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IN the history of Christianity in England the site of St. Augustine's Abbey has an importance second to none. Built to be the burial-places of the Archbishops of Canterbury and the Kings of Kent, the early church remained standing for nearly 500 years, and when at last it came to be destroyed after the Norman Conquest, to make way for a greater building, a careful description of its relics was made, and by a happy chance the description has survived.

By this means it has been possible in our own day to identify beyond any reasonable doubt the remains of St. Augustine's Church, which was unfinished at his death in 604, with the actual tombs of his successors, Laurentius, Mellitus, and Justus, and excavation has also revealed later additions to the early building, which are probably due to St. Dunstan in the tenth century.

The following is a brief recital of what has been done:—

In 1900 the site of the eastern portion of the Abbey Church and of the Conventual buildings was bought by public subscription and, under the direction of the late Sir W. H. St. John Hope and Mr. Sebastian Evans, the Tudor Lady Chapel, the crypt of Abbot Scotland (1070-1087) with its three chapels, and the eastern side of the central tower, also built by Scotland, were excavated. Then the Chapter house and Infirmary foundations were discovered under the Abbey Field.

In 1913 the work was resumed and the central part of the church exposed to view, including the north transept and eastern part of the nave with the north aisle, and under the Norman foundations the round church of Abbot Wulfric (1047-1059), and the remains of the north *porticus* of St. Augustine's Church with the original tombs of his first three successors, Laurence, Mellitus, and Justus.

During the War the work was stopped, but in 1920, largely through the generosity of the late Lord Northbourne, who has also contributed a large part of the cost of the Abbey Field, we were enabled to resume digging, and since then have excavated the whole of the nave down to the west door, and the whole of the south transept together with an important fourteenth-century chapel, probably the Chapel of St. Anne or the Countess's Chapel, in which was buried Juliana de Leyburne, Countess

of Huntingdon, in 1367. In the nave we have had to go far deeper than we expected, and have found not only the floor and western front of Augustine's original church with nave and narthex, but some later Saxon extensions probably made in the time of St. Dunstan. These have all been planned by Mr. C. R. Peers, F.S.A., Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, and Mr. Alfred Clapham, F.S.A., who are of opinion that in them we have the earliest plan of a Benedictine Church in Europe derived directly through St. Gregory from St. Benedict and Monte Cassino. The attached plan resembles that of Reculver, St. Pancras, and other early churches in Kent; but it shows not only the church with its north and south *porticus* and eastern apse, but continuations of the aisles, a narthex approached by steps from a vestibule, and in front of that a fore-court with a western tower.

To complete the work we must excavate the western parts of the north and south aisles, the remainder of Wulfric's crypt, and what we can of the ground to the north of the church, *but our funds have come quite to an end*. The Society of Antiquaries and the Kent Archaeological Society have been most generous to us but can give no further pecuniary assistance at present, though they entirely agree as to the importance of the work.

St. Augustine's College has not enough funds for the purpose for which it was founded, viz. for training Missionaries, and cannot apply its resources to the furtherance of historical research.

We are therefore bound to appeal again to the friends who have helped us before, and to the general public who are interested in the history of their country, to enable us to carry on the work, *which must otherwise stop*, by prompt and generous subscriptions.

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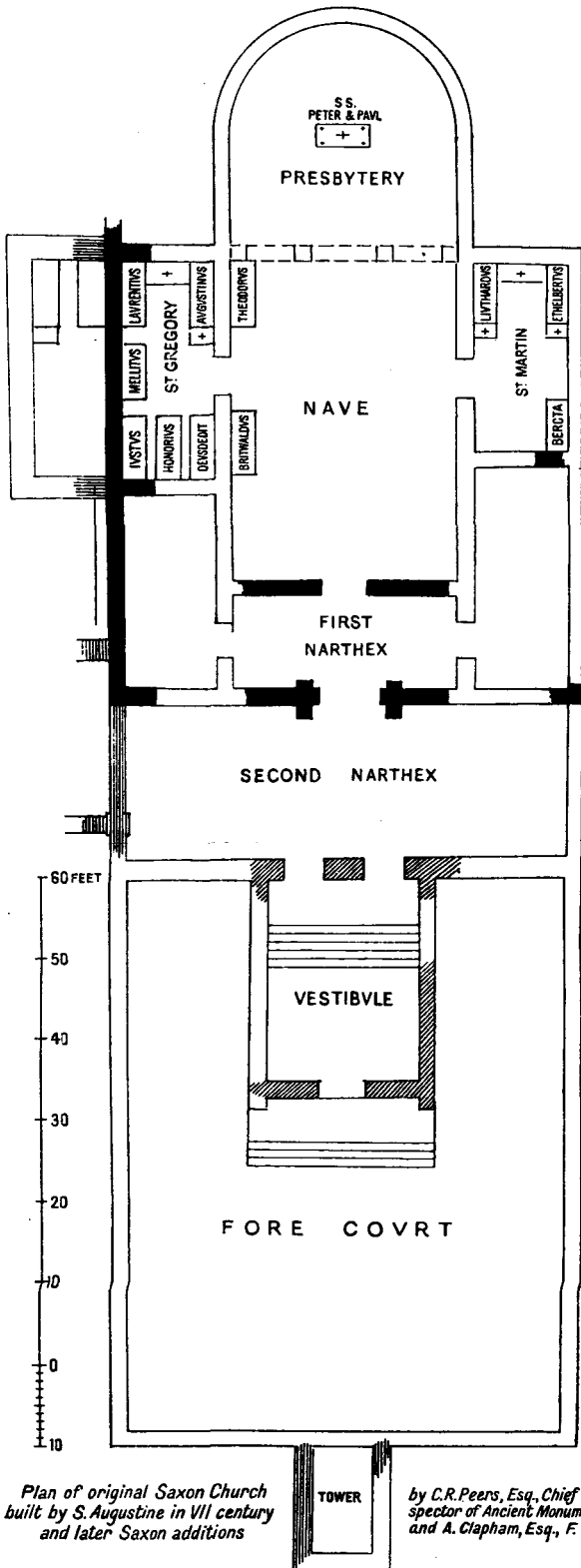
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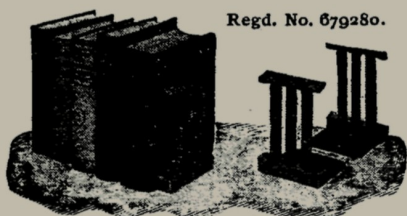
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