

**THE OBITUARY ROLL OF WILLIAM  
EBCHESTER AND JOHN BURNBY, PRIORS  
OF DURHAM, WITH NOTICES OF SIMILAR  
RECORDS PRESERVED AT DYRHAM,  
FROM THE YEAR 1233 DOWNWARDS,  
LETTERS OF FRANTERNITY, & C**

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The Obituary Roll of William Ebchester and John Burnby, Priors of Durham, with Notices of Similar Records Preserved at Dyrham, from the Year 1233 Downwards, Letters of Fraternity, & C by Durham Cathedral & James Raine

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**DURHAM CATHEDRAL & JAMES RAINE**

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At a General Meeting of the SURTEES SOCIETY, held in the Castle of Durham, on the sixth day of June, 1855,

It was resolved, "That THE OBITUARY ROLL OF PRIORS EBOCHESTER AND BURNBY be edited by the Rev. JAMES RAINE, as one of the publications of the Society for the current year."

At a Meeting of the Council of the SURTEES SOCIETY, held in the Castle of Durham, on the thirteenth day of December, 1855,

It was resolved, "That THE OBITUARY ROLL, instead of constituting one of the publications for the present year, be transferred to the year 1856."

JAMES RAINE, JUN.

*Secretary.*





## PREFACE.

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JOHN BURNBY, one of the Priors of Durham \* commemorated in the Roll which occupies the chief place in the following pages, is stated, in a document in the possession of the Reverend Henry Burnaby Greene, of Longparish, in the diocese of Winchester, to have

\* "Singultus duplices rotularis pagina profert." *Baldricus*, in *Rotulo Cenomensis*. Duchesne, *Hist. Franc. Script.* t. iv. There is abundance of proof in the following pages that not unfrequently the names of even more than two persons were combined in the same Obituary Roll. In fact two or three families seem to have united in thus soliciting the prayers of the living in behalf of their deceased members.

Of Prior Burnby more will be said in the sequel. A few brief notices of Prior William Ebchester may be necessary, occupying as he does a full half of the "Rotularis Pagina," here brought to light from the Durham Records. Prior Ebchester's name bespeaks the place of his birth, the village of Ebchester, on the banks of the Derwent, in the county palatine; his original surname, whatever it may have been, having been laid aside upon his admission as a monk, in conformity with the practice rarely departed from at Durham.

In a document dated in 1455, it is recorded that Prior Ebchester was then seventy years of age, and in another in 1456, that he had been a professed monk of Durham for fifty years; we must therefore place his birth in 1385, and his full admission into the fraternity in 1406. This admission, however, must have taken place late in that year, as he is not mentioned as acting a part in the proceedings of the Convent upon the death of Bishop Skirlaw in March. In 1416 he held proxies from absent monks upon the election of Prior Wessing-

been a member of the family of Burnaby of Northamptonshire, from which he himself is descended; and, in addition to a gift of money contributed by himself and other members of his family to be

ton, and in the January following we find him appointed, along with Robert Horneby, a fellow-monk, as Confessor in Durham College, Oxford. On the 7th July 1423 he was appointed by the Benedictine Convocation at Northampton to preach at its next general Chapter (Reyner, p. 179). In 1424 (1st March) he was constituted Proctor General of the Prior and Convent of Durham in all matters concerning their College at Oxford, their Cell of St. Leonard's at Stamford, &c. In 1426, and again in 1429, being then "Sacrae Paginæ Professor," he represented his Convent at Northampton. In 1430, 11th September, he was appointed Prior of Holy Island, an office which he held till 1437, representing in the meantime his mother church of Durham at Northampton in 1432, and again in 1435. In 1437 we find him acting as sacrist at home, in which capacity, on the 6th of December in that year, he was sent to the King by his convent, along with John Mody, a fellow-monk, for licence to elect a successor to Bishop Langley. On the 7th January following he took part in the election of Bishop Neville, and after the election had been made, was deputed along with John Mody above mentioned to announce to the new bishop the choice of the Convent. In 1438, and again in 1441, he was the proxy of his monastery at the General Council at Northampton. In 1439 he was one of the compurgators of Richard Blackburne, a fellow-monk, accused of incontinence. In 1442 he acted as one of the Procurators General of the Convent at the Bishop's Visitation, and after discharging various other offices and trusts in his Convent was elected Prior of Durham in 1446. On the 8th of June in that year Prior Wessington had resigned his high office in the Chapel of St. Nicholas, near the Prior's apartments. The election took place on the last day of that month. The mass of the Holy Ghost was sung at the high altar in the Cathedral, and after a sermon by the monk Robert Emylton, Ebchester was elected to the vacant chair without contest or compromise, "solo Sancti Spiritus instinctu et inspiratione." (Reg. iv. 46, &c.) The new Prior discharged

expended by the Surtees Society in making the Ebbeschester and Burnby Roll public, that gentleman has favoured the Editor with the following statements respecting the family of Burnby \*:—

The family of Burnaby appears to have been settled in the midland counties of England from the time of the Conquest. The name is written in various ways, De Burnby, Burnabe, Burnaby, the latter mode having been chiefly in use in recent times. In the reign of Henry II. Eustace Arden received from the crown a grant of the lordship of Watford in Northamptonshire, which soon afterwards passed into the possession of the family of Burnaby by the marriage of John Burnaby with Sarah the grand-daughter of the grantee, and which continued in their possession till the time of James I. when a portion of it was sold by the then owner, Sir Richard Burnaby, to Sir George Clarke. In 9 Edw. II. Eustace Burnaby was High Sheriff for Northamptonshire, and one of his descendants held the same office in 18 and 27 Henry VI. A member of the family represented the same county in Parliament in 3 Edw. III. In the reign of King John, Robert de Burneby built and endowed a small religious

his office in a manly and vigorous way. His public acts and his letters prove him to have been a person of independent spirit, knowing his duty, and performing it with resolution tempered with courtesy and kindness. As will be hereafter stated, he resigned his office in 1456, and dying soon afterwards was buried in the southern end of the middle transept, with a long rhyming epitaph, which may be seen in print in Hutch. ii. 97.

\* I may mention that there are notices in the Durham Records of a Petronilla Burnby, to whose name a place was assigned in the Liber Vitæ, p. 108, as that of a benefactress to the Convent about the period in which the Prior flourished (the name of the Prior himself is entered in the same precious book, p. 119) and that twice in 1429 there were money dealings between Prior Wessington and Thomas Burnaby of York. Reg. ii. parv. 39, &c.