

FOREWORD

The copious records of the abbey of St. Edmund at Bury have engaged the piecemeal attention of a long line of historical writers. Beginning with Thomas Carlyle, who first popularized the chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond, we have (*inter alia*) the works of Gage, M. R. James, Edgar Powell, H. W. C. Davis, Miss Cam, Professor Douglas and Mrs. Lobel. But the real challenge of all this material—the history of the great franchise administered by the abbots in West Suffolk for more than five hundred years—has still to be met. The text of Abbot Samson's *Kalendar*, here printed, at last and in full, by Mr. Ralph Davis, besides its value to the economic historian, is a contribution of fundamental importance to the history of the franchise or Liberty, the beginnings of which were first and appropriately explored by his father forty years ago.

The manuscript from which the only surviving text of the *Kalendar* is now published was acquired, after various vicissitudes, by the Cambridge University Library in 1917. Two years later it was shown to me by the Librarian, Dr. Jenkinson, whose kindness and courtesy, still vividly remembered, should here be put on record. To me, hacking my way through the Bury cartularies under the guidance of H. W. C. Davis, it seemed a great find: but its baffling problems in those pre-Stenton, pre-Jolliffe days delayed publication, and the transcript passed into the hands of Professor Douglas, who extracted its 'feudal' material in his *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds*.

It is a peculiar pleasure to me that this valuable text should have found in H. W. C. Davis's youngest son an editor so acute and so reliable: and that it appears most properly in the Camden Series, to which we owe the first edition of Jocelin's chronicle.

V. H. GALBRAITH.

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