

from a national, significance: he does not stand for Israel; nevertheless, the typically good man who endures a typically hard fate is a representative figure, and the poet who created him writes from a background of misery and disorder. On the supposed Babylonian source of Job we agree with Dr. Gray in his scepticism; he hardly does justice, however, to the remarkable likeness of the Hebrew to the Babylonian poem. When a more complete text of the latter comes to light we shall be able to judge whether there is anything beyond a striking resemblance between them.

We have noticed a few misprints. In Part I., p. 74, third line from below, G (=Greek), ought surely to be H (=Hebrew); p. 202, the numeral 9 is missing from the translation. In Part II., pp. 43, 55, 324 the Syriac, and on p. 70 (below) the Hebrew, is incorrectly printed.

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WALTER DE WENLOK: ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER. By Ernest Harold Pearce, Litt.D., F.S.A., Bishop of Worcester. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. 1920. Demy 8vo. Pp. vii + 236. Price 12s.

During the period of his canonry at Westminster Dr. Pearce had fortunate opportunities of making himself well acquainted with the Muniment Room of the Abbey, and he first turned them to good account in his monograph on William de Colchester, an abbot of the fourteenth century. His present work is of greater compass, and deals with a more notable man, Walter de Wenlok, who was Abbot of Westminster from 1284 to 1307. It is a truly excellent book, of the sort dear to the heart of the archæologist, and a valuable contribution to the ecclesiastical history of the period with which it deals. Walter de Wenlok, a monk of Westminster, was elected as successor to Abbot Richard de Ware on December 31, 1283, and about three weeks later he set out for Rome to obtain the Papal confirmation of his election. Dr. Pearce gives some highly interesting details of the cost of the journey, and particulars of the borrowing of money by the new Abbot and his party from a banking firm in Siena. More money had to be borrowed at Orvieto, where the Pope, Martin IV., was then in residence—a good deal of money had been expended before Abbot Walter, duly confirmed in his rights, was free to leave Rome for Westminster. He was back at the Abbey in June, 1284, and by the end of that month had received his temporalities from the King, by August the store of silver plate which belonged to his office, and by November an account of the stewardship of his estates

during the time which had elapsed since the death of his predecessor. All this is interesting as showing that in those days it took the best part of a year to settle an Abbot of Westminster in his high place; in connection with this particular election, Dr. Pearce records a highly notable fact—namely, that when Abbot Walter was chosen, Edward I., instead of following the custom of his predecessors, and seizing the previous Abbot's corn, sheep, oxen, horses, silver, jewels, books, and treasure, granted them to the incoming Abbot and his successors; a little later he gave the Abbot and monks of Westminster a further important privilege in freeing them of all exactions of toll between Dover and Calais, and at all bridges, waters, and roads throughout the kingdom.

This last privilege may seem a small one; it was in reality a very great one. Walter de Wenlok, as Abbot of Westminster, did much travelling. In *Mun.* 24490 there is a record of a progress which he made in the autumn of 1286 through his manors in the Eastern Counties and the Midlands. It took him into Hertfordshire, Essex, the South Midlands, and back through Surrey. In the following year he was at Pershore, Malvern, and Bourton. All through his abbatial career he travelled much; that travelling from one manor to another was a necessity of his office is proved by the fact that in August, 1285, Pope Honorius IV. granted to him a faculty for a portable altar—a privilege which, says Dr. Pearce, meant much to a man whose official life was one of perpetual motion. It could hardly be otherwise. An Abbot of Westminster in those days seems to have been not so much a monk as a man of business. He had estates in various parts of the country—Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Surrey; there were more nearer London, at Laleham, Staines, Yeoveney, notably at Denham, near Uxbridge, where the Abbots had a great country house; it was not only necessary for him to visit these—his own portion of the Westminster properties—but to pay periodical visits to those other estates which belonged to the convent. All this meant money, and Dr. Pearce tells us a great deal about Wenlok's money affairs. He often found himself poor amidst his riches, yet there is no reason to accuse him of extravagance; he was wise in his purchases, and allowed no expenditure without his warrant. But he was frequently in debt, and to all sorts of people, even “to John, his servant, £1 5s. 7½d.” Now and then he makes an effort to pay off some of his creditors—he orders £53 6s. 8d. to be paid to some merchants of Siena “for an old debt”; £10 to Juliana, wife of Thomas Romayn, money which he had borrowed from her; £26 13s. 4d. to his tailor, and so on. These financial matters

are somewhat hard to understand, for that Wenlok could find money at a given moment appears from the fact that in 1291 he ordered full and immediate payment of debts amounting to £274 15s. 11½d.—no inconsiderable sum. Nevertheless, we often find him resorting to the pawnbroker with his jewels, and the only conclusion we can come to is that if there was anything that really was wanting in the later Middle Ages it was a sound banking system.

It was during the abbacy of Walter de Wenlok that the famous burglary of the Royal Treasury at Westminster happened; Dr. Pearce devotes a highly interesting chapter to it, which should be read in conjunction with Professor Tout's paper, "A Mediæval Burglary," published in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* five years ago. The monks of Westminster fell into serious trouble in this affair—originally ten of them (one of whom, John de Prestcote, was probably not a monk) were arrested; later, according to a royal mandate, the Abbot himself and forty-eight monks were implicated, and a thorough investigation of the whole matter was held at the Tower just after the Feast of the Epiphany in 1304. The whole thing is a curious business. One Richard de Podelicote, a merchant in cheese and butter, ultimately confessed that he alone was responsible for the burglary, which he effected to recoup himself for certain loans. Dr. Pearce characterizes this man's confession as "a straightforward story, which merely lacks any probability." As for the supposed guilt of the monks, "certainly," says Dr. Pearce, "the monks were not enriched by the burglary either individually or as a body." He thinks their inculpation was due, less to their actual guilt than to the hostility of Reginald de Hadham, who subsequently figured in the equally famous case *Hadham v. Wenlok*, to which he also devotes an entire chapter. That case, into which we need not go, arose from the principal defect in Abbot Wenlok's character; in spite of his ceaseless and great care of the Abbey estates, and the welfare of the community, Wenlok was unfortunate in his relations with a certain section of his brethren, and the last years of his rule were marked by a personal quarrel which split the convent into two bitterly disagreeing factions. The record of those years is not pleasant; it is one of sordid money matters, leading to acrimonious litigation; far more pleasant are the human touches of which Dr. Pearce gives us plenty in his accounts of Wenlok's relations with his old mother, whom, when he was first elected to his great station, he brought up from her far-away country home to see him in his magnificence, and whom he treated with a deference and honour that prove him to have been a good man and a worthy Christian.

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