

F.A. Gasquet. English Monastic Life. Methuen & Co. London, 1904.

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PREFACE

This volume does not appear to call for any lengthy preface. It should introduce and explain itself, inasmuch as, beyond giving a brief account of the origin and aim of each of the Orders existing in England in pre-Reformation days, and drawing up a general list of the various houses, all I have attempted to do is to set before the reader, in as plain and popular a manner as I could, the general tenor of the life lived by the inmates in any one of those monastic establishments. In one sense the picture is ideal ; that is, all the details of the daily observance could not perhaps be justified from an appeal to the annals or customs of any one single monastery. Regular or religious life was never, it must be borne in mind, such a cast-iron system, or of so stereotyped a form, that it could not be, and for that matter frequently was, modified in this or that particular, according to the needs of places, circumstances, and times. Even in the case of establishments belonging to the same Order or religious body this is true ; and it is of course all the more certainly true in regard to houses

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belonging to different Orders. Still, as will be explained later, the general agreement of the life led in all the monastic establishments is so marked, that it has been found possible to sketch a picture of that life which, without being perhaps actually exact in every particular for any one individual house, is sufficiently near to the truth in regard to all the houses in general. The purposes for which the various parts of the monastery were designed and were used, the duties assigned to the numerous officials, the provisions by which the well-being and order of the establishment were secured, the disposition of the hours of the day, and the regulations for carrying out the common conventual duties, etc., were similar in all religious bodies in pre-Reformation days ; and, if regard be paid to the changed circumstances, are still applicable to the monastic and religious establishments now existing in England.

It remains for me to publicly record my thanks to those who have assisted me in the preparation of this volume.

In regard to the list of the ancient religious houses, which it is to be hoped may be found of use to the student of monastic archeology, I have to acknowledge

the kind help of Rev. Dr. Cox, the general editor of the series ; of Mr. W. H. St. John Hope ; of Mr. R. C. Fowler, of the Public Record Office ; of the Rev. R. M. Serjeantson ; and of the Rev. H. J. D. Astley. My readers are also indebted to Mr. St. John Hope and to

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