THE TABARD INN, SOUTHWARK,  
THE QUEEN'S HEAD, WILLIAM RUTTER,  
AND ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH.  

By Philip Norman, F.S.A.

At the General Meeting of the Surrey Archæological Society, held in Southwark, May 12th, 1858, a paper was read by the late Mr. George R. Corner, F.S.A., entitled "Ancient Southwark Inns," which has formed a capital basis for subsequent research on the subject. The oldest of these was the Tabard, immortalised as the starting place of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims. Mr. George Rutter Fletcher, F.S.A., has lately discovered at the Public Record Office, when gathering information about his family, an important document concerning this famous inn. It is a copy of the lease of the Tabard to William Rutter, enrolled in the Court of Augmentation, upon its confirmation, in Easter term 1 April, 31 Henry VIII. This document is referred to by Corner, who quotes from a description of the property in the particulars of a grant by the king to John and Thomas Master in 1544, but it does not appear that he either saw it or even knew that it was still in existence. The lease, which Mr. W. F. Noble has kindly helped to decipher, is now printed in full, merely adding, by way of preface, that the Tabard, or at least the property on which it stood, had belonged to the monastery of Hyde-by-Winchester ever since the year 1304, the abbot's town-lodging being within the inn-yard; and that the last abbot was John Capon alias Salcot, D.D., described by Henry VIII (July, 1531) as "a great clerk and singularly learned in divinity." He aided the king in his divorce from
Catherine of Arragon, was consecrated Bishop of Bangor in 1534, but continued Abbot of Hyde, holding the bishopric in commendam, until the suppression, when he surrendered the abbey to the king, and was shortly afterwards translated to the see of Salisbury, which he held till his death in 1557. On the accession of Mary he returned to the Roman Catholic faith.

In the Public} A U G M E N T A T I O N  O F F I C E  R E C O R D S, Volume 210, page 73. Record Office.}

Miscellaneous Books.

This Indenture made the 6th daye of September in the xxxth yere of the rign of our soveraigne Lorde Kinge Henrie the eight betwene the rign Reverend father in God John Capon by the permission of God Bushopp of Bangor and Comendatorye for his lif of the monesterye of Seinte Peters of Hide nyght to the Citie of Wynche ster in the Countie of Southi. And the Covent of the same place on the one convent partie and William Ratter of Southwark in the Countie of Surrey on the other partie Witnesyth that the said Bushopp Comendatorye and Covent wyth there hole As sent and Consent have demysy granted and to fferme letten to the seid William his executores and assignes All there mese or Inne callyd the Tabbard with thappurtenances sett message lying and being within the pisse of Sainte Margarett in Southwark wherein one Richard Robart Patty late dwellyd together with ceryne utensiles and stuff of household expressed in a payer of ceduls indentyd to thes indenturs annexed excepte and always reserved to the said Bushopp Comendatorye and his successors and assigns a message callyd the Abbotts place and a gardyn and stable callyd the Abbotts stable set and being within the seid Inne callyd the Tabbard with all commodities to the same Abbotts place gardyn and stable belonginge together with fire entr and issue to and from the same place for the said Bushopp Comendatorye his successors there servaunts and assigns with there horses cartes and all other thyngs necessaraye for the seid Bushopp his successors and assigns for the same place as well by nyght as by daye. To have and to holde the seid message or Inne callyd the Tabbard with the appurtenaments together with the seid utensils and staff of household expressed in the same Cedull indentyd excepte before excepted unto the said William Ratter and his assigns from the feast of Sentte Michell tharchangell neste after the date hereof unto thendd and terme of xli j yerces then nexte folowinge fully the end

NOTE.—This is evidently the scriv's error. "Richard" is at the bottom corner of one page, and "Robert" at the top of the next. From another source of information, we know that the name was "Robert."
to be complete and ended yeildinge and payinge therefore yerely to the seid Bushopp Comendatory his successors or assignes nyne poundes of good and lawfull money of England at iiiij terms in the yere that is to saye at the feast of the natvytie of our Lord Ihesu Criste thannunation of our ladye the natvytie of Seinte John Baptist and Seinte Michael tharchangell bye evyn porcions. And the seid Bushopp Comendatorye and his successors and Assignes All the seid Meše or Inne with thappartments except wallynge beyinge grounde settlynge and grounde pynynge planckynge of stabulls and all other reparations of the said meše or Inne vij foote high. And excepte also all and singular the reparations of the house nowe of late buylidyd and edyfyyd within the said meše or inne nowe newe seyt beinge and adjoynyng to the keechyn of the said meše and beyinge also of the south side of the well there being within the said meše And except Glasynge and latysynge of the new lodgyng newly edyfyinge within the said Inn shall repayre susteyne and maynteyne as often as nede shall require duryng the said terme at there owne proper coste and charges And the said William covenеныthy and grauntyny for hym and his assignes that all the said reparations of ground pynynge ground settlyng planckynge of stabulles wallynge and bredinge of the said meše or Inne and every parell therof at his owne proper costes and charge shall repayre susteyne and mayntayne as often as nede shall require duryng the said terme the said Busshop Comendatorye and his successors fyndynge hym tumber stone erthe lyme and sande and all other stuff necessarye for the same. And that the seid William his executors and assynes shall well and sufficiently repayre susteyne and maintayne the said new buylidyd house adjoynyng to the seid keechyn on the south side of the seid well in all manner of reparations and as oft as nede shall be duryng the said terme. And also all the glasyng and latysynge of the seid newe lodgings newly edified as often as nede shall require duryng the said terme. And also the same well and sufficientlye repayred susteynd and maynteyned shall leve all the same in thend of the seid terme. And over that the seid William his executors or assignes shall do to be purged voydyd and clensyd all the seages belonginge to the same duringe the seid terme as well and cleane leave yt att thend of the said terme and over that they shall make cleme all the said stables and other places and yardes of the seid meše or Inne at thend of the said terme without any delaye. And yf yt happen the seid yerely rente of ix£ to be behyudd unpayed in parte or in all after any terme or daye of payment thereof as is aforesaid that it ought to be payed by the space of xv dayes. And lawfully askyd that then it shalbe lawfull to the said Bushopp Comendatorye his successors or assignes into the seid
meas or Inne calyl\ud{dactyl} the Tabbard with thappartenenes to enter and messuage
distrayne and the distrose so there taken lawfully to bere back dryve
and cary awaye and that to retayne And kepe till they of the seid
yearly rents and tharrerages of the same be fully contentyd and payed
And yt it happen the seid yerely rente of ix£ or any parcel thereof be
behynde in parte or in all after any terme of paymente thereof as ys
aforsaid And ought to be payed by the space of iij monthes and law-
fully askyd that then yt shalbe lawfull to the said Bushopp Comenda-
torye his successors or assigns to reenter into the foresaid me\se or
Inne calyl\ud{dactyl} the Tabbard with thappartenenes and every parcel
thereof and all the same to have ageyne and repossesse as in there
former estate And the seid William and all other thereof to expell
and amove the\se indentyd in any thynge notwithstandinge And the
seid William Rutter covenuntith and grantyth by these presents that
he his executors or assigns at thend of the seid terme shall yfelde upp
and leave unto the seid Comendatorye and his successors all the seid
utenysyls usilments of housold in the same seedule indentyd in as good
degre and condicion as the same William Rutter then receyved of
the seid Comendatorye reasonable use and were of the same alwaye
excepted And the seid Bushopp Comendatorye and his successors all
manner quyt rents and all other charges due and goinge out of the
same me\se or Inne calyl\ud{dactyl} the Tabbard with thappartenenes shall bere
paye and supporte from tym to tym at there owne proper coste and
expence durynge all the said terme provyded alwaye that it shalbe
lawfull unto the said William his executors or assigns durynge the
seid terme to suffer or p\myytt any assise sessyons or any other Courte
to be holden or kepte by any person or persons wythin the preecnetye
or circnyte of the said Mese or Inn Callyd the Tabbarde or any
parte thereof withoute the expresse assente or agrement of the same
Bushopp Comendatorye or his successors in that partic to be hadde
In Witnes whereof as well the Bushopp Comendatorye and Covent as
the seid William Rutter to these indentydws interchaungeablye hane
sette there seele the daye and yere above wryten.

This Seedule Indentyd Witnessith that hereafter foloweth all
suce instylments and utensyls of housold as the said Bushopp
Comendatorye hath lefte in the seid Inne calyl\ud{dactyl} the Tabbarde withe
thappartenenes that is to saie firste in the rose parlar iij locks iij keyes
and a skrene in the half a longe sittith a borde iij trestylles iij benchys
and a serene in the elyff parlar a serene a hooke and a keye in the
kechyn a bokett a corde iij shelves a dressyng borde and a pulleye to
the well in the greate chambre iij lockes and iij keyes in the little seller
ij lockes and ij keyes in the newe seller. And in the chamber above
the same seller ij lockes and ij keyes in the taward chamber a lock
and and (sic) a keye and att the stayer fote of the halle a lock and a
keye in the great yate of the Inn ij planekes in the Crowne Chamber
a lock a key a skrene and a little shelie in the drykynge bower a
rubull naled to ij postes ij benches vj bordes and iij lattys of wikers
in the Keye chamber a locke and a keye in the bett iij lockes and a
keye in the ijj tents next the bett iij lockes and iij keyes in the Corne
Chamber iij lockes and iij keyse in the courte of the Inne a bokett a
cheyn of Iron and troughe 'Im V bedstedes in iij several chambers
within the said Inne Item there is vj lockes upon the newe buylding.

Witnesed by Rico. Riche Milite Apud
Westminster xxiiij die Novembr\(^{\circ}\) Anno
Regni n\(\text{r}i\) xxxij\(^{\text{de}}\).

Beyond the notice of the abbot's lodging, and the
house "of late buildyd and edyfydd within the said
messuage," the great interest of the above document
consists in the enumeration of the rooms and their
fixtures, given in the schedule, which may not unlikely
represent the inn very much as it was seen by Chaucer.
The description is upwards of sixty years older than
one given by Mr. Hubert Hall, F.S.A., in his excellent
book, Society in the Elizabethan Age, p. 162, from a writ
of Elegit issued in the case of "Partridge \(v\). Mabbe,"
7 May, 43 Eliz. There also the rooms are enumerated
as "Maister Hussye's" chamber, "the flower de Luce,
&c., but the names do not correspond with those in our
lease.

The custom of naming the rooms of an inn was
common in Tudor times and is still kept up, to a
certain extent, in the country. In Shakespeare's King
Henry IV, Part I, Act 2, Scene 4, Prince Hal puts
into the mouth of an "under-skinker" or drawer the
words:—"Score a pint of bastard in the Half Moon."
"Score a pinte of sacke in the Conney" occurs in Ben
Jonson's Bartholomew Fair. In The London Chauntieleres,
1659, the tapster of an inn thus describes his morning's
work:—"I have cut two dozen of toste, broacht a new
barrell of ale, washt all the cups and flaggons, made
a fire i’th’George, drained all the beer out of th’Half Moon the company left o’th’floor last night, wip’d down all the tables, and have swept every room.” Other instances were given by the late Mr. Halliwell Phillipps (then Halliwell) in the notes to his folio Shakespeare.

William Rutter, the lessee of the Tabard inn, appears to have been a man of good position. The following entries in the Churchwardens’ Accounts of St. Margaret, Southwark, no doubt refer to him.

“The xxij day of Marche in the ix yere of Kinge Henry the viii the accompte made of Wylhn Rutter and John Smythe churchwardens for ij yere and made the battementes and every thynge clere accompted. At the which accompte the same wardens be clerly dis-clearly charged and every thing to them alowed.”

Again—

“Be yt knowne by thys present Record that in the yere of our Lorde gode m""""iv""""xxivijij then bi a consent of then-habitans of the paryshe of Saynt Margarites in Southewarke lowenly by ther good wysdom bought and purcashed by one Thomas Onley Esquier and his wyffe a certayn olde place with the grounde be longing to the same same tyme called Lorde Ferrers place, sett and beyng within the same parisshe. The byers thereof, Thomas Bulley, John Smyth, Wm”"""" Rutter, John Kitton, Raffe Copwood, John Garner, John Crosse, Rob’ Petty, Wiliyam Jeffrason, William Chaundeller, Nicholas Stoxbridge, John Sparrow, wyth the ayde of all the hole body of the parisshe for the somme of one hundredthe and tene poundes sterling wyche was gathered among the forsaid byers and the in-abbyssors of this same parisshe with tene pound that the pryor of Saynt Marionerais gane to the same purches. And all they wylyng to make a churche yerde, they havynge so small and skant Rome in the tymo of necessitie that they were fane to berry thre or fore ded bodis withiame one sepulker one a pone another. The wyche churche yerde was adiont and halowed the xxvij day of Septembare in the yere of our Lorde God m""""v""""cccxxvijxvj.”

This same year, namely in 1536, an Act of Parliament was passed to enable the parish to hold the churchyard in mortmain, from which we learn that it was about an acre in extent, and that it was then partly occupied by “certeyne olde houses in verye extreme ruine and decaye.” The old church stood in the middle...
of the roadway immediately opposite the entrance to the Tabard. In the year 1540 it was suppressed, and the priory church of St. Mary Overy became by purchase the church of the united parishes of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Margaret, being henceforth generally called St. Saviour's. Stow, writing in 1598, says, "A part of this parish church of St. Margaret is now a Court where-in the Assizes and Sessions be kept, and the Court of Admiralty is also there kept. One other part of the same church is now a prison called the Compter in Southwark." Beyond this very little was known about St. Margaret's Church, until in 1847 the parish documents from which we quote were discovered in a chest at St. Saviour's, and shortly afterwards transcribed and explained by the late Mr. J. P. Collier. They extend from 1444 to 1536, and among other interesting facts one learns from them that the church had an antechapel, an organ, plate, and costly vestments, and that for some years dramatic entertainments were given there on St. Margaret's and on St. Lucy's day.

Our illustration of St. Margaret's Hill is from Norden's map, date 1600. The building facing us is the Court House, on the site of the church, part of which, though not apparent in the view, may still perhaps be incorporated in it; the gateway of the Tabard would be across the road.
on our right. Whether this Court House had been previously rebuilt is an open question, but in 1676 there came a general clearance in the shape of the great Southwark fire, which, as we are told in a contemporary account, began at an oil shop "over against the Counter (or Compter) on St. Margaret's Hill." Ten years later a new Town Hall was built here at the charge of the City of London and decorated with a statue of Charles II; an illustration of it is given in Wilkinson's *Londina Illustrata.* By the year 1793, having become ruinous, it was rebuilt. A view by T. H. Shepherd in 1830 shows the Town Hall which took its place, and joining it on the right the Protector Fire Office, first erected as the banking-house of Sir James Saunderson, Harrison and Co. These buildings in their turn were removed in 1859; the Southwark branch of the London and County Bank and Town Hall Chambers now occupy the whole of the site.

But to return to the lessee of the Tabard. Mr. Rutter Fletcher, to whom our best thanks are due, has copied the will of his namesake. It is dated 22 Oct. 1540, and was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 8 Oct. 1541. He is therein described as William Rutter, of the parish of St. Saviour, Southwark, Innholder. He mentions his wife Elizabeth, brother Thomas Rutter, sister Mary, son William Rutter, and Robert Fleming that married his (Testator's) daughter Johan. He devises a farm in Oxfordshire, and house and land in Grinsted; which circumstance seems to identify him with William Rutter, collector of subsidy for East Grinstead, 13 Henry VIII, and with William Rutter, member for East Grinstead in the Parliament of 21 Henry VIII, a.d. 1529 to 1536. If so, he followed the example of Henry Bailley, Chaucer's host, who was member for Southwark in 1376 and again in 1379.

A few more words on the Tabard Inn. The first known mention of the change of sign to that of the Talbot occurs in certain Chancery proceedings of 27th June, 1599. Robert Mabbe, plaintiff, there states that
his father, John Mabbe, in his lifetime, "owned the messuage tenement and garden thereunto belonging, with appurtenances, commonly known and called the Talbott." Farther on, in the same document, he says that his father in his lifetime owned in fee "the demesne commonlie called the Tabard, and some gardine thereunto belonginge, and one messuage with appert'nances, and the reversion thereof, winding to the back of the said inn called the Tabarde." By a coincidence, in Mr. Crispe's present instalment of Surrey Wills, extracts are given from the will of John Preston, who owned the Tabard after the Mabbe family. How it came into his hands has been related elsewhere; and Speght in his second edition of Chaucer (1602) tells us how Preston repaired and added to it.

His grandson, Philip Bernard, who inherited the Tabard, mentions in his will (1629) that the abbot's lodging was then converted into a brew-house. The

1 John Mabbe, a freeman of the Goldsmiths' Company, was elected Chamberlain of London, 13th December, 1577, and retained the office till his death in 1582.
2 The Inns of Old Southwark, by Rendle and Norman, p. 186.
inn was burnt down in the great Southwark fire of 1676, but rebuilt in the old style and on the old foundations; it was latterly always called the Talbot until its final destruction in 1875. Our full-page illustration was copied by the writer from, or rather founded on, a watercolour drawing by the well-known topographical artist, George Shepherd. The smaller view, with the Canterbury pilgrims in the foreground, has been said by Corner and others to represent the inn before the great Southwark fire. It is from Urry's *Chaucer*, published in 1721, fifty-five years after that event. There is no allusion to it in the text, and we are ignorant of the artist's authority for his drawing. The Tabard preserved its picturesque appearance until the end.

In conclusion it may be added, that of the picturesque hostelries which even a generation ago still lined the Borough High Street, only a few fragments now remain. As lately as December, 1895, the main structure of the Queen's Head (the next inn south of the Tabard) was levelled with the ground. Some months earlier the plaster covering had been stripped off, when it was found that there was a frame of massive oak timber; the plaster work inside being composed of unburnt clay mixed with straw and spread on oak laths. An old brick chimney at the back had evidently been a later addition. A carved oak mantelpiece on the first floor was Jacobean in style, perhaps even a little earlier; above were garrets or "cock-lofts." This inn, next south of the Tabard, was once the Crossed or Crowned Keys, so marked in a Record Office map of about 1542, and had belonged to the Poynings' family, who in 1518 let it for 40s. the half-year; in 1529 it was a store place for "the king's harness," no doubt for arms and armour. In 1558 Richard Westray, ale-brewer, bequeathed to his wife Joane, his "messuage called the Cross Kayes with the brewhouse garden and stable as it is now newly builded" by his son Thomas. In 1587 it was an inn, and had become the Queen's Head, named no doubt after Elizabeth, as the King's
Head, originally the Pope's Head, had been named after her father Henry VIII. About 1636 it had a notable owner, John Harvard, who afterwards went to America and helped to found Harvard College, Cambridge. In spite of a statement to the contrary in a broadsheet published at the time, this inn escaped the fire of 1676, owing perhaps to a tenement at the gateway being blown up with gunpowder by way of precaution; and it continued to flourish until within the last few years. I am inclined to think that the structure just destroyed was that which in the 16th century had been "newly builded" by Thomas Westray. The galleries on the north side still exist. Of other famous Southwark Inns mentioned by Corner, the last remains of the King's Head were pulled down in 1885; the old White Hart, or what was left of it, disappeared in July 1889. Since then the George Inn has been sadly curtailed, but the south side, partly galleried, is still in good condition and used for its original purpose.