THE GRANGES OF FURNESS ABBEY,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WINTERBURN-IN-CRAVEN.¹

By Annie Cottam, B.A.

Read 4th October 1928

THE Abbey of St. Mary in Furness was founded in 1127 by the monks of Savigny in Normandy in consequence of a gift made by Stephen, Count of Boulogne and Mortain, later King of England. The gift is on a munificent scale.

"I, therefore, give and grant to God, St. Mary of Furness, and the Abbot of the House, all my forest of Furness, and Walney, with the privilege of hunting; Dalton, and all my lordship within Furness, with the men and everything thereto belonging; that is, in wood and open ground, in land and water; Ulverston and Roger Bristoaldun with all that belongs to him; my fishery at Lancaster and Warin the Little with all his land; and sac and soc, tol, team and infangtheof and whatever is contained within Furness, except the land of Michael le Fleming; with this view, and upon this condition; that in the aforesaid place a regular order of monks may, by Divine Grace be established." ¹

Stephen had previously made a grant of land to the Abbot and monks of Savigny, at Tulketh near Preston, where they might found a monastery of their Order. But apparently the abbey had not prospered and the Abbot Ewan was perhaps only too glad to take advantage of a further gift to seek a more promising abode for the brethren. The isolation of the peninsula of Furness was well suited to the monastic life. Moreover, the Vale of

¹ Unless otherwise stated all references are to The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey, Vol. i, ed. by Rev. J. C. Atkinson (Chetham Society), N.S. 9, 11, 14; Vol. ii, ed. by John Brownbill (Chetham Society), N.S. 74, 76, 78.

² Vol. ii, 736.
Bekansgill, chosen as the site of the abbey, provided timber and red sandstone for building purposes; the land in the immediate neighbourhood proved very fertile and food grown near the Abbey could be supplemented from the fishery at Lancaster.

Furness Abbey has left behind no picturesque records of its early struggles as have Byland and Fountains. We are left to deduce from the legal phrases of the Coucher Book that the religious zeal of the monks like that of their contemporaries, attracted the attention of neighbouring landowners, who showed their interest by gifts of land "To God, to the Abbey of St. Mary in Furness, and to the monks who are there serving the Lord." The twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries witnessed a quiet accumulation of estates either by voluntary gift, moral persuasion or purchase, and eventually Furness had wide possessions in Lancashire, Cumberland and Yorkshire.

The nucleus of the Abbey's possessions was Stephen's original grant of Furness. After some dispute between the Abbot and his powerful neighbour William Fitz-Gilbert the first of the family of Taillebois, Barons of Kendal, who later took title of Lancaster, the boundaries were settled on the oath of thirty sworn men and were confirmed by Henry II. The Furness Fells were considered to be separated from Kendal by the boundary from Brathay, down Lake Windermere to the River Leven. Taking the River Duddon as the western boundary, the district was almost equally divided by the natural boundary from Elterwater, south by Tilberthwaite Beck, Coniston Lake and the River Crake. Of the two divisions William Fitz-Gilbert chose the western one, promising that he would pay a yearly rent of 20s. and that his son would do homage to the Abbot for the land. The Abbot had complete control over the eastern

\[1\] ii, 522.  
\[2\] i, 343-4.
FIG. 11.

LANCASHIRE OF FURNESS ABBEY.

FIG. 12.

FINE SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WINTERBURN IN-CRIGNA.

By Anne Colman, B.A.

June 4th, October 1829.

St. Mary in Furness was founded by the monks of Savigny in Normandy, in a place situated near the mouth of the River Mersey, under the protection of St. Blaise, to whom it was dedicated. It has been a place of great interest for many centuries, and has been the seat of many noble families.

The present church was built in the 13th century, and has been much altered and enlarged since that time. It is a large and well-preserved building, and is now in the care of the Vicar of the parish.

The church is surrounded by a wall, and has a large graveyard in front. The entrance is through a gateway, and the church itself is entered by a door in the north wall.

The interior of the church is very ornate, with many fine stained-glass windows and carved wooden choir stalls. The roof is pointed and decorated with richly wrought decorations.

The church is a place of great historic and architectural interest, and is well worth a visit for those interested in such matters.

Scale of 1 mile = 1.5 miles.

Granges thus - Beaumont

The present owner of the church is the Rev. J. H. Pocock, Vicar of the parish.
half, except that William had the privilege of hunting and hawking there.¹

In South Furness, apart from Dalton, the Abbey’s lands centred round the mining districts of Orgrave, Elliscales, Marton and Lindal, and on the Duddon estuary at Ireleth and Angerton Moss. Beyond the Duddon, the coastline was dotted with the Abbey’s possessions from Millom to Drigg. In Upper Eskdale, the valleys of the Esk and Lingcove Beck with Brotherilkeld² as centre, came to the monks owing to the generosity of the Penningtons of Muncaster; and finally, the extensive district of Borrowdale was purchased from Lady Alice de Rumeley about 1209.³ In Lonsdale, numerous grants of land near Lancaster at Kellet, Skerton, Halton, Ellel and Bolton-le-Sands made the Abbey a power on the other side of Morecambe Bay and in Amounderness there were several holdings in Stalmine, Pressall and Staynall. The Abbey’s Yorkshire lands were exceedingly valuable. They extended from Whernside and Ingleborough to Gargrave in the Aire Valley.

The general plan was to organise the lands by a system of granges. In Furness itself there were eleven granges in the year 1292;⁴ viz. Biggar, Northscale and Landscale in Walney, Billerwick, Soler, Barrow, Roose, Rampside, Newton, Lindal, and Ireleth. Outside Furness there were four large granges. These were Winterburn and Newby in Craven, Beaumont near Lancaster, and Stalmine near the modern Fleetwood. From a bull of Innocent IV⁵ in 1247 we learn that the pasture lands of Upper Eskdale were farmed from a grange at Butterilket, and that there were other granges at Salthouse in Furness, Salthouse in Coupland, Greenholme (near Bolton-le-Sands) and Selside (near Newby). As the two

¹ i, i. ² Known locally as Butterilket. ³ ii, 568. ⁴ i, 633. ⁵ i, 603.
latter are not mentioned in 1292 we may suppose that with the development of Beaumont and Newby they were discontinued. In Borrowdale the grange was no doubt situated at the modern village of Grange. I have found only two other references to granges in the Coucher Book. In the Abbey Rental 1536-1538, mention is made of Nibthwaite Grange in the Crake Valley and Marsh Grange near the Duddon Coast and probably these were granges before the Dissolution. Nibthwaite Grange is noteworthy as being the only grange recorded for Furness Fells.

The lands of which these granges were the centre had varying possibilities. Most of them were purely agricultural and whether arable or pasture, their full development was assured, especially after 1147 when the Houses of Savigny were affiliated to the Cistercian Order, an Order soon to become famed for its agricultural work.

To make the most of the landed possessions the services of many men were necessary. The Coucher gives little information about the administration of the granges. We know, however, that in Cistercian Houses it was usual for the agricultural work to be done by lay brethren in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and that they remained, although perhaps in lesser numbers, until the Black Death. The Coucher Book mentions a lay brother at Furness as late as 1311.¹ Those actually living at the Abbey participated in the religious life as far as their work permitted. They rose later than the monks and probably attended Matins, the rest of the hours being recited wherever they happened to be at work. The lay brothers attached to the granges in Furness would constantly come in touch with the monastic spirit. Brethren living on distant granges occasionally visited the Abbey and were then expected to keep the hours strictly but on the granges themselves the usual

¹ ii, 267.
monastic discipline had to be relaxed as the agricultural work needed constant attention.

A fairly large grant of land in a suitable district usually became the nucleus of a grange. The original gift was extended by further grants or purchases, privileges and immunities were secured, and the resources of the district were then carefully developed by the brethren. To illustrate this process I propose to study in some detail the history of Winterburn Grange near Gargrave, in Yorkshire.

Prior to the year 1155, William Graindeorge and his brothers Robert and William, granted to the monks Winterburn, with common in the wood and pasture of Flasby. Winterburn was situated near a tributary of the River Aire in the north-east of the parish of Gargrave. The land promised to be suitable for both arable and pasture and the rights of common in the wood and pasture of Flasby would be an important factor should it be decided to make Winterburn a grange. The monks had probably realised the possibilities of the estate. The grant was partly a business transaction, not just a gift "Deo et monachis Sancte Marie de Furnesio." In notifying the Archbishop of York of the grant William stated that he undertook to acquit the land of suit and service. In return the monks gave him eighty marks and three palfreys. During the following years William added property in the neighbourhood. The monks were soon to be an important factor in the neighbouring township of Flasby. William allowed them a sixth part of the land for an annual rent of 10s., and made a further gift of eleven acres in the townfields of Flasby, called Langlands. Later donations rounded off the monks' possessions immediately round the manor. For example, between the years 1155 and 1190 William granted to the monks two bovates of land in Flasby fields with a toft

\[\text{ii, 354-5.}\]
and croft and then added another bovate near the toft and croft. These gifts were free from all secular service.¹

The importance which the monks attached to the Winterburn estate may be judged by the numerous confirmations which are recorded. Roger de Mowbray, the overlord of William Graindeorge, confirmed to the Abbot and Convent the gift of Winterburn with common rights in the wood and pasture of Flasby and notified the Archbishop of York and "all other sons of Holy Church" of the confirmation. The Archbishop himself was induced to safeguard the monks' rights in his province. He recites that the gifts of the faithful need ratification by the Archbishop. He therefore confirmed the site of the monastery of Furness given by King Stephen and the Abbey's possessions in Winterburn and Flasby which had been recognised by Roger de Mowbray.² The final confirmation was by Henry II.³ The monks were not content until they had secured recognition of their rights by both the ecclesiastical and secular authorities.

William Graindeorge has a more interesting history than most benefactors to the Abbey. He appears to have been actuated by real sympathy with the monastic life. Wishing to live a life of retirement he decided to enter the monastery intending to end his days there. His son William was not so singleminded as his father, who, he feared would alienate the whole of the manor to the Abbey. Accordingly, before his father left the world he persuaded him to make over the manor to himself and undertook to allow his parent seven marks a year as long as he lived. But William did not spend the rest of his life at Furness. He returned to Flasby and lived there "as a guest and not as lord." ⁴ Perhaps William, formerly lord on his own estates, did not find the monastic discipline as congenial as he had expected.

¹ ii, 360-1. ² ii, 373-4. ³ ii, 377. ⁴ ii, 439
A tombstone inscribed with his name bears witness that he was buried in the Abbey.

The first step in organising the grange was to extend its lands and privileges. William Graindeorge the son, confirmed his father’s gifts and allowed the monks free transit throughout all his lands. Still following his father’s example he extended the Abbey’s property. Between 1188 and 1216 he made some half-a-dozen grants of land to Furness amounting in all to twenty-six acres and three bovates. Two were gifts of an acre and two acres respectively in Flasby fields. On the surface the gifts seem spontaneous offerings to Holy Church but the number of small tracts of land made over to the Abbey suggests that the monks, with the intention of rounding off the manor, had used moral persuasion with this William who was less pliant than his monastically minded father.

Other landowners of the district also gave of their possessions to swell the monastery’s property. The neighbouring township of Hetton was soon to a large extent under the Abbey’s control. Gifts were at first on a small scale. The three generations of Arnauld, Henry and Helias de Hetton granted five acres of land in the townfields with “all the meadow that appertained to the five acres.” Perhaps presuming on the doubtful boundaries of the meadowland the monks enclosed more than their share for Helias, in a later charter, released all claims for purprestures which he had against the Convent. He also made the necessary concession of free passage so that the monks could lead their cattle and carry corn, hay and turf to their manor of Winterburn without hindrance.

The documents relating to Hetton are noteworthy because they record so many small grants of land with unusual conditions attached. More than twenty deeds

1 ii, 366-70.  
2 ii, 376-8.
are recorded from a certain Helias, son of Harsqui de Hetton, making grants varying from two acres to five oxgangs of land. The gifts were rendered more valuable by the privileges that accompanied them. Most gifts included rights of free passage. If rights of common pasture went with the tracts of land before, the monks also enjoyed the privilege. Rights of turbary were frequently accorded. For example, Helias allowed the monks to have fifty carts of turf each year. This turf was dried for peat and supplied fuel for the household needs of the grange at Winterburn. Occasionally, special rights of pasture were stipulated. In one case Helias de Hetton allowed the monks to pasture forty sheep, eight cattle, two draught animals and two pigs on his land.

Richard, son of Emma de Hetton, made small grants to the monks on five separate occasions. One deed records the gift of a piece of land measuring one rood in length and in breadth 28 feet to be measured by the foot of any man " quemcumque fratres de Winterburne voluerint adducere ad illam latitudinem mensurandum." Richard appears to have had disputes about measurements with the monks before. In the previous deed he quitclaims for ever all quarrels and disputes he has had with them " de terris mensurandis . . . et omnibus alis nocumentis." When the monks had found the large-footed man one can imagine the keen enjoyment with which all the inhabitants of Hetton assembled to witness the ceremony of measurement.

Another example showing unusual conditions of grant is that of Gilbert of Hetton and Eve his wife. They granted to the monks land for which a payment of 6s. was to be made during their lifetime but on the death of both it was to become the property of the monks absolutely. The final stipulation is that " if the said
Gilbert, after the death of Eve his wife, shall in his life
or at his death devoutly ask for the habit of a lay brother
the said abbot and brethren of their piety will grant
the request.”

The monks had thus extended the manor in a north-easterly direction to Hetton. To the south-east of Winterburn was the township of Flasby where the monks already had acquired possessions through the generosity of William Graindeorge, the elder. Other lands were added by Hugh de Flasceby, his son Hugh and his son-in-law Thomas. The latter gave all his lands in Flasby between the fields of Flasby and Rylstone on condition that the monks provided for his sustenance. Moreover a special agreement was made between the monks and Hugh de Flasceby and his wife Emma when they renounced their claims to the lands given to Furness by Hugh’s father. They were to receive 30s. each year in two instalments, half at Whitsuntide and half at Martinmas; the monks were to provide them with a windle of oatmeal weekly, two conventual loaves each day, and every year seven ells of green or burnet cloth, six ells of blue, one hood and one wrapper of lamb’s wool, or their value in money, viz. 20 pence an ell for the green or burnet cloth, 14 pence an ell for the blue, 22 pence for the wrapper and 30 pence for the hood; at Martinmas they were to receive four pairs of slippers or 4 pence a pair instead; finally, the monks promised to provide for them a house with four acres of land in Millom in a suitable place or else give them 4s. at Michaelmas each year.

Such detailed documents lead one to believe that gifts of land were not always voluntary; but, it is clear that when the monks used pressure to acquire further lands to round off their possessions the grantors did not suffer thereby.

The lands of Winterburn Grange could now be regarded

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1 ii, 409.  
2 ii, 445-6.  
3 ii, 442-3.
as compact. The monks had possessions in the three neighbouring townships of Hetton, Rylstone and Flasby and their power in Craven was such as could not be exercised without challenge. Neighbouring landowners regarded them with jealousy and the Abbey was constantly involved in litigation to defend its title both to land and privileges.

A dispute with William Graindeorge the younger was inevitable. From the outset he showed himself much less in sympathy with the monks than his father was, and he was loth to recognise the latter's gifts to the Abbey. The Abbot claimed common pasture in Flasby and reasonable estovers in its wood, but William is recorded to have hindered the men of the grange to the loss of one mark to the Abbey. When the case was held in the King's Court at York, he claimed that he held nothing as an inheritance from his father since he had succeeded to the lands during his father's lifetime. The monks, however, were able to prove that although William held most of his lands by gift there was a small portion which he held by inheritance and he was therefore bound to warrant the Abbey's right to the privileges in dispute.\textsuperscript{1}

The Convent was not always successful. There was a similar dispute with the successor of Eustace, son of Helias de Rilleston, who had granted the monks free common throughout the moor and pasture of Hetton and Rylstone. Such a privilege was important in a sheep-rearing district, and on the death of Eustace the Abbey had to defend its rights against Eustace's successor William and eventually make a concession. William was allowed to enclose a certain parcel of land, but if any of the animals belonging to the grange strayed on to his lands he pledged himself to restore them without hurt.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} ii, 437–40.  
\textsuperscript{2} ii, 423.
Such disputes with neighbouring landowners were usually tried locally and this placed the Abbot, living in Furness, at a great disadvantage. Even if he were given due warning of a suit, bad weather might prevent his crossing the Leven and Kent sands in time, and the local landowners were only too ready to have the case decided during his absence. For this reason the Abbot gained permission from King and Parliament to appoint attorneys to act for him in the wapentake courts of Staincliff and Friendless. Even then the privilege was only secured with difficulty. Some months later in the same year (1412) we find that Henry IV had specially to direct Sir Henry de Hoghton, the bailiff of the wapentakes, to allow the appointment of the attorneys there by the abbot and explain why he had hitherto hindered him.

In a dispute with Sawley Abbey the very existence of the grange was threatened. The monks of Sawley had a grange just south of the River Aire at Stainton, and Winterburn being only five miles distant, they could justly complain that the brethren of Furness had transgressed the rule of the Cistercian Order that “Granges of different Abbeys shall be at least two leagues distant from each other.” According to the Cistercian regulation, two other abbots of the Order, viz. those of Byland and Kirkstall, were commissioned by the Abbot of Citeaux to hear the merits of the case and Furness was allowed to retain its grange at Winterburn. Sawley Abbey agreed to recognise the boundaries of the Winterburn lands as they were in 1219 but, in the future, the monks of Furness were not to acquire land or pasture within the limits prescribed except by consent of the monks of Sawley.

After the Statute of Mortmain 1279, the monks had always to obtain the king’s permission to acquire further

1 ii, 474.  
2 ii, 483.  
3 ii, 475–6.
grants of land and this necessitated an inquiry into the loss that might result to the Crown. Such an inquiry was held before Sir John de Eshton could grant Eshton Tarn near Winterburn to the monks.¹

Most cases of litigation could be settled in local courts or in the King's Court at York, but occasionally the Abbot had to make the long journey to Westminster. A case in point is a plea of 1368. On the death of Abbot Alexander de Walton the Yorkshire escheator had taken the manor of Winterburn into the king's hands on the supposition that the estate was held directly of the king by knight's service. The Abbot won his case and the manor was restored by the king together with all profits received in the meantime.²

Whilst such cases as the above demanded the ceaseless activity of the skilled lawyers amongst the monks the work on the grange in question continued without interruption. The extensive lands needed constant attention and careful development, and the lay brethren were employed in many different ways. Such an entry as the following illustrates but one aspect of their labours. Walter de Archis granted to the monks four oxgangs of land in Hetton with various privileges. He allowed them the right "to load and carry away turves, hay and grass and anything else they should need for their grange at Winterburn as well as common pasture for sheep, horses, pigs and other animals."³ Whilst pasture was the supreme interest at Winterburn gifts of turf were very welcome as large quantities of peat were used each year. Sometimes the donor stated that he wished the peat to be used "to warm the poor who are entertained at the gate of Winterburn Grange," as in the case of Wilin de Archis who gave ten loads of turf annually.⁴ For the same purpose ("ad sustentationem porte grangie") Richard son of Emma de Hetton assigned a gift of

¹ ii, 465. ² ii, 357. ³ ii, 381. ⁴ ii, 382.
twenty cartloads of turf from Hetton turbary each year.¹ So that whilst many conversi were employed all the year round in superintending the pastures, in July and August extra hands would be required at the turbaries to cut turf, stack it for drying, and finally carry it away for winter fuel. Perhaps at the same time of the year other brothers would be busy in the woods taking advantage of such privileges as that of William Grainedeorge the elder who granted “reasonable estovers in the wood of Flasby” ² and always when necessary the brothers could profit by Edward I’s grant in 1281 of free warren in the lands of Winterburn, Hetton and Flasby.³

The monks had more than one mill at the grange. We read that they received the moiety of one mill from Helias de Hetton and in 1237 the moiety of another from Eustace de Rilleston. It is of interest in passing to note that in both these cases the owners of the mills were in debt and the monks agreed to help them out of their pecuniary difficulties but on their own terms. In the case of Helias three Jews of York testified with their “Hebrew letter” that the monks of Furness had paid his debt of twelve marks and in another document we learn that Helias granted to the Abbey the moiety of his mill for an annual rent of 20s.⁴ In the case of Eustace the moiety of the mill surrendered by the Jews came to the monks without any charge.

No grange was complete without its fishery. About half-way between Winterburn and the modern Bell Busk is Eshton Tarn. As the monks had the Lime fishery for Beaumont Grange and Coniston and Windermere for Furness, they eventually acquired Eshton Tarn for Winterburn. It was granted to Furness Abbey by Sir John de Eshton about 1260. There were no restrictions upon the time of fishing as in the Lime. The monks or conversi were free to fish at any time of the year and could

¹ ii, 408 ² ii, 437. ³ ii, 470. ⁴ ii, 447.
have a small fishing boat on the water. They were also to have half the eels caught in the eel trap placed in the stream flowing out of the tarn. Sir John allowed the Abbey servants free passage through his land to the fishery and liberty to build a hut wherever was convenient to them.¹

All these activities of the lay brethren and monks were important in the general life of the grange, but the most valuable side of their work was the sheep rearing. By far the majority of the deeds relating to Winterburn confer rights of pasture. Cattle, horses and pigs were reared in large numbers, but the nature of the country was specially suited to sheep rearing. The wool of the Cistercians found a ready market in Flanders at this time and Furness, from her two Yorkshire granges of Newby and Winterburn, contributed an important share.

It is to be regretted that no definite information is extant describing for us this busy life at Winterburn. Being so far from Furness some of the conversi would visit the Abbey occasionally, but most not at all. There would be some conventual buildings. We may safely assume a chapel, and instead of cloisters the brothers would meet in a large hall. In addition, a refectory, dormitory and infirmary would be necessary. The grange buildings would be almost a small village. The needs of the lay brothers were supplied on the spot. Like a monastery, a grange was surrounded by buildings where millers, blacksmiths, tanners, shoemakers and brewers carried on their work to supply the needs of the brethren who devoted all their time to agriculture. A grange was a busy centre.

Although the Coucher Book gives comparatively little information about the granges themselves, much can be gathered from the charters of the work characteristic of the districts in which the granges were situated.

¹ ii, 463-7.
It is convenient to deal first with the Furness Fells district for which the one grange only is recorded, at Nibthwaite at the foot of Coniston Water. The arrangement made with William of Lancaster, I, concerning the boundaries was disputed by his successor and son-in-law Gilbert Fitz-Roger Fitz Reinfred and his wife Helwise. In the king’s court at Westminster 1196 it was decided that they should hold the western half as before but with the addition of half Ulverston, paying a rent of 20s. for the Fells and 10s. for Ulverston. In return the Lancasters gave up to the Abbot the hunting and hawking which they had formerly enjoyed in the eastern half and granted free passage to the monks on the road leading from Furness through Ulverston to their fishery in the Crake.\(^1\) To the next member of the Lancaster family to hold the title the monks were indebted for further territory and fishing privileges. About five miles north-east of Ulverston the moorland of Scathwaite and the more picturesque wooded country of Egton where the scenery is just merging into that of the Lake District, is admirable for sheep rearing. This district William of Lancaster, III, gave to the Abbey in addition to fishing privileges on Lakes Coniston and Windermere. On each lake the monks were provided with one small boat and twenty nets for fishing. There was also a larger boat on each lake; on Windermere for carrying timber; on Coniston for the transport of any necessaries.\(^2\)

Furness Fells is a wide district to be served by one grange only, and I suggest that the northern half of the monks’ territory was organised from Hawkshead. The monks had possessed the Chapel there since the opening of the thirteenth century,\(^3\) and the manor of Hawkshead was in a flourishing condition at the Dissolution. In the Abbey Rental 1536–8, already referred to, mention is made of its “two orchards and two closes . . . of a

\(^1\) i, 15–18. \(^2\) i, 347. \(^3\) i, 646–7.
certain pasture called Lathgrene, together with the first crop of six acres of meadow called the Broding . . . of a watermill and millstream" . . . of the "fresh water fishery . . . called the Mere of Hawkshed Estwater" as well as various other houses, barns and pastures. ¹

Almost the whole of the Furness Fells district was given up to pasture. In 1538 the tithes of lambs and wool of Hawkshead Chapel alone amounted to £48 11s. 10½d. ² An interesting entry in the same Rental refers to "three 'Smythes' in Furneys Fells employed for making iron," maintained by the wood found on the spot. No doubt the monks had used the wood for the same purpose before the Dissolution and also for "cartesadles, cartwheles, cardebourdes, cupps, hoopes for cowpers" as mentioned further on in the same entry. ³

In North Furness iron smelting was a subsidiary industry but in south Furness iron working was the chief interest. When the whole of Furness with its eleven granges was assessed for taxation in 1292 the proceeds from the flocks and herds amounted to £3 11s. 3d., whilst the income from the iron ore with all expenses deducted was assessed at £6 13s. 4d. ⁴

The iron districts were Orgrave, Elliscales and Marton near the grange of Newton and Lindal. The district was within three or four miles of Furness Abbey and the monks would be well aware of its mineral wealth. If any opportunity occurred which would give them possession of part of the land, it would not be neglected. The documents show clearly that the monks were determined on the acquisition of the iron area and that slowly but surely they attained their end.

At the opening of the thirteenth century the lord of Orgrave was a certain Roger, son of Orme. His first important connection with Furness Abbey was on the occasion of his grant to the monks of all the iron ore in
The common field of Orgrave. He gave them full liberty to conduct mining operations and allowed them to use a certain water course to wash the ore. Finally no one was to hinder its transport. In consideration of these privileges the Convent paid Roger twenty shillings.¹

Further grants of land in Orgrave were made by Roger's brother William and his brother Gilbert,² of whom the latter's land at least was rich in iron ore.Orm de Kellet ³ gave up all his rights in the lands and minerals of Orgrave and Gilbert Fitz-Reinfred ⁴ acknowledged that he had no right to take iron ore in Orgrave except by permission of the Abbot and Convent. Thus the monks were gradually strengthening their hold upon the mining rights of Orgrave and in 1235 came the final settlement of their privileges in the court at Lancaster. Roger's son, Hamo, acknowledged that the entire right to the ore in Orgrave belonged to the Convent of Furness alone. Roger of Orgrave's daughter Claricia, his grandson Adam, and Agnes, the wife of another Roger, all formally recognised the arrangement.⁵ After encroachment for two generations, the Abbey had at last secured control over the minerals of Orgrave.

In the second mining district of Elliscales, near Dalton, the monks were even more successful. Like Roger of Orgrave, Hugh de Morisby began by granting certain mining privileges to the Abbey, namely "all mining rights and all the minerals in my land of Furness, called Elliscales," with full liberty to dig, wash and purify the ore, and carry it away. Moreover, the monks might freely pasture their animals and erect any buildings which were necessary for them or the workmen. Hugh's first grant was perhaps too comprehensive; he did not foresee difficulties. A second deed was therefore drawn up in 1270 safeguarding his rights. If any of his build-

¹ i, 229. ² i, 235-42. ³ i, 248. ⁴ i, 251. ⁵ i, 253-7.
ings were damaged by the mining the monks had to repair them at their own expense and any buildings which they wished removing were to be removed by the monks themselves without damage. Hugh had perhaps awakened at last to the pecuniary value of the ore, for in this deed he received from the monks as much iron stone as was usually needed for one "astre" or furnace and for this annual allowance he agreed to pay half-a-mark. In return the monks granted Hugh freedom to pasture the horses which carried the iron stone and charcoal to supply the hearth of one furnace. Finally, Hugh confirmed to the monks full power to raise iron stone wherever it was found on his land of Elliscales. This charter brought the Abbey to the same stage as the agreement of 1235 did with regard to Orgrave.

In the case of Elliscales the monastery went a step further. Later documents show how the manor of Elliscales was granted by Hugh to Robert de Layburne, how the latter's son Robert inherited it, how it passed by sale from him to William Sharp of Furness and how finally in 1385 Richard II granted his royal licence that the Manor of Elliscales might be received by Furness Abbey, the Statute of Mortmain notwithstanding.

The third important district for iron ore was Marton, near Lindal. In 1332, the Convent obtained Edward III's licence to acquire one messuage and forty acres of land, three acres of meadow, two acres of wood and a hundred acres of turberay in Broughton and Little Marton. Numerous other small gifts had been made to them in the latter half of the thirteenth century so that with this considerable estate the monks had a good basis for the grange at Lindal. Up to this point the monks' interest, apparently, was agricultural, but in 1397 they acquired mining rights there. Being so near Orgrave and Ellis-

1 i, 261-4. 2 i, 266. 3 i, 270. 4 i, 275. 5 i, 277-8. 6 i, 285-7. 7 i, 307.
The monks had now extensive lands in Orgrave, Elliscales and Marton which were rich in ore. Unfortunately, there is little information given in the Coucher Book concerning the monks' methods of mining or smelting. Most details given concern the preparation of the ore for the purpose. The process may briefly be described in the words of Hugh de Morisby's charter: "quaerendum, fodiendum et perquirendum, lavandum, purgandum, operandum." Having chosen a site for mining operations, the monks proceeded to lay bare the metal by digging a trench. Such is the method one would infer from the words "fossam ubi foditur mineria." There is no indication of underground working, but a simple shaft would appear to be necessary if the ore lay deep beneath the surface. To free the ore from the shale and soil the monks used water from neighbouring streams as well as hand picking. For example, Roger of Orgrave's first gift included "aquee cursu ad illam scil. mineriam lavandum." The frequent occurrence of this phrase "ad lavandum" implies that washing was the usual means by which the ore was purified before being put into the furnace.

The "astrum" or furnace used at this period resembled the hearth of a wide chimney. Information about smelting methods occurs incidentally. The most instruct-
ive sentence is the following: “Concesserunt idem abbas et Conv. equis predicti Hugonis ... pasturam in Moushil qui cariaverunt lapidem minae vel carbones ad sustentationem astri predicti.” From this we understand that the monks used charcoal for smelting. Both the ore and charcoal had to be carried from the mine to the furnace on the backs of horses, so that the whole process was slow and laborious.

It is not known whether the monks raised ore for exportation. The fact that the produce of the mines is not mentioned in the valuation at the time of the Visitation of the Royal Commissioners in 1535 leads one to suppose that the ore was all needed for the Abbey’s own use, for agricultural implements or repairs on the granges. A large proportion was also given to the tenants, as is apparent from the depositions of the witnesses in the case of John Brorgrane v. the tenants of Low Furness in 1582.

“... The deponent saith that he hath seen divers of the tenants of the said manor come to a smithy ... bringing with them certain clott iron, which they said was of their livery iron received out of the said monastery for the maintenance of their plowes and husbandry; and that he hath divers times heard that the tenants of the said Abbey received yearly amongst them out of the said monastery, of the said livery iron to the value of eleven or twelve bands, every band weighing fourteen stone, and every stone fourteen pounds, which at that time was worth eight-pence a stone.”

This gives us some idea of the amount of ore presented to the tenants but leaves us with a very inadequate idea of the total output of the iron industry in Furness.

Many charters relating to Furness are noteworthy as proving that the coast was suitable for the making of salt in the manner common in the Middle Ages. At high tide the salt water was dammed up by earthen

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1, 264.  
2 Introduction to Part iii, pp. xv–xvi.
banks and then evaporated in shallow pans by heating or by open air action. There is evidence in the Coucher that the monks had constructed some of these "salinae." Salthouse in Furness and Salthouse in Coupland derived their names from the salt making. Thomas Skillar granted to the monks his lands in Angerton Moss and among the "pertinentia" were the "salinae" for which the low coasts of Angerton Moss were specially suited. In accordance with the Abbey's usual policy, the monks in 1299 obtained licence from Edward I, that, Mortmain notwithstanding, they might accept the manor of Angerton Moss from Thomas Skillar and in the same year they acquired the neighbouring manor of Bolton-with-Adgarley.

Iron mining, salt making and agriculture were the chief occupations in Furness. By a grange we understand an agricultural centre, but Lindal and Newton in the middle of the mining area must have been somewhat different from the other granges in Furness. Whilst assuming that the servants of the grange were engaged in farming perhaps lay brothers employed in mining were lodged on the premises.

Elsewhere in Lancashire the monks' influence centred round the two granges of Beaumont near Lancaster and Stalmine near Fleetwood.

The Abbey had had relations with the Lancaster district since the earliest times when Stephen had granted them his fishery in the Lune and Warin the Little with his land. Professor Powicke, in the *Victoria County History* states that "the origin of Beaumont Grange is curious" and relates its beginnings as follows:

"Warin the Little . . . retired with his wife to the Abbey in his old age, leaving to the monks half a plough land in Stapleton Terne. This was converted into a grange. The story runs that King John saw, on a sojourn, 'that the grange was too small

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1 i, 331, 332.
2 i, 329-30.
3 i, 515-17.
and poor,' and gave the whole vill of Stapelton Terne. The monks then transferred the men of the vill to the grange and made one large colony."  

In the next hundred and fifty years such additions were made to the Abbey's lands in the Lancaster district that with Beaumont Grange as headquarters, this became one of the most profitable sources of the monks' revenue. The fishery in the Lune gained them valuable privileges. Stephen's successor, William, Earl of Warenne, Boulogne and Mortain, gave them permission to take from his forest any timber they might need, especially for their fishery. The grant was renewed by Earl John (afterwards King), together with freedom from tolls and pontage. Henry III confirmed the possession of the fishery as well as the above charters of William and John. The monks must have thought their possessions valuable since they sought these confirmations. Others thought so too, because the Abbey's claims were constantly attacked.

In 1337-8 the Abbot pleaded his case personally before the justices for pleas of the forest. He could well justify himself by the series of charters just mentioned. He declared that he had the right to take timber from Lancaster forest for his manor of Beaumont. He could use it for various purposes; either repairing and thatching old houses and building new ones, for making implements of husbandry such as ploughs, and carts, for bows and arrows, or for an enclosure round the manor. In fact any timber which he needed on the manor or for the fishery, he could obtain without view of the forester as often as he pleased. The jury decided in favour of the Abbot and the king forthwith granted an exemplification of his charters. Instead of the Abbey's timber privileges being restricted, Henry, Earl of Lancaster in

2 ii, 184-6.  
3 ii, 187-8.
1342 allowed the monks to take timber, not only from the forest of Lancaster but from the parks which had been enclosed in the forest since the granting of their charters.1

Perhaps what the monks valued most of all at Beaufort Grange was the Lune Fishery. The Priory of St. Mary’s, Lancaster, also realised its importance and the story of their disputes with Furness is typical of monkish quarrels.

It had been decided that the Abbot of Furness should have the first two draws with his drag net in the place called St. Mary’s Pot and the first draw in all the other parts of the river. He might also fix the “hey” of his fishery anywhere he liked in the Prior’s land of Newton-le-Bulk. The Prior should have the third draw at St. Mary’s Pot and the second elsewhere. But not content with the third draw after the Abbot’s two, the Prior or his servants had fished whenever they felt disposed and according to the Abbot had taken fish to the value of £300. It appears that there were many struggles between the men of Furness and St. Mary’s at this time. The Abbot asserted that the Prior’s servants had not only insulted his men but had beaten them. On another occasion they had forcibly taken the oxen from his waggons when his men were conveying timber to make weirs on the river. The Abbot, therefore, found himself obliged to apply for royal protection.

On the 29th of September in the following year, 1315, an agreement was drawn up between John, Abbot of Furness and Nigel, Prior of St. Mary’s, which again laid down the rights of each house. It was agreed that there should be no night fishing and that the Abbot’s servants should draw as soon as possible after each tide, so that the Prior’s men should not have long to wait. And if the Abbot did not wish to make a draw at any
tide, the Prior might let down his nets at once. To ensure that the Abbot's passage to the fishery should be unhindered he was allowed to have a road twelve feet wide, from Lancaster to the "hey." Perhaps this agreement ended the hostility between the two houses and henceforth when fishing they bore themselves with dignity suited to their calling. After the suppression of the Priory and the transference of its rights to the Abbey of Lyon in Middlesex, the Abbot of Furness secured control over the whole fishery. The Abbess of Lyon confirmed his former privileges and leased the Priory's fishery to him for sixty years at an annual rent of ten shillings.¹

Thus Beaumont Grange did not want for timber and fishing privileges. A second source of grants was Kellet near Carnforth. From its woods the Abbey could take plentiful supplies of turf and dead wood. Gilbert, son of William de Kellet, allowed the monks dead wood from his wood at Kellet, from the first day of summer until the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula each day as much as one cart could take to Beaumont Grange.² A like privilege was accorded by almost all other important landowners in the district. No doubt, the monks occasionally abused their privileges. Thomas de Coupemanwra allowed the monks to take one cart of dead wood each day in summer but stipulated that his forester should see that they did not exceed the given amount or impair his forest by taking green wood.³ Besides fuel, the monks needed wood for repairs and accordingly we find charters granting "reasonable estovers" in the wood under view of the forester.⁴

Kellet was famous for its millstones and the monks regarded it as a valuable privilege to get stones from that district. Gilbert, son of William de Kellet, Thomas de Coupemanwra, and a certain Adam de Kellet all

¹ ii, 217-19. ² ii, 119. ³ ii, 120. ⁴ E.g., ii, 124.
allowed the monks to take millstones as often as they needed them from the part of Kellet which belonged to them. Kellet thus supplied Beaumont Grange with millstones, wood and turf; and in addition the brethren enjoyed rights of common pasture and free passage.

The Grange of Stalmine in Amounderness was very similar to Beaumont. The lands, used for the pasture of cattle rather than sheep, were gradually extended by gift and purchase. The brethren enjoyed common pasture rights as in the case of Nicholas de Hakenshove (Hackensall) who allowed them to pasture cattle at all times of the year on the lands within his demesne after the corn and hay had been harvested. They had a mill, a mill-pool and a salthouse. Finally Thomas de Goosenarghe undertook to acquit them of suit at the county and wapentake courts in consideration of a sheepfold and two salthouses with right of way.

Beaumont and Stalmine were the two chief granges in Lonsdale, but there must have been smaller granges also as the area was so extensive. Excluding the peninsula of Furness the district comprised vast estates in the part of Lancashire north of the River Wyre.

In Cumberland, Furness Abbey had possessions from its earliest days. One of its first benefactors and perhaps the very first after Earl Stephen, was Godard de Boyvill of Millom who granted to the monks, between 1135 and 1152, a carucate of land called the Foss, near Whitbeck in Coupland. About the same time his nephew Robert took the Cross and to fulfil his vow was compelled to mortgage his estates of Kirksanton and Horrum to Furness Abbey. The Coucher does not tell us whether Robert ever returned from the Holy Land to redeem his property but his cousin Arthur, who succeeded Godard as lord of Millom, granted the land and service of Robert

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1 ii, 118–22.  
2 ii, 261.  
3 ii, 263–6.  
4 ii, 522–3.
to the monks with Robert's consent. 1 Godard's second son William was even more generous. His first gift was the pasture of the Meals of Kirksanton with a share in the fishery of Helcupool and later he gave the monks a small island called the Holme of Kirksanton which was near to his garden. Wishing to contribute to the maintenance of the poor in the secular infirmary he assigned to the monks thirteen acres of land in Kirksanton. To supply fuel to the Convent William granted rights of turbary in the fields of Haverigg and Kirksanton, allowing the monks to take as much peat as they required and to pile it up in the fields and dry it there. Finally the monks could take any amount of timber from Kirksanton Wood and grind their corn at his mill without payment. 2

The charters quoted above can all be dated before 1194, the period when enthusiasm for the monastic ideals was most sincere and the monks' interest in secular affairs was not developed. The prevailing tone is very different from that of the Yorkshire deeds. The successors of William de Boyvill and their neighbours were equally generous, and eventually the monks had extensive possessions in Blackbeck, Bootle, Arnaby, Eskmeals and Drigg. Some gifts were made to secure burial in the Abbey cemetery, 3 others gave free passage. A gift of William de Thwaytes supplies an interesting detail. When the monks went to Millom to collect their tithes William undertook to provide pasture for their horses. 4 On the 19 December 1292, John de Hodeleston, lord of Millom, freed the monks from suit at court and granted them a salthouse and a turbary and common pasture for eight oxen, four cows, and two horses. 5 Millom Church was largely under the monks' control and the township appears to have been their headquarters

1 ii, 513-14. 2 ii, 514-19. 3 E.g., ii, 52
4 ii, 550-1. 5 ii, 539-43.
beyond the Duddon Estuary. Except for the reference in 1247 to the grange at Salthouse in Coupland no other grange is mentioned for this area.

The remainder of the Abbey’s possessions were situated in the heart of the Lake District, and their general aspect will have altered very little to-day. Brotherilkeld in Upper Eskdale was apparently noted for its cattle in 1292, but the fells in this district and in Borrowdale would no doubt provide pasture for hundreds of Herdwick sheep as they do now. Borrowdale was purchased from Lady Alice de Rumeley, daughter of William Fitz Duncan, nephew of David King of Scots in 1209 for the sum of £150 plus ten marks in lieu of two horses, which completed the payment. At Alice’s request, King John confirmed the grant on 19 July 1215, but the confirmation cost the monks £60. The concession of free passage and halting places for the monks’ cattle from Ashness by Castlerigg and Smeathwaite, or by Watendlath and Harrop to Wythburn and Grasmere (?) completed the monk’s privileges at Borrowdale and enabled them to use their purchase to the best advantage. Probably almost bare of habitation before the monks’ arrival there the valley would be drained to make rich cattle pastures, the fields cultivated for rye and barley and the bare fell sides dotted with sheep. The grange would certainly be an outpost in the wilds.

There remain to be mentioned the Abbey’s lands in Yorkshire. Unlike Borrowdale and Eskdale, townships existed near Winterburn and Newby before the monks acquired possessions there. Both granges were important sheep-rearing centres. Newby was granted to the Abbey about 1170, and in 1250 the monks considered it worth their while to pay £600 for further pasture grounds at Southscales to Alice, daughter of Adam de

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1 ii, 573. 2 ii, 574-5. 3 ii, 296.
Staveley. This was an extensive area in the Pennines near Whernside and Ingleborough and adjoining Selside where the Abbey had land already. Probably the moors were used for breeding horses as well as sheep. The deed of purchase stipulated that if any untamed horses strayed to the Lady Alice’s lands, they were to be led back without any harm being done to them.\(^1\) The manor of Newby was extended by further grants in Clapham, Stackhouse, Selside and Ingleton, bringing its territories close to those of Winterburn. The two granges made Furness Abbey influential landowners in Yorkshire.

This completes the survey of the Abbey’s lands and granges. A study of the deeds relating thereto arouses in us a certain feeling of admiration, but not the admiration one would expect. Unconsciously we compare the Abbey’s history with that of an ambitious family ever striving to add estate to estate to increase the family’s wealth and prestige. We admire the zeal of monks but in this case it is the zeal for acquiring landed possessions; we admire their perseverance but this perseverance aims at material progress; we admire a community which jealously guards its spiritual reputation; yet we cannot but admire the jealous care with which the monks guarded their worldly prestige. Above all, the history of a grange illustrates the economic services rendered by monks. Whatever their other failings, the Cistercians were good farmers. They introduced nothing new into the practice of husbandry but they developed to the uttermost the lands in their possession. Marshes were drained, waste lands brought under the plough, and vast areas of moorland made profitable for pasture. In neglecting no opportunities which their lands offered, whether pastoral, arable or mineral, the monks made a valuable contribution to the economic development of this country during the Middle Ages.

\(^1\) ii, 325–6, 328–30.