



THE BARONY OF GRELLEY.

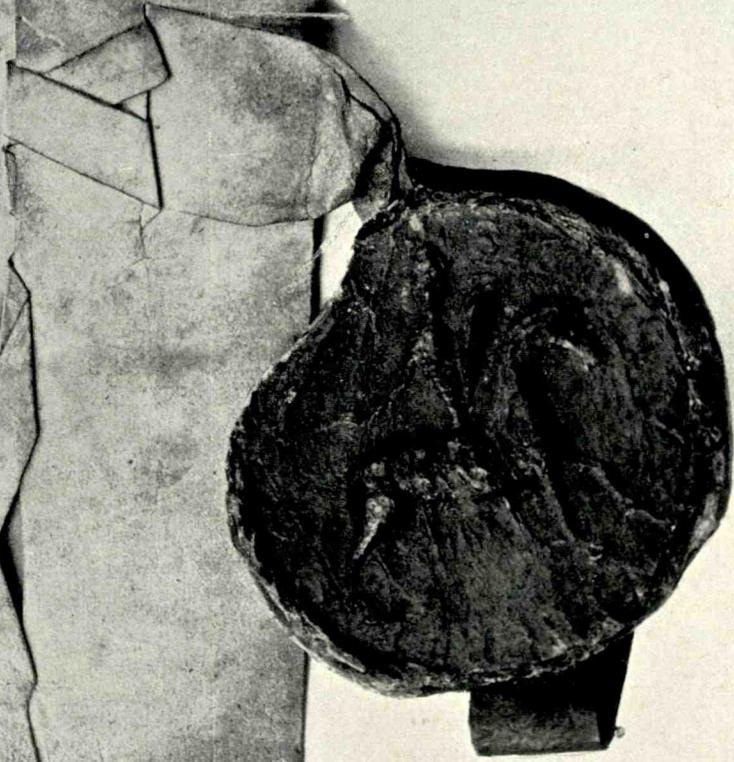
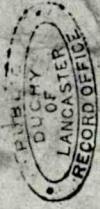
By William Farrer.

Read 17th January, 1901.

AMONG the Norman followers of Count Roger, the Poitevin, the most important were Albert Greslet, Roger de Montbegon, and Warin Bussel; who, either in their persons or their descendants, represented the holders of three great Lancashire Baronies, namely, those of Manchester, Tottington and Hornby, and Penwortham. It is true that the early Constables of Chester, the Villers and Lacys, each held large baronies, but the two first seem rather to have been associated with the Earls of Chester than with the house of Montgomery, and, until the reign of Stephen, the connection of the house of Lacy with Lancashire continued only for the few years from 1088 to 1106. Of these six great families, we propose to give some account of the Greslets, having recently met with some new materials for the history of the family, which may prove to be of interest to the members of the Historic Society.

The name "Greslet" is probably a nickname, like Bussel, and seems to be the old French *greslet*, slim or deft; although it might mean something less pleasant, namely, pock-marked, from *greslé*, a word expressive of the similarity of this disfigurement to

Albertus grelle omnib' hominib' suis ⁊ amicis. francis. ⁊ anglicis. clericis. ⁊ laicis. salutem.
Sciatis me concessisse ⁊ dedisse ⁊ hac carta mea confirmasse huic Alberto filio Robti
de kent. x^{xi}. m. acras terre quas pater suus tenuit de me incumstede die qua iter
suum cepit apud ierusalem ⁊ illas decem acras que fuerit Alfeto potekine. ⁊ predicta dedi ei
incrementum terre predicta. x. m. acras de domino meo p' homagio suo ⁊ seruitio. illi ⁊ here
dibus suis tenendum deme ⁊ de heredito' meis libere ⁊ quiete in bene ⁊ in pace. sicut p. xv.
solidos reddendo annuatim. Et medietas reddatur ad pasca. ⁊ medietas ad festum sci michael.
⁊ p. vii. denarios ad marcam. P' hoc autē seruitium predictū erit quitus ab omnibus seruitiis ⁊
consuetudinibus que ad terram pertinent. Telle. hugo de newilla. Robto de buron. Wlto vbro
de tūmstede. Wlto de herlaue. Adam de ouetune. hugo de humetune. Turstano de brai.
henrico haltem. Wlmo de hostredia. Baldesmo kamerario. Robto de newilla. Radulfo
de bobi. Galfrido de buchecune. hostro de newilla. Petro de arches. hugone cantore.



anything which has been hailed upon, or marked by hail. (*Vide* Cotgrave, and Littré *in voce*.)

In the twelfth century the name became modified to Gredle, and in the thirteenth to Greilli or Grelley. It first appears in the Domesday survey—"Inter "Ripam et Mersham," where, in describing the Hundred of Blacheburn (pronounced Blakeburn), the record states that "Roger the Poitevin gave "the whole of this land to Roger de Busli and "Albert Greslet, and there are there [in 1086] so "many men who have 11½ ploughlands [of the "demesne] which the same [Roger and Albert] have "granted to be quit [of rent] for three years, and "therefore they are not now valued." This means that in 1086 Roger Busli and Albert Greslet were jointly possessed of Blackburn Hundred, and that the demesne lands were so impoverished of oxen and other stock that the tenants had them rent free for a term of three years, not then ended. The Survey also tells us that in 1086 Roger the Poitevin was no longer in possession of his Lancashire fief, and there is reason to believe that between that year and the accession of William Rufus, or perhaps immediately after that event, Busli and Greslet resigned Blackburn Hundred, so that this estate and the adjoining district of Bowland might be conferred upon Ilbert de Lacy, Baron of Pontefract, who, about the same time, received a part of Count Roger's forfeited estate in Craven. What Greslet received in exchange will presently be seen. In the year 1094, we find him attesting his chief lord's grant of lands, churches, and tithes in Lancashire and elsewhere to the Abbey of St. Martin of Sées, the much-favoured church of the house of Montgomery; in which grant occurs this important clause—that Earl Roger gave *inter alia* to God and St. Martin and the brethren at Sées, in alms for ever, "the tithes of the churches of all the land

“ of Albert Greslet, and the tithes of Warin Boissel
“ at Preston, and the tithes of the land of Roger de
“ Montbegon at Kelesey and Tavelby and Tite
“ (now Kelsey and Tealby and Tyd in Lincoln-
“ shire), and all his [*i.e.* Montbegon's] demesne
“ between Rible and Mersey, and four men of Ralf
“ Gernet in Suffolk.”¹ Unfortunately these gifts
did not all continue in force after the accession of
Henry I, when Count Roger's English fief was
finally forfeited, so that one cannot be sure which
churches are here referred to; but it is highly prob-
able that Albert Greslet's churches included
Ashton-under-Lyne, Childwall, and Cotgrave—
churches which are named in Count Roger's grant
—with the church of Preston, and many others,
and which were certainly in the possession of
Albert's son, Robert, in the reign of Henry I,
doubtless by restoration to Albert or his son, by
that sovereign, after Count Roger's banishment in
1102.²

In this charter there is no reference to the church
of Manchester, which is distinct evidence that
Greslet had not received Manchester and the soke
in the year 1094. Turning again to the Great
Survey, we are told that in 1066 there were in the
manor of Salford 3 hides and 12 ploughlands of
waste land (*i.e.* land formerly rated to Danegeld as
12 ploughlands, but derelict or devoid of stock in
1066); in the manor of Radeclive one hide; and
another hide belonging to Salford; that the churches
of St. Mary [of Manchester] and St. Michael [of
Ashton-under-Lyne, which belonged to the demesne
of the Hundred], held in Mamecestre one plough-
land quit of all custom except geld; also that there
belonged to the manor or hundred 21 berewicks,

¹ *Calendar of Documents, France*, p. 236.

² *Register of Lancaster Priory*, p. 8. Ashton-under-Lyne is apparently
to be identified with the Estanesberia of Count Roger's charter.

which 21 thanes held for 21 manors, in which were $11\frac{1}{2}$ hides and $10\frac{1}{2}$ ploughlands. Passing on to the year 1086, we are told that of this land these knights held by the gift of Roger the Poitevin—Nigel, 3 hides and half a ploughland; Warin, 2 ploughlands; another Warin, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ploughland; Geoffrey, 1 ploughland; and Gamel, 2 ploughlands.

Of these estates the first is, without doubt, Manchester and the soke, and St. Mary's Church with the half ploughland belonging to it. The soke may have consisted of one hide in the vill of Chorltoncum-Hardy, Withington, Didsbury, and Rusholme; one hide in the vill of Crumpsall, Nuthurst, Moston, Goderwick, Ancoats, Newton, Bradford, and Clayton; and the remaining hide in Manchester, Ardwick, Openshaw, Gorton, and Denton. The question naturally arises, Who was Nigel who held Mamcester in 1086, apparently in 1094, and probably lost it upon the forfeiture of his chief lord in 1102? He cannot have been—as some have suggested—Nigel, the Earl of Chester's Constable, because Nigel died some years previous to the date of the survey, nor does his name appear there either under Halton or its members in Cheshire or Lancashire; but the name of his son William, or William fitz Nigel, does appear. After much consideration, the only suggestion that we can make, which must be taken *quantum valet*, is that he was Nigel de Stafford, the ancestor of the Gresleys of Derbyshire, a family having no known connection with the Grelleys, notwithstanding the similarity of the two surnames. As already stated, in a recent paper upon "the Domesday Survey between the Ribble and Mersey," this Nigel held several estates of the Honour of Lancaster, of one of which (Thorp Constantine) he was deprived in 1086. He also held numerous other estates in the counties of Derby, Stafford, and Leicester, some

in chief and some as tenant of Henry de Ferrers, Richard Forestarius, the Bishop of Chester, and Ralph fitz Hubert; many of which he lost in the year 1102, when Count Roger and many of the old Conquest families were banished the kingdom, for openly assisting the King's rebellious son.³

Of the next two Domesday estates, one is almost certainly Ashton-under-Lyne, held by Warin Bussel, and under him by Albert Grelley, just as his descendants also held it afterwards of the barony of Penwortham. (See the Inquest of the co. Lanc., taken in 1212.) Of the remaining two, Geoffrey has not been identified, and Gamel was very likely the thane of that name who held Rochdale in 1066.

Albert Grelley again appears in the Domesday Survey as "Albertus homo Rogerii," under cos. Norfolk and Suffolk, in Spixworth, Coketeshala, Tunstead, Blakenham, and Willesham, all estates which his descendants held of the Honour of Lancaster. He may also be identified with the "Albertus," tenant in Haintone, co. Lincoln, of Count Roger in 1086, where also "Albertus" was tenant in the Lindsey Survey of 1114-16, though this entry probably relates to a period a little antecedent. Probably he also held in the same county Bloxholme, Bracebridge, and Canwick, estates which his descendants held of the Honour of Lancaster.

It is certain that Nigel did not retain possession of the manor of Manchester after the year 1102. It is also certain that Albert Grelley and Roger de Montbegon either took no part in the rebellion of that year, or were pardoned by the King, who from this time onward—the country over—commenced to re-group old fiefs, and out of the old order, by increasing the estates of the knightly families of

³ A full account of this Nigel and his descendants will be found in *Staffordshire Hist. Collections*, vol. i, n. s.

lower degree, to create a new and more loyal baronage. To this influence we may trace the creation of the barony of Manchester, and its bestowal upon Albert Grelley; an event shortly afterwards followed by the incorporation of Count Roger's forfeited estates, with the addition of other estates of banished feudatories, and a number of large manors of royal demesne, into the Honour of Lancaster, and its bestowal on the King's nephew, Stephen of Blois, afterwards King. This was about the period 1112 to 1114.

In the Inquest of county Lancaster, taken in 1212, we are told that the fees of Barton, Withington, and Pilkington were of *ancient feoffment*; and later, in the inquest of knights' fees (in Lancashire) chargeable to the aid to marry the King's sister to the Roman Emperor, taken in accordance with a writ directed to Simon de Thornton, the sheriff, about midsummer, 1236, it is recorded, that "Thomas Greyley holds $5\frac{1}{2}$ knights' fees in Manchester, with the soke, of ancient feoffment," *i.e.* fees which had been created before the day on which King Henry I was alive and dead (Dec. 1st, 1135). It may therefore be considered, as certain as the nature of the circumstance permits, that the barony of Manchester was created soon after the year 1102, and bestowed upon a loyal knight in the person of Albert Grelley.⁴

⁴ The feudal service was 12 knights, distributed as follows:—

In co. Lancaster.		In co. Lincoln.	
Barton-cum-membris	$1\frac{1}{2}$ fee	Bloxholme	$\frac{3}{4}$ fee
Withington . . . (1 judge)	1 ..	Swineshead	1 ..
Worthington	$\frac{1}{2}$..	Sixhills and Hainton	$\frac{1}{4}$..
Pilkington . . . (1 judge)	$\frac{1}{4}$..	In co. Norfolk.	
Childwall, Aspull, Turton,		Tunstead	1 ..
Harwood & Brockholes	1 ..	In co. Suffolk.	
Dalton, Parbold & Wright-		Risby	1 ..
ington	1 ..	Willisham	1 ..
Lostock and Rumworth	$\frac{1}{4}$..	Little Blakenham	$\frac{1}{4}$..
In co. Notts.		Almesburn	$\frac{1}{4}$..
Cotgreave	1 ..		

Childwall, &c., and Lostock and Rumworth were not fees of "ancient feoffment," but infeudations of the time of Henry II.

The Inquest of co. Lancaster of 1212 records the creation of one of these fees of ancient feoffment, which we may ascertain by a little genealogical knowledge and calculation to have been created between 1102 and *circa* 1110, by Albert Grelley, the Domesday tenant. The late Mr. Ormerod, the historian of Cheshire, in his anxiety to magnify the family of Lathom, by endeavouring to trace an early connection between that family and the Grelleys, fell into error about the date of this infeudation, and attributed it wrongly to Albert Grelley, the grandson of the first baron, viz., son of Robert, son of Albert *the first*. The record states that "Albert Gredle, *senex*, gave the fee of one knight to Orm, son of Ailward, in marriage with Emma, his daughter, to wit in Dolton, Parbold, and Wricinton,"⁵ which the heirs of Orm held in 1212. And again, that "Albert Gredle *senior* (an error for *senex*), gave to Orm, son of Eward (Ailward), with his daughter Emma in marriage, one ploughland in Eston (Ashton-under-Lyne) by "10s. per annum,"⁶ which the heirs of Orm also held in 1212. The said Orm and Emma had issue a son Roger, to whom Albert Grelley II, the grandson of the grantor, confirmed "Haistune" (Ashton-under-Lyne) to be held of him, the said Roger, as he had held it of his father, *i.e.* of Robert Grelley, the second baron. This Roger, son of Orm, was living in the time of King Stephen, and had a son William, living in the reign of Henry II, and he in turn was father to another Roger, living from the latter part of the reign of Henry II to the end of King John's reign. He is mentioned in the Inquest of 1212 as "Roger son of William," the holder in thanage of one ploughland in Reddish, which Matthew de Reddish held under him. His son Alexander, generally

⁵ Inquest of co. Lancaster, A.D. 1212. *Testa de Nevill*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

known as Alexander de Kirkby Ireleth, was one of the hostages found by Gilbert fitz Reinfred in 1216, when he bound himself to give a life-long allegiance to King John and his successor. He is also named in the *Testa de Nevill, circa 1220*, as Alexander de Kyrkeby (fol. 663). Being fourth in descent from Orm, it is obviously impossible that Orm and Emma could have been married so late as the time of Albert, the third baron, who flourished between 1150 and 1160, so that we may safely ascribe these two infeudations to Albert the first baron, and to a date within ten years after 1102. As it has been a matter of doubt as to whether the first Albert was ever possessed of the barony of Manchester, the writer begs the reader's indulgence for this long digression, necessary in order to remove this uncertainty.

In the possession of Ashton-under-Lyne, Brindle, Anderton, and Heaton-in-Lonsdale by the barons of Manchester, fees which were parcel of the barony of Penwortham, and were held by the Grelleys under the Bussels, we find distinct evidence of early infeudations made by Count Roger the Poitevin, in some cases *before*, and in others very soon *after* the date of the Domesday survey.

The next of the family and second baron was Robert, the son of Albert. In the Lindsey survey, made in 1114-16, we find him holding two small estates directly of the King. The entries may be translated thus—"Rodbert Greslet five oxgangs in "Neteltune of the King"; and "Rodbert Greslet "one carucate and four oxgangs and a half in Cal-"decote of the King."⁷ Another entry, which seems to point to his father being still alive, to which we have already referred, runs—"The Count "of Mortain in Heintune three carucates, which "Albert holds."⁸ This place included Sixhills.

⁷ *Lindsey Survey*, fac-simile edit., fol. 17, l. iv. ; fol. 22, l. vii.

⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 22, l. i.

A few years later, viz., in 1127, as Robert Greslat, he attests Earl Stephen's foundation charter of the Abbey of Furness. Perhaps we are not mistaken in recognising him again many years later, viz., in 1153-4, in William de Warren's charter, whereby the latter confirmed to the monks of Furness his father's charter of the foundation of their house. A filiation of this great Lancashire Abbey, and the second to spring from the original stock, was founded by Robert Grelley, upon his estate of Swineshead, in 1134; a deed of beneficence prompted, no doubt, by his allegiance to, and respect for, his chief lord, at that time still Count of Mortain, but within a year after about to commence his troubled occupancy of a usurped throne.

In the Pipe Roll of 31 Henry I, at Michaelmas, 1130, Serlo de Burg, sheriff of cos. Nottingham and Derby, renders account "of 13 marks of silver "for a plea which had been between him and "Robert Greslet."⁹ In Lincolnshire, at the same term, "Robert Greslet renders account of 20 marks "of silver [which he had proffered] that the King "might help him against the Count of Mortain, "respecting a certain plea; and of 60 marks of "silver for the same agreement. Into the Treasury "16*li.* and 1 mark of silver. And he owes 55 "marks of silver and 1 mark of gold."¹⁰

By his charter, Robert Grilli, for the redemption of the souls of his father and mother, and deceased ancestors, also for his own soul and the soul of Matilda his wife and their children, and for the love of God, gave in perpetual alms to God and the brethren and nuns of St. Mary of Haverholm (in co. Lincoln) three acres by those ten acres which he had previously given for the accommodation of their buildings, together with common of pasture

⁹ *Pipe Roll of 31 Hen. I.* Record Com., p. 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

of the whole town of Bloxham jointly with himself and his men, confirming this with the sign of the cross ✠. Witnesses, Albert Grilli my son, and Robert de Arches.¹¹

In the earlier charter referred to, Robert Greslet, for the redemption of the souls of his father and mother, etc., and for the health of the souls of his wife Maud and their children, gave to the same convent a manse in his land of Bloxham, whereon to set their buildings, to wit, ten perches in width and five furlongs in length. Witnesses, Robert de Archis,¹² Roger de Matom, and Robert his brother.¹³

By his wife Maud, Robert Grelley had issue—Albert his son and heir, and other children whose names have not been preserved, unless Gilbert Grelly, who held land in Riskington (now Ryston), co. Suffolk, and whose name occurs in charters to Haverholm Priory, was one of them. He survived until *circa* 1154, and died in extreme old age.

An interesting story is told in Thomas of Monmouth's *Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich*, of the wonderful cure of a falcon of Albert Gresle, in the year 1154.¹⁴ The story runs as follows:—

Among so many eminent and mighty miracles, the power of God is sometimes apt to show itself forth greatly in the smallest things. Now Robert Gresle, a nobleman, had a son Albert, who, when a lad, possessed a falcon of which he was exceedingly fond: and one day it so happened that this bird fell sick, and the boy was as grieved for its mishap as if it had been his own. The bird seemed to be *in extremis*, and the boy betook

¹¹ *Lansd. MSS.*, 207 A, p. 207.

¹² Robert de Arches was pardoned 5s. of his quota to the Danegeld collected in Lincolnshire in 1130, in which year Roger de Mateom accounted in co. Norfolk for an amercement of 40s. laid upon him for a breach of the peace. Perhaps his father or brother occurs in an entry under Hampshire, recording that the sheriff had accounted at the Treasury for 10*li* of the ferm of Robert de Mateom's manor of Greteley. One is inclined to wonder if Robert de Bloxham, who owed 10 marks the same year in Lincolnshire "for one Weregeld," is to be identified as Robert Greslet—(*Pipe Roll of 31 Hen. I.*, pp. 104, 92, 40).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

¹⁴ Cambridge University Press, pub. 1896. Book vi, No. 19, p. 258.

himself to the intercession of the blessed boy and martyr William, praying that by his kindness the dying falcon might be restored to health and life: he vowed, moreover, that if the saint would restore him his beloved bird, he would come to him every year with an offering in acknowledgment. His father meanwhile and the other knights who were present laughed at the boy as making a childish request, partly because they were sure that the bird would die directly, and partly because they deemed it ridiculous to pray to the saints or make vows to them for such trivial matters. Yet it came to pass that as the boy prayed with tears and sobs, contrary to the expectation of every one, the bird breathed again, and in a short space appeared well and sound. All marvelled at the sight, and glorified the Lord as being truly wonderful in his Holy ones: and they were alike surprised and grateful to the holy martyr of God, William, for sympathising in and caring for even the smallest matters. Now after this, I saw the boy come with his father to Norwich to pay his vow, and ascertained from them the facts as they happened. And when I had heard the story, I blessed in glorifying and glorified in blessing the glorious and merciful martyr of God, or rather in his martyr the Lord who crowns all martyrs, Who being Creator and Governor of all things, although He is great in great things, yet does not disdain at times to work in the smallest matters.

In or about the year 1154, Albert Grelley succeeded his father as third baron. Some years before, he had contracted a marriage which brought a great increase of property to the family. The lady was Maud, sister of William fitz William, Constable of Chester, who died childless, probably before the year 1150. Upon his death, Maud and her sister Agnes, who was the second wife of Eustace fitz John, Lord of Knaresborough, became co-parceners of the constablenesship, with the lordship of Halton and its member, the fee of Widnes, and large estates in various parts of England. Halton and Widnes and the constablenesship of Chester, with various estates in cos. Lincoln, Northampton, and Oxford, were the pourparty of Agnes, no doubt as elder sister, and her husband Eustace. The pourparty of Maud and Albert Grelley comprised the manor of Cuerdley in Lancashire, the manor of

Woodhead, including the vill of Casterton, in Rutland, the lordship of Pirton, *alias* Periton, in Oxfordshire, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ and the third part of a knight's fee in Barnetby, Bigby, Somerby, Hainton, and Sixhills, in co. Lincoln, being the fees of the Constable of Chester in that county.¹⁵

¹⁵ Periton was the name of a hundred, appurtenant to the great Honour of Wallingford, which was in the hands of the King at the date of Domesday. It was afterwards given to Earl Hugh of Chester. Under the title of "Berchescire," in the survey (fol. 56 b), and under a heading—"These under-written thanes of Oxenefordscire had land in Walinge-ford," we read, "Earl Hugh [has] one house in Piritune, rendering "three shillings." The Earl afterwards gave the manor of Periton to his Constable, Nigel, who, for the soul of his wife, gave part of it to Westminster Abbey, as appears by the following writ of King Henry I, addressed to William fitz Nigel:—"Henry, King of the English, to "William, Constable of Chester, [sendeth] greeting. I command that "the Abbot and monks of Westminster do hold their land of Peritone, "which thy father gave in alms to that church for [the health of] his "wife's soul, as well and honourably, as freely and justly and as quit of "scutage and all secular customs as thy father first gave and granted it "to the same church, and as they afterwards held it well, and in the "time of Hugh, Earl of Chester. And hereafter let none do any wrong "to them or their possessions, but if hereafter anything of theirs be "taken, let it be rendered up, lest I hear [their] complaint thereupon. "And except ye do [this], Richard Basset [my Justiciar] shall cause it to "be done. Witness, the same Richard Basset, at Wdestok" (Woodstock). (*Ex autogr. in Archivo Eccles. Coll. Westmon.*)

By charter, which passed before the year 1117, William fitz Nigel founded a priory of Augustinian canons at Runcorn, and gave to it the church of Periton, and many estates in cos. Chester, Lincoln, and Leicester. In Lancashire, he gave "two oxgangs of land in Withnesse "[Widnes], with common right of the underwoods and feeding grounds "belonging to Appleton, to them and their men of, and dwelling in, "Withnesse." He also granted common right of the underwood and feeding grounds of Cuedley, and two-thirds of the demesne tithes in Staining, in Amounderness, and the moiety of that town, to wit, three ploughlands, and two-thirds of the demesne tithes in Sutton, beyond Merce (*par.* Prescot), which Thurstan gave.—*Towneley's MS.* (Chetham Lib., C 8, 8.)

In the next reign, William fitz William removed the priory to Norton, giving that town in exchange for Runcorn and Staining, which latter he soon after bestowed upon Stanlaw Abbey. He likewise confirmed all other gifts which his father had made. The founder's successors also gave the moiety of the demesne tithes of Widnes, and two oxgangs of land in Torbock. All which estates were afterwards confirmed by King Henry II, in a charter which passed at Wallingford, about the 10th April, 1155. (*Monasticon*, vol. vi, p. 314.)

The *Hundred Rolls*, s. t., Com. Oxon, thus refer to the grant of land in Periton:—"The Prior of Norton has the church of Pyriton in *proprios* "usus by the gift of the Constable of Chester, at that time lord of "Pyriton, called William fitz Nigel, which said church is endowed of "one messuage, 9 virgates of land, whereof the Prior holds in demesne

Sometime between 1153 and 1164, Albert Gresley granted to God and the Church of St. Bennet of Holme, in co. Norfolk, the whole claim and advowson which he and Walter (de Houton?) and his heirs had in the Church of St. Peter of Houeton, for the health of his soul, *and for the souls of his father Robert, and grandfather Albert*, together with all those parcels of land which the aforesaid Walter held of his fee by the Abbot's vivary, extending to Blakedam (Blackenham). For this grant and gift Abbot William, of the Church of St. Bennet, gave him ten marks of silver. Witnesses, Robert de Valeynes and others.¹⁶

Albert Gresley also gave the Church of St. Mary of Wilagesham (now Willisham, co. Suffolk), to Holy Trinity of Ipswich, as appears by King John's confirmation, dated 11th January, 1204.¹⁷

"2 virgates of land, and 4 acres of wood, without warren, for a park, nor does any service therefor, by reason that he holds in frankalmoign, and by the lord Pope's confirmation."

The manor of Woodhead, in co. Rutland, will be referred to later, as we find no mention of it before the thirteenth century.

The three estates of Bigby, Somerby, and Barnetby le Wold, all in the wap. of Yarborough, in the parts of Lindsey, co. Lincoln, were held by Hugh, Earl of Chester, in 1086, "William, the man of Earl Hugh," *i.e.*, William fitz Nigel, holding half the town of Barnetby in demesne, the other half being soke in Barton-on-Humber, Bigby, Worlaby, Somerby, and Habrough. In the Lindsey survey of 1114-16, we find that Earl Richard had succeeded his father, Hugh, and "William, the Constable of Chester, is his tenant," just as he was thirty years before, but Geoffrey fitz Pain is holding the soke above-named.

Thus we seem to have very clear evidence that these estates in Periton, co. Oxford, Woodhead, co. Rutland, in the Yarborough wapentake of Lindsey, together with the barony of Halton and fee of Widnes, and Staining in Amounderness, had been given by Earl Hugh Lupus—when he received his fief from the Conqueror—to his knight Nigel, whom he appointed his Constable of Chester.

¹⁶ Kuerden has preserved a brief abstract of a charter of Albert Grelle, son of Robert, releasing to the Abbot of St. Bennet of Holme all his right in the church of St. Peter of Houeton, which the said abbot had by the gift of Albert, his grandfather. About the same time, by charter addressed to William, Bishop of Norwich, he gave in frankalmoign to God and St. Bennet, and to Abbot William of Holme, all the land in Bertone which was of his fee and inheritance, which had long lain in dispute between the church of St. Bennet and his ancestors, begging the Bishop to confirm the same by his charter, which he accordingly did, as may be seen by reference thereto.—(*Cott. MSS.*, Galba E. 11, f. xxxiii.)

¹⁷ *Charter Rolls*, p. 116.

Except for the grant of the Mill at Mamcestre to the Abbey of Swineshead, by Robert Gresle, about 1134, we find little mention of the Lancashire possessions of this family until the reign of Henry II. The almost entire absence of infeudations, grants, or gifts in alms in the northern portion of the barony, may be explained by the fact that the Grelleys lived either at Tunstead in Norfolk, or Sixhills in Lincolnshire, and that after the conquest almost a whole century passed before there was much growth of status and condition among the tenants of Manchester and its members, calling for notice or deepening the lord's interest in his northern estates.

The Inquest of co. Lancaster of 1212 records the following grants made by Albert, the third baron, between 1154 and 1162:—"Albert Gredle, "senior, gave to Wluric de Mamecestre 4 oxgangs "of land of his demesne for 5s. per annum," which his heirs held in 1212, and was, as we believe, the estate of Nuthurst in Moston. Wulric, the clerk, witnessed Albert Grelley's confirmation of Ashton-under-Lyne to Roger, son of Orm, son of Ailward, to which reference has been made. Most likely he was the holder of some important office in Manchester, possibly the Dean, and predecessor of Jordan, Dean in the latter half of the reign of Henry II. Further, "Albert Gredle gave 4 oxgangs of land of his demesne to the Church of "Mamecestre in alms." Dr. Hibbert-Ware surmised that this land comprised the parsonage land in Deansgate, but one would expect the ancient Saxon endowment to be there, near the Church, and so we prefer to believe that this was the more distant estate of Kirkman's Hulme. Lastly, "the "same Albert gave to Henry, son of Siward, one "ploughland in Flixton for 10s," which his heirs held with the church there in 1212. Henry was

father of Robert, the founder of Burscough priory, and ancestor of the ancient house of Lathom.

Albert Grelley II. had two, if not three, sons, viz., Albert III, his successor, Seifred, and Barnard (?), and two daughters, Amabel, the wife of Geoffrey de Tresgoz, and Agnes, who was twice married, firstly to Theobald Hautein, and secondly to . . . de Amundevill. Seifred or Seffray is mentioned in a plea at Lincoln, in the 29th Henry III (1245), in which Thomas Gresley demanded against Ernise de Nevill, the manor of Grimsthorp as his right, whereof one Seffray, his ancestor, was seised in the time of King Henry [II], grandfather of the lord King, from which Seffray, because he died without issue, the right descended to one Albert Grelley, as brother and heir, and from Albert to Robert, as son and heir, and from Robert to this Thomas, who now demands, as son and heir. Subsequently they made an agreement, whereby Thomas Grelley released his right in consideration of forty marks, which Ernise gave him.¹⁸

Albert Grelley probably died in the year 1162, soon after attesting a noted agreement, made before the King, between William de Lancaster, Baron of Kendal, and the monks of Furness, touching the division of Furness fells. There does not appear to be any reference to his death in the Pipe Rolls, a consideration which leads to the belief that he died at least a year before the Honour of Lancaster was relinquished by Isabel de Warren, widow of William, count of Boulogne and Mortain, after her marriage to Hameline Plantagenet, and so passed into the King's hands at Michaelmas, 1164.

Albert Grelley, the fourth baron, son of Albert Grelley, *senior*, is generally described as *junior*, to distinguish him from his father. There is a charter

¹⁸ *Assize Rolls*, No. 482, m. 18.

of his preserved in the Coucher of Whalley, of which the following is an abstract :—

To all the sons of holy mother church present and to come cleric and lay, Albert Grelli sends greeting. Know ye that I have granted and confirmed to William, the clerk of Eccles, the fourth part of the church of Eccles, of that share which was his father Haisolf's, and after the decease of Haisolf, his brother Matthew's; to hold during his life in pure alms for the soul of my father, and for my mother, and for myself and my wife and my children, and for the souls of all my ancestors. These being witnesses,—Richard the same Albert's chaplain, Gilbert chaplain, Robert chaplain of Mamecestre, Jurdan clerk of the same town, Ellis clerk of Eccles, Richard clerk of Lever, Robert de Biron, Hugh de Nevill, Urian Basset, Robert de Pontewyk, Lesyng de Lever, Walter de Herlas, Henry Hauteyn, Ralph de Roby, and William the clerk who wrote this charter.¹⁹

He made the following infeudations in his Manchester fee :—To Thomas de Pierpont 3 ploughlands in Rumworth and Lostock, for the service of the third part of a knight. To Robert de Bracebridge 2 oxgangs of his demesne land in Manchester for 4s. yearly service. To William le Norreys 2 ploughlands in Heton Norris for 10s. yearly service. To Alexander, son of Uvieth, 2 oxgangs in Little Lever for half a mark yearly service, and a goshawk or 12d. To Ellis de Pendlebury land called Slivehall for a goshawk yearly, or 12d. To Robert, son of Henry de Lathom, 2 oxgangs in Anlezargh by 3s. yearly service.

From the *Hundred Rolls*, co. Rutland, we find that in the year 1274, the inquisitors stated "that Albrict (*lege* Albert) de Greyeye 60 years past gave to the Abbot of Swineheved a water-corn-mill and an oxgang of land, which were parcel of the manor of Wodeford, which is held of the lord King in chief." This refers to a grant made 90 years before the date of the enquiry, and proves

¹⁹ *Whalley Coucher*, p. 40.

how little were the memories of country jurors to be relied upon.

Albert Grelley took to wife Isabel, daughter of Thomas Basset, an eminent justiciar in the reign of Henry II, who survived him.²⁰ For in the Pipe Roll of 28 Henry II, Maurice de Creon, in co. Lincoln, proffered a sum of 200 marks for having the wife, who was Albert Gresle's, with her reasonable dower, and afterwards married her to his son and heir, Guy de Creon, who after his father's death, in 1 Richard I, rendered account of 11 marks balance of the above sum of 200 marks then remaining unpaid. By his said wife, Albert Grelley had issue, Robert, his son and heir, and three daughters.

An interesting roll in the Record Office, of the date 31 Henry II, 1184-5, contains many details of the administration of the Grelley estates after the death of Albert in 1179-80, from which it appears that Thomas Basset, the father-in-law of Albert, had the guardianship of the land and the heirs for the first year of the minority until his death, when Gilbert Basset his son continued in the guardianship. About 1182, the manor of Swineshead was delivered to Nigel son of Alexander, sheriff of Lincolnshire, and Robert de Buron, by the King's precept, to hold at a rent of 20*li.* yearly. They also held Sixhills for 15*li.* rent, and the vill of Tunstead for 20*li.* yearly. In 2 Richard I, Gilbert Basset and his brothers, Alan and Thomas, rendered account at the Treasury of 550 marks, for the custody of Albert Grelley's son with his inheritance and land.

About 1175, Albert Grelley had entered into an agreement with the nuns of Haverholm to permit them to keep nine scores of sheep in the fields of Bloxham, his father-in-law Thomas Basset being

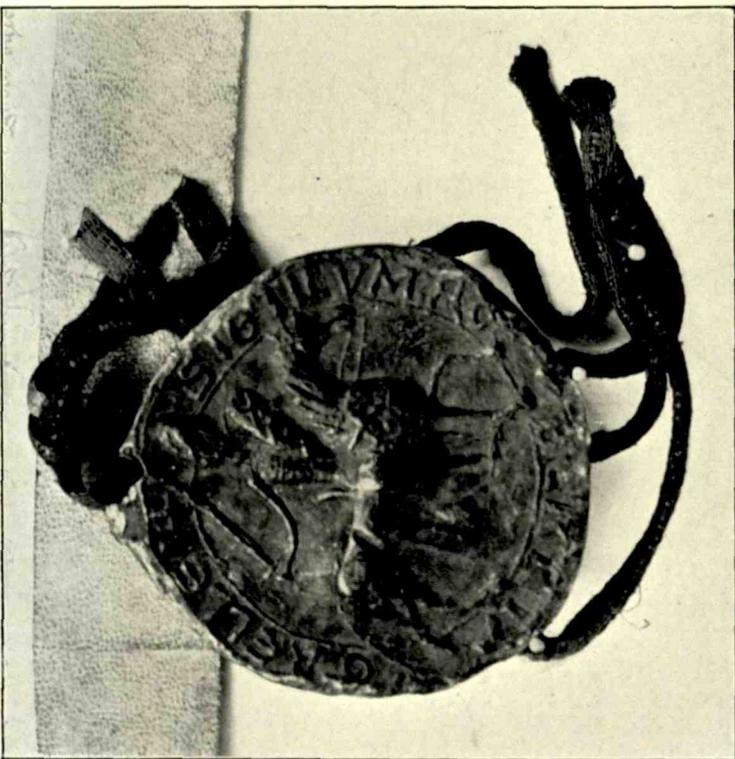
²⁰ *Hundred Rolls*, vol. ii, p. 53.

party to a similar agreement, ratified before the Justices of assize at Lincoln. After Albert's death, Guy de Creon, who had married his widow, confirmed these agreements.²¹

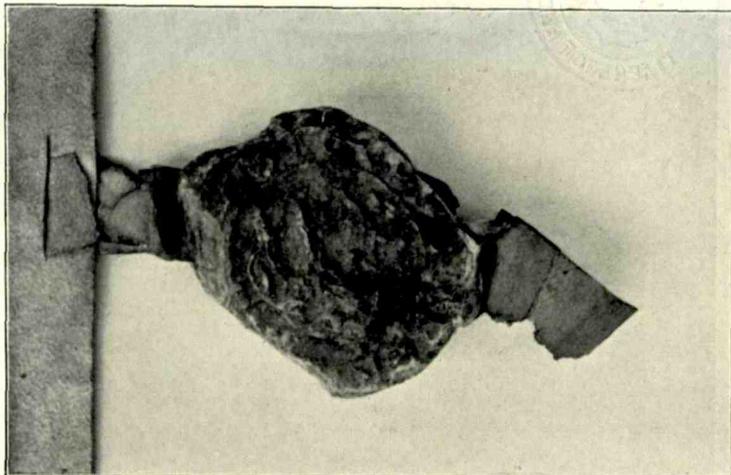
Robert Grelley, the fifth baron, son and heir of Albert, succeeded to his father's estates in 6 Richard I, (1194-5) after attaining his majority. In 33 Henry II, 1186-7, the Sheriff of Lancaster discharged himself of 12*li.* "in the fee of Albert Grethle," for the quota from twelve knights' fees, due for the scutage of Galwey, for which an account was to be rendered by his heir. Again, in 1 Richard I, in co. Lancaster, the Sheriff owed a sum of 5*s.* 4*d.* of the common amercement of the whole county, for concealment of pleas of the Crown, which sum was to be requisitioned from the demesne of Albert Gresle. In Norfolk and Suffolk the men of Tunsted, which was Aubert Gresle's, owed 2½ marks towards the tallage charged upon the royal demesne, and upon lands which were at that time in the King's hand. From these entries it is evident that the heir had not yet had livery of his estates, but between Michaelmas, 1189, and the same feast in 1194, he obtained possession, as appears from the fact that the quota of 12*li.* from 12 knights' fees was pardoned to Robert Gresle at Michaelmas, 1194, by the King's writ, because the sheriff, Theobald Walter, sent word that his knights had gone away with the King into Normandy, which was likewise the case in the other scutages of this reign.

While recently searching in the Record Office, the writer found three interesting charters of this period, with seals attached. The first is a beautifully-written charter of Albert Grelley, the fourth baron, of a date about 1175, being a grant to Albert, son of Robert de Kent, "of land which his

²¹ *Lansd. MSS.*, 207 A, p. 207.



SEAL OF ROBERT GRELLEY, FIFTH BARON OF MANCHESTER
circa 1200 (*vide* page 41)



SEAL OF ROBERT DE BURON, OR BYRON, LORD OF
CLAYTON, NEAR MANCHESTER, *circa* 1200 (*vide* page 41)

“ father held of me in Tunstede on the day on which he took his way to Jerusalem.” The seal bears an equestrian figure of a knight holding his sword in the right, and shield in the left hand. The circumscription is partially legible—SIGILLUM ALBERTI GRELE.

The second charter begins, “ Robert Gretlei to all his men, clergy and lay, French and English, both present and to come, and also their friends, sendeth greeting.” By which he granted to Robert de Buron and his heirs land in Tonstide, which his brother, Robert de Kent, formerly held, and two oxgangs of land in Failesworth (in the parish of Manchester) with its appurtenances, and I have released the rent of those lands to make up the service of half a knight’s fee, together with the land which he holds of me in Claiton (near Manchester) and in Bernetebi (in Lincolnshire) saving the advowson of the church of Bernetebi.” This was duly attested by his uncle, Seifred Grellei, Hugh de Wiketoft, and the following Lancashire retainers:—Roger de Middleton, Robert the chaplain, Jordan the chaplain, Richard de Wirkesle, William de Bracebrigge, Richard de Perepont, John de Barton, Thomas de Barton, Robert de Casterton (of co. Rutland), Henry de Trafford, William de Winequic, Godfrey the cook, Gilbert Buzcel, Hugh the writer of the charter and many others. The seal is a fine one, bearing the equestrian figure of a knight, similar to the last, but the escutcheon, with the field fretty as a sign of nobility, is clearly discernible, also the circumscription—SIGILLVM ROBERTI GRELEI.

The third charter is a release from Robert de Buron to Robert Gredle, his lord, for the sake of peace and the fulfilment of the agreement made between them, of the whole of the land which he held of him in the vill of Tonstide, which his brother

Robert de Kent, and the latter's son Albert, held of him and his father. The witnesses were Lancashire men, except one or perhaps two:—Roger de Midelton, Matthew son of William (de Hathersage), Richard son of Ellis (de Pendlebury), Geoffrey dean of Mamecestre, Richard son of Henry, Richard de Perepont, Alexander de Pilkinton, Jordan le Norreys (of Heaton.) Theobald Hautein, Hugh the clerk, who evidently wrote the charter, and many others. The seal is much worn, but seems to bear an eagle's head with open beak. The circumscription may be easily conjectured.

In Mid Lent, 1196, Robert Greslai was engaged in litigation in the King's court in two suits, one against the prior of Newstede in Ancolm, co. Lincoln,²² for impeding the appointment of a parson to the church of Barnetby le Wold, and the other against the prior of Norwich and Peter Bardolf for delaying the appointment of a parson to the churches of St. Saviour of Norwich and St. Fabian of the same town. In both cases the other side failed to make appearances, and were put to pledge and sureties by the court to appear in three weeks from Easter to answer Robert Grelly.²³

His marriage is recorded in the following entry in the *Testa de Nevill*. “The soke of Lovell of Werlingham and Weston (co. Suffolk)—This the lord King Henry the first (*sic*) gave to William Luel; and William de Longchamp, at the time he was Chancellor (*i.e.*, 1189), bought it from the said William Luel, and gave it to Henry de Longchamp his brother, who gave it to Robert Gresle in marriage with his daughter, and he now holds it (*i.e.*, in 1212), but it is not known by what

²² I take this to be the house in question, and not Newstead, coun Leicester, because the church of Barnetby-le-Wold was afterwards appropriated to the former house.

²³ *Rot. Curia Regis*, Pipe Roll Soc., vol. xxiv, pp. 226, 227.

“service. It was a member of Mutford.”²⁴ The lady’s name was Margery (or Alice).

On Dec. 5th, 1203, Richard de Wilek had letters patent from the King at Barfleur, commanding him to deliver to Robert de Greley, the widow and sons of William de Longchamp, to conduct them with the King to England.²⁵ On Nov. 3rd, 1203, the King at Clarendon sent his letters patent to Ranulf, Earl of Chester, Roger de Munbegon, Robert de Greidley, and William le Boteler, begging them to give the aid of their men of co. Lancaster in the work upon the ditches of the royal castle of Lancaster, which the King was greatly enlarging and strengthening. This he did not ask for by custom, but this time by grace only.²⁶

On 5th April, 1208, the King pardoned Robert Gresley 30 marks, due for an amercement of *novel disseisin* in England, incurred in giving his sister in marriage.²⁷

In June, 1215, he had a warrant for delivery of six harts, to be taken in the royal forest of Clive; but afterwards, becoming a prominent member of the Barons’ party, the King seized his estates, giving Periton in Oxfordshire to Ralph Gernon, by writ to the sheriff, dated at Guildford (?), 10th December, 1215. In the next reign his Lincolnshire lands were given to William Marshall, the younger, for his maintenance in the King’s service (13th June, 1217), as also were other lands of his to Hugh de Vivonia (29th June). On the 7th Feb., 1216, King John sent his letters patent to the sheriff of Lancaster, Gilbert fitz Reinfred, commanding

²⁴ *Testa de Nevill*, vol. i, fol. 346. In Easter Term, 1 John, at Nottingham, Robert Grelle complained against the Sheriff of Rutland for detention of cattle distrained from Robert’s manor of Woodhead.—(*Rotuli Curie Regis*, vol. ii, pp. 160, 184).

²⁵ *Patent Roll*, Record Com., p. 37.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁷ *Close Roll*, Record Com., p. 108.

him to give seisin "to our beloved and faithful
 " Adam de Yeland, of the castle of Robert Gresle
 " of Mamecestre with all its appurtenances and all
 " the land of the same Robert which he had within
 " the Lyme" (*i.e.*, in co. Lancaster) "to have so
 " long as it shall please us. And therefore we
 " command you to cause seisin of the aforesaid
 " castle with the appurtenances and of the said
 " land within the Lyme to be had fully to the same
 " Adam, to whom the King had committed the
 " same."²⁸ On the 3rd June, the sheriff of Lincoln
 had a warrant not to exact castleguard rent from
 Adam de Yeland, which the sheriff was demanding
 for the lands of Robert Gresle, which the King had
 given to Adam while he was in the King's service
 and in attendance upon him.²⁹ Although his lands
 had been seized by King John, Robert was at
 liberty, for he had letters patent of safe conduct
 from the King at Pontefract, on the 3rd January,
 1216, to continue in force for three weeks from the
 Circumcision of our Lord; and again for eight
 days from Sunday next before the feast of St.
 Gregory.³⁰

From London, on Oct. 30th, 1217, King Henry
 III. directed the sheriffs of Oxford, Lincoln, and
 Rutland, without delay to restore the like seisin to
 Robert Greile as he had on the day on which he
 withdrew from fealty and service of King John,
 because he had returned to the King's fealty and
 service.³¹ On the same day, the same sheriffs and
 that of Lancaster were directed to distrain Robert
 Gresle to render scutage, which had been granted
 by the common council of the kingdom, at the
 rate of two marks on each fee, payable half at

²⁸ *Patent Roll*, p. 165.

²⁹ *Close Rolls*, p. 274.

³⁰ *Patent Rolls*, pp. 162b, 169.

³¹ *Close Rolls*, p. 337.

St. Andrew in the second year, and the remainder at St. Hilary following.³²

On Sept. 3rd, 1199, Robert Greille was at Rouen, and on Oct. 9th at Chinon, in the King's retinue, and again, on Aug. 23rd, at Worcester. Most interesting of all, however, is the recorded fact that on 20th June, 1215, he was at Runimede, between Windsor and Staines, in the King's company, five days after the date of Magna Charta.³³

In A.D. 1215, Pope Innocent issued sentences of excommunication and interdict upon certain barons and others, to be published in the churches of the kingdom of England, and solemnly renewed each Sunday and fast day. Among the names of the barons appears that of R. de Gressei.³⁴ The year following, Geoffrey de Ferland certified the King of the names of those who had borne arms against him in his bailiwick in the cos. of Rutland and Leicester. Among those in the former county appeared the name of Robert de Gretley.³⁵

Lastly, he was in King Henry's retinue at Bedford, on Friday next before St. John the Baptist, in the 8th year, together with John de Lacy, constable of Chester, for which the King sent his mandate, dated at Bedford, 22nd June that year (1224), to the keeper of the Honour of Lancaster, that he should not exact the castle-guard due from them at that date in Lancaster Castle.³⁶

On June 29th, 1226, the King directed the sheriff of Lincoln to elect a new jury in a plea of *novel disseisin*, arraigned by Robert Gresley and the Abbot of Swinesheved against Thomas de Muleton, because, on the complaint of the last-named, men had been chosen on the former jury who lived very

³² *Ibid.*, p. 357.

³³ *Charter Rolls, temp. John, passim.*

³⁴ Math. Paris.

³⁵ Rymer's *Fœdera*, edit. 1816, vol. i, p. 144.

³⁶ *Close Rolls*, p. 606.

remote, and did not know the usages and customs of those parts where the disseisin was made.³⁷

He is found engaged in numerous pleas in the King's court during the reigns of King John and Henry III. In the first year of the former reign he was suing Hamon de Mascy for trespass. The sheriff could not find Hamon, and was ordered by the court to seize his Lancashire lands and keep them, with the chattels found thereon, until otherwise directed.³⁸ At Midsummer, 2 John, Robert Gretlei was suing Hugh Bussell in a plea of land.³⁹ In Trinity Term, 5 John, Robert Gredle puts in his place Albert de Nevill, or Theobald Hautein against Richard de Pierpont⁴⁰ in a plea of wood. In Michaelmas Term the latter essoined himself *de malo lecti*, and the four knights who ought to have viewed his infirmity did not come to the court to report thereon. They were Robert son of Thore, Madoc de Haleton (Aughton), Robert Gogard, and Adam de Edelinton (Adlington), who were summoned to appear in Hilary Term.⁴¹ Subsequently, the defendant Pierpont was pledged to sue in a plea of grand assize in the Quindene of Easter, 6 John, by the surety of Adam de Euckeston. The four knights appointed to elect the grand assize were Ranulf son of Roger, Roger de Middelton, Richard de Wirkedesle, and William de Turton.⁴² Subsequently, viz., on October 20th, 7 John (1205), at the Exchequer in London, Richard Pierpont acknowledged that 40 acres of wood in Lostok and Rumworth were the right of Robert Gresley, and rendered them to him, for which Robert gave him a gold ring.⁴³

³⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 124.

³⁸ *Curia Regis Rolls*, No. 21, m. 13.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 24, m. 5 d.

⁴⁰ *Curia Regis Roll*, No. 31, m.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, No. 32, m.

⁴² *Ibid.*, No. 34.

⁴³ *Lanc. Final Concords*, 7 John, No. 40.

In Michaelmas Term, 10 John, Robert Gresle was suing Richard, son of Robert de Allerton, in a plea of land, but the hearing was postponed to Hilary Term because the writ did not come.⁴⁴ On April 12th following, at York, the defendant—from whom Robert was claiming customs and services due from the tenement which defendant held of him in Allerton—released the tenement to Robert in consideration of the sum of 40s.⁴⁵

On the feast of St. Edward, 5 Henry III, (1221) Robert de Greiley was suing Thomas de Burnhull, Adam de Radeclive,⁴⁶ Alexander de Harwude, and Thomas de Wurthington for suit of court to be done every fortnight at his court of Mamecestre for the lands which they held of him in Brunhill (Brindle), Leovre (Lever), Harwude, and Wurthington, and other services, where they claimed that the suit of court was due only from month to month. On Jan. 20th, 11 Henry III (1227), or six years after the commencement of the plea, the defendants acknowledged that they and their heirs would do suit at Robert's court of Mamecestre from three weeks to three weeks, or every fortnight at pleas held by the King's writ, and at the judgment of thieves.⁴⁷

A very full account of Robert Grelley's Lancashire estates is given in the Inquest of co. Lancaster, taken in the year 1212, and preserved in the *Testa de Nevill*. On fol. 839 of vol. ii, the MS. records that "Robert Gresle [holds] xij knights' [fees] within "the Lyme and without, of which Matthew son of "William [Hathersage] and Roger [his brother] hold "one in Withinton, and from ancient time ought to "find one judge (or doomsman) for the lord King;

⁴⁴ *Curia Regis Roll*, No. 62, m. 5.

⁴⁵ *Lanc. Final Concords*, 10 John, No. 59.

⁴⁶ *Curia Regis Roll*, No. 78, mm, 4d and 14.

⁴⁷ *Lanc. Final Concords*, 11 Henry III, No. 13.

“ Gilbert de Notton one and a half [knight’s fee];
 “ Thomas de Worthinton a half; Richard son of
 “ Robert $5\frac{1}{2}$ ploughlands in Childewell, Aspul, Tur-
 “ ton, Brokhul, where $6\frac{1}{2}$ make a knight; Roger de
 “ Samlesbure and Alexander [de Harwood] hold
 “ the sixth ploughland in Harewode; the heirs of
 “ Orm son of Ailward one knight in Dalton, Pare-
 “ bold and Wricinton; Alexander de Pilkinton the
 “ fourth part [of a knight’s fee] and one judge;
 “ Thomas de Perpont the third part in Rumworth
 “ and Lestock; Robert de Burun a half [knight’s
 “ fee] and 14 oxgangs of Mamecestre [demesne
 “ in Clayton and Failsworth].” This last fee was
 an estate which Robert Grelley had himself given
 to Robert de Buron, senior, confirmed in the
 second of the three charters referred to on p. 41,
 which fee the heirs of Buron held in 1212.⁴⁸

Another feoffment of this period was that of two
 oxgangs of the Manchester demesne in Ancoats to
 Ralph de Anecote, for the yearly service of 6s. 8d.
 A copy of the original charter has been preserved
 and is given below.

Sciunt omnes tam presentes quam futuri quod ego Robertus
 Gredeley dedi, concessi et hac presenti carta mea confirmavi
 Radulpho de Anecotes pro homagio et servicio suo totam terram
 de Anecotes sibi et heredibus suis, Tenendam et Habendam de
 me et meis heredibus liberè et quietè, pacificè et honorificè, in
 feodo et hereditate, in bosco, in plano, in aquis, in pratis et in
 pasturis, cum communi pastura et omnibus asiamentis ville de
 Mancestria, et omnibus dominicis ueis pertinentibus. Preterea
 dedi ei et concessi exitum vie ultra Stamford versus Greene-
 lane, Redendo inde annuatim ille et heredes sui mihi et heredibus
 meis dimidiam marcam argenti ad quatuor terminos, scilicet ad
 Natale domini viginti denarios et ad medium quadragesime
 viginti denarios et ad festum S^{ti} Johannis babbiste viginti
 denarios et ad festum S^{ti} Michaelis Archangeli viginti denarios
 pro omni servitio et exactione et consuetudine et demandis.
 [Hanc terram] cum predictis libertatibus predicto Radulpho et
 heredibus suis Contra omnes homines et omnes mulieres

⁴⁸ *Testa de Nevill*, ii, fol, 823.

[warantizabo imperpetuum.] Hiistestibus, Roberto de Buron de Clayton, Roberto filio Henrici, Matheo filio Willelmi, Rogero de Middleton, Gospatric de Chorleton, Orm de Astun, Asce clerico, carte compositore et multis aliis.⁴⁹

Another feoffment is thus recorded in the *Testa de Nevill*:—"Robert Gredle who now is (*i.e.*, in "1212) gave to Asce the clerk a parcel of land of "his Mamecestre demesne for 3 shillings. The "same Asce holds that land.⁵⁰

On August 11th, 6 Henry III (1222), Robert Greslei proffered a palfrey for a fair every year at his manor of Mamecestre, to last two days, viz., on the eve and on the feast of St. Matthew the Apostle, until the King's full age, the sheriff being commanded to take securities for payment.⁵¹ Subsequently, at Michaelmas, the said Robert rendered account of 5 marks and a palfrey "for a fair until "the lord King's full age, at Mammecestre."⁵² By charter, which passed at Faringdon, 19th Aug., 11th year (1227), the King confirmed to Robert Greslay the grant of a fair at his manor of Mamecestre, further granting that it should last three days, viz., on the eve, the feast, and the morrow of St. Matthew the Apostle.⁵³

On February 11th, 1225, Robert Grelli was a witness to the confirmation of Magna Charta, by Henry III, at Westminster.⁵⁴

By writ of privy seal, tested by the Bishop Carlisle at Westminster, December 20th, 1230, the sheriff of Lincoln was certified that "Robert Gresle, "who held of the King in chief is dead," and that he should take all the lands which the said Robert had held in his bailiwick into the King's hand, and

49 *Black Book of Clayton*,

50 *Testa de Nevill*, ii, fol. 824.

51 *Fine Roll*, 6 Henry III, m 3.

52 *Pipe Roll*, 6 Henry III, Lanc.

53 *Charter Roll*, 11 Henry III, m 4.

54 *Rog. de Wendover*, Rolls Series, 34, ii, p. 114.

safely guard the same that nothing be removed thence until the King order otherwise.⁵⁵ The same mandate was also sent to the sheriffs of Lancaster and York. Under the same date a mandate was sent to the sheriffs of Norfolk and Suffolk, and of Lancaster, that the Abbot of Vaudey and the other executors of the will of Robert Gresle were mainprised of the chattels which had belonged to the said Robert, to answer to the King for the debts which Robert owed him, and that they should not set their hands upon his chattels in their bailiwicks, and if they had taken anything after his death to render it to the executors.⁵⁶

There are grounds for believing that Robert de Buron married one of Robert Grelley's sisters, although no record actually testifies to such a fact. Perhaps the strongest evidence is the use, by the Byron family, of arms differing only in the tinctures from those of Grelley. So far as the writer's knowledge extends, there is no evidence that either of the other sisters had issue.

On January 3rd, 1231, the King having received the homage of Thomas Gredle, son and heir of Robert, commanded the sheriff of Lancaster to give him livery of his inheritance, and also to diligently enquire, by true and liege men of his county, how much land the said Robert held of the King in chief in his bailiwick, by what service, and whether in chief as of the Crown, or as of the Honour of Lancaster as of the King's escheat. The same writ was also directed to the sheriffs of Lincoln, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Oxford.⁵⁷ Unfortunately the inquests returned in response to these writs have not been preserved.

⁵⁵ *Fine Roll*, 15 Henry III, m 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, m 8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, m 7.

In 27 Henry III (1243), Thomas Grelley proffered a fine of 100 marks to be excused from accompanying the King to France; but afterwards the King excused the fine, by writ dated Oct. 18th, because Thomas had in the meantime come into Gascony in the King's service.⁵⁸ On the 18th June the same year, he had acquittance of ward of Lancaster Castle, being in foreign parts in the King's service.⁵⁹ On August 13th, 28 Henry III (1244), he had a like acquittance "since the time he came to the King's service towards the parts of Scotland."⁶⁰ On October 13th, 1245, the King sent his mandate to the Justiciar of Chester to deliver 5 bucks and 15 does alive out of the park of Macclesfield to Thomas Grelley, wherewith to stock his park of Manchester, by the King's gift. He obtained a charter of free warren within his manor of Manchester in July, 1249.

We propose to add only a few more items with reference to Thomas Grelley, so much having already appeared in works of local history. The following reference is more remarkable for ingenuity than trustworthiness. Dr. Hibbert Ware, at p. 59 of the *Ancient Parish Church of Manchester*, falls into a strange error. He says— "Henry the Third, in consequence of his expensive wars in Gascony, etc., was compelled to seek an aid from parliament, which in the outset was resisted, when many forfeitures of lands ensued. It is to this cause that we must attribute the escheat which took place of the lands of Manchester and Horwich forest." Then quoting the Calendar of *Inquisitiones post mortem*, viz., 38 Henry III, No. 10—"Thomas Grelle, Manchestre,

⁵⁸ Close Roll, No. 56, m 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, m 7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 58, m 4.

“Horewych forest, land in co. Lancaster,” he adds, “Subsequently, etc., we find Thos. Greslet in re-
 “possession of his estates, although the escheat
 “does not seem to have been formally rescinded.”
 When the inquest is examined, the learned Doctor’s inability to discover any formal restitution becomes apparent. The writ and inquest are as follows:—

Writ dated at Oxford, 20th July, 38th year, directed to the Sheriff of Lancaster, to enquire who they were, who with dogs, bows and crossbows entered Thomas Grelle’s parks in Mamecestre, and his forest of Horewych, and the [game] therein did take and carry away without his licence, likewise seizing the said Thomas Grelle’s forester of Horewych, and him abducting contrary to the King’s peace.

Inquisition made according to the King’s precept, by the oath of Elias de Tonge, Robert de Burum, William le Norresse, Thomas de Perpund, Geoffrey de Worketley, Roger de Penilbury, Peter de Burnul, Roger de Bothelton, John de Cophull, Robert de Eston, Hugh de Longeworthe, Hugh Gogard, Ranulph de Bothelton, Richard de Adelinton, and Adam de Dokesbury, who say that on a certain Saturday, in the market place of Mamecestre, Thomas de Gretley’s bailiff heard by men coming to market, that they had heard dogs in the Park; the bailiff proceeded to the Park and found a harrier (*leporarius*) belonging to Geoffrey de Chetham herding a number of the wild animals there (*insulantem quandam partem Bestiarum*) and thereupon he did as he wished (*fecit quod voluerit*). They also say that Alikco son of Augustin, Maikoc de Heeton, Dobbe de Heeton, William de Knolles, Alexander Lees, Richard son of Haye, Thomas son of Kansfrit, Namme de Blakerode are transgressors in Horewiche forest, but they do not know that anyone seized Thomas [Grelley’s] forester and carried him away.⁶¹

Thomas Grelley is frequently mentioned in the public records as attending upon his Sovereign, and performing military service with his knights. We also find him frequently engaged in prosecuting pleas against his Lancashire retainers in respect of his rights, customs, and services, and often by charter acquiring and demising lands of his Manchester fief. He married twice, having issue by his

⁶¹ *Inq. p. m.*, 38 Henry III, No. 10.

first wife, whose name is unknown, at least two sons, who lived to man's estate. He married, secondly, Christiana Ledet, widow of Henry de Braybroc, who survived him. She was a great heiress, but having no issue by Thomas Grelley, her inheritance descended to the issue of her first marriage, viz., her son Wyscard Ledet. The principal estates which descended to his issue from both parents were the barony of Wardon, or Westwardon, and the manors of Sutton, Potton, and Cadebury. It was said of two of those manors that John of Gaunt gave them, and an indefeasible title thereto, to one of his favourites, by the most concise charter ever known. It ran thus—

I John of Gaunt, do give and do grant,
To John of Burgoyne, and the heir of his loin,
Sutton and Potton, until the world's rotten.

Christiana Ledet brought to her second husband, as her dower, a life estate in the barony of Wardon, in co. Northampton, of the levy of which to the scutage of Gannoc, Thomas Grelley had respite by writ, dated 10th April, 1248.⁶²

Thomas Grelley died shortly before the 18th Feb., 1262, the date of the writ of *diem clausit extremum*, directed to the Escheator on this side Trent, to take his estates into the King's hands, his heir being under age. On March 6th following, the King assigned the manors of Swineshead and Sixhills to Christiana Ledet, the widow, to hold until her late husband's estates had been extended, when her dower would be assigned to her. By the 6th May, it had been found by inquest that Thomas Grelley had not enfeoffed Peter Grelley, his younger and surviving son, of his manor of Manchester within a sufficient length of time before his death, nor in such a manner that he could have free tenement

⁶² *Fine Roll Excerpts*, ii, p. 32. *Testa de Nevill*, pp. 23-35.

thereof, and that the wardship thereof pertained to the King, of whom Thomas had held by barony. The King therefore directed the Escheator beyond Trent to take the manor into the King's hands and safeguard it, and sent his mandate to the sheriff of Lancaster to take with him the power of the County and go in person to the said manor in case he found any resistance there to the order to take the same into the King's hands. The feoffment which the King set aside was in the following words :—

I Thomas Gredley have granted to Peter Gredley my son and his heirs my whole manor of Mammecestre with the advowson of the churches of Mammecestre and Childewell, and with the chapels of Aston, Hale and Garstan pertaining to the said churches, with all other the appurtenances of the manor of Mammecestre, within the vill and without, in demesnes, forests, meadows, mills, pools, vivaries, waters, woods, parks, pastures, homages, reliefs, wardships, escheats, tolls and all other appurt. named and unnamed. Also I give to the same Peter my manor of Barton, &c., which I bought fully from Sir Gilbert de Barton. I also give him my manor of Kyerdeleye, &c. To hold to Peter and his heirs or assigns as freely as ever I more fully and freely held the same, by doing to Robert de Ferrers, son of Sir William, sometime Earl of Derby, and to his heirs the due services which I, Thomas, and my ancestors have been accustomed to do. These being witnesses—Sir Geoffrey de Chetham, David de Hulton, John de Birun, Robert de Aston, William le Norais, Richard de Moston, Alexander de Pilketon, Roger de Penulbury, Matthew de Burch, Richard son of Ranulf, Jordan son of Robert, Richard de Boudon, William the clerk, and others.⁶³

It will be noticed that no trusts are expressed in this deed.

Six years later, on the feast of SS. Innocents, 52 Henry III (1268), in the High Court at Winchester, Peter Grelegh, stiling himself Warden of the Church of Mamecestre, made an acknowledgment that if Robert, son of Robert, firstborn son of Sir Thomas Greilegh, who is heir of the said Thomas, should die during the lifetime of Sir Philip

⁶³ *Close Roll*, No. 82, m 11 d, 46 Henry III, 1261.

Bassett without having attained his full age, whereby the right of the inheritance would devolve upon the said Peter, that the said Philip Basset should have and hold the manor of Periton by Walingeford, with the appurtenances, for the term of his life; after his death to fully revert to Peter and his heirs without impediment of anyone.⁶⁴

On February 21st, 1262, the King, in fulfilment of a promise to John Baliol, in acknowledgment of his services, to provide a marriage for one of his sons or daughters of the value of 500*li.* or up to 1000*li.*, gave him the marriage of Robert [grandson and] heir of Thomas Grelley, and of the first-born son of Robert. In case the first-born son died before Baliol married him to one of his daughters, or in case the daughter died before she was able by law to obtain dower from the said heritage, Baliol was to have the marriage of the next heir of the said first-born son.⁶⁵ The contemplated marriage never took place.

From the *Hundred Rolls* we learn that Robert Grelley, grandson of Sir Thomas, was under age in 3 Edward I (1275),⁶⁶ and from the inquirers in Kirkton, in Holland Wapentake, "that the ancestors of Robert Grilley of Swineshead enfeoffed the Abbot of Swineshead of the place where the Abbey is set, with 12 scores of acres of land in the vill of Swineshead, of which each acre is worth 12*d.* yearly, but at what time they know not. And the said Robert holds them of Lord Edmund, the King's brother, who now is, of the Honour of Lancaster, &c." The abbot came and showed a charter of confirmation of King Henry II.⁶⁷

Robert Grelley came of age shortly before May 15th, 1275, that being the date of the King's

⁶⁴ *Abbreviatio Placitorum*, p. 172*b.*

⁶⁵ *Patent Rolls*, 46 Hen. III, pt. 1, m. 15.

⁶⁶ Vol. i, p. 507.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

mandate to the Escheator on this side Trent, to give him livery of Thomas Grelley's lands, as kinsman and heir of Thomas, the custody whereof had been committed to Edmund, the King's brother, the King having taken his homage and rendered his lands to him.⁶⁸

On May 20th a like mandate was sent to the Escheator beyond Trent, to deliver to Robert the manors of Mamecestre, Barton, and Kyuerdelegh, saving the right of Peter Grelley, when he wished to prosecute it.⁶⁹

In the King's Bench, in Trinity Term, 4 Edw. I (1276), Robert Gredleye demanded against Guy de Mortimer a messuage with appurtenances in Cambridge, of which Thomas Greddeley, his grandfather, whose heir he is, was seised at the day of his death, from whom the fee descended to one Robert, as son and heir, and from that Robert to this Robert who now demands as son and heir. Guy defended his right, and said that the messuage was acquired by one Albert Gredleye, who died seised thereof, and at his decease bequeathed it to the disposal of his executors and for the welfare of his soul, and they when in seisin, enfeoffed him, the said Guy (*sic*). Moreover, while in seisin, the said executors let the messuage to one Peter Gredleye. He also says that Thomas Gredleye, of whose seisin it was, in going and returning through the town of Cambridge, was often entertained by the said Peter in that messuage, so that Thomas had nothing therein except as a guest, and did not die seised thereof. Subsequently they came to an agreement, Guy acknowledging the right of Robert, and rendering the messuage to him, to hold of Guy and his heirs for 7s. per annum, for which Robert gave him a sor hawk.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *Patent Rolls*, 3 Edw. I, p. 166.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁷⁰ *De Banco Roll*, No. 15, m 69.

Robert Grelley married Hawise, daughter and co-heir of John de Burgh, junior, who brought to her husband the manor of Wakerley, a member of her father's barony of Lanvaley, and other estates in cos. Norfolk and Somerset. She was 24 years of age in 8 Edward I (1280), and died 27 Edw. I (1299), having been dowered by her husband of the manor of Casterton, co. Rutland.⁷¹

Robert's death occurred some time shortly before 24th May, 1282, when the various writs of *diem clausit extremum* were issued. Thomas, his son and heir, was only two years and three-quarters old, having been born at Sixhills on the eve of St. Lawrence, 7 Edward I., *i.e.*, August 9th, 1279.⁷² He therefore attained his majority on August 9th, 1300. When he was 12 years of age the King granted his marriage to Joan, wife of John Wake, to the use of one of the sisters of John Wake, but whether the nuptials were ever celebrated does not appear.⁷³ During his minority the King presented John de Drokenesford to the Church of Childwall, on March 15th, 1293, and again on July 30th, 1299. He also presented Master William Segini del God to the church of Manchester, on March 14th, 1296, and again on June 20th, the church being void by the resignation of William (*sic*) de Langton, bishop designate of Coventry and Lichfield. Three years later, *viz.*, on September 27th, 1299, the King presented Otho de Grandison to the same church.⁷⁴

On March 13th, 1307, the King sent his mandate to Thomas Grelley to do homage to Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, for the lands which he held of the Honour of Lancaster, notwithstanding that he had already done homage to the King. He was a Knight of the Bath, and was summoned to Parlia-

⁷¹ *Cal. Genealogicum*, ii, p. 569.

⁷² *Cal. Genealogic.*, pp. 314, 569.

⁷³ *Patent Rolls*, 24th Sept., 9 Edw. I, p. 445.

⁷⁴ *Patent Rolls*, Edw. I, *vide* *Calendars*, *passim*.

ment as baron, by writ dated March 10th, 1308, returnable on the Quindene of Easter following, and until 4 Edward II.

In 1304 he alienated the manor of Willisham to William de la More, who obtained pardon on Nov. 6th for having acquired it without licence, and licence to retain it. Before May 10th, 1308, he also alienated the manor of Piriton to John de Guise, and before October 23rd, 1310, the manor of Wackerley to John la Warre, who had married his sister Joan, and had obtained an acknowledgment for 6000*li.* from Thos. Grelley, to be levied, in default of payment, on his lands and chattels in the counties of Lancaster, Lincoln, Northampton, Rutland, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Somerset, probably for Joan's marriage portion. On May 14th, 1308, John de Guise acknowledged that he owed Thomas de Grelle 7000*li.*, and John la Warre that he owed 4000*li.*, no doubt the consideration for the alienation of the manors of Piriton and Wackerley. The last reference to the eighth baron of Manchester, and the last male representative in the direct line of this noted family, is the acknowledgment, on June 8th, 1313, of Edmund Passelewe, of co. Kent, that he owed Thos. de Grelle 100*li.*

Thomas Grelley died soon after, when the manor of Manchester and its members, and what still remained of the other Grelley estates, passed to John la Warre, husband of Joan Grelley, sister and heir of Thomas Grelley. With him died out the last remaining of the old Conquest families who had held Lancashire baronies. De Lacy died out in 1311, Bussel and Montbegon scarcely saw the accession of Henry III, and de Villers and the first line of the Constables of Chester did not live to see peace restored in England on the accession of Henry II.