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## SOME EPISCOPAL VISITATIONS OF LINCOLN CATHEDRAL.<sup>1</sup>

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THE history of a Cathedral (like the history of a country, a city or a Church) is partly external and partly internal. The external history comprises those facts in which the institution is brought into contact with the outer world and with bodies extraneous to itself. It also includes such developments as are patent and manifest to all, as for instance the erection of new buildings or the acquisition of new property. The internal history is the record of the dealings of the members of the body one with another, the growth and exhibition of any special spirit or temper, and other matters more or less concealed from the outside world. There is very much in the external history of the great Cathedral, under whose shadow we are assembled, which is full of deep interest, but this is easily ascertainable by any from the Chronicles and other sources. I desire now to touch a few points in the internal history of the Cathedral, the conduct and proceedings of the members of its Chapter—points not so easily ascertainable as the other, but gathered from the MS. registers and records connected with the Church, as these are more or less mixed up with the Visitations and enquiries of bishops.

It appears that Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, was the first bishop in England who practised a regular and systematic Visitation of his Diocese. This at least may be inferred from his own words. He says, "At the commencement of my episcopate I began to make a

<sup>1</sup> Read in the Historical Section at the Lincoln Meeting, July 28th, 1880.

circuit of each archdeaconry, and caused the clergy of the several deaneries to be summoned by the rural deans on a certain day to a fixed place, and the people to be warned to come at the same time and place with their children to be confirmed, and to hear the Word of God and confess.

. . . In my first circuit some came to me finding fault and saying, 'My Lord, you are doing a thing new and unaccustomed.' To whom I answered, 'Every novelty which does good to a man is a blessed novelty.'"<sup>1</sup>

And if Grosseteste was the first Bishop who practised systematic Parochial Visitation, he was certainly the first in England who attempted the Visitation of a Cathedral and its dependent Churches. On the occasion of the dispute which arose between the Bishop and Chapter on this point, Matthew Paris tells us distinctly that a Bishop had never visited a Cathedral and its affiliated Churches.<sup>2</sup> "The Bishop of Lincoln," he says, "even rose up against the Canons of his Cathedral Church who had elected him, and insisted that, putting aside the Dean of Lincoln, they should submit to be visited by the Bishop himself against the custom of that Church time out of mind."<sup>3</sup> In the long argumentative pamphlet which Bishop Grosseteste himself wrote in support of his claim to visit the Cathedral we do not find him attempting to support the claim by quotation of precedent. On the contrary he relies on Biblical arguments, such as that 'Moses exercised a visitatorial power over the elders appointed to assist him at the advice of Jethro; that Jacob had full power over the shepherds of Laban; on Samuel's circuits as Judge, &c.; that the right to visit is implied in the Fifth Commandment, and is inherent in and inseparable from the Episcopal office. He draws a strong distinction between the duties of a *visor* and a *visitor*. The Dean who constantly resides in the Cathedral is properly the *visor* or superintendent; the Bishop coming at intervals to see if all be well, its *visitor*. His pamphlet is in fact an elaborate argument as to the value and use of the visitatorial power rather than an attempt to prove its legal right.<sup>4</sup> Indeed in one part of his argument the

<sup>1</sup> Anglia Sacra, ii, 347.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. Par. Hist. Maj., Ed. Watts, p. 485.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par., ib.

<sup>4</sup> Gross. Epist., ccxxvii., Ed. Luard, pp 357-431.

Bishop plainly admits that custom was dead against him. He says, "You may not allege for a custom the fact that the bishop has never visited, nor can those subject to a bishop pretend custom because they have not been visited and corrected. For custom is not a negation, nor a privation, nor a neglect, but custom is the frequent repetition of a lawful action. But *not* to visit, and *not* to do the things belonging to the episcopal office is a negation and neglect of the bishop. This is not a custom but a corruption."<sup>1</sup> Whether however it was to be called *consuetudo* or *corruptela*, the fact is evidently admitted by the Bishop that the Chapter never had been episcopally visited. The defence made by the Chapter to the claim of the Bishop to visit them, in addition to their allegation of its novelty, was an unfortunate one and little creditable to that body. They produced a Charter which purported to be the re-foundation of the Cathedral of Lincoln in the time of William Rufus, and which expressly gave authority to the Dean to govern all things, and only if his discipline failed was he to call in the bishop, and after him the king."<sup>2</sup> This Charter was altogether a forgery.

The matter after six years' of dispute went to the great Appeal Court of the Pope, and was finally decided by a Bull of Innocent IV., dated Lyons, August 25, 1245, in favour of the Bishop. The way in which the decision was procured it is perhaps as well not to investigate too closely, but a salutary power and privilege had thus been obtained for the See of Lincoln, and consequently for all the English Sees. Bishop Grosseteste immediately proceeded to make use of the authority which he had thus acquired. He had intended to visit the Chapter first and then to pass to the Prebends, but at the earnest request of the Chapter, who felt probably that some preparation and consultation were necessary before this vigorous Reformer could be welcomed among them, he changed this arrangement and visited first the Prebendal Churches.<sup>3</sup> What his proceedings were when at length Bishop Grosseteste came to the Cathedral, I am not sure whether there is any record remaining to show,<sup>4</sup> but he would

<sup>1</sup> Gross. Epist., p. 421.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. Par., Hist. Maj., p. 571.

<sup>3</sup> Gross. Epist., p. 344.

<sup>4</sup> There is mention of a *Laudum* made by Bishop Grosseteste in Aluwici Laudum, p. 87.

probably find plenty of matter for censure. There was, for instance, the "Feast of Fools," which Grosseteste had described in his Constitutions as an "execrable custom" and which he had strictly forbidden; which seems however to have flourished in Lincoln Cathedral. Concerning this he wrote to the Dean and Canons of Lincoln, "Inasmuch as the House of God is, as the Son of God beareth witness, the house of prayer, it is an infamous thing to turn it into a house of joking, scurrility and trifling, and to desecrate a place dedicated to God by diabolical invention. It is an execrable thing to profane the venerable feast of the Circumcision of the Lord with the filth of libidinous pleasures. Wherefore we command you in virtue of your obedience and strictly enjoin you that you by no means permit to be holden this Feast of Fools, since it is full of vanity and defiled with pleasures, in the Church of Lincoln on the venerable feast of the Circumcision of our Lord."<sup>1</sup>

Grosseteste was succeeded in the See of Lincoln by Henry de Lexington or Laxton,<sup>2</sup> who had been Dean when the Bishop had visited.<sup>3</sup> His episcopate was very short, and as in all likelihood he was strongly committed to the opposition to episcopal visitation, and perhaps owed his election to this, it was not probable that he would visit the Cathedral.

After Lexington came another Dean, Richard de Gravesend,<sup>4</sup> who succeeded his predecessor both in the Deanery and the See. He was a man of very considerable ability and much employed in public affairs. He was a strong partisan of the Barons against Henry III., and in consequence came under the displeasure of the Pope, and had to make his peace by the payment of a vast sum of money. He had also to go to Rome to be absolved. Bishop Gravesend was very much occupied in public affairs, but he found time to attend to the wants of his Cathedral Church. Whether he held a formal Visitation of it is uncertain, but at any rate he was one of its chief benefactors. He procured for the Cathedral the advowson of the Church of Gumley, and he gave to the High Altar

<sup>1</sup> Gross. Epist., p. 118. The date of this letter is uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> Succeeded 1254, died 1258.

<sup>3</sup> He was made in 1245, the year in which the Pope decided the case.

<sup>4</sup> Succeeded 1258, died 1280.

a sumptuous chalice of gold and a chalice of silver, a beautiful silver cross with a foot to be carried processionally at double feasts, a silver image of the Blessed Virgin with two silver cherubs, and divers relics of saints, caskets and cases of silver, chasubles, choral copes, tunics, dalmatics, and other vestments, and a lenten veil of great beauty and comeliness.<sup>1</sup> And besides the Church of Iffley, which he appropriated to the Archdeacon of Oxford, and ten pounds a year given by him to the community of Vicars Choral, the daily common allowance of the Canons was increased by him from eight pence to twelve pence by his gifts of the Chapels of Bierton, Quarrendon, Stoke and Buckland; the Churches of Paxton, Hambleton, Bytham-with Holywell, the moiety of Glentham with Tathwell. And that which seems to be still more excellent he appointed twelve boys with their master to minister in the Church and to live together, assigning to them a competent maintenance for all things needed from the Church of Little Ashby,<sup>2</sup> the fourth part of the Church of Hilbaldstow, pensions also from some religious houses. The Chapter Act, which records these benefactions, further gives directions as to the *Obit* of Bishop Gravesend. The full service for a deceased Bishop is to be used, and five marks to be distributed out of the common fund among the clerks and officers of the Church.<sup>3</sup> Gravesend was bishop all the time that the Angels' Choir was being erected, but I believe not a single notice of the building is to be found in his Register.

On the death of Gravesend, for the third time in succession the Dean of Lincoln was raised to the episcopate.<sup>4</sup> Bishop Sutton is famous in history as having been the one Bishop who supported Archbishop Winchelsea in his struggle against Edward I. as to the taxing of the clergy. He was probably also the best abused man of his day in the monasteries and parsonages of the country, inasmuch as he was the person who, in

<sup>1</sup> The *Consuetudinarium*, of which there are several MSS. at Lincoln, was written in his time. It relates almost exclusively to the bell-ringing and ceremonies which took place in the course of the services within the Cathedral, with a slight notice of what was done in *Capitulum* and *ad Prandium*. The invitation *ad prandium*

was given at service time, and the meal itself was part of the Capitular life.

<sup>2</sup> Hence called Ashby Puerorum.

<sup>3</sup> From a Chapter Act, Linc. MS., printed in Appendix H, to Girald. Camb. vol. vii.

<sup>4</sup> Oliver de Sutton, succeeded 1280, died 1299.

conjunction with the Bishop of Winchester, made the new assessment of clerical incomes, known as the Valuation of Pope Nicholas IV.; the valuation being (according to the Chronicler Bartholomew de Cotton and the Oseney Annalist) of unheard of severity.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Sutton's own registrar, John de Schalby, acknowledges that this was his own fault.<sup>2</sup> The bishop indeed seems to have been somewhat sharp in his work. For not content with the valuation made by his commissioners, he in many cases personally revalued, and raised the estimate to double or treble what it had been put at.<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Sutton, we know from John de Schalby's record, *did hold a Visitation* of the Cathedral, and did order that the Priest Vicars should live together as a college in the new buildings which he was erecting for them. It is probable also that at the same Visitation he ordered the enclosure of the Cathedral Close by a crenellated wall, the removal of the Church of St. Mary Magdalen from within the Cathedral to a place outside it; the removal of the Canons' stable, which stood between the Church and the Chapter House, and the erection of the south-side of the cloisters.<sup>4</sup>

After Sutton came John de Dalderby,<sup>5</sup> who had been Precentor of the Church, and who was so famous for his piety in his day that his Canonization was applied for. There is no doubt that Bishop Dalderby held Visitations of the Cathedral,<sup>6</sup> inasmuch as his *Laudum* remains in the *Liber Niger*. He both regulated it in many points and gave benefactions to it. He gave three Churches to the Dean and Chapter, assigning the great tithes of two of them (Normandy and Russenden) to the Priest Vicars. And as this body was now put to extra expense by having to keep up the new buildings constructed for them by the direction of Bishop Sutton, Bishop Dalderby secured for them for this purpose an annual payment of two marks each from two monasteries of the Premonstratensians. He completed the arrangements as to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, uniting it with All Saints, and providing

<sup>1</sup> Barth. de Cotton, Chron. pp. 183, 189, 198; Ann de Oseney, Ann. Monast. iv., 333.

<sup>2</sup> Gir. Camb. vii., 209.

<sup>3</sup> Ann. de Dunstaplia, Ann. Monast.

iii., 382.

<sup>4</sup> See John de Schalby in Appendix to Giraldus, vol. vii., and Mr. Dimock's notes.

<sup>5</sup> 1300—1320.

<sup>6</sup> *Laudum Willelmi Alnwick*, p. 87.

for the rights of the Chancellors of the Cathedral, who were *ex-officio* Rectors of All Saints.

Dalderby was succeeded by a man of an entirely different stamp, Henry Burghersh, a man of high family and great political importance, but I am afraid, by no means immaculate. I do not find any record that Bishop Burghersh held a Visitation of the Cathedral, but he gave a body of Statutes to the Consistorial Court, which exist in MS. in the British Museum.<sup>1</sup>

The next Bishop was Thomas Beck, in whose time the Cathedral was by no means in a happy state. The Dean was a Roman Cardinal residing at the Papal Court. In one of the Chapter Registers we find under the year 1363 a pathetic letter addressed by the Chapter to the Pope. They complain of the long absence of their Dean at the Papal Court. All sorts of difficulties were put in the way of the Canons in the execution of their duties by those whom they describe as the *Sequentes* of the Dean. The Canons were so perplexed and disturbed that they did not know when to celebrate. The Dean, they said, was so great a man in the Papal Court that they did not dare to litigate with him there, inasmuch as in times past they had had bitter experience of his power to their great trouble and expense. Yet they could not for that reason forego the defence of their ancient customs, and though placed in a great strait they must still strive to do their duty. The non-residence of the Dean caused the cessation of his accustomed charities. When in residence it was the custom of the Dean of Lincoln to give to twenty-five poor persons every day their food, and every week from the feast of S. Michael to the feast of St. Peter *ad vincula* to give to each poor man that came, twice in the week, a certain measure of beans and peas. All this however had long been in abeyance through the Dean's absence, and so they pray the Pope to give them another Dean, mentioning as fit persons among their body Simonde Islip (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), John de Offord, and William of Exeter.<sup>2</sup>

There is evidence to show that Bishops Beaufort, Repingdon, Flemyng, and Gray, all made orders and

<sup>1</sup> Cotton MSS., Vitellius A. X. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Hutton's Extracts, vol. v., Harleian MSS. (B. M.) 6954.

arrangements for the Cathedral, and in particular Bishop Flemyng drew up a Laudum, upon which the disputes afterwards referred to Bishop Alnwick turned.<sup>1</sup> This brings us to one who stands in a very close relation to the Cathedral, as the author of the Statutes by which the Church is now governed. William Alnwick was a man famous in his day for piety and learning; he was the chosen confessor of Henry VI., that most devout prince. He succeeded to the See in 1436, and he soon found that the task of regulating the affairs of the Cathedral was one to which he was imperatively called to address himself. By the care and munificence of the present Bishop of Lincoln, Bishop Alnwick's Laudum or Settlement of the matters then in dispute between the Dean and Canons, has been printed from the Bishop's Register, together with the Statutes afterwards drawn up by Bishop Alnwick and known as the *Novum Registrum*. This volume also contains the grounds of quarrel and the accusations mutually made by the contending parties. The Bishop has also most kindly furnished me with notes and extracts made by him from the Register, and I have myself carefully examined it as well as the Chapter Acts.

From these sources I must now endeavour to give a sketch of this famous quarrel. The Dean of Lincoln at the period of Bishop Alnwick's incumbency of the See was John Mackworth. Between him and his Chapter there had long raged an internecine war. Mackworth in addition to his Deanery held the Prebend of Nassington, and was usually non-resident. The Chapter was compelled to act a great deal without him, and this seems to have specially exasperated him. We learn incidentally from the introduction to the Laudum that there had been some severe quarrels between the Dean and the other members of the Chapter, but that these had been composed by the arbitration made by Bishop Flemyng.<sup>2</sup> But the peace which had been made was soon broken on the accession of Dean Mackworth. The Chapter bring against this Dean to the Visitor no less than forty-two charges, of which the following are some of the chief. (1.) That he will not entertain the choir on festivals when the Bishop is

<sup>1</sup> See Alnwici Laudum, pp. 85, 87, 106.

<sup>2</sup> Laudum Willielmi Alnwick, p. 82.



not present, and he is the principal celebrant, that being the ancient custom of the Church. (2.) That he shirks the obligations properly belonging to him both on principal feasts and on the obits of kings and bishops. (3.) That all the time he is non-resident at Nassington he takes away the Vicar, whom he ought to keep in the Cathedral Church to supply his place. (4.) That when non-resident he will not pay his sevenths, which ought to go to the common fund of the Canons, but (6) nevertheless insists on having a share of the sevenths paid by the other non-residentiaries. (7.) That he puts out monitions and orders as coming from the Dean and Chapter without any consultation with the Chapter. (8.) That he brings his clerks with him to Chapter meetings, and thus the secrets of the Chapter get known. (11.) That in processions he will not walk straight and in a line, as he ought according to the custom of the Church, but walks crookedly, or anyhow, without regard to the proper direction; sometimes behind the celebrant, sometimes along side of him, this being quite against the customs of the Church. (13.) That he allows his servants to hinder the porter of the Close from shutting the door at a proper time. (15.) That he has fraudulently kept back from the Chapter 25s. 8d. which he ought to pay at the *Obit* of Bishop Henry Lexington. (16.) That he receives fees for inductions and does not account for them, seizes for himself monies due to the Chapter. (17.) That he summons his subjects in the Prebends and even the Residentiary Canons of the Church on matters of discipline to any place that he pleases, not observing the proper place for doing this. (18.) That he comes to the Chapter attended by armed men to the great terror of the Canons, when at such times there ought to be only one verger keeping watch at the door of the Chapter House. (19.) That he admits people as poor clerks who are no better than idiots, without any examination, and allows such persons to form part of the poor clergy of the Church.<sup>1</sup> (20.) That at vespers and prime he makes the bell stop before the officiating priest has arrived, and on the contrary makes the choir wait for him, if he is late, even though the celebrant has begun mass, "to the great scandal of the Church." (21.) That

<sup>1</sup> For the office and duties of the *pauperes clerici* see *Novum Registrum*, p. 70.

he takes away from the Church the Consuetudinary of the Church, vulgarly called "the Black Book," which always ought to be kept in the vestry, in charge of the Treasurer. (22.) That he insists on inspecting the muniments of the Church, which ought not to be done except in the presence of the Provost of the Canons and another residentiary Canon appointed by the Chapter for this duty. (23.) That he won't attend to the table of services, but insists on celebrating on double feasts, when he is not set down for this. (24.) That he utterly despises the regulations made by Bishop Grey. (25.) That he has pulled down part of the wall of the cloister to build a stable. (26.) That he prevents the Archdeacon's official from paying the dole to the poor in St. Giles' Hospital. (27.) That he tries to expel the Proctor sent by the Chapter to the Convocation.

These formidable charges and many others were made to the Visitor by the Chapter against the Dean, and his interference is earnestly sought. On the other hand the Dean had something to say against the Chapter. He accuses them of wasting the common funds of the Church in senseless and useless quarrels, of granting leases and concessions of rights, privileges and immunities, under the common seal without consulting the Dean. And whereas each Residentiary ought to have a special Chaplain attendant upon him in the Church to wait upon him in the performance of the altar services, instead of this the Residentiaries take one of the Vicars Choral or the Chantry Chaplains to do this office. They also, according to the Dean, failed to present to Chantries in the Church which were vacant, and appropriated the revenues; other monies bequeathed for pious uses they had misapplied. They had appropriated the cloth bought out of the common fund of the Church for clothing for the poor to the use of themselves and their servants. They neglected to repair their houses and in many ways misconducted themselves.

This very pretty quarrel between the Dean and the Chapter Bishop Alnwick was called upon to settle and appease, and it must be confessed that his task was no slight one. The *Laudum* or Arbitration which he set forth under date of June 23, 1439, is a document of considerable length and minuteness, and attempts a detailed

settlement of all the points in dispute. But it seemed to the Bishop that this was not enough. He declares that though he had happily put an end to the long-standing quarrel between the Dean and the Chapter, yet inasmuch as the customs and ordinances by which the Church was governed were very obscure and contradictory, he greatly feared that dissension would again arise. Therefore he had applied himself to the arduous task of recasting the whole of the statutes of the Church and constructing out of them a new body of statutes, which henceforth were to be the only laws by which the Church was to be governed. The Chapter had been summoned, and had agreed that the Bishop should draw up for them such a new body of statutes, and in order to allow time for its construction the Chapter Meeting had been adjourned till after the Feast of S. Michael, 1440. Probably the body of statutes drawn up by Bishop Alnwick, and known as the *Novum registrum*, was finished and promulgated soon after this, but there is no actual date given for its publication, nor is there any record of its formal acceptance by the Chapter. But it would seem that as the Chapter had previously formally agreed that the Bishop should draw up a body of statutes for them, they were in fact committed to whatever the visitor should determine to promulgate and were cut off from the right of objecting. This, however, does not appear to have been the opinion of Dean Mackworth, who, finding the new statutes bear hardly upon some of his practices, made a formal objection to them (not, however, until some two years after their first promulgation) and declared he would never be bound by them. Hence arose an internecine war between the Bishop and the Dean. In 1443 the Bishop issued a commission to the Dean of Christianity, the Rural Dean of the city, to enquire into certain acts of violence alleged to have been done by the Dean who is called the *alleged* Dean. It was said that he had called the Precentor in the choir a *buffoon* and a *vile tailor*, and had offered personal violence to him. From a long entry in the Bishop's Register with regard to the mode of *censuring the Dean*, I gather that the cause of Mackworth's anger was some infringement of his dignity in this respect. Next year there was another commission addressed to the Sub-Dean

to enquire into the Dean's conduct. Mackworth was now put under suspension or inhibition, but he did not choose to recognise the sentence. Consequently, in 1444, the "pretended" Dean, as he is called, is summoned to Bugden to answer why he had presumed to act when suspended. I suppose he did not appear, as he was afterwards excommunicated by the Bishop. One of the last acts of Bishop Alnwick was to issue a commission for his trial, and there is every reason to suppose he would have been deposed had the Bishop's life lasted a little longer. But Bishop Alnwick died in December, 1449, and the Dean survived him by two years.

Although this episcopal visitation of the Cathedral had not caused the cessation of strife, which was probably impossible so long as such a litigious person as Mackworth was at the head of the Cathedral, it had nevertheless laid the foundation for peace in the future. The quarrels which had been so frequent between Deans and their Chapters in the past seem, under the wholesome influence of Alnwick's *Laudum* and *Novum registrum*, to have been quiescent during the remainder of the fifteenth century. But at the beginning of the next century the Cathedral was unhappily presided over by a Dean who was a worthy successor of Mackworth, and in his time a visitation of the Cathedral occurred, as to which we are furnished with many curious and interesting details. The Dean alluded to was George Fitzhugh, fourth son of Henry, Lord Fitzhugh, a family which was possessed of several fair lordships in Yorkshire in the time of the Conqueror.<sup>1</sup> Belonging to a powerful family, and enriched with numerous benefices, Dean Fitzhugh had allowed a state of things to grow up around him in Lincoln Cathedral, which was probably almost unparalleled even in that, perhaps the worst age of the English Church. William Smyth, the pious founder of Brasenose, was then Bishop of Lincoln, and knowing probably that there was much amiss in his Cathedral church, he determined to hold a visitation of it in due state and solemnity. In the register of this Bishop, which is written in a beautifully clear hand, differing herein from many of the episcopal registers, which are sore

<sup>1</sup> Churton's *Life of Smyth*, p. 122, from Dugdale, *Bar. i.*, 405.

trials to the eyes of students, is contained a full and minute account of this visitation.<sup>1</sup> It took place on Monday after the Feast of the Annunciation, March 29, 1501. The mass of the day having been said, and the other hour services which ought to be said before noon having been duly performed, the Bishop, issuing from his palace through the great gates, approached the western door of the Cathedral, the bells in the western bell-tower being rung, the Dean, the Canons Residentiary and non-Residentiary, the Vicars, the Choristers, and all others having any office in the church, waiting his approach in the nave of the Church, all vested in silk copes, and arranged in order, with the cross, the taper-bearers, the thurifers, as is accustomed in solemn processions. A bench, covered with silk, being set on the topmost step before the western door, the said reverend father bent the knee before the bench, and adored the image of the crucified one, [placed upon it.] And then they received him with honour, and the Dean and Chancellor (the Precentor being infirm and absent) censed him, and the Dean on his knees handed him the holy water, and he on his knees aspersed and kissed the cross. Then the Dean supporting him on the right and the Chancellor on the left, the Canons and Prebendaries preceding him, they conducted him through the nave and the centre of the choir, the chanter beginning and the choir answering responses to the Holy Trinity. Then, as the Bishop knelt before the High Altar, the Dean said prayers over him in the accustomed form, and the Bishop made an oblation at the image of the glorious Virgin placed in the midst of the altar; and then the aforesaid reverend father put on his canonical habit, viz., a surplice (or rochet), an amice, and a black cope, and went in procession to the Chapter-house of the church, with the Dean and Canons. A vast crowd also, both of clergy and laity, accompanied him. The Bishop then sat upon his accustomed seat in the Chapter-house, the Dean and Canons sitting in order, and the Word of God was preached in the Latin language by Master Edward Polwhele, scholar in the University of Oxford, on the text—"Go and see whether all is well with thy brethren." (Gen. xxxvii, 14.)

<sup>1</sup> It is given in most of its details in Churton's *Life of Smyth*, but I have carefully consulted the original Register.

Then an Indulgence of forty days having been granted by the Bishop, those not immediately interested withdrew, and the visitation began. The Dean, Dr. George Fitzhugh, exhibited certain letters certificatory directed to the Dean and Chapter, appointing the Visitation. These were duly read by the notary public, the Registrar of the Bishop, William Miller, clerk. Then the names of all holding office in the Cathedral being called over, all were called upon to take an oath of obedience, which the Dean did in these words. "In Dei nomine, Amen. Ego Georgius Fitzhugh, decanus ecclesiæ Cathedralis beatæ Mariæ Lincolnensis juro vobis reverendo in Christo patri et domino domino Willelmo dei gratiâ Lincolnensi episcopo, vestrisque successoribus episcopis Lincolnensibus, canonicam obedientiam quatenus de more teneor, sicut me Deus adjuvet et hæc Sancta Dei Evangelia." Then came Geoffrey Symeon, Chancellor, William Skelton, Treasurer, Simon Stalworthy, Sub-Dean. Then the Canons non-residentiary. Then were exhibited the letters of those absent excusing themselves by their proctors. William Smyth, Archdeacon of Northampton, was absent for the study of letters beyond seas. John Waller was employed in the king's business, in which many great interests of the Cathedral Church were concerned. Henry Hornby was Dean of the Chapel and secretary to the illustrious Countess Margaret, the King's mother, and was occupied with weighty affairs.<sup>1</sup> Then many of the other Canons, Priest Vicars and others appeared personally, and the Visitor pronounced all those who had not appeared contumacious. Then it being dinner-time he prorogued the Synod till four o'clock, at which time all being assembled the Dean exhibited certain letters apostolical with the lead, granted by Sixtus IV. (Pope), and containing a dispensation to him *in the sixteenth year of his age*, to hold any benefice with or without cure of souls, even if it were of the next dignity in the Cathedral after the pontifical. He also exhibited certain letters of Dr. John English, lately collector of the Pope in the kingdom of England, containing a dispensation granted to the said Dean, that being in the twenty-third year of

<sup>1</sup> In Churton's "Life of Smyth," much interesting information as to these Canons is to be found.

his age, he might be advanced to the sacred order of Priesthood. He also exhibited certain letters of Sixtus IV. (Pope), containing a dispensation that he the Dean might accept and retain three mutually incompatible benefices even with cure of souls, so long as between the three there were not more than two parochial churches. He also exhibited Apostolical letters of Sixtus IV. (Pope) containing the union of the parish Church of Bingham in the Diocese of York, to the Canonry and Prebend of Whittingdon in the Cathedral of York. Also letters of Innocent VIII. (Pope) authorising the union of the parish Church of Kirby Ravensworth to the parish Church of Bedall for the Dean's life, which Churches the Dean as Rector of them at present possessed. Also his letters of orders, and letters certificatory of his collation to his Prebend of Cropredy, and his induction and installation in the Deanery, but he exhibited no letters of the confirmation of his election to the said decanal dignity, nor any other letters whatsoever. The aforesaid Dean was then interrogated by the reverend father as to the state of the Church, its regimen, the morals and the conversation of those belonging to it, especially as to matters which might be reformed by the present Visitation. He answered that to the best of his belief all things were satisfactory, and that there were no grave and serious matters requiring reformation, or needing the intervention of the reverend father. In one matter, however, the Dean did desire the interference of the Visitor. He wished to have it laid down as a rule by the Visitor, a point which the custom-book had left uncertain, viz., that on the principal feasts, when the Dean was celebrant, the Canons should be obliged to serve him. This he said the Residentiary Canons frequently refused to do. The Dean's matters being disposed of *Geoffrey Simeon*, the Chancellor, appeared. He exhibited his letter of orders. Letters apostolical of Pope Innocent VIII., containing a dispensation to him to hold three incompatible benefices with two parish churches, letters of collation to Chancellorship and Prebend of Stoke. *Simon Stallworthy*, Sub-Dean, exhibited the same dispensation as to the three incompatible benefices with two parish churches, and his letters of collation to Algarkirk

and Bottesford, to the Sub-Deanery and the Prebend of Buckden. At the next session of the visitation some more important matters came up. (1) The Chancellor appeared and desired an enquiry into the state of a fund of £100 left by some unknown benefactor to the Senior Vicars who had lost their voices, to enable them to purchase corn and ale when those necessities might be bought cheap, the sum to be repaid each year by those who used it. He declared that many of the Vicars who had received portions of this sum had not repaid it. Some were dead, others were still in the Church. He prayed for an immediate inquiry into the accounts of the treasurer for that year. (2) He also stated that of old custom the fines arising from the Vicars absent from divine service in the Choir were converted to the use of the fabric and the repair of the houses in which the Vicars dwelt, but now it was the custom to divide the fine money equally among the Vicars, so that they cared very little about being absent from service as they all got a share in the spoil, and this he said tended to the great injury of divine service. (3) The Chancellor also made complaint and said that the Dean and Chapter having undertaken to spend 20 marks yearly at the obit of John Russell, lately bishop, and (?) 50 marks at the obit of Thomas Fitzwilliam Esq., and having received large sums of money from the executors for this purpose, nevertheless have not assigned the lands and possessions left them for this purpose, but hold possession of them and pay the obits out of the common fund of the Church.

Then came Master *William Skelton*, the Treasurer, and complained that the Archdeacon of Lincoln had withheld the allowances due to the poor in the hospital of St. Giles, outside the City of Lincoln, and specially the payments due for certain obits, all which payments had been made by his predecessor time out of mind.

The Treasurer further complained that the Master of the Choristers did not use any diligence in teaching singing, and that he was often absent and scarce gave one lesson a day. He had also a complaint against the house of the choristers interfering with the arrangements of his own house which adjoined it.

*Simon Stalworthy*, Sub-Dean, alleged that the Provosts



of the Vicars used to appear every Saturday in the Chapter House before the Dean and Chapter, and exhibit an account of the fines incurred by the Vicars for being absent from services, so that delinquents might not go unpunished, and the money might be applied to the sustentation of the Vicars' house. This, however, was abandoned, to the grave loss of the Church.

Master *Richard Trafford*, Priest-Vicar, complained that the statutes having provided that none should be admitted Vicar-choral who had not been approved by four senior Vicars choral both for his singing and reading, yet that now persons were admitted as Vicars who were altogether unfit, as notably a certain Bailey, admitted at the request of Thomas Fitzhugh, the natural son of the Dean.

*John Lamberd*, Vicar-choral, deposed that the antiphonary and grail books of the church were much broken in their bindings, and unfit for Divine worship, and that John Goutry, the singing-master, caused the chant books belonging to the choir to be carried away to the choristers' house, and there taught the choristers out of them, so that the books were often broken, and also often not to be found in the choir when they were wanted in the service.

*Richard Burton*, Vicar-choral and Chantry-priest, complained that John Helmeister, a citizen of Lincoln, unjustly kept back from him a rent of six shillings, which ought to be paid from a certain house on the High Bridge.

Some graver scandals followed, the names of the informers being withheld.

(a) It was stated in writing that a certain Mrs. Wygnerpole, wife of a gentleman in the service of the Dean, was very frequently entertained in the chamber of Master *Matthew Blackburn*, in a chantry within the church, and had access thither at any hour of the day or night, and that by pretext or reason of the said woman the Chaplains often resorted thither and played at dice (*taxillos*), bones and cards,<sup>1</sup> beyond midnight, losing their money terribly, and that great suspicion of incontinency attached thereto.

(b) It was also complained that whereas in former times on Feasts and sometimes on common days the Resi-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churton remarks that this passage shows cards to have been in vogue in England at this time, when it had been thought that they were little known here,

it being often asserted that they were introduced by the Princess Catherine of Spain, who did not arrive in England till the autumn of this year.

dentiary Canons used to be present at processions in the dress of their order, they now absented themselves altogether from processions.

(c) Again that the Dean admitted "poor clerks" to the church just as he pleased, without any regard to their learning and instruction.

(d) It was also complained that the servants of the Dean, and even those of the other Residentiaries, did enormous mischief to the fabric of the Cathedral Church by breaking the glass windows and the stone tracery by their arrows and cross bow bolts, and piercing the lead on the roof with their missiles.

(e) A complaint was also handed to the Visitor that whereas it was provided in the statutes of the Burghersh Chantry that the master should never admit any boy of his kin or affinity, nor any boy who did not know *playne song* (sic) and his Donatus, yet that it was sufficiently evident that Master Henry Apjohn, the Precentor of the Church of Lincoln, and Master of the said Chantry, had lately admitted a boy who was his near relative, being led by carnal affection thereto, which said boy did not know his Donatus, nor how to sing in any manner whatsoever.

After having received these presentments which scarcely seem to justify the Dean's assertion that all things were well in the Cathedral, the Bishop entered into a minute examination of the accounts. Master Thomas Hiller, residentiary, and William Gaske, clerk, Guardians of the Rubra Cista, vulgarly called the Red Tike, exhibited certain accounts as to the monies received and disbursed by them. The Bishop found that large sums had been spent on the fabric, but that there was such urgent need of further repairs that it was held to be necessary to appeal to the public. He directed therefore that the Archdeacons and non-residentiary Canons should be summoned to treat upon this matter and other matters connected with the well-being of the Church.

At the conclusion of the Visitation the names of those attached to the Church are given. The list includes thirty-two Chantry priests, nine poor clerks, seven choristers, eleven officers of the Church, fifteen priest vicars, nine lay vicars.

Bishop Smyth issued his schedule of injunctions as to

the amendment of the matters brought to light in his Visitation on the 20th April, 1501, dated from his Castle of Banbury, but no immediate steps were taken by the Dean and Chapter. It was not till October 7th, 1503 (that is two years and six months afterwards) that they undertook to reform some of the abuses which had come to light. Under that date we find in the Chapter Acts a paper in which the Dean and Chapter promise to the Bishop as follows: (1.) That they will restore all the monies which they have *borrowed* from the funds left for the obits of Bishop Russell and Mr. Fitzwilliam. (2.) That the Vicars shall be compelled to show the state of the chest in which the £100 was wont to be kept, in order that the restitution of the monies may be enforced. (3.) That the money due from some of the Canons to the fabric fund shall be restored. (4.) That an inventory shall be made of all the ornaments of the Church in the custody of the treasurer. (5.) That the Vicars and other ministers of the choir shall be compelled to observe their duties more diligently in the matter of the celebration of the divine service, especially as regarded early matins, and that the fines for their absence shall be paid to the building fund. (6.) That the Chantry priests shall be compelled to observe the foundations of their Chantries, and that they shall attend in the choir at the performance of service for the dead, and not go away before it is ended. (7, 8.) That all the good customs of the Church shall be observed, and that the Dean and Chapter shall be in amity. (9.) That the Vicars and poor clerks shall have a Canon chosen to report about them. (10.) That Chapter secrets shall be religiously kept. (11.) That the vestments, ornaments and jewels of the Church shall not be let go out of the Church without permission of the Dean and Chapter. (12.) That the Treasurer shall find good and wholesome wine for those who celebrate at the high altar and for the other chaplains whom he is bound to supply. (13.) That Chantry Chaplains shall not frequent the houses of laymen. (14.) That women of notoriously bad character shall not be allowed to reside in the Close. (15.) That the common funds of the Chapter shall be spent in proper uses. (16.) That the foundation of the Chantry of Mr.

John Alford shall be finished. (17.) That a general statement of the debts and revenues of the Church shall be drawn up.<sup>1</sup>

As a good many of the points complained of at the visitation are not mentioned in the schedule of promises, it may be inferred, perhaps, that they had been already amended--that the Dean's servants had left off shooting their cross-bow bolts at the coloured windows, and that the Archdeacon of Lincoln had resumed his doles to the poor in St. Giles' Hospital. We may trust also that the games at dice and cards in very questionable company had ceased, and that, if Mrs. Wygnerpole were not already banished from the neighbourhood of the Cathedral, the undertaking that no such ladies should be allowed to live in the Close would have the effect of removing her. We take leave of Dean Fitzhugh and his Canons with the best hopes for their reformation, but I think it will be admitted that the state of the Cathedral church of Lincoln, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, did somewhat need episcopal correction.

1 Act. Capit. Line. 1503, f. 71-3.