

**REMAINS, HISTORICAL AND LITERARY,  
CONNECTED WITH THE PALATINE  
COUNTIES OF  
LANCASTER AND CHESTER, VOL. 9.-  
NEW SERIES. THE COUCHER BOOK OF  
FURNESS ABBEY, PART I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649556823

Remains, Historical and Literary, Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester, Vol. 9.- New Series. The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey, Part I by J. C. Abbey

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**J. C. ABBEY**

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VOLUME 9.—NEW SERIES.

MANCHESTER:  
Printed for the Chetham Society.  
1886.



## The Chetham Society.

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THE  
**Coucher Book of Furness Abbey.**

PRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL PRESERVED IN  
THE RECORD OFFICE, LONDON.

EDITED BY  
**REV. J. C. ATKINSON,**  
*Author of "The Cleveland Glossary,"*  
*"The History of Cleveland,"*  
*"The Handbook of Ancient Whitby and its Abbey,"* &c., &c.,  
*Editor of "The Whitby Chartulary,"* &c.

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PART I.

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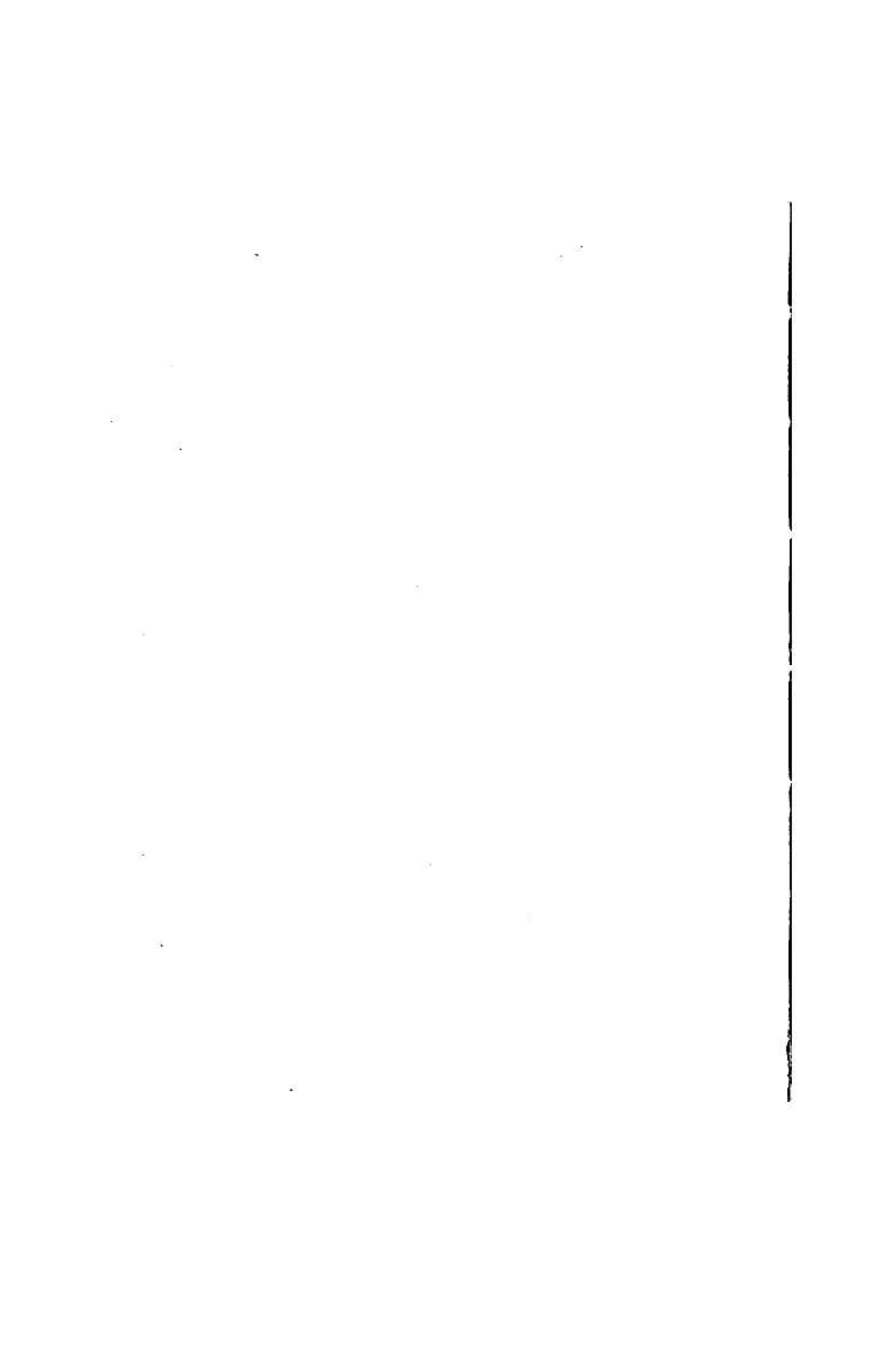
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*The cost of transcribing, editing, and printing this book  
has been generously defrayed by His Grace the DUKE OF  
DEVONSHIRE, K.G., by whom the volume is presented  
to the members of the Chetham Society.*

R. C. C.





## PREFATORY NOTICE.

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TOUCHING the collection of documents, of which the following pages contain as faithful a copy, it is hoped, as it is easily possible to make, the Author of the *Annales Furnesienses*, or *History and Antiquities of the Abbey of Furness*, says—"Of this handsome volume a slight description cannot be unacceptable. . . . It is a large folio, sixteen inches in height by ten inches and a half in width, and consisted originally of two hundred and ninety-three folios of ordinary vellum, but many have been torn out. It is written in double columns, in a large square hand, and contains numerous charters relating to the possessions of the monastery in Furness, as well regal as the grants of private persons, much correlative matter, of interest and value, and a series of papal bulls concerning the order in general and Furness in particular. The initial letters are richly but coarsely illuminated, and in most instances bear the emblazoned arms of the grantors. It is to be lamented, that at some remote period, many of these illuminations, and in consequence parts of pages, have been cut out, the work probably of an antiquarian collector of the time of Queen Elizabeth, as several of the escutcheons which have been recovered and pasted in their proper places are labelled at the back in the writing of that date."

To this it is necessary to append but little, either in the way of comment or addition. The volume is in modern binding, not the ancient 'boards,' and inserted

at the beginning are certain pages — not of vellum like the bulk of the original book — and with them two original deeds. Up to f. 47 the book is not “written in double columns.” From that point, however, at which the copies of charters — not the charters themselves, as it is loosely expressed in the extract given above — begin, to the end, the statement as to double columns is correct. I should also scarcely care to describe the illuminations as ‘coarsely’ done. Many of them are of exceeding softness and beauty, and very few of them, if any, as it appeared to me, need to be spoken of derogatorily. The volume, both as to hand-writing and illumination, is a very splendid specimen of the kind.

I could wish it were not necessary to add further remarks, and these characterised by a different tone. The manuscript all the way through, with scanty exceptions, is incorrectly written, — one hardly likes to use the word ‘carelessly’ — and yet it is the word which rises for expression. I do not refer to mere variations of orthography, and especially in respect of names of persons and places: — they occur, with sufficient abundance, in all like documents and collections of documents. But in the Coucher, letters, often words, are left out, or inserted gratuitously; and only too frequently there is reason to suspect the omission of clauses, or even sentences, the absence of which makes the sense of the text doubtful, and which it is almost impossible to supply even conjecturally.

Unfortunate as this is as connected with the book at large, it is still more to be lamented in connection with more than one or two of the copies of deeds or other documents written in old French. The suspicion continually suggests itself that the copyist did not himself