A NOTICE OF SOME MSS. SELECTED FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE DEAN AND CHAPTER OF CANTERBURY.[1]

By J. B. SHEPPARD.

FROM the earliest times it has been known to students that the Muniment Chamber of Canterbury Cathedral contained an immense collection of unimpeachably authentic MSS. illustrating the social, political, and ecclesiastical history of bygone days. The old chroniclers, such as Gervase and William of Canterbury, William of Malmesbury, and Thorne of St. Augustine's, have inspected and incorporated into their works the very parchments which are still preserved within these walls; and all who are called upon to refer to Wilkins' "Concilia," or Mr. Kemble's "Codex Diplomaticus" will remember how frequent are the references to the Cathedral registers and to the "Chartæ Antiquæ Cantuar." Above all, our own Somner has ransacked these parchments, and, with the learning and judgment which seem to be heirlooms attaching to the office of Cathedral Auditor, has deciphered and transferred to his appendix many of the most interesting of them. In fact, I shall not be going too far if I say that but for the information stored up in these archives, the narrative of the vicissitudes of our national Church would be much less complete than it now is.

At the dissolution of the monastery of Christ Church in 1540 the number of MSS. was much more considerable than it is at present, and their artistic quality of a much higher class; but when the goods of the convent were scattered,—when the King seized the land and the treasure, a treasure so precious that gold and silver were the meanest part of the plunder—many richly bound books and grandly illuminated MSS. were carried off; a great part of them being happily destined to be absorbed into the Cottonian collection, or to find a resting-place in the Libraries of Oxford and Cambridge. As for the less attractive MSS. they were not considered worth the stealing, and therefore, to the

[1] Read at the Canterbury Meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute, 1875.

amount of about 5000, we still have them here, in the same building which received them when their ink was yet wet. Since the great spoliation of church property, this collection has been, as far as we know, safely kept together, two cases only excepted. In one case, a Kentish gentleman during Cromwell's interregnum acquired a duplicate charter of Philippe Auguste, which a short time ago figured in the catalogue of a London auctioneer. In the other case, a jackdaw stole a parchment of no great value from a room to which he gained access through a broken window-pane. The French King's charter has never returned, but the jackdaw's MS. escaped from the bird's beak and fell at the feet of the Rev. Mr. Bennet, at the time a Minor Canon of the Cathedral, from whom, after many years, it passed to the Rev. Frederick Rouch, who, as anyone who knows Mr. Rouch will readily believe, restored it to its proper place among the muniments.

The series of original MSS. extends in age from A.D. 742, when Ethelbald of Mercia gave to Archbishop Cuthbert a charter which is still here, down to the time of the great catastrophe of 1540. Of this latter event a characteristic memorial remains in the appraiser's catalogue of the silver plate found in the convent, wherein are set down the weight and value of every spoon, cup, and dish.

Besides the strictly *ecclesiastical* documents, which of course form the great bulk of the collection, there are many interesting records relating to matters of *national* importance, some of which were sent down to be preserved in the monastic treasury, there to be securely kept, safe from the sieges and plunderings to which even the strongest secular repositories were liable. Examples of MSS. of this class are the following :—

A contemporary record of the proceedings of Henry III. and his rebellious barons. This contains copies of the letters which passed between the parties concerned, from the time when Louis IX. was chosen to arbitrate, down to the 12th of May, 1264, two days before the Battle of Lewes. In it are found :—The award of Louis IX. ; the brief by which Urban IV. absolved the King from his oath to observe the provisions of Oxford ; the Barons' respectful address to the King ; the King's defiance to Earl Simon and his confederates ; and the separate defiance sent by the

King of the Romans and Prince Edward. From this or some similar collection the ancient chroniclers obtained copies of these letters, and from the chronicles the information here contained has passed into all the printed Histories of England.

In the second state paper are set forth the preliminary contracts by which Edward I. was appointed mediator in matter of the disputed Scottish succession.

Lastly, here is an official copy of a schedule of the reforms imposed upon Edward II. by the Barons of the Lancastrian faction in 1311. On the back of this roll is a memorandum which states that these ordinances were deposited for safety in the treasury of Christ Church, and thus explains how it happened that the schedule was sent to a peaceful monastery but little concerned in revolutions and political disturbances: "Et les dites ordinaunces et le confermement sunt en la tresorie de ceste eglise en garde."

More immediately connected with the Church of Canterbury, and valued as being among our greatest curiosities, are the two MSS. to which I now direct attention. These two parchments which, the signatures excepted, are duplicates of each other, record an episode in the year 1070 of a long-standing dispute between the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, as to the supremacy and primacy of the former. The great interest of these records does not, however, lie in the subject matter, but in the fact that one of them bears the autograph signatures of William the Conqueror and his Queen, and of several of the chief ecclesiastics of their time.

Taking the first of these MSS., we see that it is attested by the King and Queen, followed by thirteen bishops, and eleven great abbots. It will be noticed that the number of witnesses accords with the description which all the writers of Church History, copying from Wharton, give of this well-known "*Composition*."[2] Examined closely, it will be seen that this MS. is written from end to end, text and signatures, by one and the same hand; hence it may be inferred that it is a copy, doubtless contemporary, doubtless taken from the original *Composition* actually executed by the personages whose names are appended on the day when this latter was written.

This other MS., which, as I have said, is a duplicate of the first, has the body of the deed written by the same hand

[2] Jer. Collier's Eccl. Hist. ii. 17.

which executed the whole of the first, *but the signatures are evidently the autographs of the persons who attested the deed.* Here are the *very* crosses which the Conqueror and his wife subscribed as substitutes for their signatures, they being perhaps "illiterate"[3]; and here, too, are the names of the more scholarly Lanfranc of Canterbury, and Thomas of York, written by their own hands, the Bishops of Winchester and Dorchester, of Thetford and Worcester also signing their names in characters as various in style as the writers were different in temperament. This second manuscript then, I claim to be the very parchment which was executed by the royal and reverend persons concerned; and this other, authenticated as it is by what was once the seal of the Conqueror, to be an official copy, intended for public inspection whilst the more precious original was kept in the treasury, safe from loss and injury. The copy, executed by its thirteen bishops and eleven abbots, has long been known and often quoted; but the original, attested only by two archbishops and four bishops, has never, as far as I am aware, been published until this day.

A sketch of the whole of the subjects dealt with in the MSS. of the present collection, if only a few words were given to each, would be tedious from its length, and at the same time obscure from its brevity; I therefore propose to select two topics about which we have a good deal of information, and which will give me the opportunity of bringing forward some interesting original specimens. First, I will piece together the story of how the Convent sometimes received, and sometimes failed to receive, a certain annual gift of 1600 gallons of wine from the hands of the Kings of France. Secondly, I will exhibit some documents illustrating the manner in which individuals and religious corporations united themselves by the bond of Mutual Society, each thus undertaking to perform charitable acts for the benefit of the bodies and souls of the others.

Beginning then with the history of the wine, I will mention that in 1179 Louis VII., as the chronicles tell us, alarmed by a dangerous illness which had attacked his son and heir-apparent, came over to Canterbury to

[3] See Arch. Journ. vol. iv. p. 249 for a facsimile of the cross signed by William the Conqueror, and remarks upon such signs-manual.

seek the intervention of St. Thomas, the fame of whose miraculous cures had been for nine years in every man's mouth. Offering a magnificent jewel at the tomb in the crypt, where the body of the martyr then lay, the King returned to his own land, a wish which he expressed of seeing the capital, and other inland parts of England, having been coldly received by our own King Henry II. Arrived at home he found his son recovered or recovering, and, in gratitude for the cure, he gave to the Convent of Canterbury a yearly present of a hundred modii of wine. This story does not quite hang well together, for the charter by which the wine was conferred, being dated from Canterbury, indicates that the gift was made during the King's visit, and before he had had time to hear of the efficacy of his appeal to the saint.

The original charter given by Louis VII., which I here exhibit, is attested, as may be seen, by the King's seal and monogram—*Karacter*, as it is called in the body of the deed—and fortified by the signatures of the Royal Dapifer, of the Buticularius, of the Constable, and of the Chancellor. The Chancellor Hugo signs his name last of all, and it is stated that the charter was *given by his hand*, which may mean that it was written by him, or that, as Brompton reports,[4] it was laid on the altar by the Chancellor at the instance of the King. The conditions of the grant are as follow:—"The King, induced by the fame of St. Thomas the Martyr, late Archbishop of Canterbury, gives to the monks of St. Trinity a hundred modii of wine, of the measure of Paris, to be received yearly at the time of the vintage, in the Castle of Poissy, all tolls and duties, as far as the King's power extended, being remitted."

It is a singular fact, worthy of notice, that whilst reciting the causes which moved him to visit St. Thomas, the King makes no mention of the illness of his son. His own words—"Intuitu Beatissimi Martyris Thome, ad cujus tumulum, pro salute anime et corporis, in multa devotione, profecti sumus impetranda"—imply that care for his *own* soul and his *own* body brought him to Canterbury, and he nowhere hints that the grant was meant for a thank-offering expressing gratitude for any special mercy.

The King of England, coming to Canterbury, met his

[4] Brompton (Script. X.) Coll. 1140.

brother King, and, like a good knight, forbore to take advantage of the adversary who had trusted him. Gervase[5] tells us that on this occasion Henry rode all night, and so had a good opportunity of seeing an eclipse of the moon which occurred during the journey.

Louis VII. died in the next year, 1180, leaving the crown to his now recovered son, Philippe (II.) Augustus, who, upon ascending the throne, hastened, by a charter here before you, to confirm his father's gift. By virtue of this confirmation, the wine was evidently duly received up to the year 1189, when Philippe, on the point of setting out for the Crusade, gave this supplementary charter, in which he requires the Provost of Poissy to continue the supply of wine as heretofore, making up the quantity from the King's own cellar if the produce of the vineyards assigned for the purpose fell short of the *hundred muys;* in conclusion directing that the wine shall not be withheld even if after three years he shall not have returned from his pilgrimage. From 1189 to 1235 no writings carry on the history of the wine; perhaps we may infer from this silence that it was duly received; perhaps, however, on the contrary, it may be believed that the political complications at the end of the reign of our King John not only robbed the monks, then in exile, of their wine, but even made petitions and remonstrances hopeless. In 1235 Louis IX., reciting the charter of his great-grandfather, and the confirmation of that charter by his grandfather, added his own confirmation, and, as a farther assurance to the monks, executed still another confirmation in 1263. Philippe IV. in 1286, in his turn confirmed the grant of wine, quoting at full length the charter of his grandfather, St. Louis. Finally, in 1322, Charles IV. added the last example to this series of confirmations. Copies only remain of the second confirmation of St. Louis and of those of Philip IV. and Charles IV.; the originals have perished, but copies of all survive in the conventual registers.

From the time of Charles IV. to that of Louis XI.—a space of a hundred and fifty years—no farther charters or confirmations were given by the Kings of France, and it is probable that the general state of warfare then existing between the two countries deprived the monks of their

[5] Gervase (Script. X.) Col. 1457.

annual benefaction. In 1472 the energetic William Sellyng became Prior of Christ Church, and, taking advantage of the hypocritical professions of friendship which were then passing to and fro across the channel, he renewed the long silent claim, and addressed a petition to the King of France begging him to become a second founder of the annual grant of wine. We have here two charters, and a copy of another, given by Louis XI., which show that he lent a favourable ear to the Prior's petition, and not only resumed the delivery of the wine, but also agreed that instead of from the neighbourhood of Paris, where the fields were wasted and the vines destroyed, the wine should be sent from the Bordelais and from Touraine, districts suited for supplying a fluid more generous than the acerb vintage of Poissy. The second of these charters has, attached to it by a parchment ligature secured by the King's signet, a bundle of small warrants, all signed by great officers of the Court and all confirmatory of the royal grant. These appendices would doubtless do much towards removing the difficulties which smaller officials might be tempted to interpose between the royal giver of the wine and its far-distant receiver.

How long the wily King's grant remained operative we do not know, but it was long enough to secure the gratitude of the Prior and Chapter, who by a deed under the conventual seal, elected Louis to full communion with their monastery, making him a participator in the benefits of all their "prayers, masses, fasts, alms, vigils, and all other acts of piety." The Act of Chapter by which these privileges were conferred was of course sent to France, but Prior Sellyng's draft of a letter to the King, announcing the execution of the instrument, is here enrolled in this book entitled "Christ Church Letters." In this draft it is promised that the name of the King, together with the day of his *obit*, when the convent is informed of it, shall be entered upon the roll of their Martyrology or Register, and the anniversary be observed with such ceremonies as are reserved for their most honoured patrons.

On the next page of the same book is a letter which relates to the wine of St. Thomas, and in it there is an incidental allusion to a remarkable peculiarity of the last-mentioned king; a peculiarity which, thanks to Sir Walter Scott, who notices it in "Quentin Durward," is known to every Eng-

lish-speaking schoolboy on the face of the globe—better known, perhaps, than any personal peculiarity of any king who figures in European history. Louis XI., with his hat-band of saints, stands, I will venture to say, a distinct figure before the minds of thousands of general readers, to whom all other French monarchs, from Clovis to Charles VII., are no more than formless shadows. This letter, then, which represents Louis as coveting an image of St. Thomas, to fill a vacant niche in his hatband, is a supplement to Sir Walter's description of Maitre Pierre, and some day may come to be enshrined as a note in a new and more sumptuous "Abbotsford edition" of the novels. I say Sir Walter's description, for, lacking his adoption of the story, it would have remained in the pages of Jean Bodin, hidden from all but laborious students.

This confirmatory letter, which was written by a London correspondent to Prior Sellyng at Canterbury, about the year 1480, begins thus:—"After all dew recomendacyon plesyth your lordshyp to undyrstond I have spokyn with the Frenshe Byshopp at Westminster; whereas he may not be with you at thys Ester, but wyll send unto you a letter be a man of his own, and also will be with you or that he passe over se, and proposyth to be a Brothyr of youre Chapter. And as for a pype of Wyne, he wold not for his bysshopereche receve noon of yow. *Also, Ser, ther is a man of his that bare youre letter and the copye of youre patent unto the Kyng of Fraunce, sayd unto me, that the Kyng of Fraunce askyd wheder that he had any tokyn of Saynt Thomas delyvered him from your lordshyp's wysdome, made as he mygth wer hit on hys hatt in the worshyppyng of Saint Thomas; the whiche wer to hymn a gret plesure.* What shall be don in this I remyt unto your Lordshyp."

After Prior Sellyng, Thomas Golstone, the second of the name, ruled the monastery, and was contemporary with Charles VIII. the son of Louis, to whom, as may be inferred from these rough drafts which lie on the table he addressed some most servile petitions. In the example now in my hand he cites the original grant and the confirmations of the king's predecessors, especially the generous renewal of the gift after long disuse by Louis, the king's father. He, of course, begs Charles to be as good to the Convent as his father had been, and he promises that,

in their turn, the monks will do for him all that they undertook to do for the late king:—"Orabunt autem assidue prefati oratores vestri omnipotentem Deum pro felici statu Serenetatis vestre dum vixeritis, post mortem vero pro anima vestra, ac animabus progenitorum vestrorum: ac pro pace inter Franciam et Angliam perpetuo conservanda." From these drafts, as I said above, we infer that some sort of petition was sent to Charles VIII., but the exact terms in which it was composed cannot here be ascertained —probably it bore a general resemblance to all these drafts, but exactly coincided with none. Whatever may have been the form of the petition, its result seems to have been valueless, for we do not find any answering charter bearing the style and title of Charles VIII.

In 1514 Nicholas Lytlyngton, at the time an official of the diocese of Canterbury, inspected and copied all the charters relating to the wine which were extant at that date. What may have been the object of this collection we know not; probably a petition was sent to Louis XII. with a copy of the certified charters. If this were so it was productive of no good result, for the name of Louis XII. is, like that of Charles VIII. his kinsman, absent from the list of charters. Thus far, then, the charters of gift and confirmation, the title deeds as we may call them, by which the claim to the wine was established.

The next step after obtaining the wine was to transport it to England at as small a cost as possible, and this the monks were enabled to do by the liberality of those of the French nobility whose estates lay between the vineyards and the coast. Canterbury possesses in large numbers the original instruments, fortified by the seals of the grantors, by virtue of which the Convent was permitted to convey its wine from Poissy to Whitsand, paying neither toll nor pedage by the way. Among the benefactors who were willing to forego their claims in favour of the Convent were the Counts of Poissy, St. Valery, Melun, Guisnes, Pontigny, Flanders, and Boulogne. Here, too, are charters of Henry II., Richard I., John, and Edward IV., which, dispensing with the customs dues ordinarily levied upon imports, brought the wine cheaply ashore into England.

The most modern notice which mentions the wine as actually received, occurs in the first year of Richard III.,

when Dr. Langton, a courtier and a zealous partizan of the Monastery of Christ Church, gives advice to the prior about shipping his wine which was warehoused at Bordeaux. At the time, discord was threatened between the two countries, and this, whilst it hindered the shipment, at the same time rendered the prior all the more anxious to get his property safely across to his own side of the channel. This letter is dated from York, whither the writer had gone in attendance upon the new King during the progress in search of popularity which he made in the first year of his reign. The portrait of Richard, sketched by Dr. Langton, does not in any particular resemble the popular idea of the crook-backed tyrant. Thus he writes :—

" Thys Kyng contenteth the people whar he goes better than ever did prince ; for many a poor man that hath suffred wrong many days have he relevyd and helped be his counsel ; and in many grete cities and townes was grete summes of money gyf hym which all he hathe refusyd. On my trouth I lyked never the condycions of any prince so well as his," &c. The writer at the date had been promoted to the Bishopric of St. David's, and was aspiring to that of Salisbury, which soon fell to him ; and, therefore, he was bound to be satisfied with a patron to whom he owed such rapid promotion. In connexion with his translation from St. David's to Salisbury Dr. Langton quaintly writes : " I trust in God ye shal hastely here tythyngs of me that I am an Ynglisshman again, and no more Walshe."

In one of the monastic registers are two pages filled with memoranda relating to the growing and collecting of this " Wine of St. Thomas," whose history we are tracking. These memoranda are disjointed and crabbed in their style, and, therefore, I submit the substance rather than the text of the information which they contain :—

" At Triel and Cantelupe the King of France has certain tenants, who are bound to pay every year to the agent of the Canterbury Monastery, at the time of vintage, a cess of wine, large or small, in proportion to the size of their holdings.

" In cases of defalt the agent who represents at Poissy the Prior of Canterbury has a power of destraint, which must, however, be exercised through the provost of Poissy.

" At Triel the King has a special close of land which is let to a woman of Poissy, and she is bound to deliver half the red wine which the close produces to the King and half the white wine to the agent of Christ

Church, the remaining halves of both the red wine and the white being her own fee, to repay her for the cultivation of the close.

"At the end of the vintage the Prior's agent shall go to the Provost, and before him make a statement on oath, declaring how much wine he has received from the vineyards and from the special close; and if the total be less than a hundred muys, then the Provost shall furnish the balance from the castle cellar.

"At St. Brice the Convent of Christ Church owns two pieces of vineyard which the agent lets to tenants, who, by way of rent, pay half the produce of the vines."

I may here explain that the property at St. Brice came into the possession of the monastery by a deed of gift executed by one Richolda, the widow of Guido de Groolai, in the twelfth century. This gift is certified in two small parchments, which bear the seal of Peter Bishop of Paris. Returning to the memoranda we learn farther, that :—

"The tenants, both at Triel and at St. Brice, are forbidden to complete their wines (non debent fullare vina) except inthe presence of the agent; lest they be tempted, by adding water, to make worse wine for the Convent than they do for themselves."

An arpentum of vineyard ought to yield an average of eight muys of wine; that is, sometimes six and sometimes ten.

In the year 1294, when war broke out between France and England, on the question of the territory of Guienne, Philip IV. arrested the Convent's wine, along with all the goods of English subjects found on French territory; but afterwards, in 1302, he restored the wine, and, in addition, gave 200 livres as damages and compensation for delay. At the same time he sent warrants to his Provost at Poissy, and to his treasurer, directing them to reinstate the Canterbury monks in all their former privileges, and to pay the 200 livres which he had assigned to them.

The register from which we get this information reports that at the same time Philip suspended the law which forbade the exportation of gold, silver and coined money, in favour of Prior Henry of Canterbury, who was in France attached to the suite of Edward I. From the copy of the instrument by which this grace was conferred, it appears to have been only an ordinary passport, permitting the Prior to enter and leave the country with his usual stately equipage, his horses, plate, personal ornaments, &c. Now considering that Prior Eastry was in the company of an

almost victorious invader, backed by 50,000 men, this passport seems to have been superfluous, if not impertinent.

In one of the portfolios are contained the reports furnished to Prior Eastry by Robert de Longo-Jumello, his resident agent at Triel, and by Peter Galais, who succeeded to the office after the death of Longjumeau in 1324. Among the accounts are some familiar letters from the agent asking for forbearance when his payments were in arrear; reporting the progress of his collections in the time of vintage; protesting against the calumnies of mischievous talebearers; and in one case complaining that the cloth sent from Canterbury for the writer's livery gown was not long enough by a yard. Another parchment has a title which may be rendered, "The census of the wine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, received at Triel, A.D. 1292." After the title follow a hundred lines of items, each line stating the name of a tenant who contributed wine, the designation of his vineyard, and the amount of wine which he contributed. This account proves that at the date, more than a hundred years after the first grant by Louis VII., the wine was collected upon the old plan, gallon by gallon, from the king's tenants; each person paying in proportion to the size of his vineyard. Here are other reports of a similar kind for the years 1288, 1289, and 1300. At the foot of one of these is a statement that the wine paid as rent at Triel amounted to 18 muys, 7 sestres and a half.

In 1324 Longjumeau, the agent, died, and Peter Galais, a citizen of Paris, took his place. It is proved by an entry made in this year that the wine was not transported to England, but was sold on the spot. The wine produced in 1323 amounted to six casks, and was sold for 16 livres of Paris. More wine was grown, but the Queen Isabella of England, who, with her son and Mortimer, was in France engaged in matters affecting the Crown of England, took two casks, for which she did not pay anything. In the same year the treasurer of the King of France paid 57 livres, on account of 28 muis, which were lacking from the Canterbury hundred. The summary for this year, 1324, states: "Et sic est profectus de vinis Francie, A.D. MCCCXXIV de claro in sterlingis xvii. lib. viii. s. x. d. ob." That is to say, that after all expenses had been paid in the year 1324, the convent netted something less than

17*l.* 10*s.*; but even this was not an exceptionally bad year, for on one occasion the agent, alarmed at some seizures of provisions which the king was making for the use of his army in Flanders, sold off all the convent wine for 15 Paris livres. On this occasion he reports that the wine was "thick and in bad condition, and that the wines of this year were quite valueless":—("Cras et en mauvois point, et que les vins de ceste anne ne hont rien valu").

It may be asked, what did a *mui* contain, and how much did the hundred *muis*, which sold for 17*l.* 10*s.*, amount to? One of the Cathedral registers answers this satisfactorily, giving the various standards in use at Paris, St. Denis, St. Brice, Pontoise, and Triel. The standard of Paris, the only one which concerns us, seeing that Louis VII. prescribed that his gift was to be estimated by that measure, is thus described: "A Parys, ii. pintes funt une quarte, et quartre quartes sunt un sester; xvi. sestres sunt un mu, et vi. mus funt un tonel. Tel ke C muis sunt xvi. tonels et quatre muis—Tel ke $\overset{xx}{\text{iii}}$. xvi. sestres sunt un tonel." From this it appears that a sester, containing four quarts, was but a gallon translated into French, and that a *mu* of 16 sestres contained 16 gallons, and therefore that a hundred modii of "the wine of St. Thomas" amounted to 1600 gallons. This quantity we learn was exported in 16 tuns of 96 gallons each, with one smaller dolium containing the trifling balance.

One more question, but that an important one, remains to be solved: what *sort of wine* was this which resulted from the combined contributions of the tenants of St. Brice and Triel? For answer, it will be sufficient to point out that both St. Brice and Triel are within a few miles of Paris, and that the *vin du pays* of the neighbourhood of Paris is a liquid so austere and worthless that it can only be obtained outside the barriers; the trifling octroi duty, which would double its price, being sufficient to exclude it from the city. In fact, the *vin bleu* of the Parisian workman is the red wine which, we have seen, was reserved for the king, whilst the corresponding white, and by inference, inferior product, constituted the "Vinum Sci. Thome" of these records.

I now proceed to direct attention to the second subject I have mentioned as being illustrated by the Canterbury MSS. I must remind you, that all the great monasteries of

the middle ages, were accustomed to make contracts with each other, by which they stipulated, that upon notice being duly given of the death of a member of one house, the brethren of *all* the other associated houses should perform certain pre-arranged religious rites on behalf of the soul of the defunct. The announcement of the death was conveyed from monastery to monastery by a special messenger, who was styled "Brevigerulus" "Breviger," or "Portitor Brevium." If the departed monk were a simple brother of his order, a mere "breve" was considered to be a sufficient intimation of his death; in fact the dispatch of the "breve" was often delayed until the number of deaths had accumulated sufficiently to make it worth while to start the "Breviger" on his round. When, however, a prelate—a bishop or an abbot—passed away, a more solemn form of procedure was employed. A roll of parchment (technically *rotulus*) was prepared, and upon it was inscribed a catalogue of the virtues of the deceased, of the public employments which he had exercised, and of the benefits which he had conferred upon his own monastery, and upon the church in general; lastly, the roll expressed in mournful terms, the great grief of the brethren of the deceased, and called upon all who were bound by contract to do so, to perform the usual ceremonies for the repose of his soul.

With this short introduction, referring you for farther information to a learned paper by Mr. J. G. Nichols in the Norwich volume of the Journal of the Institute, I here direct notice to an important parchment, being the *very rotulus* which was sent round from convent to convent throughout eastern England after the death of John Hotham, Bishop of Ely, who died in 1336. At the head of the roll is a large illuminated initial letter containing a conventional representation of the defunct arrayed in episcopal vestments; this is followed by an elaborate eulogy of the Bishop, who, as a great churchman and a great statesman perhaps had really deserved laudatory epithets, which, if applied to a less distinguished personage, might be considered hyperbolical.

In this lament, the church of Ely is described as weeping as for an only son. She is Rachel mourning not her sons, but the father of her sons.

The defunct is declared to be another Jacob—"qui die

noctuque gelu urebatur et estu pro amoris magnitudine serviens pro Rachel." A second Moses—he was "dux populi." A second Aaron "Sacerdos magnus erat." "Mattathias zelator legis Dei strenuus." "Johanathas amabilis; et Symon vir consilii." "Erat honestis parentibus procreatus, et in domibus regum educatus mox generositate . . . . . nobilitatus."

"Non obstante quâvis occupacione mundanâ psalterium Daviticum cotidie ex integro Regi regum decantavit."

"Erat in ecclesia angelicus, in aula splendidus, in mensa dapsilis, in capitulo severus, arguens, increpans, obsecrans subditos in omni paciencia et doctrina."

At the end of the eulogy is a complete exposition of the raison d'être of these rolls :—Nam sepcies in die cadit justus, et nemo mundus a sorde, nec infans quidem unius diei—Et ob hoc, ineffabilis Dei miseracio humane fragilitati pie preordinavit, ut qui sibi non sufficit pro suis reatibus satisfacere, de suffragiis alienis, reconciliacionis remedium misericorditer consequatur—Unde iterato vestris pedibus, pietatis intuitu, provoluti crebris gemitibus, preces precibus humiliter accumulamus quatinus beneficiorum remedia que unicuique nostrum spem caritatis inspiraverint eidem Johanni velitis impartiri—Et que vel quanta fuerint devocionis vestre munera, cum titulis vestris, in scripto redigi devotissime supplicamus . . . . . Creator omnium rerum faciat nos seipsum revelata facie contemplari—Anima Dni. Johis. de Hotham quondam Episcopi Eliensis, et anime omnium fidelium defunctorum per misericordiam Dei, requiescant in pace. Amen—"Nostri defuncti sunt vobis in prece juncti."

This long explanation condensed amounts to this: that any one whose acts of penitence do not suffice to atone for his trespasses, may acquire the necessary balance of pious deeds from the superfluous merits of others; and therefore the monks of Ely beseech their brethren of the allied monasteries to bestow upon the deceased bishop a share in the benefits of their supererogatory devotions. The roll thus filled was sent round to the monasteries, twenty-four in number, which were in *mutual society* with Ely, and each, in turn, inscribed upon it its *titulus*, that is, the name of the monastery was written in full, the prayer for repose was added according to the formula given above, and the invocation asking for good offices in repayment concluded the *titulus*.

One example will serve to show the form of a complete *titulus*:—

"Titulus ecclesie Sce. Marie et Sci. Benedicti
"Rameseie—
"Anima Dni : Johis. Epi ; Elyens. et anime
"Omnium fidelium defunctorum, per
"Misericordiam Dei, requiescant in pace."
"Amen—Oramus pro vestris, orate pro nostris."

The monks of Croyland varied the closing invocation, to, "Vestris nostra damus. pro nostris vestra rogamus." The Carmelites of Cambridge and the monks of Stow, insert after the name of the bishop, the words, "et anima Ricardi Monachi et acoliti ejus." It is probable that this Richard was a monk of Ely, personally known to the Cambridge Friars and to the brethren at Stow. In the ordinary course of things when this *rotulus* arrived at Canterbury, the *titulus* of Christ Church ought to have been inscribed upon it and the bearer helped forward on his homeward road; what the accident may have been which prevented this, we do not know, but to it we owe the possession of this valuable MS., which was intended to remain at Ely. You will remember that when speaking of the French wine, I told you that when Louis XI. renewed the grant he was received into *society* with Christ Church. I have no doubt, that at the time of his death, a *rotulus*, rich in royal heraldry was brought to receive the *titulus* of the Canterbury Convent. Edward IV. came to something of the same honour by a sidewind. It happened that before Cardinal Bourchier died, he established and endowed a chantry in his cathedral, neglecting, however, to obtain the King's licence for the amortization of the lands conferred by the deed of endowment. By this neglect the King had the opportunity of seizing the endowment, but he waived his right, and in gratitude, the Chapter received him into *Communion*, constituting him a co-founder of the Chantry. Among the MSS. will be found proofs that the monasteries of St. Bertin, St. Ouen, and Lyons, in France, and Waltham and Westminster in our own country were joined to Christ Church Canterbury by the strictest bonds of confraternity.

In a list of disbursements for the year 1221 there are many items which bear upon this subject. For example :—

"Portitori brevium pro Osberto Monacho VIII*d*—Pro Honorio—Pro Helya Longo."

"Portitori rotuli pro Willelmo priore, xi. s. iiii. d."

"Pro eodem rotulo faciendo—ii. s. x. d."

The deaths of simple monks were announced by "Brevia," the expensive *rotulus* being reserved for the prior.

In conclusion, I will draw attention to this handsome volume with its velvet bindings and brazen clasps. It contains the Indenture (expressed by the undulated upper edge of the lids) by which the Prior and Chapter of Canterbury bound themselves to observe the obits of King Henry VII., Margaret his mother, Edmond his father, and Elizabeth of York his consort. The seals, which hang from the lower margin are those of the King as a principal in the transaction, and of the Abbot of Westminster, and the Lord Mayor of London, in the character of trustees. The instrument is one of the counterparts of the well-known Deed by which that beautiful and stately edifice, the chapel of Henry VII. was established at Westminster Abbey, and to which the officials of Christ Church were parties, together with so many other important communities of the time.[6]

[6] *See* Dean Stanley's "Memorials of Westminster Abbey," p. 162. The Royal copy of these Indentures, sumptuously bound, and having its depending seals enclosed in silver skippets, now preserved in the Public Record Office, has more than once been exhibited at the meetings of the Institute. *See* Arch. Journ. vol. xviii. pp. 182, 278 (where the documents are more fully described) and vol. xix. p. 288.