UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

It is probable that Cambridge first became a seat of education in the seventh century, when, according to Bede, Sigebert, king of the East Angles, with the assistance of Bishop Felix, instituted in his kingdom a school for learning, in imitation of those which he had seen during his exile in France.@@1 This school is supposed to have been fixed at Cambridge, which then bore the name of Cairgrant, and was one of the most celebrated towns in Britain, though the fact is not asserted by Bede. How long the school thus founded continued to flourish, we are not informed ; but the complaint of Alfred that, in his youth, when he had leisure to be instructed, he could not find teachers, would lead to the inference that in his time no public se­minaries existed. The merit of restoring, or probably of founding, the school which formed the nucleus of the future university, is ascribed to Edward the Elder, son of Alfred ; who appears, from the chronicle of Hyde Abbey, to have erected, “ at his own expense, halls for the students, and chairs and seats for the doctors at the same time ap­pointing teachers, and adopting other necessary measures, which seemed to secure the stability of the institution.@@2 The importance of the town, however, rendered it liable to numerous vicissitudes, and exposed it to the ravages of the Danes and Saxons. In the year 1010 it was burnt and plundered by the Danes ; and towards the end of the ele­venth century, William the Conqueror destroyed a part of it, to make room for the fortress which he found it neces­sary to erect for the purpose of overawing the refractory monks of Ely. In all these reverses of fortune the scho­lastic establishments had their full share.

The reign of the succeeding monarch was not more fa­vourable to the tranquillity of the town, and the schools were therefore for some time abandoned. Henry L, who is said to have been educated at Cambridge, conferred on the town some valuable privileges, and induced the wandering students to return to their former dwellings. In his reign (1109) Joffrid, abbot of Croyland, “ sent to his manor of Cottenham, near Cambridge, Gislebert, his fellow-monk, and professor of divinity, with three other monks who had followed him into England. These being well versed in philosophy and other sciences, went daily to Cambridge, and having hired a public barn, made open profession of their sciences, and in a little time collected a great concourse of scholars. In the second year after their arrival, the number of their scholars from the town and country increased so much, that there was no house, barn, or church capable of containing them. For this reason they separated into different parts of the town, imitating the plan of the university of Orleans.”@@3 An old building is still pointed out as the representative of the barn in which these missionaries taught. The number of students conti­nued to increase, and the school gradually acquired cele­brity, till 1174, when nearly the whole town was consumed by a fire “ so merciless,” says Fuller, “ that it only stopped for want of fuel to feed its fury.” From this disaster the seminary appears to have speedily revived ; and, in 1209, it received an accession of numbers from Oxford, in con­sequence of an act of severity on the part of King John,

which has been already alluded to. This, according to Mr Hallam.@@4 is the earliest authentic mention of Cambridge as a place of learning ; though he admits the reasonableness of the conjecture, that the Oxford scholars would not have removed to a town so distant, if it had not already been the seat of academical instruction. Cambridge was not yet permitted to enjoy the tranquillity which is indispen­sable for the successful prosecution of study. In the year 1215, during the contentions between King John and his barons, the town was laid waste ; and it shared the same fate afterwards in the civil war under Henry III. Previously to this last disaster, the king had extended his patronage to the rising seminary, in consequence of some of the Parisian scholars who had accepted his invitation having settled there, and had by public letters confirmed the authority of the academical officers, and checked the disorders which from time to time manifested themselves. In these remote times the students lodged in the houses of the citizens, or in halls or inns hired of them, under the superintendence of principals, who were responsible to the chancellor for the conduct of their pupils.@@5 The extravagant demands for rent gave rise to numerous disputes between the scho­lars and townsmen, and drew from the king in 1231 a pub­lic letter ordaining that lodgings or hostels *(hospitia)* “should be taxed according to the custom of the univer­sity, namely, by two masters, and two respectable and law­ful men of the town, and let to the scholars according to their valuation." This order was repeated in letters patent of the same king, with the addition that the valuation should be renewed every five years.@@6 A similar regulation pre­vailed at Oxford.

The most important of the public instruments of Henry III. relative to the university, besides those already men­tioned, are, his letter addressed to the sheriff of the county *(vicecomes)*, calling upon him “ to repress the insubordina­tion of the clerks and scholars, and to enforce obedience to the injunctions of the bishop of Ely, either by imprison­ment or banishment from the university, according to the discretion of the chancellor and masters his letter to the bishop of Ely, ordering that “ clerks who were contumacious and rebellious against the chancellor should be imprisoned or banished from the town and his letter addressed to the sheriff, in the 26th year of his reign, in which it is ordered that “ when any clerk of the university of scholars study­ing at Cambridge, has been guilty of any misdemeanour, and has been convicted by the university, and sentenced to imprisonment, if the burgesses of the town are negligent in carrying the sentence into effect, or are unable to do so, the sheriff, on the warrant of the chancellor, is to cause such malefactor to be committed to prison, and kept in safe custody, until the chancellor demand his liberation.”@@7 The mixture of jurisdictions implied in these documents is sin­gular ; the authority of the bishop of Ely, as diocesan, is distinctly recognised ; but delinquents are to be tried by the chancellor and masters, and the civil power of the she­riff is necessary to carry their sentence into execution. It likewise appears from what has already been stated, that Cambridge, though not yet incorporated, was recognised as a university,@@" and received a support from the civil power which was not given to the continental universities. A

@@@, Bede, Eccles. Hist. Gent. Ang). lib. iii. cap. 18, at cited by Dyer, Hist. of the University of Cambridge, vol. i. p. 47.

@@@' Henry’s History of Great Britain, ii. 360.

@@@3 Peter of Blois; Appendix to Ingulfus, as cited in Henry’s Hist. of Great Britain, iii. 439. Dyer’s History, i. 141.

@@@4 Mid. Ages, iii. 527, note.

@@@s The highest officer of the university was originally celled Rector. Mr Dyer says the name Chancellor occurs in 15th Henry III., and sup­poses it was applied to him about the beginning of this reign. History, i. 60, note. Privileges, i. 404, 485.

@@@9 Dyer’s Privileges, i. 5 and 7.

@@@' Dyer’s Privileges, i. pp. 5, 6, 62.

@@@β Mr Dyer states (Privileges, i. 412, note) that he finds the term *University* applied to Cambridge in a public instrument of 1223. Mr Hallam (Mid. Ages, iii. 527, note assigns the date of its first incorporalion to the 15th of Henry III., or 1231 ; but in Hare’s Regis­ter of the Charters, and other monuments of the liberties and privileges of the university, which is the authority on which the university re­lies, there it no charter of incorporation of this year, or indeed any of this monarch. It is probable, therefore, that Mr Hallam has mistaken