

Original Documents.

NOTICE OF A FORMULA OF A PAPAL INDULGENCE, PRINTED BY PYNSON, AND OF SOME OTHER DOCUMENTS OF LIKE CHARACTER.

IN the course of researches preparatory to the publication of the portion of the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, edited for the Camden Society, my attention was attracted to a fly-leaf, bound up in a copy of the edition of that English-Latin Dictionary printed by Richard Pynson in 1499, and preserved in the King's Library at the British Museum. The leaf proved to be the formula of an Indulgence granted by Pope Julius II.; and there can be little doubt, on careful comparison of the type, that it is a production of the same press as the rare volume with which it is found. The binding is not original, but there seems no reason to suppose that the leaf may not have been in the book in its earlier state. What may have been the object of printing the Indulgence, and of binding it up with the Dictionary, it may now be difficult to determine.¹

The formula seems sufficiently curious to entitle it to a place in this Journal, more especially as a production of Pynson's press which appears to have escaped the notice of bibliographers; Ames does not refer to it, nor does Herbert or Dibdin; the Indulgence consequently finds no place among the results of Pynson's industry in the year 1508 in the *Typographical Antiquities*. The document is remarkable also as containing a reference to the manufacture of alum in Italy, of which little seems to be known. Some of our readers may be aware that, in the middle ages, alum, which was extensively used in dyeing and in the preparation of skins, was produced at Rochha, the Turkish name of the government which comprehended Edessa, in Syria; hence the name *Roch alum* still in use. It was also made near Smyrna; and, about the middle of the fifteenth century, the manufacture of alum having been established at Tolfa in the Papal States, and also in other parts of Italy, Pope Pius II. prohibited the use of oriental alum.

The formula above mentioned is as follows, the contracted words being here printed *in extenso* :—

Willelmus, permissione divina Cantuariensis Archiepiscopus, totius Anglie primas, et apostolice sedis legatus, et Robertus, permissione divina Menevensis Episcopus, in regno et dominiis Anglie sanctissimi domini nostri Julii ejusdem nominis Pape secundi ad hec commissarii generales, tibi [blank for the name of the person to whom the Indulgence might be granted] auctoritate apostolica nobis in hac parte concessa, ut confessorem idoneum secularem vel cujusvis ordinis regularem eligere possis, qui, confessione tua diligenter audita, ab omnibus et singulis tuis

¹ I have much pleasure in acknowledging the kindness of Mr. B. W. Rye, of the British Museum, to whom I am indebted for the following observations.—"This copy of the *Promptorium* belonged to James West, President of the Royal Society, at whose sale in 1773 it was bought for George III. for 2*l.* 6*s.*

I think there can be no doubt that the Indulgence was in the book at the time, although it seems to have escaped observation. Neither in West's Sale Catalogue, nor in the printed Catalogue of the King's Library about fifty years later, is there any allusion to it. I believe I was the first to catalogue it some years ago."

peccatis, criminibus, excessibus, et delictis, etiam si talia forent propter que sedes apostolica esset quovis modo merito consulenda (machinationis in personam summi pontificis, occisionis Episcoporum et aliorum prelatorum superiorum, falsificationis litterarum Apostolicarum et bullarum, delationis armorum et aliorum prohibitorum ad infideles, sententiarum incursarum occasione aluminum de partibus infidelium ad fideles delatorum, quo ad illos dumtaxat qui alumina infidelium emerunt et ad regnum Anglie aliaque Cristi fidelium loca deveyh [*sic*] curaverunt, casibus dumtaxat exceptis) semel in vita et in mortis articulo, in casibus vero non reservatis tocienis quotiens id petieris, plenarie absolvere possit et valeat, necnon vota quecumque (ultramarino voto, et ingressus religionis et castitatis votis dumtaxat exceptis) in alia pietatis opera commutare possit, dummodo secundum taxam nostram in capsâ ad hoc deputata pro fabrica basilice Sancti Petri elemosinam imposueris, de apostolice potestatis uberiore gratia, auctoritate prefata, tenore presentium plenam et liberam facultatem damus et elargimur. Dispensandi autem et componendi facultatem in omnibus casibus et articulis qui in litteris Apostolicis super indulgentia presenti confectis plenius continentur, et dispensationem seu compositionem requirunt, nobis ipsis aut a nobis ad hoc specialiter deputatis seu subdelegatis reservamus. In cujus rei fidem et testimonium presentes litteras fieri fecimus. Datum apud Lamehith anno a nativitate domini millesimo quingentesimo octavo, tercio die Maii, pontificatus prefati sanctissimi domini nostri Pape anno quinto.

At the foot of this formula is a woodcut of the arms of Pope Julius II., who was of the De Rovere family, the charge being an oak tree; and the escutcheon has the usual accompaniments of the cross-keys and the tiara. It will be observed that it is dated in 1508, in the fifth year of his pontificate, being nine years later than the date of the edition of the Dictionary in which it is found. The work had in all probability remained in quires in Pynson's warehouse, and this copy had not been bound until after that date.

The Indulgence appears to be a form, with a blank for the name of the person to whom it might be granted. It purports to be issued by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, William Warham, and the Bishop of St. David's, Robert Sherborn, as the Pope's Commissaries General *ad hæc*, or for that purpose, and to authorise the appointment, by the person for whose benefit it was intended, of a confessor who might hear his confession, and grant him absolution of all sins, &c., with the exception of some which are especially mentioned, including the exportation of arms and other prohibited things to the infidels, and the importation of alum from them. There is also a remarkable clause auxiliary to the works then in progress at St. Peter's in Rome, to which the energy of Julius II. had given a more systematic impulse. The first stone of Bramante's structure was laid by that Pontiff in April, 1506. In the Indulgence, dated Jan 11, 1510, in furtherance of that purpose, and which a few years later excited the memorable controversy between Luther and Tetzel, Julius II. authorised, in almost the same terms as those used in the formula above given, the appointment of private confessors; absolution of certain sins being excepted, with special mention—"censurarum occasione aluminum Tulphæ nostræ ac de partibus infidelium ad fideles contra prohibitionem nostram delatorum." *Amort de orig. Indulgentiarum*, p. 206; comp. also p. 210.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to call attention to some other instances of Indulgences authorising the appointment of private Con-

fessors. We have found the following among some miscellaneous documents relating to the manor of Kettlethorpe, Lincolnshire, which had been kindly sent for our inspection by the Rev. Edwin Jarvis, Rector of Hackthorn in that county. It purports to be granted by the Chamberlains, Warden, and Procurator of the Hospital of the Holy Trinity of St Thomas the Martyr in Rome, and is dated at London, Aug. 1st, 1461. It is here printed *in extenso* :—

Univerſis et ſingulis Chriſti fidelibus ad quos preſentes litere pervenerint, Nos, Camerarii, Cuſtos, et Procurator Hoſpitalis Sancte Trinitatis et Sancti Thome Martyris Cantuarienſis in Urbe Romana fundati, ſalutem ac utriuſque hominis² continuum incrementum. Cum ſanctiſſimus in Chriſto pater et dominus, dominus Pius Papa ſecundus, ſeptimo Idus Januarii, anno Incarnacionis dominice milleſimo cccc. quinquageſimo octavo, ſui que pontificatus anno primo, univerſis et ſingulis fratribus et ſororibus hoſpitalis predicti ubilibet conſtitutis, ac infra triennium computandum a dato conceſſionis ſui hujusmodi de [*sic*] recipiendis ceſſerunt [*sic*] ut ſibi quociens tociens opus fuerit eligere valeant conſeſſores ydoneos et diſcretos, ſeculares vel regulares, qui, eorum conſeſſionibus diligenter auditis, et injuncta penitentia ſalutare, ipſos ab omnibus criminibus, niſi ſuper quibus ſedes Apoſtolica merito conſulenda, abſolvere ſemel, ac in articulo mortis plenam remiſſionem omnium peccatorum ſuorum concedere valeant ; ſic tamen quod ijdem [*sic*] conſeſſor de hiis, et de quibus fuerit alii [*sic*] ſatisfaccio inpendenda, eam eis per ipſos vel heredes ſuos faciendam injungat, quam ipſi vel eorum heredes facere teneantur, prout ut ipſius ſanctiſſimus [*sic*] in Chriſto patris litteris plenius continetur. Nos igitur Camerarii, Cuſtos, et Procurator Hoſpitalis ſupradicti, auctoritate apoſtolica, ac vigore officiorum noſtrorum quibus preeſſe diſcimus, dilectos nobis in Chriſto Willelmum Kyrmond et Elizabeth uxorem ejus, in noſtram confraternitatem ſpecialiter recipientes, noſtrorum privilegiorum ac hujusmodi dulgentiarum [*sic*] oracionum, ſuffragiorum, aliorum que operum pietatis, nobiſcum nunc pro ſemper participes in omnibus facimus per preſentes. In quorum fidem (et) teſtimonium ſigillum confraternitatis Hoſpitalis predicti eſt appenſum. Datum London' primo die menſis Auguſti anno Domini milleſimo cccc^{mo} ſexageſimo primo.

Indorſed at one corner—Per annum j. d.

To the foregoing document was appended by a parchment label a ſeal in red wax of the Hoſpital above mentioned ; a ſmall fragment only remains.³ We are not aware of any other impreſſion. Several brass matrices, however, of ſeals of this Hoſpital exiſt in this country, and a deſcription of them may here be admiſſible.

The ſeal of which the earlieſt notice is known to me is a matrix formerly in poſſeſſion of Mr. Maton of Salisbury, ſtated to have been found there during alterations in the cathedral about the year 1791. The Rev.

² This word is written *homis*, with a line over it. The reading *in extenso* appears to be as above given. Compare Madox, Form. Ang. No. Dxciv. p. 336, where the phrase "Salute in utroque homine" occurs.

³ On cloſe examination it appears that this impreſſion was from a ſeal reſembling n type the firſt or ſecond of thoſe above

deſcribed, although probably from a different matrix ; a little mitred figure may be diſcerned in a pointed-arched niche or panel under the feet of the Supreme being ; the baſe of the tabernacle work forming the principal deſign is corbeled out, and courſes of masonry are diſtinctly marked thereon.

Dr. Milner, the historian of Winchester, communicated to the Gentleman's Magazine an impression and notice of this seal; it is figured vol. lxi. part ii. p. 1177. The device, as also that of all the other matrices of seals of the Hospital hereafter to be described, is the customary representation of the Holy Trinity under a canopy of tabernacle work; in a niche beneath is a demi-figure, doubtless of St. Thomas of Canterbury, in an attitude of supplication; the legend is as follows:—*ſ. frat'nitat' hoſpital' . ſ'ci . thome . mart'ris . in roma* . Date, fifteenth century. The form is pointed oval, the seal measures about $2\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It may be observed that the form and dimensions are the same, or nearly so, in all the seals of the Hospital here noticed.

In the British Museum a matrix exists similar to that above described; but, if any reliance may be placed on the engraving given in the Gentleman's Magazine, the two seals are not identical. The general details of the design are the same. The legend, which is almost literally the same, is differently divided, the figure of St. Thomas occurring in the latter between *ſ'ci* and *thome*; whereas in that preserved in the National Collection the break is after the contracted word—*hoſpita*—of which the last syllable thus terminates; some other variations are also to be observed.

Another matrix is in the British Museum, superior in design and preservation to the last, to which it bears a general resemblance. The canopy is more elaborate; the background behind the Trinity is filled with tracery; beneath is an escutcheon, France and England quarterly; the legend, not interrupted at the lower part of the seal as in the two already described, is as follows—*ſ. fraternitatis hoſpitalis ſ'ci thome mart' in roma*. This matrix, as I am informed by Mr. Franks, was formerly in the Sloane collection.

A fourth matrix of the seal of this Fraternity was exhibited by the Rev. S. Blois Turner in the museum at the meeting of the Archæological Institute in Lincoln, in 1848. See Museum Catalogue, Lincoln volume, p. xlvii. It was discovered at Botesdale, Suffolk, and was in the possession of Mr. Pallant, by whose executors it was presented to Mr. Blois Turner. The device resembles that of the seal first described, and has a small suppliant demi figure of St. Thomas in a niche under the Trinity. The legend is as follows—*ſ' . frat'nitat' hoſpitalis . ſ'ci' thome' mart'is i' roma*.

Two other seals have been preserved, differing in some particulars from those already noticed. These were, as I believe, formerly in Gale's possession. One, of good workmanship, has for its device the usual representation of the Holy Trinity; beneath which is a figure of the archbishop, not suppliant, but holding the cross-staff in one hand, the other being raised in benediction. On the dexter side of this lower division of the seal is an escutcheon, France and England quarterly. The coat of France appears in both quarterings to be semé. The legend, in bold Lombardic capitals, is as follows—*S. AD CAUSAS HOSPITALIS S. THOME MART. IN ROMA*. This matrix, which may have been executed on the continent, is now preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.

I have an impression of a matrix, possibly the other already noticed as having been in the possession of Gale. The general design is the same as that of the seal last described. The workmanship is rather rough, resembling the effect of a casting rather than of an original matrix. The figure of St. Thomas and the escutcheon occur upon this seal below the representation

of the Trinity, as on the last, but the coat of France is charged with three fleurs de lys only. St. Thomas holds the cross-staff in his left hand; in the seal previously described it is in his right. An annulet is introduced in the field, at the right side of the head of the saint. The legend, identical with that given as on one of the seals which belonged to Gale, is as follows: *S. p'curator' hospitalis s. thome' martiris in roma.* I have not succeeded in ascertaining where this matrix was procured.

Little appears to be known of the history of the institution at Rome to which these seals appertained. Dr. Milner states that it was a hospital for the reception of English pilgrims, the origin of which he traces to the *Schola Anglorum* founded at Rome in 727 by Ina, king of the West Saxons, with consent of Pope Gregory II., and adjoining which the Saxon monarch built a church in honour of the Virgin Mary, for the benefit of the English visiting Rome, with a place for the burial of those dying there. (See Matthew Westminster, p. 137.) Among persons of note who resided there was the exiled Burthred, king of the Mercians. Matthew Paris records that the school was augmented by Offa in 794, and converted into a hospital, called the Hospital of the Holy Spirit. After various casualties and fresh endowments it subsisted as a Hospital for Pilgrims, as Dr. Milner states, until the reign of Henry IV., when it was repaired by Sir Robert Knowles. Dr. Milner supposed that the hospital may have been dedicated anew at this period, under the title of the Blessed Trinity and St. Thomas the Martyr, by which it was still known when he wrote, having been brought back in 1578 to its original intention as a place of study for English youth.⁴ No evidence, however, appears to have been adduced in proof of the supposed identity of the institution thus designated with the ancient Saxon foundation in Rome, described as "*Hospitale apud ecclesiam S. Mariæ in Saxia in urbe Romana—quod Hospitale S. Spiritus communiter nuncupatur, et quod quidem Hospitale Anglorum dicitur, et Anglorum fuit hospicio deputatum.*"⁵ The indulgence granted in 1477 by Sixtus IV. confirming numerous indulgences conceded to this hospital by previous pontiffs, designates it "*Hospitale S. Spiritus in Saxia alme urbis;*"⁶ and we may hence conclude that the learned historian of Winchester was in error in the conjecture that its name had been changed early in the fifteenth century. It may be observed that the greater number of hospitals were dedicated to St. Thomas the Martyr; and it is remarkable that so little should be known of a fraternity which appears, by the occurrence of so many matrices found in this country, to have had considerable relations with England during the fifteenth century.

Another document of the same description as those already noticed is in the possession of Mr. Maskell. It is in a few parts illegible, but from the general purport it appears to be a grant of the privilege of confraternity by William Lyale, priest and chaplain, acting on the behalf of the wardens and brethren of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, who had the privilege of choosing their own confessors. This document, which is dated 1461, the same year as that last described, is as follows:—

Universis Christi fidelibus ad quorum noticias presentes litere pervenerint,
Nos, Willelmus Lyale, presbiter et capellanus honeris [*sic*] Sepulcri domini

⁴ Gent. Mag. lxi. p. 1177.

⁵ Mon. Ang. vol. vi. p. 1116. Caley's

edit.; from Escheat Roll 20 Edw. III.

⁶ Amort, de Orig. Indulg. p. 169.

nostri Jhesu Christi in Jerusalem, procurator ecclesiarum in q
 perperit alvus (?)⁷ virginalis. Noverit universitas vestra quod, cum in privilegiis apostolicis per sacrosanctam sedem apostolicam dicti Sepulcri custodibus et ejusdem loci confratribus ab antiquis temporibus indultis, et per eandem sedem de novo confirmatis, quamplures indulgentie contineantur, quarum, licet non omnes, quedam sequuntur, videlicet, quod omnes confratres et consorores dicti sepulcri possint eligere sibi, tocies quociens voluerint, ydoneos confessores seculares vel regulares, qui eis valeant concedere plenam remissionem omnium peccatorum suorum de quibus sunt vere contriti et confessi, casibus sedi apostolice duntaxat exceptis, presbiteris, clericis, ac viris religiosis, cujuscunque ordinis aut habitus fuerint, necnon [omnibus ad] hanc fraternitatem admissis, qui de bonis suis dicto Sepulcro aliquid donaverint, quicquid per inpotenciam, negligenciam, oblivionem, aut corporis debilitatem in divinis vel horis canonicis omiserint, per ydoneos confessores gracia collacionis predicte penitus eis remittetur. Nos igitur, ex auctoritate nobis in hac parte commissa, Ricardum Erle in confratrem nostrum generosum⁸ recepimus ad privilegia omnium indulgentiarum concessarum, quarum summa ad octo millia annorum et totidem quadragenarum, ac triginta millia missarum, necnon et totidem spalteriorum,⁹ ex primitiva largicione apostolorum Petri et Pauli, cum multiplici gratiarum augmento eorum omnium successorum usque in presens, indulgentiarumque incrementis a singulis Romanis pontificibus in futurum perpetue concedendarum missarum, oracionum, ac omnium aliorum terre sancte suffragiorum, et Sepulcri domini Jhesu Christi in Jerusalem, ipsum volumus esse participem. In cujus rei testimonium sigilli nostri presentes facimus appensione communiri, anno domini millesimo cccc.^{mo} sexagesimo primo.

A fragment only of a seal of dark coloured wax remains appended by a parchment label. The form was oval or circular, not pointed oval; the device appears to have been a cross, with the crown of thorns suspended over the transverse limbs; the scourge and a branch, probably the hyssop, are introduced in the field. On the sinister side there appears to be a second cross; the design may have consisted of the three crosses upon Calvary. A few small traces only of the legend may be seen.

In vol. xii. of this Journal, p. 292, we gave another document from Mr. Maskell's Collection, being a certificate, dated in 1478, by a knight, Humfrey Nanfaunt, captive among the Turks, that monies had been paid for his redemption, and for the purchase of the benefit of a Papal Indulgence which also authorised the choice of a private confessor. In Sir Peter Leycester's Cheshire, p. 376, mention is found of a document of still earlier date, granting the like privilege, as follows:—

“Sir John Seyville, Knt., brother of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, and Procurer of the Pardon or Indulgence of the Castle of St. Peter, (by virtue of this Indulgence of Pope Alexander V. granted to all those who have put their helping hand to the fortification of the said Castle, that they shall chuse themselves a confessor) now granteth to Hugh de Toft and Alice his wife, because of their charity and aid towards the

⁷ The document is here much damaged. This passage may perhaps have had reference to those churches in the Holy Land mentioned by Amort, *De Origine Indulgentiarum*, pp. 217, 219, and of which Bethlehem was one.

⁸ A word seems to have been erased here, and *generosum* written over the erasure in different ink.

⁹ *Sic*. The word occurs elsewhere thus written, and also *Spalmus* for *Psalmus*, *Spalmodia*, &c. See Ducange.

said Castle, full liberty by the Pope's authority to chuse themselves a confessor; whereunto the seal of the Indulgence for the said Castle is affixed. Dated 'apud Templum Bruer,' A.D. 1412."¹

I am not aware that any impression of a seal of the Indulgence of the Castle of St. Peter has been noticed. It appears, however, that the Indulgences in question were in considerable request, since not less than five matrices have been found in this country, each of them with the legend,—*Sigillum Indulgentie Hospitalis Castri Sancti Petri*.—The device is, in each instance, a castellated building within an embattled wall, in which is a gateway with the portcullis half raised. Within, over a similar gateway with a portcullis, stands the Holy Lamb; over this are embattled turrets, with a central tower above all, in which a bell is suspended. One of these matrices, in possession of Mr. T. Sharp of Coventry in 1806, is figured *Gent. Mag.*, vol. lxvii. part ii. pp. 1021, 1029, and described vol. lxxvi. part ii. p. 893; another is figured *ibid.*, p. 1105; and a third, of much more elaborate design, in the same volume, p. 793, where it is stated to have been lately found in an orchard at the Marquis Townshend's farm called Oaklands in Walton-on-Trent, Derbyshire.² The brass face had been gilt but was much worn. This matrix is now in the British Museum. I have recently received from Matthew Dawes, Esq., F.S.A., an impression of a fourth matrix, now belonging to him, and found some years since in a field at Borough Hill near Walton-on-Trent. It resembles that described, and appears to be in very perfect preservation. A fifth, inferior in execution, was in the Tyssen Collection, and is now in the possession of Mr. Hankinson. I am indebted to the Rev. S. Blois Turner for an impression.

In closing these notices of a subject which, so far as I recollect, does not appear to have been hitherto examined with the attention which it may well claim, in connection with the social and religious conditions of our country in the century immediately preceding the Reformation, it were scarcely necessary to advert to Chaucer's graphic description of the Pardoner, or to the keen satire of Piers Ploughman. They are familiar to all who are conversant with the literature of our country. The documents now placed before our readers, and the frequent occurrence of seals such as have been described,—the medals, as seals have sometimes been termed, of Mediaeval History,—present to us evidence of the extensive distribution of Indulgences in the fifteenth century. The increasing eagerness for their acquisition must necessarily have opened the door to various abuses, to which it were needless here to advert. As early as the year 1300 the Council of Cologne had deemed it advisable to check the intrusion of the "*Questionarii goliardi*," who carried about Indulgences from door to door; and, in like manner the Council of Mayence, in the following century, peremptorily again animadverted upon the "*abusum Questionariorum, qui quotidie exrescit*." At a later period, it will be remembered, the evils consequent upon such practices in our own country were met with summary severity: by the stat. 22 Hen. VIII., 1530, all proctors and pardoners going about in any county without sufficient authority were to be treated as vagabonds.

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¹ Reprinted in Ormerod's Cheshire, vol. i. p. 395. On the back of the deed is written an absolution in Latin.

² A communication on the subject by

Mr. Hamper will also be found *Gent. Mag.* vol. i. p. 391. Among seals in Horace Walpole's possession was one for Indulgences by Pope Eugenius IV.