning to find an outlet, first in the revived monasticism and its hermitages, and then in the foundation of a number of strict houses of regular canons.

The first of these was perhaps Hexham, where the priest Eilaf, son of the treasurer of Durham who had had to yield place to the monks in 1083 and father of Ailred of Rievaulx, was in possession. The change was due to archbishop Thomas II in 1113; it was gradual, and the archbishop died early in the following year; the real transformation came when Anketil, a canon of Huntingdon, became prior.² Thurstan, the new archbishop-elect, after short visits to his diocese, was for several years occupied in his resistance to Canterbury and remained abroad; when he finally returned in 1120 he was active in his encouragement of regular canons. Thus Nostell, *c.* 1114, where the king's confessor, Aldulf, was prior, Bridlington, *c.* 1113–14,³ Kirkham, founded from Nostell⁴ by Walter Espec *c.* 1130, and Guisborough came into existence. Thurstan's character was one of unusual energy and determination. The same dominant traits appear in the three important episodes that distinguished his rule—his resistance to the primate and (later) Henry I on the question of profession (1115–20), his encouragement of the reformers at York and Fountains (1132–3), and his conduct in the campaign against the Scots (1138). Though he was a

¹ *Ep.* 64.

² For the refounding of Hexham, *v.* Richard of Hexham's *History*, and Ailred *On the Saints of Hexham*, in *The Priory of Hexham*, ed. J. Raine (Surtees Soc. XLIV (1865), 173–203; *v.* also I, 54 *seqq.*, 190–4). Also Symeon of Durham, II, 247.

³ Both Bridlington and Bredon (a foundation from Nostell) were in existence by 1122 (*v.* L. Delisle, *Rouleaux des Morts*, 330, 314). ⁴ *Monasticon*, v, 280; cf. *VCH, Yorks*, III, 219.

native of Bayeux, there is a striking similarity between his enthusiastic and ascetic temper and that of typical northerners such as Richard, first abbot of Fountains, and Henry Murdac. Himself a man of austere life, he had in early years vowed to devote himself as a monk at Cluny; in his old age his thoughts turned again to this and he consulted Bernard, who deprecated a change of life but hinted not obscurely that if change there were, it should be to Clairvaux.¹ In the event, Thurstan remained at his post, but when death drew near he proceeded to Pontefract where he died in the habit of Cluny, having previously taken part in a Dirge which he caused to be recited round his bed. He was thus one who might be expected to welcome the new monasticism, and to give his somewhat impulsive enthusiasm free rein in patronizing its expansion.²

Actually, however, the distinction of first introducing the white monks to England belongs, not to Thurstan and Clairvaux, but to L'Aumône and William Giffard of Winchester. The site chosen was Waverley, near Farnham in Surrey, in what was then a somewhat remote locality away from the main lines of travel. The abbot and community from L'Aumône were presumably foreigners, and settled down unostentatiously to their regular life at the end of 1128.³ Waverley, though it grew steadily and made a number of foundations, attracted no recruits of renown, and Ailred, perhaps with a tinge of patriotic bias, could speak of it as hidden away in a corner.⁴ The foundation that truly marked the beginning of the invasion was that of Rievaulx, near Helmsley, some thirty miles north of York. The founder was Walter Espec, acting in close concert with Thurstan; nothing is known of the previous negotiations, but it is natural to suppose that the group of Yorkshiremen round Bernard had had their share in forwarding the project. In any case, Bernard took all possible care to ensure success. The way was prepared by a characteristic letter to Henry I,⁵ and at the head of the band of colonists was the Englishman, William. The gift of land was apparently made in 1131; the foundation dated from 5 March 1132.⁶ Less than three weeks later the great assembly of black monks met at Cluny to hear the reforming regulations of Peter the

¹ *Ep.* 319.

² All the northern chroniclers devote space to describing Thurstan's character, and there are many other incidental references to his piety. The fullest and most eloquent account of his character is that given by Prior Richard of Hexham in his *History of the Church of Hexham* (ed. Raine), 57: "Hic inter innumeras et gravissimas adversitates, quibus diu et creberrime pulsatus est, animum invictissimum et constantissimum gerebat. His igitur tandem superatis et optato fine consummatis, celebrem cognitionis famam et magnae venerationis laudem apud plurimas gentes merito probitatis suae adeptus est. Erat quippe vir magnae castitatis et prudentiae, honestatis et iustitiae, et multarum virtutum fulgore perspicuus."

³ *Annales Waverl.*, s.a. 1128.

⁴ Ailred, *de Bello Standardii* (PL, cxcv, 704; also in *Chronicles of the reign of Stephen*, III, 184): "Waverlenses... quasi in angulo latuerant."

⁵ *Ep.* 92.

⁶ This, the correct date, is given by *Chronica de Mailros* (Bannatyne Club, 1835), 69. The charter rehearsing the foundation, printed by J. C. Atkinson in *Chartularium Rievallense* (Surtees Soc. LXXXIII (1887), no. XLII, 16-21), states that the founder acted *consilio et consensu Turstini*. For Bernard's relations with England v. Appendix IX.

Venerable, and before the monks of Rievaulx had passed many weeks in their lonely valley, their presence had precipitated a crisis, fraught with important consequences for the religious history of the north, in the abbey of St Mary at York.

II

St Mary's, as has been related, was founded, under circumstances imperfectly described in the records, as a kind of schism from the community of Whitby, in 1088. Unfortunately, less is known of the place in the forty years that followed than of any other abbey of equal importance in England. The account of its first years, purporting to be written by Stephen, the first abbot, and the *Chronicle* giving a list of the early abbots with their dates, are alike wholly untrustworthy. Indeed, there may be said to be absolutely no reliable information about the house in the twelfth century before the crisis of 1132. The events that then took place show that by that time the spirit of simplicity which animated the Northern revival had given place to latitude. The abbey, which lay under the walls of the city and near to the busy river and the bridge-head, had become wealthy in land, churches and tithes; it had adopted the traditional modifications of the Rule. In this it did not stand apart from the other black monk houses, but it seems certain that the discipline of St Mary's had become relaxed, and that a majority of the monks had come to be satisfied with such a state of things, which was largely due to the aged and ineffective Abbot Geoffrey.¹ Whether anything gravely scandalous existed cannot be said with certainty; some remarks of Prior Richard, reported by Thurstan, leave the question open.² At the same time, there were in the house a group of men who had preserved the fervour of early years and were besides, as the event showed, exceptionally gifted in many ways. This group included several of the chief officials of the abbey: prior, subprior, sacrist and almoner. The abbey was in close touch on the one hand with Thurstan and the circle of able ecclesiastics by whom he was surrounded, and on the other with the monks of the neighbouring priory of the Holy Trinity and of the Cluniac house of Pontefract; it is therefore

¹ There is considerable uncertainty as to the dates of Geoffrey's term of office. According to the MS. printed in *Monasticon*, III, 569 (cf. *Chronicle of St Mary's, York*, ed. Craster, Surtees Soc. CV, 1933, p. 1), he was elected in 1131 and died on 17 July 1132. Neither of these dates can be accepted. He appears as abbot in 1123 (Hugo Cantor, *Hist. York*, II, 199; *Historia Selebeiensis* [24]) and 1128 (*Hist. York*, III, 52), and was certainly alive in October 1132. According to the reliable John of Worcester (ed. J. R. H. Weaver), 48, the abbacy was "bestowed" in 1138; the vacancy may well have been caused by Geoffrey's death. The monk Serlo alludes to him as "vir grandaevus et etate confectus" (*Mem. Fount.* 7); Thurstan (*ibid.* 13) describes him more fully as "vir utique pro sensu et ingenio suo honestus et bonus, nimium tamen simplex et illiteratus".

² *Mem. Fount.* 17: "Inter haec [sc. relaxationes] periculose, ni fallor, servatur pudicitia. Hinc quippe peccatis nostris exigentibus vix sufficiunt laternae [sc. circatorum] vel custodiae, cum personas honestiores excedant plerumque numero suspiciores. Si vero privata omnia interim bene procedant Deus novit, et nos experimento didicimus."

natural to suppose that the more alert among the brethren were well acquainted with the Cistercian movement, with Bernard's controversy with the black monks, and with the reaction of reform in Cluniac circles. Thurstan, at any rate, showed himself well informed on all this in the autumn of 1132.¹ The actual division of opinion at St Mary's, however, would seem to have been the direct result of the arrival of the white monks in Yorkshire, when they would no doubt have passed through the city and visited the archbishop.²

Our knowledge of the episode which followed is derived in the main from two chief sources, each of which has a high degree of reliability.³ One is a long and strictly contemporary letter of Thurstan to William of Corbeuil, archbishop of Canterbury. The other, though composed rather more than seventy years after the event, is of a peculiar interest and value. A certain Serlo was at York in 1132; a native of the district, he had been educated at the abbey,⁴ and was related to more than one of the group which seceded. He was an eyewitness of the events that accompanied their exodus; possibly he was a clerk of the archbishop, or one of the functionaries in the *curia* of the abbot. He was at the time some twenty-five years of age. Five years later he himself became a monk at Fountains, and although he was comparatively late in taking the habit, he was destined to survive all his contemporaries and to live far beyond the common span.⁵ He was sent to Kirkstall, a daughter of Fountains, and

¹ Thurstan in his letter (*Mem. Fount.* 22) refers to the recent reforms of Peter the Venerable: "Ipsa Cluniacus nova mutatione probavit quod multa sint inter suas consuetudines quae merito deberent emendari." He quotes the parallel of Molesme (*ibid.* 29) and is familiar with Cassian (*ibid.* 28). Prior Richard's manifesto has in it much of the spirit of the new dialectic.

² Thurstan, writing c. 8 September, says (*Mem. Fount.* 11): "Ante dimidium ferme annum... ceperunt... agitari." That would have been precisely when the white monks arrived. Serlo (*ibid.* 5) says: "Cepit eos subito taedere, etc.," and the fact that the first movers and Prior Richard were mutually ignorant of each other's sentiments and that Richard *expavit de novitate rei* (*ibid.* 13) shows that dissatisfaction came to a head suddenly.

³ The *Narratio Fundationis: de fundatione Fontanis monasterii*, incorporating Thurstan's letter, was printed in the *Monasticon*, v, 294-6, from Dodsworth's transcript (MS. Bodl. Dodsworth 26) of an original which has not been identified; this gives a somewhat abridged version of both narrative and letter. Both were printed in full for the first time by J. S. Walbran in the volume of the Surtees Society, so often quoted (*Memorials of Fountains*, 1, 1-128); the *Narratio* from Gale MS. O. 1. 79 in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, of the early fifteenth century, the letter from a MS. in the library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. The latter MS., of the twelfth century, had once belonged to Fountains. "The ingenious Mr Walbran" as a fellow-antiquary calls him, collated other MSS. and editions, and added very valuable notes, but he had had no training in the methods of exact scholarship, and his text contains a number of obvious inaccuracies. The episode presents a number of problems; v. Additional Note F, *The Foundation of Fountains Abbey* (p. 756).

⁴ Serlo says of himself (*Mem. Fount.* 2-3) that he was "apud eos [the monks of York] etiam nutritus".

⁵ *Mem. Fount.* 2-3: "Tum ille [sc. Serlo] sicut est in dicendo serius: 'sexagesimus', inquit, 'et nonus annus hic est a diebus conversionis meae, et eram tunc, ut memini, incipiens quasi annorum triginta, cum me primo Fontes contuli, sacro illi conventui sociandus'." Serlo took the habit at Fountains c. 1137-8 (*ibid.* 57); he therefore dictated his reminiscences c. 1206 at the age of ninety-eight. He was one of the group that founded Kirkstall in 1147 (*ibid.* 93). His narrative ends with the death of Abbot William in 1190.

there, when almost a hundred years old, he narrated the story of the origins and subsequent history of his first monastic home to a monk who had been charged by the then abbot of Fountains to compose a permanent record. He asserted, and with justice, that his memory retained unfaded the impressions it had received of the momentous events of his youth.¹ His account was dictated to Hugh, a monk of Kirkstall, who had before him, and embodied in his narrative, a copy of Thurstan's letter and of several from Bernard.

The arrival of the Cistercians from Clairvaux, we are told, brought forcibly to the minds of many at St Mary's that they were not following the Rule of their profession, and the teaching of the gospel on which it was based, in anything resembling entirety. After much discussion among themselves they at last approached the prior, Richard—clearly a man at once more capable and more spiritual than the abbot—whom they had at first avoided for fear lest he might quash their attempts. They discovered that he shared their convictions and he at once threw in his lot with them and took the position of leader to which his rank and ability entitled him; he was, besides being a man of deep spirituality, a prudent administrator; he had also influential friends, among whom was Archbishop Thurstan.² The matter was by now public property in the house, and the group were accused of levity and disobedience. At length, on 28 June, Richard the prior and Gervase the subprior laid the whole question before the abbot. His first reaction took the shape of grief that such a subversion of peace and order should have taken place in his days, when he was stricken in years. He warned them to desist from their enterprise, recollecting that as professed monks they had no longer any right to dispose of themselves or of their future.

To this Richard replied at length. He and his companions, he said, were making no innovation. They wished solely to observe the Rule, or to speak more accurately, the gospel which lay behind all rules.³ The Rule had been written to guarantee the gospel to all, not to provide an ideal for individuals. As St Gregory had said, it was remarkable for its discretion; it appointed times for prayer, for reading and for work; moreover, it appointed a regular fare. But at St Mary's little of this was observed. Daily conversations had taken the place of the silence of the Rule; the food and drink were varied and excessive; and many were sent out of the

1 *Mem. Fount.* 3. Serlo's narrative is, however, occasionally confused, and in one or two places inaccurate.

2 Prior Richard is described by Serlo (*Mem. Fount.* 6) as "homo religiosus et timens Deum, et prudens in exterioribus, amicus potentium, fuit enim pro se [*sic*] reverentia religionis omnibus amori et honori, familiaris et notus Pontifici [*sc.* Thurstano]". The archbishop says (*ibid.* 13) that on him "tota pene monasterii cura pendeat".

3 *Mem. Fount.* 13: "Nil rude, O pater, novumve inducere contendimus, verum antiquam regulam beati patris nostri Benedicti, immo potius antiquissimum Evangelium Christi, quod omnes regulas antecedit... observare debemus."

monastery to live upon the estates of the house.¹ They were, nevertheless, pledged to evangelical perfection, and if the words of the gospel, heard so often, seemed utopian, they had the example of the Cistercians before them, in whose life the gospel was a living reality. If the proximity of the city made some features of the Cistercian life impossible of realization, they might at least perform the part that lay within their power.

Prior Richard spoke with the fire of new conviction, and used strong language; it is not surprising that Abbot Geoffrey heard him without enthusiasm.² Instead, however, of taking a clear decision, he asked the prior to furnish him with a written scheme of the reforms he suggested. Richard complied with alacrity, and produced a programme which reorganized the whole establishment in things temporal and spiritual. The Rule was to be kept strictly as regards silence and food; churches and tithes were to be handed over to the archbishop, and the monks were to live on the produce of their lands.

Meanwhile, news of what was afoot had spread through the community and caused a fresh outbreak of indignation. The prior, it was said, was attacking, not only his own house, but Cluny, Marmoutier, Canterbury, Winchester and St Albans. Richard, for his part, countered by again approaching the abbot with a request that he should either reform St Mary's or give to those who desired it opportunity to follow their profession. The abbot promised to give a full answer on the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady (8 September), after he had taken advice. But meanwhile feeling was running very high in the abbey; it was agreed that anyone who discussed the obligations of his profession should be excommunicated, and several of Richard's associates now left him, moved by fear or favour, to be received by their opponents only after a confession that they had erred. Richard therefore took the decisive step of appealing for assistance to the archbishop.

Thurstan's first step was to summon abbot, prior and subprior to a conference in the presence of witnesses. Richard once more made his petition: to follow Christ in voluntary poverty and bear His cross; to be allowed to observe fully the gospel and the Rule.³ He begged the abbot to help him. The abbot replied that the loss of so many of his leading assistants would be a very serious one to him; that he and the rest of the community wished simply to live by the customs that were traditional to them; that in any case he could not promise help without the consent of his chapter. A day was therefore fixed on which the archbishop should visit the abbey and hear the matter discussed.

In the interval the abbot, who was clearly not a man of strong character,

1 *Mem. Fount.* 17: "Velint nolint omnes plerumque fit custos villarum."

2 *Mem. Fount.* 21: "Quae verba domnus abbas non satis jocunde [!] suscepit."

3 *Mem. Fount.* 23: "Quatinus pauperem Christum in voluntaria paupertate sequerentur, et Christi crucem in corpore suo portare, itemque Evangelicam pacem regulamque plene beati patris Benedicti observare non impedirentur."

called to his support monks from the priories of Holy Trinity and Pontefract. The archbishop, for his part, arrived on the appointed day surrounded by a group of notable ecclesiastics, among whom may be recognized several whose names afterwards became celebrated in the religious and literary history of the times. Hugh the dean was there, soon to be the first distinguished recruit and benefactor of Fountains; William Fitzherbert the treasurer, destined, as Thurstan's successor, to meet Richard the sacristan as his accuser before the pope, and to receive, after a troubled life, the honours of a saint; Hugh the archdeacon, better known as Hugo de Sottovagina or Hugh the Chanter; William of St Barbara, the future bishop of Durham on whose word were to depend the fortunes of Fitzherbert; Serlo (not the narrator), a canon, who like his namesake was to find his way to Fountains; and others. At the door of the chapter-house the abbot came to meet the archbishop, denying him entrance unless he dismissed some of his clerics. When Thurstan expostulated, a clamour was raised by the monks, some of whom showed signs of using violence. The archbishop, obtaining a hearing, proceeded to lay an interdict upon the abbey, whereupon a monk named Simeon exclaimed that a century of interdict was better than episcopal interference, and the cry was raised that Richard and his companions should be seized and imprisoned. They in turn crowded round Thurstan, who withdrew with them into the church, which was blockaded by the abbey's servants, the archbishop on his side barring the door which led into the cloister. Finally, Thurstan was able to return to his house, carrying with him the thirteen appellants. It was 17 October 1133.¹

Abbot Geoffrey, though apparently at first condoning the exodus,² did not remain idle. Having written to the king and other notabilities, he took to the road in order to enlist allies to his cause.³ It was to counteract his propaganda that Thurstan wrote to William of Corbeuil, then papal legate, the long letter which has formed the source for much of the preceding story.⁴

The group of monks enjoying the protection of the archbishop, originally thirteen in number, contained no less than seven future Cistercian abbots,⁵ but before its departure from York it underwent a slight change.

1 So *Narratio* (*Mem. Fount.*), 10.

2 Bernard, *ep.* 313: "Sunt... sicut ipse testaris, te absolvente quandoque dimissi."

3 *Narratio* (*Mem. Fount.*), 10: "Abbas... nuncios ad regem dirigit... scribit etiam... episcopis, abbatibus, etc." Thurstan writes (*ibid.* 26): "Abbas vero nescio quid acturus iter arripuit."

4 William had been the determined opponent of Thurstan's claims, but there was no private enmity between them. Thurstan, indeed, had given evidence on behalf of William prior to his election in 1123 (Hugo Cantor, *Hist. York.* II, 199).

5 All agree that thirteen followed Thurstan (*Narratio*, 9; Thurstan's letter, 26: "presbiteros duodecim et subdiaconum unum"; *Chronica de Melsa*, I, 74), but the names do not tally. From a comparison of the various lists it would seem that Robert of Whitby, though given as one of the thirteen by Serlo, joined later, as did also Adam of Whitby. The seven abbots were: Richard the prior (Fountains); Richard the sacrist (Fountains); Robert

Abbot Geoffrey did not cease to command and to implore his whilom subjects to return to their allegiance, and two of them, Gervase and Ralph, deterred by the prospect of material and spiritual hardship, returned to St Mary's. Their return gave the occasion for the entrance upon the scene of the abbot of Clairvaux. Strangely enough, the appeal to Bernard did not emanate from the group in Thurstan's house, but from the abbot of St Mary's, apparently at the suggestion of the uneasy consciences of the two defaulters, who were anxious for a decision from a master of the spiritual life. Bernard wrote twice to Geoffrey, and both letters belong to the weeks immediately following the exodus.¹ Their tenor was what might have been expected. Bernard brushed aside the complaints of the abbot and the pleas of the two waverers, recognized the work of God in the movement, warned Gervase and Ralph that having chosen the best, the second best was no longer lawful for them, and laid upon the abbot the responsibility of assisting by all the means in his power those of his sons who were aiming at perfection. A third letter, written about the same time, warmly thanked Thurstan.² In the event, Gervase rejoined his friends at the archbishop's house, while Ralph remained at St Mary's, but his place was taken about this time by a worthy substitute, a monk of Whitby who may have been residing at York, Robert, who was to become celebrated as St Robert of Newminster, and before they left York yet another Whitby monk joined them, Adam, the future first abbot of Meaux.³

Richard and his companions remained with the archbishop for almost three months. Then, at Christmas, Thurstan took them with him to Ripon, where he had extensive estates, and bestowed on them land in Skeldale; he presided at the election of an abbot, and blessed Richard the ex-prior, who was elected. He was, as the chronicler remarks, an abbot of monks without a monastery. The land by the Skell was totally uncultivated, and for the first winter the community was dependent on what the archbishop continued to supply. There was a large and spreading elm between the river and the steep side of the valley, which here was very narrow; under it they constructed huts; round it they began to cultivate a garden. Such was the origin of the abbey of St Mary of Fountains, as it was named from the pure springs abundant on the slopes of Skeldale.

The little group soon felt that their position was anomalous. The only motive for the departure from York had been dissatisfaction with black monk observance, and they feared lest, by remaining wholly independent, they might fail to escape the perils of private judgment and error. They

(Kirkstead); Gervase the subprior (Louth Park); Walter the almoner (Kirkstead); Ranulf (Lyse); Alexander (Kirkstall). To them were added Robert (Newminster) and Adam (Meaux) from Whitby.

¹ *Epp.* 94, 313.

² *Ep.* 95.

³ Adam is not mentioned in the account of the exodus; his Whitby provenance is given in the *Chronica de Melsa*, I, 74. Probably Whitby and York had a union of confraternity (v. *infra*, p. 475). For St Robert, v. his *Vita* in *Analecta Bollandiana*, LVI (1938), 343–60.

therefore decided to apply to the abbot of Clairvaux for permission to join the Cistercian order. A letter was drafted, detailing the history of the past year; it was accompanied by a warm recommendation from the archbishop and carried to Clairvaux by two of the band. Bernard replied with a letter of congratulation, and sent as bearer of his letter one Geoffrey, a monk now in his old age, whom he had often employed as a director of communities who had transferred themselves *en bloc* to Clairvaux.¹ By him the monks of Fountains were taught the Cistercian manner of life, and already they were beginning to receive recruits in considerable numbers.² Nevertheless, their material prospects showed no signs of improvement—it must be remembered that they were without lay brothers at the start—and after two years the situation was so desperate that Abbot Richard proceeded to the abbot of Clairvaux to beg him to assign them a home in France. Bernard acceded, and gave them Longué, a grange of Clairvaux, which subsequently became an abbey. But while Richard was on his mission, the tide had turned at home. Hugh, dean of York, and a man of property and culture, decided to offer himself as a novice at Fountains, and besides his money and lands, carried thither the nucleus of a library.³ Shortly after, he was joined by two rich canons of York, Serlo and Tosti, and the long list of benefactions to Fountains had worthily opened. It was at this time, about five years after the exodus from York, that the other Serlo, at whose dictation many of the above facts were recorded, entered Fountains, and he comments with deep feeling on the fervent life he found there—a fervour which was still in existence when he spoke.⁴

Though the beginnings of Fountains, born into the Cistercian family as it were out of due time, had been so laborious, its story, and the character of its first abbot, soon attracted attention, and it rapidly became the mother of children. Something will be said of these later; for the moment it will be best to carry its domestic history forward. As early as 1138 Abbot Richard was sufficiently well known in high places to be chosen by Alberic, cardinal bishop of Ostia and legate in England, to accompany him on his tour of visitation.⁵ When Alberic returned to

1 Bernard, *ep.* 96; cf. Walbran's notes, *Mem. Fount.* 46.

2 *Mem. Fount.* 48: "Adjunxerunt se eis clerici septem et laici decem recepti in novitios."

3 *Mem. Fount.* 53: "Erat autem homo dives... in libris scripturarum sanctarum quos... multis sibi sumptibus et studio comparaverat. Et hic primus qui armarium de Fontibus felici auspicio suscitavit." It must have been about this time that Bernard addressed a letter to King David of Scotland soliciting his assistance for Fountains. The letter, an unfamiliar one, is to be found only in *Der heilige Bernard von Clairvaux*, by G. Hüffer (Münster, 1886), 233, no. x.

4 *Mem. Fount.* 57–8: "Deus bone, quanta tunc apud Fontes vitae perfectio!... Patres nostri... studuerunt... posteris suis... formam relinquere quae, favente Deo, usque hodie illaesa perdurat."

5 *Mem. Fount.* 71. This account is borne out by John of Hexham in his continuation of Symeon of Durham's *Historia Regum* (ed. Raine), 121, and by Richard of Hexham, *de Gestis Stephani* (ed. Raine), 98.

Rome, Richard accompanied him to act as representative of Thurstan at the Lateran Council of Lent, 1139, and to negotiate for the archbishop's retirement in favour of his brother Audoen.¹ It is possible that the legate intended to recommend him to the pope for preferment in the Curia but, to use Serlo's phrase, the Lord made better provision for him, and the first abbot of Fountains died in Rome on the last day of April 1139.

The orphan community addressed themselves to Bernard, and, on his advice, elected as abbot the other Richard, once sacrist of St Mary's, who had been the spiritual leader of the exodus which had been directed by the more active genius of his namesake.² The two Richards might, indeed, be taken as embodying the two vocations, of Martha and Mary, which existed alongside of one another in the early Cistercian houses, and which Bernard in a measure possessed in combination. The second abbot of Fountains was a contemplative, with unusual insight and prudence in the care of souls. The aged Serlo, who had passed the years of his spiritual formation under his care, speaks with deep feeling of his wisdom, and of his power to read the secrets of the heart. The external cares of office had little attraction for him, and his post was indeed no sinecure, for in addition to the three English foundations made at this time, Richard could not escape becoming involved in the controversy over the York election of 1141, and had ultimately to make the journey to Rome. Thrice in his brief term of office he begged Bernard, whom he would have met at the season of the annual general chapter, to relieve him of his burden and allow him to retire to Clairvaux. Thrice the saint refused; on the fourth occasion, when Richard called at Clairvaux on his return from Rome in 1143, Bernard wrote to the monks of Fountains that if they did not refuse, he would permit their abbot to resign his office. Richard returned joyfully home, and produced the letter, but the community, who found an eloquent spokesman in one Hugh of Matham, refused to allow him to depart. The abbot sadly accepted the verdict, but told his sons that they would not long enjoy their triumph. In the event, he died before a year was out at Clairvaux, whither he had been taken by his journey to chapter.³ Thus within a little more than ten years of the departure from York the two leaders of the appellants had passed away.

As Abbot Richard had died at Clairvaux, it was natural that Bernard

¹ Serlo (*Mem. Fount.* 71–2) says: “Peracta legatione renitentem trahit ad curiam volens hominem in majoris administrationis gradum promoveri.” Richard of Hexham, however (ed. Raine, 104), says that he was sent out by Thurstan: “et propter Concilium et propter quaedam alia privata negotia quae per illum facere disponebat”. He goes on to give these private reasons. His account is borne out by John of Hexham (ed. Raine, 124).

² Serlo's long memoir of Richard, whom he knew well, is an eloquent and moving tribute (*Mem. Fount.* 73 *seqq.*). The statement that this Richard was the prime mover at York is his (*ibid.* 73).

³ *Mem. Fount.* 75–8. As abbot of a daughter-house of Clairvaux, Richard would have the duty of visiting Bernard every year; the natural time would be on his way to or from chapter.

should take steps to allot a successor. His choice fell upon a remarkable man. Henry Murdac was a native of the north of England and had held preferment under Thurstan;¹ from his position as a teacher of repute he had followed the call to Clairvaux, where he was the companion and friend of the future Eugenius III, and whence he passed to be abbot of Vauclair. Knowing, as Bernard did, that the infant community had lost the two outstanding men who had led it into the wilderness, and that it had become entangled in the fierce controversy over the York election, he may well have felt it to be imperative that a man of energy and experience should be sent north. In any case, Murdac arrived with a letter of warm recommendation,² nominally to join with the abbot of Rievaulx in holding the election, actually, to be elected himself.³ He doubtless found a number of old friends at Fountains, and was duly chosen as abbot.

With Murdac's election in 1143-4 the first chapter of the history of Fountains, and the one peculiar to that house among all the Cistercian foundations in England, came to an end. The new abbot was by temperament a consuming fire, and temperament and circumstances alike were to stimulate his combative spirit in Yorkshire. Clairvaux with all its uses in their purity was his *mot d'ordre*; he made an end once and for all of any lingering customs from the past that had survived among the ex-black monks; he also entered with energy into the contest against the archbishop elect. Before giving any account of this it will be well to consider the growth of the other great Cistercian abbey of the north.

III

The land given to Abbot William and his companions in the valley of the Rye, not far from Walter Espec's castle at Helmsley, fully satisfied the Cistercian requirement of solitude and was, when the monks arrived, wholly uncultivated. The first years must have been full of the hard work of breaking up the land and constructing conventual buildings. Yet from the first the monks of Rievaulx appear to have attracted far more notice than their cousins at Waverley. Had they done no more than give the impetus to the group at York their coming would have been memorable, but within a few years they attracted to themselves numerous recruits, among them men of the highest distinction, such as Maurice, subprior of the cathedral monastery of Durham, known to his contemporaries as a

¹ John of Hexham (ed. Raine), 150: "Excellentia quidem generis sed potius praecellentem frugalitate conversationis, ante monachatum sub venerabili archiepiscopo Turstino tam in Eboracensi ecclesia quam in circumjacenti provincia ex dono parentum honoribus et divitiis locupletatum, etc."

² Bernard, *ep.* 320, to the prior, Alexander, and the monks of Fountains: "sic audite eum [Murdac] in omnibus tanquam me ipsum. Imo et tanto amplius quanto ille et prudentia et meritis antecessit."

³ *Ep.* 320. In *ep.* 321 he exhorts Murdac to accept the verdict if elected.

second Bede in his learning and sanctity,¹ and Waldef, stepson of King David of Scotland and prior of the Augustinian canons of Kirkham, destined to become first abbot of Melrose and a saint.² Another newcomer, who arrived within two or three years of the foundation, was destined to fill a still more important position in the history of the English Cistercians.

Ailred of Rievaulx, the "Bernard of the north", is a singularly attractive figure whom, thanks to the records left by a disciple and still more to his own writings, we can see as a living man in some completeness.³ No other English monk of the twelfth century so lingers in the memory; like Anselm of Bec, he escapes from his age, though most typical of it, and speaks directly to us, as, in fuller measure, Augustine and Teresa speak, of his restless search for One to whom he might give the full strength of his love. As we read, a corner of the veil that hides the past from us seems to lift, and we catch a momentary glimpse of Rievaulx in its first eagerness—a glimpse that reveals something unexpected, at once most real and yet most alien to our habits of thought.

A true Cistercian in his simplicity and austerity, Ailred is also a true disciple of Bernard in the warmth of sentiment which makes more than one of his pages a counterpart of the Sermons on the Canticle. He resembles Bernard, also, in his ability to administer and organize, and in the attractive power of his mind, which made of him the counsellor and confidant of many in high places far from Rievaulx. Like Bernard, too,

1 For Maurice, v. John of Hexham (ed. Raine), 55, 150, and Walter Daniel, *Vita Ailredi* (ed. Powicke), 93-4: "Mauricius magne sanctitatis vir et preclare prudencie utpote qui potaverat a puero vinum leticie spiritalis in clauistro Dunelmensi, et ex pane Cuthberti viri Dei reffectus creverat in sublime ita ut a sociis secundus Beda cognominaretur; cui revera erat in tempore suo tam vite quam sciencie prerogativa secundus." Prof. Powicke has collected all that can be known of Maurice in his article *Maurice of Rievaulx* in *EHR*, xxxvi (January 1921), 17-25. He notes there that a subprior, Maurice, of Durham, witnessed a charter in 1138, and very reasonably concludes this to be the future abbot of Rievaulx. To me it seems all but certain that it was to this Maurice, not to his namesake the prior of Kirkham, that Walter Daniel wrote the letter prefixed to the *Vita Ailredi*.

2 For Waldef, v. *Vita S. Waldeni*, by Jocelin of Furness, in *Acta SS*, August, I, 248 seqq. Jocelin wrote c. 1210, but had reliable sources before him. Cf. also Prof. Powicke's *Ailred of Rievaulx*, *passim*.

3 Ailred's works are printed in *PL*, cxcv, 209-796, with the exception of the Sermon *On the Saints of Hexham*, printed by Raine (v.s. p. 229, note 2), the *Regula Inclusarum*, printed by the Maurists as an appendix to Augustine and reprinted *PL*, xxxii, 1451 seqq., the tractate *De Jesu Puero Duodenni*, printed by the Maurists in Bernard's works and reprinted *PL*, clxxxiv, 849, and some shorter meditations attributed to Anselm (nos. 15-17), for which see Dom André Wilmart's article, *Les Méditations attribuées à S. Anselme*, in *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, viii (1927), 276-7. A chronology of his life and works is given by Prof. Powicke, *op. cit.*, Appendix A, 477-80 (67-70 of the reprint), which needs a few slight corrections in view of more recent work. His unfinished treatise *De Anima*, hitherto unprinted, exists in more than one English MS., the best being perhaps that in the Durham chapter library, MS. B IV 25. Besides Walter Daniel's *Vita* and Ailred's autobiographical passages, and scattered references in chroniclers, there is a valuable appreciation of his mind and character by his friend Gilbert, abbot of Swineshead, written on hearing of his death. *V. Gilberti Hollandensis Serm. 41 in Canticum*, printed in Bernard's works by Mabillon, v, 287. *V.* also the sketch by Jocelin of Furness in *Vita S. Waldeni*, *ut sup.*, 257, and Additional Note G, *Ailred of Rievaulx* (p. 756).

he had a wide correspondence, and preached and wrote in the meditative, discursive manner that was so soon to give way to the new discipline of the schools. But Ailred cannot be wholly described in terms of Bernard. He lacks altogether the triumphant and compelling force, as also the consuming zeal, of the abbot of Clairvaux; he has, on the other hand, something altogether his own, a delicacy, an intuition which, from being a gift of mind alone, gradually came to be a reflection of the whole spirit, and which makes of his later years of rule at Rievaulx an episode altogether *sui generis* in English monastic life. It is not easy to think of another in that age—unless it be Abelard—who so arouses and baffles all our endeavours to comprehend what comes so near to us and yet remains so far away.

Ailred was by birth completely English, with an ancestry that gave him connections with the Church stretching far back into the Northumbrian past (for his father was “hereditary” priest of Hexham), and with the landed families between Hexham and Durham.¹ Though he was not trained in the schools as were his contemporaries who crossed to France, he had clearly been well taught, probably at Hexham,² by one who was familiar with the new humanism, and when still in the impressionable years of late boyhood he became one of the court circle of the Scotch king and ultimately held the post of steward or seneschal.³ At that period, the rivalry between the Scotch and English had little of the racial significance it afterwards came to acquire. The kings of Scotland were of the blood royal of pre-Conquest England, and were in a sense the legitimate sovereigns of Englishmen; David had an earldom in the south, and was often at the court of Henry I; the district between the Humber and the Cheviot was still debatable ground. If the Scotch king claimed sovereignty over counties soon to be wholly English, the archbishop of York, on his side, claimed metropolitan rights far north of the Tweed, and more than one Englishman had tried his fortune in a Scottish see. Ailred had been brought up with David’s son, Henry, and there was, therefore, nothing unusual in his presence at the Scotch court, as there was nothing strange in the Scotch king’s English stepson, Waldef, entering a religious house in Yorkshire. The author of Ailred’s *Life*, and Jocelin of Furness who composed the *Life* of Waldef, dwell naturally upon the temptations of

¹ Ailred’s family connections are described very fully by Prof. Powicke, 30–3, with ample references, especially to Richard of Hexham (ed. Raine), 55–6, and Ailred’s own sermon *On the Saints of Hexham* (ed. Raine).

² He was educated with Prince Henry, son of King David. Cf. *Genealogia Regum Anglorum*, PL, cxcv, 736–7: “Cum quo [Henrico] ab ipsis cunabulis vixi et puer cum puero crevi, cujus etiam adolescentiam adolescens agnovi, etc.” Prof. Powicke does not mention this passage. The prior of Hexham, it should be remembered, was Anketil of Huntingdon, where a school of repute existed.

³ *Vita Ailredi*, 83: “Erat . . . echonomus domus regalis . . . mense regalis dapifer summus.” Cf. Bernard’s letter, PL, cxcv, 501–2: “Cui . . . in regia domo carnalium ciborum fuit credita dispensatio.” V. also Prof. Powicke in *Scottish Historical Review*, xxiii (1925), 34–41.

court life. These were doubtless considerable, but the Scottish court had during the past fifty years been something of a nursery of saints. The exquisite St Margaret, King David's mother, herself a grand-niece of the Confessor, had in her husband, Malcolm, and still more in her son, David, and daughter, Matilda of England, a family not unworthy of her. In the next generation David's second wife, besides bringing him a stepson later to be venerated as St Waldef, brought also traditions of the boy's grandfather, the Earl Waltheof whom nationalist sentiment had invested with the halo of martyrdom. In addition to its tradition of sanctity, the Scottish royal house was distinguished by personal courage and administrative ability of a high order, so that the atmosphere, even if there was little culture in it, must have been morally bracing to a degree for a generous and receptive nature. Certainly Ailred, impressionable from a child, became deeply attached to David,¹ and his biographer tells us that the king intended him for the highest ecclesiastical preferment in his dominions.² This, however, was not to be. Already, as a young man of about twenty, he must have been stirred by the action of his friend Waldef, the king's stepson and brother of Simon, earl of Northumberland, who about 1130 became an Augustinian canon at Nostell, then under the rule of Aldulf. Within a few years the distinguished young canon became prior of Kirkham, a house founded by Walter Espec only a few miles from the still desert valley of the Rye, and there Ailred was soon to find his friend again, and his own heart's home.

Gentleness, radiance of affection and wide sympathy are not the qualities which most would associate with the early Cistercians, but they are assuredly the outstanding natural characteristics of Ailred. As a child and boy, his whole life had been given to his friends:

When I was still a boy at school, the friendship of those around me was my greatest joy, and in all the occupations and dangers of those years I gave myself wholly up to my affection for my friends, so that to love and to be loved seemed the most delightful thing in the world, and nothing else seemed of any profit at all.³

Cicero's *De Amicitia* was put into his hands as a text-book. He read it eagerly, and felt regret that his own friendships seemed to fall so far short of the grave and measured standards required by the philosopher.⁴ As a

1 Ailred had a faithful memory, and twenty years after he had left Scotland and with the war of 1138 between he wrote shortly after hearing of David's death (1153) the eloquent lament for his *dulcissimus dominus et amicus* at the head of his work *Genealogia Regum Anglorum* (PL, cxcv, 713–16). At the end of the same treatise he speaks of David as one "quem prae cunctis mortalibus dilexi" (*ibid.* 737).

2 If this is exact, Ailred must have decided upon a clerical life while still at court, before his mission to York.

3 *De Spirituali Amicitia*, Prologus (PL, cxcv, 659–60). Ailred's *amari et amare* is of course an echo of Augustine's description of his early life in *Confessions*, II, 2: "Et quid erat, quod me delectabat, nisi amare et amari?"

4 Laurence, Ailred's friend, gave a copy of the book to Durham (Powicke, *art. cit.*, 36) and Ailred takes it for granted that Ivo also had read it as a boy (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 661–2).

boy and young man at David's court his heart still gave itself readily, perhaps all the more readily because his friends had the glamour of a higher birth than his own. His years in Scotland were sour-sweet days. They gave him a loving admiration for his patron David which never faded from his mind, and a deep friendship for David's son, Henry¹—a friendship which had, indeed, roots still deeper in the past—and his stepson, Waldef, but they were years of a long struggle which he records in the cadences, and almost in the phrases, of the most familiar pages of Augustine. Here, again, besides an anguish the nature of which we can but surmise,² it was his heart that kept him from his heart's true rest:

The ties of that life among friends held me, and above all the knot of one friendship, dear to me above all the delights of the life that then was mine. . . . Those about me, seeing what I possessed, but ignorant what was passing within me, said: How well it is with him! They little knew how ill it was with me within, where alone true joy can be.³

The contest was so bitter that for a time death seemed to him the only solution that might rid him of his burden.⁴ Whether the break with the past in his soul was accomplished before his arrival at Rievaulx, he does not tell us, but the manner of that homecoming is related by his biographer. Ailred was sent south, about 1134, on a mission from King David to Archbishop Thurstan. He heard from a friend, probably Waldef, of the white monks who had arrived two years before at Rievaulx, though it can scarcely have been the first time he had heard of those whom King David had helped.⁵ Anxious to visit them, he was taken by his friend to Helmsley, where they stayed the night with Walter Espec and passed the next day at the new monastery. After another night with Espec, Ailred was setting out for Scotland when, riding along the ridge of the hill above Rievaulx, he could no longer resist the Spirit. Again he presented himself at the door, and this time he had come to remain.⁶

In his early days at Rievaulx he was still most sensitive to the affectionate influence of those about him. Among them was the monk Simon, younger than himself, who died still young shortly before Ailred wrote the *Speculum*

1 *V. Genealogia Regum Anglorum*, 736–7: “Quem [Henricum] juventutis flores pulsanter sicut patrem suum quem prae cunctis mortalibus dilexi. . . corpore quidem, sed nunquam mente vel affectu reliqui.”

2 Cf. the autobiographical passages in the *Speculum Charitatis*, I, 28 (531–2) and *De Institutis Inclusarum*, c. xxvii (*S. Augustini Opera*, ed. Benedict. (Paris, 1836), I, i, 1392–3); also the *Vita*, 78.

3 *Speculum Charitatis*, I, 28 (*op. cit.* 531–2). Was this friend the prince Henry? The whole passage contains verbal and rhythmical reminiscences of Augustine, *Confessions*, VIII, 11 *et al.*

4 *Speculum Charitatis*, *loc. cit.*: “Nisi cito admovisses manum [he is addressing God]. . . forte pessimum desperationis remedium adhibuissem.”

5 King David had assisted Rievaulx at the beginning. Cf. letter of Bernard referred to above, p. 237, n. 3. Writing c. 1134 he says: “Fratres nostri qui sunt Rievallibus senserant primi viscera tue pietatis” (Hüffer, *op. cit.* 233).

6 *Vita Ailredi*, 84–7.

Charitatis eight years later, and whom he laments in pages which, though they owe something to Bernard's lament on his brother composed some three years previously, and still more to those in which Augustine mourned Nebridius and Monica, are no less a revelation of his own deep emotion:

I remember (he writes) how often, when my eyes were straying hither and thither, the mere sight of him so filled me with shame that, returning suddenly to myself, I sternly repressed my lightness of mind, and recollecting myself, began to think of something of more profit. The rule of our life forbade us to talk together, but his countenance, his gait, his very silence spoke to me.¹

Almost twenty years later, the memory of Simon was still fresh; for Ailred was faithful in his love:

I recall two friends (he says) who although they may have passed from this life yet live to me and always will live. The first I took as my friend when still young at the beginning of my religious life; our tastes, our characters were something similar... He was snatched from me at the very beginning of our friendship, when he had been chosen, but not fully proved...²

Ailred's years in the court circle of King David had doubtless given a distinction to his bearing, and we know him to have been, as a young man, unusually handsome.³ Abbot William soon singled out the young monk whose past history and qualities of mind, added to his growing holiness, must have distinguished him to any discerning observer, and in 1142 we find him sent as the abbot's representative to Rome in the matter of the York election.⁴ It can scarcely be doubted that he met Bernard as he passed through France, and that it was at this meeting that the abbot of Clairvaux first made the request that Ailred should write on Charity—a request which he repeated shortly with such compelling force.⁵ His letter found Ailred novice master at Rievaulx, and it was answered by the *Speculum Charitatis* written, as his biographer tells us, in the *probatorium*. A year later he was appointed abbot of the new foundation of Revesby in Lincolnshire.

¹ *Speculum Charitatis*, I, 34 (539–46). The whole passage is perhaps the most eloquent in Ailred's works, and a most vivid glimpse of the Rievaulx noviciate. It was written 1142–3; St Bernard's lament on his brother Gerard (*Serm. in Cant.* xxvi, ed. Mabillon, III, 2816–27) was delivered in 1138. For Ailred's fidelity, cf. *De Spirituali Amicitia*, III (681): "Semel a me receptus in amicitiam, a me nunquam poterit non amari."

² *De Spirituali Amicitia*, III (698–702).

³ His biographer (*Vita Ailredi*, 88) thus describes him on the day of his profession, *aet.* 24–5: "Quoniam aliquantulum rufus erat ut David, pulcher et decorus aspectu plurimum delectationis intuentium oculis ingerebat." A sentence of which St Stephen Harding would scarcely have approved.

⁴ *Vita Ailredi*, 89. This, as is learnt from the history of the York dispute, was in 1142.

⁵ This letter, which appears as an introduction to the *Speculum Charitatis* (PL, CXCv, 501–4), bears the title *Epistola Gervasii Parchorensis* [i.e. Louth Park] *Abbatis*. Dom André Wilmart, in his article *L'Instigateur du Speculum Charitatis d'Aelred abbé de Rievaulx*, in the *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, XIV (October 1933), 369–94, has shown conclusively from MSS. evidence that the writer is Bernard—and indeed the style *clamat dominum*.

Even so early the growth of Rievaulx had been phenomenal. When Ailred was master of novices Abbot William had already no less than three hundred souls under his rule.¹ Maurice, the "second Bede" of Durham, was there, and shortly after Ailred had left for Revesby the prior of Kirkham, Waldef, who also had been involved in the disputes of York, decided at last that his vocation was to the severer life of the white monks. For a time it seemed that many of his sons would follow their prior, and a draft agreement was actually framed by which the monastery of Kirkham was transferred to the monks of Rievaulx, who undertook to build a new home for the remaining canons at Linton, but the arrangement was never executed, and Waldef went out alone or nearly so.² He began his new life at Wardon, a foundation of Rievaulx in the south, but soon returned to the mother-house, where he remained till he returned to Scotland as abbot of Melrose.

William, first abbot of Rievaulx, had thus fully justified the confidence which Bernard reposed in him. Within a dozen years his sons had increased from twenty-five to more than three hundred, Rievaulx had become the mother of daughters and the abbot, besides taking part in public affairs of Church and state, had had a large part in moulding the vocations of Ailred and Waldef. When he died, in 1145, William was buried under the floor of the chapter-house, and venerated among the white monks as a saint.³ Fragments of his tomb still remain, and we know that Waldef, on his customary visits to Rievaulx as abbot of Melrose, used to pray there.⁴ His death, like that of the second Richard at Fountains two years later, ends the first period in the history of his house.

1 *Speculum Charitatis*, I, 17 (563): "Trecentis, ut reor, hominibus unius hominis voluntas est lex." Even if (as does not seem likely) some *mercennarii* are included in the number, the growth in a decade is stupendous.

2 *V.* no. cxlix of the *Rievaulx Cartulary* (ed. Atkinson), 108-9. Prof. Powicke, *Vita Ailredi*, 54-5, and *VCH, Yorks.* III, 219-20, give the correct explanation of this curious document. Cf. also *Vita Waldeni*, 257.

3 *V.* the description of the remains of William's tomb by Sir Charles Peers in *Archaeological Journal*, LXXXVI (1929), 20 *seqq.* For William's character *v.* *Vita Ailredi*, 93; John of Hexham (ed. Raine), 109: "vir consummatae virtutis et excellentis memoriae apud omnes posteros", and *ibid.* 149; and Bernard's letters to him.

4 *Vita Waldeni*, 264, 265.