

Chester Cathedral in the Reigns of Mary and Elizabeth

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THE history of Chester Cathedral from its founding in 1541 to the death of Edward VI has already been dealt with in the pages of this Journal (XXXVII Pt. I), and in this paper I shall assume a knowledge on the part of the reader of what has gone before. My purpose now is to continue the history of the Cathedral to the end of the century, a period covered by the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth and one of critical importance in the history of the Church of England. I hope to show what effect the changes of this period had on one particular cathedral and diocese and to discover what exactly the Reformation meant to the people who were living at the time, how far it interrupted the continuity of Church life and what effect it had on the everyday life of the people, and so to clothe with flesh and blood the dry bones of history.

As in my previous paper, the Treasurer's Accounts form the basis of this one, supplemented by the usual printed sources, but I have also drawn on the unpublished writings of the Randle Holme family preserved in the Harleian Collection at the British Museum and on a very interesting Visitation by the Archbishop of York which has not been printed before. I also acknowledge with gratitude the help I have received from Mr. W. Ferguson Irvine, F.S.A., and Mr. J. H. E. Bennett, F.S.A., both of whom have been ever ready to put at my disposal the stored-up knowledge of a lifetime.

THE REIGN OF QUEEN MARY 1553-1558.

At the accession of Mary Tudor to the throne of England on July 19, 1553, the composition of the "Dean and Chapter" of Chester Cathedral was as follows, the names being arranged in order of seniority.

William Cliffe, D.D., LL.D., Dean	1547.
William Wall, D.D., Subdean	1541.
Nicholas Bucksey, M.A.	1541
John Gibbs	1544.
John Lepyngton	1544.
George Cotes, D.D.	1544.
John Whitby	1550.

As was expected, the new Queen undid all the changes made by Edward VI and brought the Church back to the position it occupied in the reign of Henry VIII before his quarrel with the Pope. What would the members of the Chapter do? On the one hand they might be expected to welcome this return to the *status quo ante*, for they were all what might be called pre-Reformation in origin. The Dean had been Archdeacon of London as long ago as 1529, Cotes had been elected Fellow of Balliol in 1523, Wall was an ex-friar, Bucksey an ex-monk of St. Werburgh's, and Whitby an ex-canon of St. John's, Chester. On the other hand they had all accepted the reforms of Edward VI. What actually happened was that only two of them resigned or were deprived, John Gibbs and John Lepyngton, while George Cotes was promoted to be Bishop of Chester in place of Bishop Bird. The latter was quite prepared to carry on through the new reign if he had been allowed, but unfortunately for him he had incautiously availed himself of the permission given by Edward VI to the clergy to marry, and although he promptly repudiated his wife and tried hard to induce the Queen to allow him to retain his see it was of no avail and he had to resign. He retired to Great Dunmow in Essex where he died in 1558. The three vacancies on the Chapter were naturally filled by the Queen with people of her way of thinking; they were John Wimsley or Wilmslow, Edward Gregory and Thomas Runcorn, all appointed on the same day, April 2, 1554. None of them held office for very long. Wimsley and Runcorn died in 1556, being succeeded by Robert Percival and William Collingwood, and Gregory died in 1559. Wimsley was Rector of Tarporley and brother of the Chancellor, of whom more anon. Runcorn was Rector of Bebington and Archdeacon of Bangor. From his will we learn that Edward Gregory was his great friend and that he left his Archdeaconry to him, though it is rather surprising that he had the power to do this. His will also reveals that his stables contained ten horses, five geldings, four nags and "my young trotting horse."¹

George Cotes, the new Bishop of Chester, only lived to enjoy his new office for one year, for he died in December, 1555. It is unfortunate for his reputation that during that year he should have been called upon to pronounce judgment on George Marsh for heresy and condemn him to be burnt at the stake. But Cotes could not very well help himself. Marsh had been arrested some weeks before Cotes became Bishop and he had no option but to try him and to condemn him if he refused to recant. The story has often been told² and there is no need to tell it in detail again here. Suffice it to say that towards the end of 1554 Marsh was brought from his prison at Lancaster to Chester where he was confined in the precincts of the palace for about four months. Here he was

¹ *Cheshire Sheaf*, 3rd ser., xviii, 53.

² *Chester Archaeological Journal*, xvii, pt. 1, 24, 26. *Sheaf*, 3rd ser., iii, 45.

argued with by the Bishop and many others, including Wrench, the headmaster of the King's School, and Archdeacon Bucksey. At last, probably in March 1555, he was brought to trial in the Consistory Court, which was then held in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral, in the presence of the Bishop, the Mayor, the Subdean, the Chancellor and many others. Marsh refused to deny the articles which were read out to him, pointing out that "all you now present did acknowledge the same in the time of the late King Edward VI", which of course was perfectly true and must have been very embarrassing for his judges. Here Foxe must be allowed to tell the story in his own inimitable way. Though he was not present himself he must obviously have owed his information to an eyewitness.

"The bishop took a writing out of his bosom, and began to read the sentence of condemnation; but when he had proceeded half through it, the chancellor [Wimsley] interrupted him, and said, 'Good my lord, stay, stay; for if you read any further it will be too late to call it again.' The bishop accordingly stopped, when his popish priests, and many other of the ignorant people, called upon Mr. Marsh, with many earnest words, to recant; and amongst others, one Pulleyn, a shoemaker, said to him, 'For shame, man! remember thyself, and recant.' They bade him kneel down and pray, as they would pray for him; so they kneeled down, and he desired them to pray for him; and he would pray for them."

Still Marsh refused to recant and so

"the bishop then put his spectacles on, and read forward about five or six lines, when the chancellor, with flattering words and smiling countenance, again called to the bishop and said, 'Yet, good my lord, once again stay; for if that word be spoken, all be past; no relenting will serve;' and the bishop, (pulling off his spectacles) said, 'I would stay if it would be' 'How sayest thou,' said he, 'wilt thou recant?'"

But Marsh remained obdurate and "the bishop then read out his sentence to the end, and afterwards said unto him, "Now I will no more pray for thee than I will for a dog." Marsh met his death bravely at Boughton, April 24, 1555, on the spot now marked by an obelisk.

Although Cotes was Bishop only for one year he was very energetic. He not only held an Ordination in the Cathedral at which twelve priests were ordained—the first ordination since 1547—but he also conducted a Visitation of his Diocese which reveals that the return to the Old Religion was at first generally welcomed.

The Chancellor, George Wimsley, who tried to save Marsh, must have had rather a guilty conscience, and his history well illustrates the seamy side of the Reformation. He was, as has been said, brother to Prebendary Wimsley

and their father was Rector of Davenham, Bishop Bonner of London being their half-brother. In the days when they were born the wives of priests were not legally recognised and therefore both the Wimsleys were reckoned illegitimate, though this does not seem to have been a barrier to their ordination. George was made Chancellor of the new Diocese by Bishop Bird in 1541, which office together with that of Diocesan Registrar he held until his death. Although he was a priest he married and had four sons, the youngest an "innocent," and also two illegitimate sons. He was Rector of Tattenhall and died there in February, 1560-61, after making a long and garrulous will which shows that during his lifetime he had made the most of his worldly opportunities. He had obtained the advowsons of Waverton, West Kirby and Astbury, the last-named being worth a clear hundred marks a year, and also the advowson of the Archdeaconry of Chester, worth £50 a year. This was held at the time he made his will by Prebendary Percival who paid him an annuity of 20 marks for it. Further, he had the lease of the parsonage of Tattenhall, let to his brother Thomas for £9 10s. a year, and the lease of the parsonage of Castleton in Derbyshire. The benefice of Tattenhall was to be filled at the next vacancy by "my base sone Thomas" if he became a priest.³ Wimsley died in the odour of sanctity and in communion with Rome, although he had conformed to the changes of Edward VI's reign and had condemned George Marsh to be burnt alive for not doing so.

The only accounts which have survived in this reign range from Christmas 1555 to Christmas 1556 and we have therefore no record of the way in which the old services were restored in the Cathedral, but we are able to glean a few extracts which throw light on what was going on in the Cathedral during the above-mentioned year.

Candlemas, for example, was observed in the old-time way.

1555 xiii ponde of wax agaynste Candlemas to the Churche	xii s. viii d.
The trysell [trestle ?] for the pasche at Candlemas	v s. iiii d.

Henry VIII's death was still remembered.

the xxii of January at the Kynge dyrge for Rynggyng & to the bellman and to poore folke	iii s. iiii d.
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There is, however, some discrepancy here, for he died on January 28.

The old ceremonies in Holy Week were still kept up.

First to Thomas Barnes [Minor Canon] for a pottell of Malvesey and a pare of gloves for the prophet upon palme Sunday.	xiiii d.
For bred wyne and ale for the Maundy as apperith hyn bill.	ii s. x d.

³ *Chetham Soc.*, xxxiii, 115, (1846).

There are three purchases of rushes during the year,—“ for the quier II sacks ” at Easter, the second and third being at Whitsuntide and Midsummer at 10d. a time. Other interesting items are

for a penteyd clothe to Jesus altar wth a brother of velvet and sylke frynge	xii s.
for a thousand of houselynge bred	x s.
for wax to seale my Lords election	iiii d.

This refers to the election of Cuthbert Scott, D.D., by the Chapter to be the new Bishop in place of George Cotes deceased.

for a paxe to the Ladye Altar	viii d.
for getting stones out of the horse pole	i d.
for ringing at the assumcion of our Ladye and the dedication of a day	xvi d.
for ii censers to the churche	xiiii s.

Cuthbert Scott, the new Bishop of Chester, was Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge in 1554 and 1555 and was an ardent supporter of the Papacy. He was Bishop for four years only, but during that time he conducted two Visitations of his Diocese and held nine ordinations. There must have been a dearth of clergy of his persuasion and much leeway had to be made up. In 1557 he ordained 17 priests and in 1558 no fewer than 68, 35 of whom, however, belonged to other Dioceses.⁴

The Visitations do not concern the Cathedral except so far as they affected S. Oswald's, of which it is recorded in 1557, “ The Church wants repair, the churchyard is defiled by animals and cattle. The curate has not access to the Holy Eucharist at night time, nor has he suitable dwelling house. The Churchwardens appeared and state that the duty of repairing the Church lies with the Dean and Chapter; that Thomas Green rents the churchyard, and that the keys of the Church are in the hands of the Clerks of the Cathedral Church. Ordered to communicate with the Dean and Chapter on the matter. Against Geoffrey Langley—carried off part of the tabernacle in spite of the Churchwardens. Excommunicated.”⁵ Evidently the use of the South Transept as a church was not a very convenient arrangement, but it is interesting to know that in spite of it being used as a parish church the Dean and Chapter were still responsible for its upkeep.

It was in the reign of Queen Mary that a change was made in the appointment of the prebendaries of the Cathedral which still has effect today. At the founding of the cathedral the right to appoint was vested in the Crown; in 1557 or 1558 the Queen granted it to the Bishop of the Diocese. This was done to compensate him for the loss of the Rectory of Workington in Cumberland,

⁴ *Sheaf*, iv, 90.

⁵ *Ibid.* 3rd ser., 1, 32.

which, after having been given to him by Henry VIII as part of the endowment of his See, was found to have been already given to someone else. The Rectories of S. Bees and Cartmell were the other part of the compensation.⁶

On November 17, 1558, Mary's disastrous reign came to an end and a few months later Dean Cliffe died also, December 7.

THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

I. 1558-1567.

Elizabeth came to the throne on November 17, 1558, and was proclaimed in the Cathedral on the 25th at a cost of 13s. 4d. That there would be religious changes under the new Queen no one could doubt, but what those changes would be and how far they would go no one had any idea. Two changes were, however, certain; the burnings for heresy would cease and the Papal supremacy in England would again be abolished.

For the time being all went on at the Cathedral as before. The prophet had his gloves as usual on Palm Sunday and 2s. 8d. was spent on the Maundy Thursday feast. But only the day before (March 22) Parliament had passed the Act of Supremacy in spite of a vigorous speech against it by Bishop Scott. The Act of Uniformity was also opposed by Scott, but passed on May 8 and came into force on June 24⁷. By it the Prayer Book of 1552, with a few specific alterations, was restored. In August Royal Commissioners were sent round the northern Dioceses to see that the Acts were enforced and they carried with them Elizabeth's Injunctions. These were in the main a repetition of those issued by Edward VI and included those ordering that holy tables should be substituted for stone altars and that all shrines should be destroyed. If S. Werburgh's shrine had not already suffered it could hardly fail to escape this second order. The Commissioners reached Chester Diocese at the end of September, 1559. They sat at Northwich on October 20, but there the chief Commissioners fled for fear of the plague, appointing local laymen as their deputies. These sat in Tarvin church on October 24 and in the Cathedral on the 26th. They noted in a memorandum in Latin that the "see was vacant long; that the Deanery had lain void two years, that there were but two resident prebendaries; and that the establishment was in such beggarly state that they could neither help the poor nor pay the ministers of the church their salaries."⁸ This is manifestly inaccurate. Bishop Scott, after his vigorous opposition in the House of Lords, was deprived of his office on June 26, 1559,

⁶ *Notitia Cestriensis, Chetham Soc.*, viii, 3.

⁷ Both speeches are printed by Strype, *Annals*, i, pt. ii, 408 and 438.

⁸ R. W. Dixon, *History of the Church of England*, v, 154.

and imprisoned in the Fleet, so that the See could not have been vacant more than a few months at the most. Likewise the Deanery could hardly have lain void two years, for Dean Cliffe did not die until December, 1558, though of course it is possible that he might have resigned two years before his death. As regards payments of salaries the Accounts show that salaries were paid to all the usual officials up to Michaelmas of that year, after which the records are missing.

One of Elizabeth's first duties, then, must have been to appoint a new Dean to the vacancy in Chester. Her choice fell upon Richard Walker, the son of an artisan, who was born and educated at Lichfield and went from there to Jesus College, Cambridge. He was subsequently appointed Headmaster of Lichfield Grammar School and on his ordination in 1540 was made Rector of West Kirby. In 1542 he became Dean of the Collegiate Church of S. John Baptist, Chester. On the dissolution of that College in 1547 Walker received a pension of £14 5s. a year and became Archdeacon of Stafford, this in addition to his Rectory of West Kirby which he still held. Having successfully survived the changes made by Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary, he could not have been a man of very strong convictions, in which he was not peculiar. In 1663 he initiated proceedings against the Cotton family to try and recover for the Cathedral the lands which had been filched from it. He died, however, in September, 1667, before a decision could be reached.⁹

The Elizabethian Settlement *made no change* in the composition of the Cathedral Chapter. Of the prebendaries in office Wall and Bucksey were old foundation members whom nothing could move, but the remaining four were all recent appointments by Mary, as we have seen. They were Edward Gregory (April 2, 1554), Robert Percival (Aug. 2, 1556), William Collingwood (Sept. 24, 1557), and Thomas Wilson (Oct. 1, 1557). Collingwood was also Rector of Christleton. It might have been expected that if they were appointed by Mary they would have conscientious objections to the changes made by Elizabeth, but this apparently was not so. It is true that the names of Percival, Collingwood and Wilson appear in the list of deprived clergymen drawn up by one Nicholas Sanders in 1571, but although he lived so close to the time, the Accounts show that he was wrong. Also Ormerod says (I 271) that Gregory was deprived, probably because he disappears in 1559 shortly before the Commissioners arrived in Chester. But it is dangerous to jump to conclusions. The Accounts show that he died suddenly, so suddenly that the clerk had written his name down in the list of prebendaries to receive their quarterly payment, but there is no sum of money entered against his name in the right hand margin while in the left hand margin there is written in a very small hand

⁹ *Sheaf*, 3rd ser., II, 54.

"*Non quod obiit.*" He was succeeded on January 13, 1559-60 by Robert Hebblethwaite, the spelling of whose name gave the clerk a perpetual headache, to judge by the different attempts he made at it. William Collingwood was not long in following Gregory, for he died at the end of August, 1560, according to the following entry in the Accounts.

Towards the paymente of Mr. Colingwoods dette of such money as was dewe unto hym before his death that is to saye frome Mydsomer a.d. 1560 untill within one monthe of Michaelmas next after.

He was succeeded by Edward Hawford, B.D., Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, on February 14, 1560-61. He seems to have remained at Cambridge and Chester saw very little of him.

The Accounts during Elizabeth's reign are fragmentary, for they cover only the years 1559, 1561-63, 1567, 1572, 1574, 1578-79, 1583-85, 1588, 1597. On September 17, 1561, we get for the first time a summary statement of account which is interesting in view of the Commissioners' Report on the poverty of the Dean and Chapter.

And so there is receaved [after payment of salaries] more than is laid forth the some of xxxii li vi s. viii d. ob the wyche some . . . was deyveryd unto Sir John Mayre [Minor Canon] deputy to the tresurare aforesaide to the use of the churche and chapter before namyd.

There is one item which occurs here for the first time, but which in future is an annual entry.

ffor iii nyghtes watchinge in Christmas

xii d.

In later years there is also a payment of 8d. for hire of harness. This refers to the custom of employing extra watchmen on the nights of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and S. Stephen's Day. It is supposed to have begun in the time of the Welsh wars, owing to the inconvenient habit of the enemy choosing those nights for making a raid on the City. Sixteen houses were charged with the responsibility of supplying each a watchman in virtue of the terms of their tenure. In 1542 the Dean and Chapter owned two such houses (called Gable Rents) in Watergate Street, but now apparently they had only one and they hired a man to do the watching at 4d. a night. If they still had two houses they must have paid their men only 2d. a night which seems too small a payment even for those days.¹⁰

Another annual item is the Midsummer bonfire, which, says the author of *British Calendar Customs*¹¹ is "of great antiquity and has close associations with the rites and beliefs of Druidical times." Here in Chester it evidently formed part of the Midsummer Show, of which a full account is given by

¹⁰ Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Periods*, 234. Ormerod, 1, 382.

¹¹ *British Calendar Customs*, III, 6.

Morris¹². What is remarkable is the expense to which the Dean and Chapter went. In 1547 it cost 8s. 10d. In 1551 it was almost double—16s. In this year (1562) they spent 13s. 9d. and in 1567 £1 4s. 6d. The details in 1562 are as follows.

For carienge of iii ^{or} loades woode to the bonfire	x s. viii d.
for a loade faggottes to the same	ii s. i d.
For makinge the same	xii d.

In 1567 there are two additional items.

To browen for makinge of the bonfyre	iiii d.
For gorsses on Midsummer even to the bonfyre	vi d.

The Bishop appears in the Accounts from time to time. Bishop Scott, as we have seen, was deprived of his See on June 26, 1559, and after being imprisoned in the Fleet managed to escape to Flanders. The See was left vacant for nearly two years, and at last on May 4, 1561, the Queen appointed William Downham, Canon of Westminster, who had been her chaplain before she came to the throne. Downham was an easy-going man and was continually getting into trouble with the authorities for not exercising discipline in his Diocese. In 1568 the Queen wrote him a personal letter on the subject, as we shall see later; in 1570 the Privy Council reported him to the Archbishop of Canterbury and in 1574 he was written to again. It was therefore quite in keeping with his character to buy off the Archbishop of York's Visitation of his Diocese by letting him have the fees. Bishop Pilkington of Durham alluded to this in a letter he wrote to Archbishop Parker in 1564 full of grumblings about his brother Bishops.

"The Bishop of Man," he wrote, "liveth here at ease, and as merry as Pope Joan. The Bishop of Chester hath compounded with my Lord of York for his visitation, and gathereth up the money by his servants; but never a word spoken of any visitation or reformation. And that, he saith, he doth of friendship, because he will not trouble the country, nor put them to charge in calling them together."¹³

The Accounts, however, show that the Bishop did hold a Visitation in the autumn of 1561—

Payed the first daye of my L. Visitation for a dynner to him	xxxi s. xi d.
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and the following year he duly collected the Archbishop's fees for him.

payd the xviiith of February to my L. Bishopp for p'curacones due at my L. Yorke's visitation	iii li.
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¹² Morris, 323-332.

¹³ Strype, *Parker*, Bk. II, ch. 26.

In December, 1562, the Bishop was given another dinner, but not such an expensive one.

Spent upon my lorde busshope at his going up to parlamente to hys
farewelle v s. ii d.

Parliament was prorogued on April 10, 1563, and the Bishop was welcomed home again.

For ryngyng at my lord busshopes comynge home viii d.

Now follow a few extracts which throw a little light on the Cathedral in the first decade of Elizabeth's reign.

1561 payed to my L. Busshopes man for a table of commandments xiiii d.

Elizabeth ordered the Ten Commandments to be set up at the east end of the chancel in a letter to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners dated January 22, 1561. This entry in the Accounts was made in the autumn of that year. The letter states that the Commandments were not only for edification but also "to give some comely ornament and demonstration that the same is a place of religion and prayer."¹⁴ To such a pitch of bareness had our churches been reduced by this time.

1562 payed to Mr. Willm. Glaseor for his wages and fees for one hole
yeare and a halfe endit at Midsom' 1562 xxxvii li x s.

Glaseour, who lived at Backford, was seneschal or steward of the Cathedral, holding a position similar to that held by Lord Derby in the Abbey. His duties could not have been very onerous and the post seems to have been a lucrative sinecure. £25 a year would be about £700 in modern money.

1563 January For anyrne [an iron] for the church to smyte fyrere vi d.

We are so accustomed to matches that we forget what a trouble it must have been to "smite fire" without them.

In 1563 there was evidently some trouble over the subsidy. The clergy at this date still retained the right to tax themselves in Convocation, but in the reign of Mary the amount of their subsidy was fixed for them at £20,000, so that the privilege did not mean very much. The representative of the Dean and Chapter in Convocation was Prebendary Hebblethwaite.

To Sir Rondull Barnes [Minor Canon] rydyng in the churche cause to Lytchefelde	xi s. vi d.
(April) To a messenger to the northe country to Master hebletwhat	vi s. viii d.
(June) To Mr. hebletwahat for his expenses to Yourcke	vi s. viii d.
To a messenger to luchfealde with letters concernyng the subseyde	ii s. viii d.
(July 20) To John Shawe for his cost to london to make answer to my lords graunt Mr. (sic.) for tenth & subseydie	xxvi s. xiiii d.
For his horshyre	viii d.

¹⁴ Proctor and Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 109.

It seems to have been the custom to reward the man who brought the first tithe salmon. Salmon fishing in those days and until quite recently did not open at Chester until May 1.

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|------|--|---------|
| 1563 | In reward for a teathe sameunde | viii d. |
| 1567 | Pay'd the first day of May to him that brought a tithe samon | viii d. |

We get very little information about the conduct of the services within the church beyond the usual entries for bread and wine and candles and besums and rushes and ringing. Now and then money was spent on the choir.

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|------|--|------------|
| 1561 | To Sir John Mayre [minor canon] for one communyon boke and one psalter bought at the commandmente of Mr. Wall being subdeane | [no entry] |
| 1563 | For prickynge of dyvers strange songs to the quyre | ii s. |
| 1572 | For viii singinge bookes for the quere | x s. |

These would be for the eight choristers.

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|------|--|--------|---------|
| 1563 | For reparyng of the coupes in the church in buckerram and rybban | vii s. | viii d. |
| 1575 | ii pounce candles for the lanterne in the church and for the clerke to shutte the doores | | viii d. |

Perhaps this is the lantern which now hangs over the font and which was "found crushed into a shapless mass of tin, and restored under the guidance of Sir A. Blomfield."¹⁵

Repairs were continually being made to the buildings and sometimes we can get an indication of how the buildings were being used. There was, for example, a Choir School, probably for instruction in singing only, as the choristers were included in the list of King's School scholars.¹⁶

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|------|--|------------|--------|
| 1562 | For repering of the Queresteres schole | [no entry] | |
| 1576 | A lok and kaye for the dore of the singing schole | vi d. | |
| 1578 | For two double spars bought by Richard Done to stay the roof of the Choristers schole | xvi d. | |
| 1585 | April 21. To Edward Dawby for xxii ffoote of new glasse for the windows in the songe schoole at 7d. the ffoote | xv s. | ii d. |
| | Paid to hym for mendynge the ould glasse in the same schoole | | iii d. |

The minor canons seem to have lived together and they kept a common table, taking it in turns to act as "steward menstrual" or mess president each month.

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|------|---|--------|---------|
| 1563 | To Sir Roger Houghton stuard menstruall | XLV s. | iiii d. |
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¹⁵ E. Barber, *Guide to the Cathedral*, 34. It was found on the staircase in the corner of the chapter house.

¹⁶ In Randle Holme's plan (? late 17th century) the south-west porch of the Cathedral is labelled Singing School Porch. See Lyson's *History of Cheshire*, II, 452.

This sum did not vary from month to month, and it would seem, therefore, that the six canons' food cost no more than 3d. a head per diem.

	January. For reparyng the pety Canones house	v s.
	Aug. 19, to a wryghte a wycke for workynge on the Ruffe upon the pety cannons house	v s.
	Oct. 22. for soder to repear the ledes over the pety cannons chamber	xviii d.
1576	To the same Dalbye for mendinge the windows at the pety canons house called the Misericord	xvi d.
1585	Pd. to hym [Edward Dawby] for mending 3 windows in the misericorde called the P. Canons Dinging hall	vii d.

This gives us a clue to the whereabouts of the house, for the misericord was the monastic warming room or parlour generally situated in the infirmary, which was on the green opposite Abbey Street.

The lay clerks, or conducts as they were called, also appear to have lived together.

1563	For a locke and a kaye and two hynge with other necessary reparatyons to the chanters house	ii s.
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Extensive repairs were done to the Cathedral barn in 1567.

	June 27, to a carpenter for putting up a tree in the mynster barne	x d.
	More to a laborer to helpe get up the same	vi d.
	To Thomas Johnson for a tree to undersett the minster Barne	vi d.
	July 2, to Skinner for Roddes for the Barne of the Minster	iiii d.
	July 11, for a lode of claye to the Minster barne	vi d.
	For carienge water to the same and carienge claye and other necessaries to the laborors	iiii d.
	To danet for daubinge	vi d.

The "tree" was probably a triangular framework or principal which was put together on the ground and then hoisted into position. In this connection may be mentioned timber "tryes" which may have been the curved timbers still sometimes seen in half-timbered buildings.

1563	To Robert Skinner & a wryght with hyme to Huntingdon to make devsys of the tymber tryes	xiii d.
	For lx tryes	vii li
	For caryage and knotting of the same	iiii li iii s. iii d.

On the cathedral itself very little money appears to have been spent in the years for which the Accounts have survived. In 1562 gutters were laid at a cost of £1 os. 2d. and the clock was repainted. The glazier and his man were at work for 12 days (16s.) and again (November 21) for 3 days (3s.). In 1567 there is a reference to a new aisle in the church which is difficult to understand and must mean a newly restored aisle.

	Inprimis iii li. and a halfe and syx owences of sowder spent by Robert Skinner upon the newe yle in the church	ii s. iii d.
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The Whitsun Plays, 1567.

Paid for a brod clothe against the Witsun pleas	vi s. viii d.
For a barell of bere to gene ¹⁷ to the pleares to make them to drinke	vi s.
For packe thread at Witsun to hange up the clothe	ii d.
On Witsun even for russes for the quire	xvi d.

In 1573 a barrel of "byre" was provided for the players costing 8s. and a cloth was provided for "the mansyon over the gate" (6s.) and cords for it (1s. 4d.). It looks as though the front of the Abbey gateway was draped for this occasion.

There is one item in 1562 which is a complete puzzle and the context in which it appears does not throw any light upon it.

For a cast of lyans	viii d.
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A cast of hawks meant "a set or couple of hawks," but we cannot suppose that the Dean and Chapter kept a couple of lions!

II. 1567-1577.

There were several changes in the Chapter during the first decade of Elizabeth's reign. The old veteran and ex-monk Nicholas Bucksey died in 1567 and was succeeded by Dr. Piers who held office for less than a year and then on the death of Dean Walker was made Dean, October 4, 1567. His place on the Chapter was taken by John Nutter, another Dean-to-be. Thomas Wilson disappears in 1566 and is succeeded by Thomas Dunne, who appears in the Accounts as Treasurer in the following year. Robert Percival, appointed by Queen Mary in 1556, was followed by John Hardyman, D.D., who was appointed in June, 1563. Ormerod, quoting the Cowper MSS. which is apparently no longer extant, says Hardyman was deprived by the Queen in 1567 for excessive zeal against Puritans, but the quotation is so full of inaccuracies that we cannot accept such evidence without confirmation, which is at present lacking. All we know for certain is that in that year Thomas Herle took his place. The complete list of Dean and Chapter in 1567 is, then, as follows.

John Piers, D.D., Dean	1567.
William Wall, D.D., Subdean	1541.
Robert Hebblethwaite	1560.
Edward Hawford, B.D.	1561.
Thomas Dunne, D.D.	1566.
John Nutter, B.D.	1567.
Thomas Herle, B.D.	1567.

¹⁷ Dr. J. C. Bridge (*C.A.J.*, xix, pt. II, 69) says this is Anglo-Saxon *gene* = to invite, compel.

The new Dean, Dr. Piers, was very much an Oxford man, as he was born at South Hinksey, a village near Oxford, was educated at Magdalen College School and became a Fellow of that College in 1546. After his ordination he held the country living of Quainton near Aylesbury from 1559 to 1566, returning to Oxford in time to preach before the Queen on her visit to that University. His text was "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers (Isaiah, XLIX, 23). Whether it was the result of this sermon or not we do not know, but rapid promotion followed. Early in 1567 he was made Prebendary of Chester Cathedral, as we have seen, and in October of the same year he was made Dean. In 1570 he added to his office the post of Master of Balliol College, which he held for one year, relinquishing it to become Dean of Christ Church and in the same or following year Dean of Salisbury. For a time, therefore, he held by royal licence three Deaneries together and it is not likely that Chester saw very much of him.¹⁸

From the Dean we pass to the Bishop. We left him being welcomed home from Parliament with the ringing of the Cathedral bells in 1562. On February 21, 1568, the peace of this good man was rudely disturbed by what can only be described as a "raspberry" from the Queen. At this time the Papists were beginning to cause her considerable anxiety, especially in the north of England and particularly in Lancashire where many of the ancient families still clung to the old Religion. Out of 8,512 recusants in England at this time it was reported that 2,442 resided in the Diocese of Chester, which of course included Lancashire at this time.¹⁹ In her letter the Queen says how disappointed she was in the Bishop, "expecting in you that diligence and carefulness for the containing of our subjects in the uniformity of religion, and in the service of God, according to the laws of the realm, as now upon the credible reports of disorders and contempts to the contrary in your diocese, and especially in the County of Lancaster, we find great lack in you, being sorry to have our former expectation in this sort deceived." She then compares him unfavourably with Lord Derby, who has been "very careful and faithful for our service. Now therefore," she goes on, "we will and charge you further to have other regard to your office; and especially to foresee that all churches and cures be provided of honest men, as well learned curates as ye can cause to be provided; using therein the ordinances and censures of the Church to the remedy of the defaults, and suffer not for lack of your personal visitation, by repairing into the remotest parts and especially into Lancashire, that obstinate persons having been most justly deprived, be not secretly maintained, to pervert our good subjects within any part of your diocese; as we understand they have now of long time

¹⁸ *Sheaf*, 3rd ser. III, 1.

¹⁹ Morris, *Chester* in Diocesan Histories Series, 136.

been . . . ” It is not surprising that such a letter should have galvanised the Bishop into activity and sent him trundling northward in his coach as soon as the summer arrived. On November 1, 1568, safely back from the wilds, he wrote to Cecil to say he “ had the last summer visited his whole diocese, which was of length six score miles, and had found the people very tractable; and nowhere more than in the furthest parts bordering upon Scotland; where, as he said, he had most gentle entertainment of the worshipful to his great comfort. That his journey was very painful by reason of the extreme heat; and that if he had not received great courtesy of the gentlemen, he must have left most of his horses by the way; such drought was never seen in those parts.”

If “ parts bordering upon Scotland ” may seem rather an exaggeration it must be remembered that in those days the Chester Diocese included Grasmere and Keswick, the boundary being the River Derwent.

Thus did this modern Balak bless those whom he was sent to curse. But he does not seem to have realised how exasperating his conduct must have appeared to the Queen, for he took this occasion to ask a favour of her. He had for the last seven years been allowed to hold two livings in plurality in order to augment his income. The period for which they were granted to him was now coming to an end and he writes to Cecil to ask him to get the Queen to grant him the livings for life, “ and that in so doing, he should be able to maintain the like port that he had hitherto done; otherwise, he should of necessity be constrained to abate his household, which he would be very loath to do. He added, that he had of the bishopric nothing but bare rent, and much of it illy paid; and that it was the least revenue that any man of his calling had in the realm. That he had paid yearly out of the same, as he was able to make a perfect account, above 500 marks, so that there were not much more than 500 marks for him to maintain himself and his poor family. That he kept every day to the number of forty persons, young and old, besides comers and goers; which could not be maintained with any smaller portion. That he was no purchaser of lands; that he bestowed all in housekeeping; and that he was glad to make even at the year’s end; and yet, he thanked God, that he was out of debt. This he wrote from his house at Chester.”²⁰

We have seen Bishop Downham abroad in his Diocese; we are now to have a glimpse of him at home in the bosom of his family. The occasion is the appointment of a prebendary to fill the place of William Wall, Sub-Dean, the last survivor of the original foundation, who died in 1573. So much has happened since his appointment that it is hard to realise that he was once Warden of the Grey Friars in Chester. He was buried under the west window of the Cathedral which used to bear this inscription :—

²⁰ Strype, *Annals*, 1, pt. II, 250 ff.

SUB HAC FENESTRA JACET WILLIELMUS WALL, NUP' HUIUS ECCLESIAE PREBENDARIUS AC OLIM MINORITA, FILIUS WILLIELMI WALL PAUPERIS HEREMITE QUI POST MORTEM UXORIS SVAE SOLITUDINEM MONTIS MULICARNI SE CONTULIT IBIDEM SOLITARIA' VITAM DUCENS ORATIONE JEJUNIO ET CONTEMPLATIONE.²¹

"Under this window lies William Wall, late Prebendary of this Church and formerly a Minorite, son of William Wall a poor hermit who after the death of his wife betook himself to the solitude of Mount Mulicarnus, leading there a solitary life in prayer, fasting and meditation."

We are lucky to possess a detailed account of the way in which Wall's successor was appointed. It has been left to us by the rejected candidate, the Rev. Thomas Purvis, Headmaster of the King's School, and is contained in his reply to one of the questions asked in the Archbishop of York's Visitation in 1578.²² His reply is so condensed and assumes so much knowledge of what has gone before that I print an expanded version of it.

On February 21, 1573, Thomas Purvis was presented to the vacant prebendal stall by the Dean, Dr. Piers. The Bishop had the right of appointment, but in 1568 he had granted the next prebend that should be vacant to five trustees among whom were the Dean, Sir William Davenport and Sir George Calveley.²³ It would seem that on this occasion the Dean had acted on his own initiative without the consent of the others. Armed with the necessary documents Purvis waited upon the Bishop to get his appointment confirmed. It must have been with some trepidation that he did so, for at the last "Metropolitically" Visitation in 1571 he had dared to find fault with his Lordship. However, Bishop Downham was not the man to bear malice, and "after sharp expostulation" he consented to admit him. "You shall have it," he said. "Register, make out his institution." At this Mrs. Downham intervened. Starting up from her stool, she exclaimed, "If I were a man he should not have it," and much more to the same effect. "But my Lord answered, 'Why, woman, the writings are in order. It must be so. Cotgreave (turning to the Registrar) make out his institution. Mr. Purvis, leave your writings with me that he may make it out.'" The schoolmaster thanked him and departed joyfully. Soon after he had gone the Chancellor came in and Mrs. Downham enlisted him on her side. He studied the "writings" Purvis had left behind and gave it as his opinion that the appointment was irregular

²¹ Harl. MS. 2151, f. 43, quoted in *Sheaf*, 3rd ser., xviii, 91 and *Ormerod* 1, 298, n.

²² York Dio. Registry, Cause Papers, File R. vii, G. 1883.

²³ Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis* 4. (*Chetham Soc.* viii).

because only one of the five trustees had made the appointment. But—illogically as it seems—he went on to say that “if any of the other feoffees would present some other clerk” Purvis might be excluded. Sir George Calveley, who lived at Lea Hall near Aldford, was sent for “with convenient speed” and for the next four days poor Purvis was denied access to the Bishop. Then his Lordship informed him that he had sent a messenger to Dr. Piers, who was probably at one of his other Deaneries, “to know his mind concerning the advowson,” and that he would be back in ten days time. “*Interim* nothing shall be done prejudicial unto you.” But about the tenth day Sir George Calveley arrived with his nominee, Edward Bulkeley, who was forthwith admitted to the vacant stall. The Bishop, however, being a kindly man, suggested that Purvis ought to be compensated for his disappointment, but said he, “Marry, what it shall be we may not say before he (Bulkeley) is inducted, for fear lest we commit simony.” Purvis protested that no action ought to be taken until his appeal had been heard. He “required a caveat *ne quisquam admitteretur pendente lite*,” but the Bishop answered brusquely, “After he is installed, take what caveat you will; before, you shall have none, I promise you.” Purvis appealed to the Archbishop of York who refused to hear him, and so he was forced to accept whatever compensation was offered him, after the induction. This amounted to £20 in two payments from Mr. Bulkeley and a promise from the Bishop that he “would give me another advowson and place me here prebendary at midsummer or Michaelmas next at the farthest.” When this did not materialise, “I followed mine appeal both at York and at London to my further undoing, *Ut Hesiod*.” The schoolmaster was fond of using Latin tags and the allusion here is to the poet Hesiod who was involved in a dispute with his brother about his patrimony and lost his case.

The whole story is worthy of the pen of a Trollope; the kindly but weak Bishop with his masterful wife and the worldly-minded and persistent pedagogue with whom one can have little sympathy. The Dean seems to have raised no objection to his nominee being replaced, and this is perhaps explained by the fact that he resigned the Deanery on February 28 of that year (1573), retaining only the Deaneries of Salisbury and Christ Church. Promotion continued to come his way, for two years later he was made Bishop of Rochester (April 15, 1576) and in less than two years more was translated to Salisbury where he was already Dean. For a time he held both these offices together. In 1589 he became Archbishop of York, and a long Latin epitaph in a corner of All Saints chapel in the Minster there records his life's history. In spite of his pluralism he was very highly regarded by his contemporaries for his generosity, kindness and Christian meekness.²⁴

²⁴ *Sheaf*, 3rd ser., III, 4.

Dr. Richard Longworth who succeeded Dr. Piers as Dean of Chester was quite a different type, for he was expelled from the Mastership of St. John's College Cambridge for his Puritan tendencies. The following indictment of him is contained in a petition presented to Cecil in 1565 by the Fellows of S. John's and recorded by Strype.²⁵

"He had snatched at his promotion," (it was said) "by violating the statutes; and he was corrupt and partial in his management. He took private rewards for the letting of leases; he took the College coal for his own firing; he appointed a bad and unlearned Bursar who defrauded the College of nine loads of coal. He had for his chief favourite a young man named Fulk, whom he made Fellow without the consent of the (other) fellows, a preacher of the College without a license to preach, and head lecturer contrary to the order appointed in the statutes . . . As Longworth was said never to study and to discharge his own share of preaching so negligently as to disgust others, the power of Fulk's oratory was the greater over him."

In the autumn of 1569 the Bishop of Ely visited the College and expelled the Master. In these circumstances it is a little surprising that the Queen should have appointed him as her chaplain, and in 1573 made him Dean of Chester. Not that it mattered much to Chester, for the new Dean spent most of his time in London in attendance on the Queen. However, his house at Chester was put in order.

1573 For iii loade of clay and iii lode of Roddes to Mr. Dean's house	ii s. viii d.
Paid for spykes	ii d.
Paid for two thraves of barley straw	iiii d.
Paid to tow laborers ix dayes uppon Mr. Deane's house after vi d a daye	iiii s. vi d.

Evidently the part of the Deanery which they were repairing had a thatched roof, and was composed of wattle and daub. In one way the Dean's presence in London would benefit the Chapter, for it was just at this time that the long drawn out litigation about the Cathedral lands was coming to a head and it would be convenient for the Dean to be on the spot. This was probably the business that took Prebendary Lane to London in 1579.

Allowde to Mr. Lane for his journey to London about business of the house	viii li
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It was an expensive journey to London in those days and as the Dean tried to keep control of the Cathedral by letter, which involved the employment of a special messenger on each occasion, it must have cost the Cathedral a pretty penny. His commands were not always received with good grace, as for example

²⁵ Dixon, v, 69 and 207.

when the Treasurer wrote in his book,

Bestowed upon one Sharples a singing man upon special letters from Mr. Deane contrary to our statutes and without the consent of the Chapter	vi li xiii s. iv d.
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In 1576 further repairs to the Dean's house were carried out.

For timber to make clamstaves for the backe court of his house with roddes to winde the same	xviii d.
Workman for one day in daubinge the same with beverage	vii d.

This reads oddly, but of course the beverage was the food and drink allowed the workman as part of his wages. "Clamstaves" is an unusual word which I have found only in two other places in the Accounts. They were the upright staves round which the hazel "rods" were wound or woven to make wattle.²⁶

Repairs to the Cathedral do not seem to have been any more extensive in the 'seventies than they were in the 'sixties, so far as one can tell from the Accounts which have survived. In 1572 10 feet of glass were bought to mend a window in the choir (7s.) and another 20 feet later on (13s. 4d.) and in 1573 glass and workmanship to the parish church (S. Oswald's) cost £12. This last entry reveals two things, one that the Dean and Chapter were responsible for keeping S. Oswald's in repair, and two, that they had been very lax in doing so, for the windows must have been in a very bad state to require £12 spending on them all at once. A "hanglock" (padlock) bought for the south door completes the expenditure for the year. In 1575 some of the old lead was taken off one of the roofs of the church and sold and new lead put in its place. It could not have been a very extensive operation as it took only three workmen three days at a shilling a day—or else they worked more quickly in those days. 148 lbs of old lead was sold at 13s. the 100 lbs and 510 lbs of new lead was bought at 15s. In 1576 the leads between the "parish church and the south Ile of the quere" received attention.

To John Kingley carpenter & his man for one day and a halfe workinge of the same Church	ii s. i d.
To John plimmer and his man for one day worke in layinge the same lead	ii s.
For caryinge up clay to the same worker	ii d.
To dawlbeye the glasier for workinge two dayes and halfe with his boye with hym glasinge the south Ile of the quere in the house sense	ii s. iii d.

There is no doubt that this is what the clerk wrote, but what he meant by "house sense" is a puzzle.

²⁶ I am indebted to Mr. D. G. McIntosh of Heswall for this information. He refers to Randle Holme's *Academy of Armoury*, III, 14, (1688), in which is mentioned "dawbing of radling walls with clamstaves and rods." He says also that the word is still used in rural parts of Lancashire amongst old time builders.

There is an interesting mention in this year of the parclose screens which in those days filled the arches in the choir east of the stalls.

To Thos. hulme the smythe for a kaye to the chapter house doore with other two kayes and mendinge the lock and also pikes of iron for the part closes of the Iles of either side of the quere xxii d.

What these pikes of iron were for is disclosed by another entry two years later.

For making xx^{tie} barres of iron and setting the same upon the parte closes of either side the Quier for boies climinge over with nailes to the same xvi d.

Evidently the Elizabethan schoolboys used to clamber up the panelling and wriggle through the open part above it, and the pikes alone were not enough to stop them; they had to be reinforced with iron bars put in to strengthen the stanchions and fill up the openings. These screens remained in position until 1845 when they were swept away in the Anson restoration, but not before Charles Brandon had made a drawing of six tracery heads for his *Analysis of Gothic*. Five of these may be identified among the twelve heads which today adorn the backs of the stalls on either side the western piers of the tower.²⁷

An interesting case of deodand occurs in 1575.

To Edwarde Powter and Robt. Allarde for thayre expenses & paynes in seeking of the deodant mare v s.

To Richd. Predam for that he layde out & spent in seekinge the same mare allowed to hym by Mr. Subdeane & Mr. Lane vi s. viii d.

The law, which was not abolished until 1846, prescribed that any animate or inanimate thing which caused the death of a human being was forfeit to the king. Originally it was handed by him to his almoner to be devoted to pious uses, hence its name, *deo dand*, that which should be given to God, but in course of time it became an ordinary source of revenue and as such was probably among the rights and privileges granted by the Crown to S. Werburgh's Abbey and thence to the Dean and Chapter. We may suppose that this elusive mare had in some way caused the death of her rider and had not unnaturally been hidden by the owner until the search had died down.

Most of our information about the buildings in this period come from mention of locks and keys, which are remarkably numerous.

1573 For . . . mending of the iii locks of the tresury dore ii s.

1575 Unto Thos. Holme the smith for mending lockes boltes & hinges of the great gates behind Johnsons house with the 3 posterne dores within the court [Abbey Square] with great neales and also for one new lock and key and mending the dore betwext the Court & the cloyster ii s. viii d.

²⁷ These drawings are reproduced by Mr. F. H. Crossley, F.S.A., in *Historic Soc. of Lancs. and Cheshire*, xcvi (1945), 66.

- 1576 Aug. 7, payd to Thomas Holme smith for a locke & a keay for the posterne dore by Mr. Deanes house with stables and hinges for the same xx d.
- 1578 For a lock & kay for the frater doore with great neales setting on the same xvi d.

This last entry must be read in the light of the schoolmaster's evidence at the Visitation in the summer of this year when he said that the Frater was "little better than a common privie."²⁸ Evidently he had stung the authorities into action.

After so much about locks and keys it is a relief to come to the human touch in the following.

- 1575 Layd oute for Robert Cooke for his aparill and other wages by the desire of Mr. Nutter subdeane & Mr. Lane xxv s. iii d.
 To Roger sonne the kitchin boy by the advice of Mr. Lane towarde byinge his clothes ii s. iii d.
 Unto Henry Man at is going to service v s.

Robert Cooke appears for the first time at the bottom of the list of the King's School scholars on the page immediately before this last entry and does not appear again.

In November, 1577, Bishop Downham died and was buried in the choir of the Cathedral. William Webb, writing in *Vale Royal*, has preserved his epitaph which, he says, was "upon a plate of brass."

Gulielmi Downham ter sex qui claruit annos
 Praesul, in hoc tumulo flebile corpus inest.
 Bis triginta et sex vixit, vixisset et ultra,
 Multorum possunt si valuisse preces ;
 Insignis peitate Pater, solamen amicis,
 Pauperibus stricta non fuit ille manu.

1577, Decemb. 3tio.

"In this tomb is the much lamented body of William Downham, who ruled with distinction as bishop for eighteen (*sic*) years. He lived sixty-six years and would have lived longer if the prayers of many could have prevailed. He was a father distinguished for his piety; a solace to his friends, and to the poor his hand was never closed."

Prebendary Lane, the only one on the spot at the time of the Bishop's death, despatched a messenger to the Dean in London at a cost of 16s. to report the event. He need not have been in a hurry, for once again the thrifty Queen kept the See vacant for two years, the revenues going of course to the Crown.

An extract from King's *Vale Royal* should find a place in this section, recording a long-forgotten quarrel with the City. "1573. This year the Corn-market place, that was made when Mr. Webster was mayor, was removed

²⁸ C.A.J., xxxvii, pt. 1, 44.

to the other side of the street, under the Bishop's house. For which cause the dean and chapter have begun their suit in the exchequer, claiming the ground whereon the house standeth to be theirs." The exchequer was the County Exchequer Court at the Castle. The ground in question would be the broad pavement in Northgate against the King's School. The matter was settled in 1575 thus.

"1575. Henry Hardware (mayor) caused the Corn-market-house, which Mr. Dutton had builded near the bishop's palace, to be removed into the Northgate ditch . . . Whereupon the contention ceased, which the dean and chapter had begun."²⁹

III. 1578-1588.

During the vacancy of the See the Archbishop of York took the opportunity of holding a Visitation which took place in the summer of 1578. It proved to be an expensive business.

To the paritor that brought the admonicion for the Archbishop's visitation	ii s.	
For ringinge the greate bells at the recevinge of them into the churche		xxii d.
Paid for procuracions due at the Visitation	xlvi s.	xi d.
For an acquittance for the same		xii d.
For their dinner with wine to the same	xxx s.	
To the Register for his fees	xiii s.	iiii d.
To the apparitor for his fees		iiii s.
To the Visitors for their visitation	iiii li.	

Before the Visitation a questionnaire was circulated to all the Cathedral staff down to and including the "under Sextons," and the answers give us a detailed account of the Cathedral at this time.³⁰

The questions are not given but can be easily deduced from the answers. No. I dealt with the residences of the Dean and Chapter. John Nutter, Subdean, did not mince matters but went straight to the point.

"To the first article he aunsereth that neyther the deane not yet any one of the canons of the said churche are in the same resident attending their severall offices and functyons in all things according to the statutes of the same; and further saith that to his knowledge the said deane has not in person been present at all above twice sithence his entrance there [in 1573], Mr. Dr. Hawforde once in tenne yeres past, Mr. Herle scarce once in thre yeres, Mr. Bulkeley and Mr. Hyde once by yere. So that in trothe the greatest burden or rather almost all if not all indede is contynually pressed upon Mr. Lane and this respondent, whereat they no little greve and thereof wishe to be eased."

Sir Roger Houghton, minor canon of long standing, added the information that the Dean was absent "because that he ys resydent and daylie attendant upon the Quenes majestie, Mr. John Nutter subdeane commyth to the sayd

²⁹ Ormerod, I, 236 and Morris, 298.

³⁰ This document I owe to the kindness of the Rev. J. S. Purvis, D.D., Diocesan Archivist at York. See note 22.

Church verey often when occasyon fallyth, and preachyth godly and syncerely at his comyng, Mr. John Lane ys for the most part resydent the whole year." The reason for Mr. Hawford's absence was that he was Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, while Mr. Hyde "contynuyth in the unyversyty of Oxford."

No. V dealt with matters religious. The only one who had any fault to find here was Thomas Purvis, the Schoolmaster, who "marvelleth much at that now dwelling here allmost XIII yeares he cannot remember that ever he saw Deane or Prebandaryes once minister or receive the Communion." He suggests that the reason may be that wafer bread is still used "although the print of the wafer yrnes be smoothed of late."³¹

No. VI. Sir Roger Houghton reported that "too clarke vycars or conductis [minor canons] are wantynge, the one is in prison and can nott do hys dewty, the other dyede of late"—certainly two good reasons for non-attendance. Also "ther wantyth a deacon which should reade the Gospell dealye . . . and also Mr. Wm. Jewett, a laye man hath the place of a petty canon and cometh seldom to the sayd church and doth but lyttyll servyce for the same".

It is interesting to know that the Gospel was read daily, with all that that implies. In the absence of the Gospeller the Petycanons took it in turns to fill his place, as we read in the Accounts.

Allowed unto the peticanons for reading the Gospell vicibus alternis by the speciall commandmente of Mr. Deane as appeareth by his letters xxvi s. viii d.

No. IX concerned the fabric of the Cathedral. The Subdean admitted that it was "in some ruyn and decaye namelye for want of leade glasse and slayte"; but said they had spent on it all the money they had to spare after all salaries had been paid "and the excessive charges of our suytes from tyme to tyme borne" (as for example the action against the City mentioned above and the litigation with the Cotton family over the Cathedral lands which was going on at this time in London. See below p. 86.) Sir Roger Houghton said that "certeyn buyldynges belongynge unto the sayd Church were pulled downe in the tyme of King Edward the syxt by the Deane and prebendaryes that then wear."

Sir John Mayer, the doyen of the Petycanons, and formerly a monk of St. Werburgh's, added that "Mr. Doctor Hawford hys howse ys in ruyn throwe the default of Mr. Parvys scholemayster who hath the same howse in occupyng." Mr. Purvis thought otherwise.

³¹ Edward VI's Injunctions (1549) had ordered that the bread should uniformly be "unleavened and round as it was afore, but without all manner of print, and something larger and thicker than it was." This was repeated by Elizabeth in her Injunctions.

“ Doctor Howford’s house,” he wrote, “ asketh much reparacions which I have upheld this XII yeares with my great charges, although others have the commodity [use] of his calliarde [kale yard] and some parte of it alsoe, and the said honourable visitors anno predicto decrede that it should be from time to time repayred but not at my coste, which [who] have not one day of it assurance, or any hold else to lay my head; which seemeth but evill provision for painfull teachers that communly in other towns and colleges be allowed ther houses and gardens etc.”

The “ honourable visitors ” must refer to a previous Visitation, perhaps the one in which he censured his Bishop. Purvis’s grievance makes him a little obscure, but it is evident that he thinks the Headmaster of the King’s School should have a house provided for him and not be forced to live in one in which he had no security of tenure and where he was not even allowed the use of the kitchen garden.

No. XI inquired how the Statutes were observed. The Subdean admitted that there were “ many things in and about the said churche done and commytted contrary to the statutes thereof,” and many things omitted which “ wold growe in infinitum if curioslye he should sifte the querke of every particular statute; so wold the same become a labor moste vayne unles due reformacion mighte thereupon followe.” This could only be effected “ by calling the deane and canons home,” or by dismissing or punishing them for their absence “ which thing is at all times rather to be wished for than at any time hoped for.”

Sir Roger Houghton did not presume to criticise his superiors, but found fault with “ the clarkes of the Churche ” [sextons] who “ sett boyes to serve in ther places ” with the result that the ringing for services was unpunctual. “ Also the fame goythe throwe the Cytty that the Scholemayster and the ussher do nott ther dewtyes in the scole in bryngeyng up the youth of the Countre accordyng to the trust reposed in them.”

Sir John Mayer complained that many rich men’s sons were given the exhibitions which were intended for the poor.

Mr. Purvis added that he wishes a gate could be made and locked every night “ about the Northgate on the wall . . . For it is thought that this sanctuary in the absence of the reverend men which ought to be resident here, is sometimes most shamefully abused; namely the Cloisters and such other voyde places as may yeld darkness.”

There is still a doorway on the Wall leading into Abbey green, which is probably the one referred to here.

This Visitation does not disclose a very satisfactory state of affairs, with the clergy absent, the buildings in a state of disrepair and a general slackness in the performance of the services.

It so happens that we can supplement the picture with another and this one from a hostile source. It is to be found in an anonymous report to Cecil written from internal evidence between 1575 and 1580 and endorsed "a prive state of the Coledg of Chester" and in another hand "the state of Dean and Prebendaries of Chester."³² In it the virtuous Nutter does not appear in quite such a good light. The report is as follows.

Yf it please your honour to call for the thesourar's booke of receipts and paymentes your honour shall see xx li. allowed to Mr. Lane and yearely payd hym for reading of the Divinitie Lecture, which payment is no parcell of the proposicion. By the same booke your honour shall perceive that [over and above] all wages payde there remayneth aboutes xxxvii li., which appeareth upon their accompt to remayne that was receyved by the thesourar. This they make a dividend amongst them.

If your lordship examine their receipts and proposicion then it commeth to [o] short for, in the same, c. li. yearely ought to be bestowed upon reparacions of the churche which is in great deokay and the glasse thereof [is] carryed to their pryvate benefices, as somme by Nutter into Lancasshyre to Sefton, and so by others as is sayd. Also x li. for mending of hey wayes and to the pore. So that your lordship accompting this way shall never trye it out but only by that former degre.

The prebendes also sett their howses for rent, as Nutter setteth his howse to one Doctor Cannon a phisicion and straunger and when he commeth to the cyttie lighteth and lyeth in an inn. Bulkeley setteth his to one Darby a phisicion. Hyde setteth his to one Wettenhall a lawer. Hawford; in his howse is the scholemaster Parvis, and he absent. Erle hath sold his prebend to one Wright, the late bisshoppes sonn in lawe, but neither of bouthe commeth there. Lane most there, but at ii s. vi d. the weeke when he is there with the petty cannons. The deane absent by cause he is the queen's chaplyn and no howse kept by any of them the more pytty.

Still further evidence of the state of the Cathedral at this time is afforded by the Bishop's triennial Visitation on June 26, 1583, but before we come to examine it we must say a word about the Bishop himself and the Chapter whom he visited, for many changes have taken place in it since we last saw it in 1567.

William Chaderton, D.D., was consecrated Bishop of Chester on November 8, 1579. Educated at Manchester Grammar School he went to Cambridge, and subsequently became Fellow of Christ's College and then President of Queens' College (1568) and Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity (1569).

³² *Sheaf*, xvii, 32 quoting Hist. MSS. Comm. pt. II, 19.

He was also chaplain to the Queen who gave him a Canonry at Westminster in 1576, and—what was equally important—he was also chaplain to the Earl of Leicester. He was very energetic in trying to suppress the recusants of Lancashire and resided most of his time at Manchester so as to be on the spot. He is perhaps best remembered for his lugubrious views on marriage, for he is reported to have said (in a wedding sermon, of all places!) that “the choice of a wife was full of hazard, not unlike as if one in a barrel full of serpents, should grope for one fish. If (said he) he ‘scape harm of the snakes and light on a fish, he may be thought fortunate. Yet let him not boast, for perhaps it may prove but an eel.” In spite of this, he himself after consulting his patron ventured in 1569 to plunge his hand into the matrimonial barrel, though what sort of a fish he brought out history does not relate. We only know her name, Katherine, the daughter of John Rewell of London.³³

The year 1579 saw a new Dean appointed to Chester as well as a new Bishop, for Dean Longworth died in the spring of that year and his successor, Robert Dorset, D.D., was installed by proxy on September 10. Possibly it was illness that prevented him from appearing in person, for he died in May of the following year and was buried at his rectory of Ewelme, Co. Oxon. He was succeeded by Thomas Modesley, B.D., who was presented August 12, 1580.³⁴

His chapter was constituted as follows.

John Nutter, B.D., Subdean	1567.
Thomas Herle, B.D.	1567.
Edward Bulkeley, D.D.	1574.
Thomas Hide	1574-75.
David Yale, LL.D.	1582.
Robert Rogers, D.D.	1580.

Of the new Dean practically nothing is known and the same is true of Hide and Yale, except that the latter was Fellow of Queen’s College, Cambridge. We have already seen how Bulkeley came to be appointed and Herle and Rogers will be dealt with later.

We now come to the Visitation report of which the following is an abstract.³⁵

“Robert Rogers said he was the only one who had remained upon his Prebend according to the Statutes. Himself, Mr. Nutter and Mr. Hide had kept residence; but Mr. Dean, Mr. Herle, Mr. Bulkeley and Mr. Yale had not done so. The fabric of the Cathedral, especially the Choir, was in decay; but the Dean and Prebends had allowed upwards of £200 for repairs, half of which had been expended, and they had arranged that £100 a year should be so appropriated, besides eight windows in the

³³ Morris, *Chester in Diocesan Histories Series*, 135, quoting Strype.

³⁴ Ormerod, I, 266. n.

³⁵ *Chetham Soc.*, N.S., v, 79, n.

new work of the Cathedral furnished by the same. The Clergy were negligent in attending services; Mr Dean sometimes attended in apparel [i.e. robed] and so did Mr. Nutter, Mr. Hide and himself; but Mr. Herle, Mr. Bulkeley and Mr. Yale did not. Nutter and Hide administered and received with Rogers the Blessed Communion, but none of the rest had done so. It was also stated that if the Queen's Injunctions required *four* services of the Canons in a year they were preached; if not *per se, per alios*. The Dean had kept worshipful house in Chester, and Nutter, Hide and Rogers also, but none of the rest had satisfied the order. The mansion houses of the Prebendaries were in good repair, and the Cathedral was being repaired. The Petti-canons had the New Testament both in Latin and English, and conferred daily. Chapters were not kept as frequently as the Statute appointed."

A comparison of this report with that of the Archbishop's Visitation of 1578 shows that in the intervening five years some improvement had taken place, though still only one Prebendary was living permanently in Chester. Then it was John Lane. Now it is Robert Rogers. This is the famous Archdeacon Rogers, the pioneer of Chester historians, whose "Collection of Ancient Times relating to Chester" is printed in Ormerod and is our chief source of information about the Whitsun Plays. He also is thought to have begun the Annals of Chester which Aldersey continued. He was probably the Robert Rogers whose name occurs in the list of King's scholars from December 25, 1544. He went to Christ Church, Oxford, where he took his M.A. on July 12, 1551. In 1565 he was made Rector of Gawsworth and in 1580 Prebendary of the Cathedral on the death of John Lane, and held both posts until his death in 1587.³⁶

His colleague, John Herle, was a very different character. He was a Cambridge man, taking his M.A. there in 1558 and his B.D. in 1561. Love of money seems to have been his undoing. In his early days he was described by Archbishop Parker as "a grave priestly man" and was marked out by him as a possible Bishop of Bangor at the next vacancy.³⁷ Patronised by the Archbishop and a chaplain to the Queen, it is not surprising that he received one benefice after another in quick succession. When he was given a prebendal stall in Chester Cathedral in 1567 in succession to John Hardyman he was already Prebendary of Worcester (1558), Rector of Bromsgrove and Warden of the Collegiate Church of Manchester (1559). He resided in Manchester and managed to alienate the revenues of the College to his own advantage. "When he came to that great Benefice," says a contemporary account, "he

³⁶ *Sheaf*, 3rd ser., xxix, 1.

³⁷ Strype, *Parker*, Bk. III, ch.v.

sould all the Lands and Tithes and all other commodities belonging [thereto], a few only except, and the House itself to the Earle of Derby (in whose hands it now is), and granted long leases of most or all of the tithes, Colledge lands and other spiritual livings to one Killigrew, and Killigrew granted them to the Queene, and she to them that are now possessed of them, to the utter overthrow of that rich colledge, so that he left nothing to the mentenance of such a post as in times past had been kept." By 1575 he had made himself so unpopular that he was deprived by the Queen, who no doubt was glad of an opportunity to dissociate herself publicly from the man whom she had aided and abetted in his malpractices, not without benefit to herself of course. Herle was given a pension of £20 a year for life, and when in 1580 Bishop Chaderton objected to this, Sir Francis Walsingham asked him to let "Herle, the old Warden, enjoy his pension. I can see soe little hope that he will doe good anie where, that for the benefit of the Church generallie I think it less hurt that he enjoy the pension from that Colledge, than by easing that house thereof to place him in such a *Benefit* [benefice?] as he is utterly unable to instruct." So Herle continued to enjoy his pension of £20 until his death in 1587, and also continued to hold his Prebend at Chester (worth £20 a year also) and his Prebend at Worcester and his Rectory at Bromsgrove (another £20). The Bishop's protest seems quite justifiable, but it was not entirely altruistic, for he himself had been made Warden of Manchester in 1579 and therefore Herle's pension was virtually coming out of his (the Bishop's) pocket.³⁵

The mention of "the eight new windows in the new work of the Cathedral" is interesting. It cannot have really been new work and must refer to a restoration. The only part of the building where eight windows are to be found together is in the South Transept, where there are four on each side. The Accounts confirm that work was going on "at the west end of the church," which might mean S. Oswald's Church (July 1584).

1584 July. To Hugh Skinner for xii barell bordes to make barres for ii of the newe windows	viii d.
Paid to Hugh Skinner for lyme which went to the newe windows in the church	iiii d.
Paid to Hugh Skinner for a lode of sand	viii d.
Paid to Hugh Skinner for xxviii barell boardes to make barres for iii of the newe windowes	xvi d.
Payd to Edward Dawbye for glasinge of iii wyndowes in the west end of the church	xv li. iii s.

There are many other interesting items in the Accounts during the 'eighties. For instance, there are three mentions of the visits of the Players.

1583 May 14. Payd unto Mr. Rogers which he gave to the Earle of Essex players when they woulde have played in Mr. Dean's house	ii s.
1589 To the Q. players by the appointment of Mr. Deane & the Chapter	xx s.
1590 Dec. 5. to the Queene Maj. players	xx s. x d.

In 1572 an Act had been passed against "Vagabonds and Common Players unless belonging to any Baron of the Realm or Towards any other Person of greater Degree." Travelling companies of players had, therefore, to protect themselves by seeking the patronage and using the name of some nobleman or even of the Queen herself. In 1583 the Dean (Modesley) seems to have been absent and Archdeacon Rogers had to compensate the players for their disappointment. It is interesting to notice that they had expected to play inside the Deanery. If any one wishes to picture young William Shakespeare among the Queen's Players the dates permit him to do so, for nothing is known of his movements from the time he went to London in 1585 until the year 1592.

Another interesting series of entries refers to the visit of the Earl of Leicester, Chamberlain of the County Palatine, on June 3, 1584, accompanied by the Earls of Derby and Essex. The City Annals record that "they were met and attended by most of the gentlemen in this Shire, with their whole train, and as it was thought, they were in the whole 1500 horse, they were received at the High-cross by the Mayor and his brethren and the whole council of the city. They lodged at the Bishop's palace, dined by the mayor the fourth of June, and presented with a gilt cup, and forty angels therein."

The Dean and Chapter made their own preparations for this great event.

Paid to Mr. Doctor Bulkeley for his chardges in goinge to Shrewsbury to the Earle of Leicester for the house use	vs.	ii d.
Paid to Hugh Skinner for the cariage of the filth before the gate to fill the hole in the Court viii lodes ii d the lode		xvi d.
Paid to Mr. Deane toward his chardges at my L. of Leicester cominge hither		iiii li.
Paid to iii prebendaries, Mr. Subdeane, Mr. Bulkeley, Mr. Hide, Mr. Rogers for the same purpose [The absentees were Messrs. Herle and Yale.]		viii li.
Paid to Edward Griffith for boughes, rishes and other things according to a bill allowed by the Deane and Chapter at what time the Earle of Leicester came hither	xviii s.	ii d.
Paid to Alexander Button for ringers, rishes etc. at the beinge here of the Earle of Leicester	ix s.	iiii d.

This lavish expenditure was not a sign of Leicester's popularity but of his power. He was hardly likely to be popular with a Dean and Chapter whom he had helped to rob (see below p. 88) but nevertheless they had to keep on good terms with him and so no expense was spared on the occasion of his visit.

The "hole in the court" was almost certainly the horse pool in the Square.³⁸ The mention of it in close connection with Lord Leicester's visit suggests that this was the reason for it being filled up. What surprises us is that there should have been eight loads of "filth" lying handy outside the Abbey gateway.

³⁸ *C.A.J.*, xxviii, pt. 1, 46.

As in previous years, the supplying of locks and keys leads to the mention of buildings we might not otherwise have heard of.

- | | | |
|------|---|--------|
| 1584 | Paid for a keye and mendinge the locke of the slaughter house dore | iii d. |
| | Paid for one staple and settinge on the bolt of the calliard [kale yard] dore | ii d. |

The minster barn was always giving trouble.

- | | | |
|------|--|----------------|
| 1584 | Dec. 18. to 2 laboringe men for caryinge Tymber laths & slates from the tethe barne unto the store house beinge fallen downe at one tyme | vi d. |
| 1585 | Reparacons on the teithe barne at the appointment of Mr. Deane for Ao. 1585 | xxxii s. xi d. |

Other building items are as follows.

- | | | |
|------|---|----------------|
| 1585 | January. pd. to the sayd Robt. Lech (barber) for paynting & gyldinge the R. armes over the Mynster gates | xxiii s. iv d. |
| | Pd. likewise to John Tydder almsman for the repairing of his chamber within the Mynster allowed unto hym by the Chapter | vi s. viii d. |
| | April 15, pd. for a load of claye to Mr. Rogers to stoppe rotten holes in the lyme house and other places | vi d. |
| | July 28, pd. at the appointment of Mr. Subdeane for caryinge of water out of the Cloysters and the Church after the great Rayne | iii d. |

This was a storm of rain and hail on July 24 which lasted from noon till midnight and was thought worthy of a place in the City Annals.

- | | | |
|--|---|--------|
| | Sept. 8, pd. unto Thomas bath wryght for puttinge up a beam in the new south syde Ile at the speciall appoyntment of Mr. Deane and Subdeane | vii s. |
|--|---|--------|

As before, this must mean the newly-restored south aisle.

From 1583 onwards we get mention of repairs to the King's School which according to the Headmaster's evidence in 1578 was "within the minster of Chester" and was ruinous, "insomuch that stoness, diverse times dropping out of the walles, have broken the schollers' heades, whereof is no amendment, though ther have not wanted complaintes."³⁹

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------|
| 1583 | Paid to Hugh Skinner for lyme to the schole and to . . . the church | iii d. |
| 1585 | Feb. 27, for clente naylls and single spicke to mende the floor in the free schole | iiii d. |
| | Pd. to Laurence pott one of the R schollers allowed unto hym by the Chapter at the last audit for his paynes in teachinge the schollers after the death of the usher untill another usher was by them provided | xiii s. iv d. |
| 1589 | To Mr. Starkey [schoolmaster] by the appointment of Mr. Deane to by a dictionary for the schoole | xx s. |
| | Pd. for the cariage of Cowpers dictionary from Cambridge | ix d. |

Thomas Cooper's dictionary was the enlargement of Eliot's Latin dictionary which he issued in 1548; it was known as "Cooper's Dictionary" in 1565. Cooper was Bishop of Winchester 1584-1594.⁴⁰

³⁹ *Ibid.* 43.

⁴⁰ I am indebted to Mr. J. Fergusons Irvine for this information.

The next Accounts which have survived begin in December 1588, too late for any reference to the defeat of the Armada in that year. The only change in the Chapter is that Roger Parker has taken the place of Thomas Herle. Work on the Cathedral and precincts continued.

1588	For xii dosen of Tyles wh. Jo. Done bought for the Church floore at xd the dozen	x s.
	Bought 9 dosen of tyles more for the Church floore	vi s. viii d.
1589	March 15, to grasse & his man v dayes hewing stones & makeinge the stones to passe thorowe the Dorter	ix s. vii d.
	To grasse and his man vi dayes makinge up the wall at the ende of the Common privies & the new particion in the Cloisters	x s.
	Layd out by Banester the Carpenter for a spar & a post for the Raile up the staires	xvii d.
	To iii men workenge iii dayes in makinge cleane the particion betweene Doctor Bulkleys house and the walls	viii s.
	For a tree to make ii staves or propps for a Roofe in the dorter redy to fall	x s.
	To ii laborers for ii dayes in makeng cleane the Common privey house	ii s. viii d.
	For ii bourds & nayles to make the p'ticon betweene the ii churches [i.e. Cathedral and S. Oswald's]	ii s. viii d.
	To a smythe for iii lockes viz. ii for the dorter dores & ii for the dores wh. passe to the Cleystere	ii s. viii d.

Here we get a little information about the use that was being made of the old monastic buildings. The dorter was being repaired and so was presumably in use. The late Mr. Hugh Dutton, in a paper he wrote for the King's School Year Book in 1913, said that "the cells above the roof of the cloisters were known since the Dissolution of the Abbey as "the singing-men's chambers," so perhaps the six lay clerks, if unmarried, slept there. Mr. Bulkeley's house was evidently on the green where the monks' infirmary used to stand, part of which, (the misericord) was still used by the minor canons, and was near the City Wall. The wooden partition between the two churches must have been in existence long before this, and the two boards would be for repairs.

It was not until 1828 that Dean Copleston built a stone partition.

IV. DEAN NUTTER. 1589-1603.

In 1589 Dean Modesley died, leaving no memorial behind him. It is strange that nothing is known about him and one would like to think that it is because he stayed at his post and did his work instead of holding two or three offices in plurality. The evidence of Archdeacon Rogers given at the last Visitation has a bearing upon this point; the Dean, he said, had not kept residence, and yet he had kept a "worshipful house in Chester" and sometimes attended the Cathedral services. Though this may seem to damn him with faint praise it is better than the record of his predecessors.

The new Dean was John Nutter, Subdean, who was presented to the vacancy on July 4, 1589. There is an echo of his installation in the Accounts.

To Stevensone the Joiner for makinge & findinge Tymber for the frame
over Mr. Dean his stall agaynst his installacon xx d.

John Nutter was educated at Manchester Grammar School where he may have overlapped with his future Bishop, and went from there to B.N.C. Oxford in 1556. He took his B.D. in 1575. He was curate of Eccles in 1563 and was made Prebendary of Chester Cathedral in 1566. He was also Vicar of Bebbington, and Rector of Sefton, Lancs., where he made his home. Sir Peter Leycester, writing a century later (1671) says of him: "He was a man of great wealth; Queen Elizabeth termed him 'a golden ass.' He died suddenly as he was at supper at Sefton, anno Domini 1603, where he was buried."⁴¹ That Nutter was wealthy there is ample evidence to show, but there is no reason to suppose that he was a fool and I hazard the suggestion that the Queen, who was well versed in the classics, was thinking of the "Golden Ass" of Apuleius when she gave Nutter this nick-name. The evidence for his wealth is found partly in documents which show that he was not above doing a little money-lending on occasions and partly in the account of the search for his treasure immediately after his death. This was found hidden under the floor of the Upper Closet in Sefton Rectory and was taken into safe custody by a neighbour, Sir Richard Molineux, with the consent of the nephew of the deceased, who had assisted his uncle to hide it. There were twelve or thirteen leather or linen bags, three or four of them being made out of chrisoms, "quite half of them large enough to contain £100 in silver." They actually contained gold as well as silver, but "were not above half full." So said the witnesses before a Commission held to inquire into the subject.⁴²

Nutter's colleagues when he took office in 1589 were as follows.

David Yale, LL.D., Subdean	1582.
Edward Bulkeley, D.D.	1574.
Thomas Hide	1576.
Robert Rogers, D.D.	1580.
Roger Parker, D.D.	1587.
Peter Sharpe, B.D.	1588.

Sharpe was made Rector of Heswall in 1583 which he left for Dodleston in 1597.

Yale became Chancellor of the Diocese in 1589.

⁴¹ *Historical Antiquities*, 169, quoted in Ormerod, 1, 266.

⁴² *Sheaf*, 3rd ser. xviii, 38.

By 1596 several changes had taken place and the list is as follows.

David Yale, LL.D., Subdean	1582.
Roger Parker, D.D.	1587.
Peter Sharpe, B.D.	1588.
John Meyre, M.A.	
George Downham, M.A.	1594.
Nathaniel Dodd, M.A.	1596.

Downham was the son of the late Bishop and went to Christ's College, Cambridge of which he became a Fellow in 1585. He resigned his stall at Chester in 1598 and subsequently became Bishop of Londonderry, where he died in 1654.

We turn now to the Accounts to see what they can tell us of the Cathedral during the rule of the "Golden Ass."

In 1589 there was a good deal of work done in the Sprise, also called the Pyce in 1548 and now known as the Cloister Garth.⁴³

to iii poore fellows for makeinge cleane the sprise	xiiii d.
Charge layd out for makeynge the walles rounde aboute the garden	xl s.
1590 March 20 pd. to hym [Hugh Stockton] for a lock & key & some neyles to the sprise dore	xii d.
March 24, for 2 keyes for the sprise dore the one for Mr. Deane & the other for Mr. Subdeane	viii d.
Sept. 2, to William Walsh for ij loades of lyme for the sprice wales	xviii d.
Sept. 4, to Mr. Walsh for one c of bricke to mende the wyndoes aboute the sprice	x d.
pd. to hym for 1 dayes labor for the same worke & mendinge a hole in the dorter—12d. and one man to helpe him—10d. & a boy—6d. & for a mayde to carry sande, water & bricke—5d.	ii s. ix d.

Quite a family party in fact. But fancy mending the cloister windows with bricks!

The Dean seems to have introduced a new custom with regard to sermons preached in the churches dependent on the Cathedral and served by curates. This is the first mention of it, but it occurs frequently after this.

1590 To Mr. Deane for 2 sermons by hym made this quarter the one at Shotwick & the other at Brombroe	xiii s. iv d.
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The following miscellaneous information is interesting.

1590 For a new verge and a fine kase thereunto	iii li viii s. vii d.
1591 For mending the ould verge	xxix s. i d.

⁴³ Ormerod, (i. 257) says that it "has latterly (i.e. c. 1819) been called the Preese." No one knows the meaning of this name, which has not been found elsewhere. c.f. *Sheaf*, 3rd ser. xix, 66.

This verge did not survive the Civil War; the present one dates from the Restoration.

1591 (Autumn) Bestowed upon the earle of essex his musitions	II s.
For wyne & sugar	II s.
To the Quenes players	XL s.
1592 The xxth of July unto G. Becke and Jo. mellon for 2 dayes a pece removeinge the tymber of the barne & caryinge the slates & tymber of the Waters leaders stable into the store house ⁴⁴	II s.
The vith of September to Wm. Welch Jo. Welch and 3 laborers for caryinge into the Chapter house the Roufe of G. bell house & other leade & tymber blowen downe by tempestuous weather	III s.

In the autumn of 1597 the Audit Chamber was renovated.

paid for 2 yards brode clothe popinge greene coulour for a carpett to the Audyte Chamber at x s. the yard	XX s.
for 3 cushins	VI s.
for 3 skines of Redd lether to lyne them with	VI s. II d.
for vii pound flockes to stuffe them at 6d. the pound	III s. VI d.
for xv yards of whyted flaxe for 2 doss. napkins allowing to every napkin 1 yard halfe quarter xiii d. the yard & for 4 yards more of the same to make a square table cloth being in all 19 yardes at xiii d. the yard	XX s. VII d.
for iii yardes of cloth at xii d. the yard for another table cloth	III s.
for making the sayd table cloths & napkins & for washing thereof	II s.
1 yard & a quarter to make a cupboard cloth	xviii d.
to the wright for co'passing a doore topp in the Audite Chamber	vi d.
for ii joyned doores in the Audite Chamber	VIII s.
for masons worke & fastening the doors	III d.
for a square table and pannell board	v s.
for 2 payre of hynges 14d, for catch & latch & with nailes 3d.	II s.
for pinne dust for the Audite	II d.

There are several interesting words here which call for explanation.

Popinge greene coulour. It has been suggested that this is really "popinjay green," popinjay being a local name for the green woodpecker.

Pannell board. If this was a board divided into panels or columns and if it was connected with the counting of money, as its presence in the audit chamber suggests, it points to the use of the same method of accounting as was in use in the Exchequer at Westminster in the reign of Henry II. For the exchequer was a four-sided board measuring 10 feet by 8 feet with a raised edge round it, and covered with a black cloth ruled into seven columns with white lines a foot apart. These columns were divided into squares like a chess board and

⁴⁴ Morris, (p. 281) says "The citizens generally were supplied with unfiltered water from the Dee by the Water-leaders or Drawers of Water, who formed a numerous body, and as late as 1587 considered themselves of importance enough to petition for a charter of incorporation." They seem to have rented a stable in the Minster barn.

each column was for a different sum of money, £10,000, £1,000, £100, £20, £1, 1s., 1d. When the sheriff paid the taxes of his shire counters were placed in the respective columns to denote the money which he handed over. If there were any deductions due to him counters would be removed from the board and the final total could be read off at a glance.⁴⁵ I suggest that the panel board of the Dean and Chapter placed on its square table with its square table-cloth of four yards of whited flax was a kind of exchequer. It would be about the same size and I believe we have here evidence that the ancient system of computing with counters was still in use in Chester at the end of the fifteenth century.

Pinne dust. The O.E.D. defines pin dust as dust formed from the filings in the manufacture of pins, the first mention of it being in 1552. Why was it provided in the audit chamber? There could only have been one reason—it must have been used as pounce, which is “a fine powder as pulverized sandarac, or cuttle-shell, used to prevent the ink from spreading in writing over an erasure or on unsized paper, and also to prepare the surface of parchment to receive writing,” but the O.E.D. does not mention the use of pin dust in this connection.

In December, 1596, we have a very curious entry.

to Edward porter for bringing home of the stockes wheron he was sett at
Mr. Subdeane's appoyntment

iiii d.

We gather from this that the Dean and Chapter kept a pair of stocks in the cathedral precincts and had the power of putting people into them. This was done abroad—the High Cross where the pillory stood was the usual place—and the malefactor after he had served his sentence was paid fourpence by order of the Subdean for bringing the stockes home again. They must therefore have been on wheels.⁴⁶

In 1596 the great gates or doors to Abbey Square were re-made and the detailed statement is bound up with the Accounts. If space permitted it would be worth printing in full. They cost £13 10s. 8d. and included 4 planks 22 feet long, 3 12-foot spars, 2 more spars one of 12 feet and the other of 10 feet, a plank 20 feet 2 inches, and a half-inch board 8 feet long. “Rooses” is a strange term used here. There were 382 of them, and some were extracted from the old doors. It is suggested that they were the large-headed nails or studs with which these old doors were covered.

On November 22 Prebendary Sharpe went to Hilbre with two companions and drank two quarts of wine with their supper and three pints with their breakfast. “Horse meat” cost 3s. 4d. It is a strange commentary on the times in which we live that what suggested provender for horses to the Elizabethan suggests food for human beings to us.

⁴⁵ *Dialogus de Scaccario*, O.U.P. ed. 1902, 38–40.

⁴⁶ cf. Morris, 193.

It is evident that a good deal of litigation was going on at this time.

- 1592 Jan. 18. for a pottell of muskedyne & cakes bestowed by Mr. Deane & Mr. Subdeane upon Mr. Warburton his cominge from London 11 s. 11 d.
 March 2, pd. to Mr. Warburton his man in regard of there paynes presenting the sute x s.
 1596 Dec. 17, for a pottle of wyne sack & claret when we came from the Exchequer on wh. day our matter past by Mr. Subdeans appoyntment xviii d.

This would be the County Exchequer Court sitting at the Castle. Citizens were not supposed to prosecute one another in it and in 1562 one was disenfranchised for doing so.⁴⁷ But the people the Dean and Chapter were prosecuting were not citizens, for

- 1597 April 21, To Mr. Tho. Case the chardges he layd out for the Deane & Chapter in three severall sutes in the Exchequer namely Mr. Rowlands, Mr. Tattens the vickaw of Eastham and Mr. Hocnell (Hockenull) 111 li xiii s. viii d.

A pottle was two quarts,—not an excessive amount for three or four clerics to celebrate with. Thomas Case was the Chapter Clerk. He was also attorney in the Court of Exchequer, and died July 23, 1634.⁴⁸

Another law suit is referred to in this same year.

- Nov. 22, To John Tyrer wh. he layd out for the house in the sute between them & Sir Rowland Standly xxxii s. x d.

John Tyrer was one of the Lay Clerks of the Cathedral and he must have been a very versatile man, for in addition to his music and his knowledge of the law he seems to have added engineering. In 1601 he undertook to convey water from the Dee to any part of the City and to any houses, and for this purpose was allowed to build a lofty octagonal tower on the Bridge Gate. Two water wheels supplied the power.⁴⁹

In 1595 Bishop Chaderton was translated to Lincoln. His successor was Hugh Bellot, D.D., of whom the City Annals record under the same year:—

“Hugh Bellet, D.D., was installed bishop of Chester the first of November, who lived but seven months after, was buried at Rixham, (Wrexham) and his funeral solemnised at Chester the twenty-second of June.”⁵⁰

Nearly two years seem to have elapsed before another Bishop was appointed, and then we read in the Annals

1597. The 16th of May, Doctor Vaughan, bishop of Bangor, was made bishop of Chester. About the tenth of November Doctor Vaughan was installed bishop.”

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 198.

⁴⁸ Tait, *Chartulary of Chester Abbey*, (*Chetham Soc.*, 79) 62.

⁴⁹ Morris, 103, 287.

⁵⁰ Ormerod, I, 237.

This is confirmed by the Accounts.

May 16, to Shawman for fetching the Mayor to the Election of the Bishop viii s.

But though the Mayor seems to have attended the Chapter meeting, for it was the Chapter who had to elect him, the Dean did not and the *conge d'elire* had to be sent to him at Sefton. The spelling of it was a sore trial to the writer of the Accounts, but he did his best.

To a poore man for carieng the Conquidislier & Letters Missives to Sephton ii s. iv d.

The last page in the Accounts for the year 1597 is headed "Pauperibus" from which two extracts may be made.

Given to William Hearne a very good singing man staying for wynd to Ireland at the request of all the Quier v s.

A pleasing gesture. Contrary winds must have been very expensive sometimes to travellers en route for Ireland and Hearne was not to be the last musician to be delayed in Chester by that cause.

To an Hungarian who collected through England for Ransome of certayne Christians taken by the Turke v s.

Which reminds us that in Elizabeth's reign the Turks were in possession of the greater part of Hungary.

Two further and final extracts from the Annals will take us down to the end of the century.

1597 "The long west roof of the minster was covered with lead, and much of the timber-work repaired."

1600 "The flagging of the long west ile in the Minster was this year begun by Dean Nutter."

A few years before it was said to be lying unpaved like a barn floor. (See below p. 45).

The Accounts show that it was not finished until the end of the following year and that the versatile Lay Clerk, John Tyrer, was put in charge of the work. To a man who at that time was engaged in supplying the City with water the paving of the Cathedral nave would have seemed child's play.

1601 Dec. 5 payd to John Tyrer allowed unto him by the Dean & Chapter for his travayle & paynes taken on & about the Reparacons of the Church iiii li

Dec. 12. to iii laborers for making cleane the long paved Ile and getting away all the earth at xd a day ii s. vi d.

THE RAPE OF THE CATHEDRAL LANDS

The strange story of how Sir Richard Cotton forced Dean Cliffe and two Prebendaries to grant him most of the Cathedral lands in return for a fixed annual payment of £603 17s. 10d. has already been told.⁵¹ We have now to follow the struggle of the Dean and Chapter to get them back, a struggle which went on throughout almost the whole of the reign of Elizabeth. Most of the documents in the case have been carefully copied out by Randle Holme and are preserved in two folio volumes in the British Museum.⁵² Amongst them is Dean Longworth's petition to the Privy Council in 1578, which will be taken as a basis for the following summary.⁵³

Dean Cliffe died in 1558 and it was left to his successor, Dean Walker, to initiate proceedings for the recovery of the freehold. By this time the matter had been complicated by Sir Richard Cotton, who, knowing the weakness of his case, "after he had made and taken all the commodities of all the said lands and manors that he could," sold them⁵⁴ to certain Cheshire gentlemen, of whom Sir Thomas Venables, Sir Hugh Cholmeley, Sir Roland Stanley, Sir George Calveley, Thomas Leigh, Thomas Wilbraham and Henry Mainwaring were the chief, so that now the Dean and Chapter had practically the whole County ranged against them.

Dean Walker claimed that the freehold of the lands should be restored to the Cathedral on three grounds: (1) that the Dean and two Prebendaries had no power to act for the whole Chapter, (2) that the grant was made under compulsion, and (3) the rents assigned them were more than £100 less than the rents they had been receiving. However, Dean Walker died in 1567 before judgment was given, and the next Dean, Dr. Piers, though he "did prosecute the said matter," resigned in 1573, so that it was left to Dean Longworth to carry on the struggle. It was in his time that a new and important factor emerged. In 1575 it was discovered that the word "Cestrie" had been omitted from the letters patent by which Henry VIII had founded the Cathedral, and it was counsel's opinion that the omission of this word made the whole document null and void, so that the Cathedral lands were *and always had been* the property of the Crown. This being so, it was impossible for the Dean to have granted to Sir Richard Cotton what was not his to grant. Here was a piece of good fortune which brought a ray of hope to the harassed Chapter. The omission of the word "Cestrie" was not, as is sometimes stated, the cause

⁵¹ *C.A.J.*, xxxviii, pt. 1, 57.

⁵² Harl. MS. II, 2060 and 2071.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 2071, f. 137.

⁵⁴ "For two years' purchase" says a marginal note in the MS.

of Sir Richard Cotton's seizing the property; on the contrary it constituted the one hope the Dean and Chapter had of getting it back. They therefore petitioned to surrender all their lands into the Queen's hands in the confident hope that she would give them back again with a proper title. But in those days it was advisable to have a friend at court, and so the Dean "opened the matter to the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Leicester. His Honour of the good zeal he beareth religion dealt with Her Majesty therein and found Her Majesty as ready to grant the said lands and manors unto the Church again as His Lordship was . . . And Her Majesty further wills him to write to the Lord Chief Justice, Justice Manwood and Mr. Attorney General that they should set down their opinions what they thought in law was therein; and so according thereto Her Grace would proceed to the benefit of the Church." That, at any rate, was how the Dean understood it.

The Judges very naturally replied, on December 1, 1576, that they would give their judgment if and when the case came before them in court, and to that end suggested that an action for intrusion on Crown lands should be brought on the Queen's behalf against the fee-farmers. They added that if, as it appeared, the Queen wished the Dean and Chapter to have their lands back, a new letters patent containing the missing word would "put them in good security for the maintenance of thier house henceforth." But this was apparently not an alternative to the law suit but dependent upon it.⁵⁵

In the meantime George Cotton, who had succeeded to the family estates on the death of his father in 1556, and the other fee-farmers began to withhold their rents pending a decision of the case, and accordingly the Privy Council had to be moved to write a letter to Cotton saying "that where [as] he pretendeth to holde in fee farme all the landes and tenementes or the moste parte thereof, belonging to the Colledge of Chester of the foundation of King Henrye the VIIIth, and have of long time paide yearlie to the Deane and Chapter thereof vi c li. and odde, and because their Lordships are informed that there is some suite depending in the Exchequier by informacion of intrusyon of the Queen's Majestie against Sir Hugh Cholmeley, Sir George Calveley and Richard Hurleston, under-tenantes of some parte of that landes, whereby the validity of his fee farme may come in question, and that he is minded to withhold as well the rente which is alreadye due to the said Deane and Chapter, as also that which shall be due hereafter;" he is hereby required and commanded to pay what was due from him without prejudice to his title to the land. The other fee-farmers were dealt with in a letter to the Earl of Leicester, as Chamberlain of Chester, informing him of what had been written to George

⁵⁵ The letter of the Judges is printed in Ormerod, 1, 255, n.

Cotton and requiring him to tell "all the fee-farmers and occupiers" the same.⁵⁶

That this order proved effective is shewn by the Cathedral Receipts for 1577 which reveal that George Cotton paid in full for that year.

The advice of the Judges was taken and the case was heard in London. "The law was effectually followed for the defence of Her Majesty's right and inheritance at the great costs and charges of the said Dean to his impoverishment," and it looked as though victory for the Cathedral was certain when the fee-farmers, seeing that they were bound to lose, managed to get the case withdrawn from the Exchequer and heard by the Privy Council, by the simple expedient of bribing the Earl of Leicester with six years rent of the lands which were in dispute. Another four years passed before the Privy Council Commission issued their award on December 19, 1580⁵⁷, both parties having surrendered their rights to the Queen in October 1579. The award was in the fee-farmers' favour in so far as they were allowed to keep the lands they had obtained from Sir Richard Cotton, but the rent charges payable to the Dean and Chapter were raised from £603 18s. 10d. to £802 1s. 2d. The rest of the property which had not been alienated to Sir Richard was re-granted to the Dean and Chapter with a valid title. It consisted of the Rectories of S. Oswald and Shotwick, the tithes of thirty-two parishes or districts, the advowson of nine parishes and the rent of £19 10s. issuing from the Earldom of Chester.⁵⁸

For the time being the Dean and Chapter would appear to have recovered their normal income, but the value of money was rapidly falling and would continue to do so, and in consequence land was increasing in value. What Dr. Trevelyan has written of the chantry and gild schools is equally true of the Cathedral—"Lands of great potential value were taken from them, and they were compensated with fixed stipends in a rapidly depreciating currency."⁵⁹ Hence the poverty of the Cathedral during the next two centuries.

The expense of all this litigation must have been very great. At the Visitation in 1578 Subdean Nutter had called attention to "the excessive charges of our suytes," and at Christmas 1583 he had to advance the money for the wages of the Cathedral staff out of his own pocket. There were also travelling expenses to be considered and the cost of lodging in London, for which 4s. 8d. a day was allowed. It is unfortunate that the Accounts for

⁵⁶ *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1575-1577, 308.

⁵⁷ Ormerod, I, 255.

⁵⁸ Called "Castle rent," for which see *C.A.J.*, xxxvii, pt. I, 53.

⁵⁹ *English Social History*, 114.

1580-82 are missing, but the following extracts from other years will illustrate the above statements.

- 1583 April 25. pd. unto Mr. Deane and Subdeane by them disbursed in suits in London for and in behalfe of the house XLVI li IX s. VII d.
 December. paid to Mr. Deane for chardges at London about the affaires of the house v li
 paid to John Done for his pains in bringinge xxx li. wh. Mr. Subdeane lent to the house toward the payment of Christmas wages II s.
- 1584 To Mr. Subdeane for his chardges to London about the house business from the 25th of June until the 20th of July inclusive, viz. 26 days at 4s 8d. p.diem. III li XVIII s. VIII d.

It was also apparently considered necessary to make legal agreements with each of the fee-farmers, which involved a good deal of travelling.

- the porters chardges in his journey for the house 2 daies for the sealinge of an obligation by Mr. Leigh of Adlington and Mr. Manneringe of Chester III s. III d.
 for his horse the said dayes II s.
 to Mr. Cases man for a copie of Cottons lease and a bond of 900 pounds by the Dean and Chapter to him passed VI s. VIII d.
- 1585 pd. unto Mr. Tho. Case for his travell & payments & other charges disbursed by him in going unto Mr. Warburton and other fee-farmers about the sealinge of the annuities LIX s. III d.
 April 7, to Mr. Rogers for the hyer of a horse for one daye goinge to Sir George Calveley for the sealinge of the Annuities XII d.
 to the said Mr. Rogers for his passage overe in Eaton boate the same tyme III d.

The ferry at Eaton was a possession of the Grosvenors, who inherited it from the Etons. Robert de Eton claimed it as long ago as the time of Edward III.⁶⁰ In 1771 a horseman could be ferried over for one penny, a footman for half as much,⁶¹ so the charge for the Archdeacon seems excessive. Rogers must have gone through what is now Eaton Park. The ferry was then almost opposite the present Hall about a mile and a quarter above its present site. His destination was Lea Hall, now a farm house with traces of a moat round it near to and east of Aldford. This was the ancestral home of the Calveleys of Lea.⁶²

⁶⁰ Morris, 500.

⁶¹ *Sheaf*, I, 101.

⁶² And not, as might have been expected, Calveley Hall, which is the next house to it, but in Handley Parish. This was probably not built until nearly a century later, when Dame Mary Calveley, widow of Sir Hugh Calveley, the last male heir, made her home there. If so, she must have moved the magnificent staircase from Lea Hall, for it is too big for its present position and has Sir Hugh's arms carved upon it. See *Sheaf*, 3rd ser. xvii, 36 and xviii, 32.

Audit day now took on a new importance and special preparations were made for it.

1584 paid to Hugh Skinner for 11 lodes of turves for the audit time the 9 daye of October	viii d.
paid to Hugh Skinner for coales for the audit time	iv s. vi d.
paid to Mr. Thomas Flether draper for one yarde and halfe & halfe quarter of grene cloathe for the table in the audit house	v s. v d.
a quier of paper for the audit	iiii d.
a joyned stole for the audit	xvi d.
a chamber pot for the audit	ii s.
for a pound of candles	iiii d.
for wyne, sugar, & cakes when the fee-farmers came to pay there money	ii s. ix d.
for charges at our Audyt & Dynner	v li xiiii s. iii d.
to the musiciens the same day we had our Dynner	iiii s.

This long drawn-out struggle is corroborated more or less in the Receivers Accounts, so far as they have survived, but they cover only parts of the years 1550, 1556, 1557, 1559, 1577, 1582, 1583-84. The only complete year is 1582. In 1550, before the Cottons appeared on the scene, payments were made by bailiffs, each for his own bailiwick, but the Accounts are not sufficiently complete to show what the total income for the year was. In 1556 Sir Richard Cotton died, leaving a son and heir, George, aged only 18. Next year, however, a payment of £422 13s. 5½d. is entered under Sir Richard's name. In 1559 the late Sir Richard is credited with £385 7s. 6d. and a note at the bottom of the page says that he still owes £218 11s. 4d., which would make the required sum of £603 18s. 10d. exactly. In 1577 George Cotton, influenced no doubt by the Privy Council's letter, makes his payment in full, albeit in seven instalments. In 1582 the fee-farmers pay for themselves. One naturally wonders why they had not done so before if they had actually *bought* their lands from Sir Richard, and it is noteworthy in this connection that the Privy Council described them as "undertenants."

" CONCEALED " LANDS.

It might be thought that the troubles of the Dean and Chapter were now over and that their income was assured to them, and certainly there is no hint in the Accounts that this was not so. And yet right down to the end of the century the Award was being contested. This further struggle cannot be understood without a knowledge of what was meant by "concealed" lands and here we come upon an amazing and little-known episode in Elizabeth's reign.

As a result of the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII and of the Dissolution of the Chantries in the reign of his son a vast amount of land passed from the Church to the Crown and was leased or sold to laymen. But in certain cases, Chester being one, the lands were re-granted to the Church by letters patent from the Crown; owing to the inefficiency of the lawyers some of these letters patent were badly drafted and whenever this mistake was discovered it was held that the title deeds to the land were null and void, that the land had therefore always been the property of the Crown ever since the Dissolution, that the ecclesiastical owners had no right to it whatever and had in fact been "concealing" it from the Crown ever since they took possession of it, even though they had acted in perfectly good faith. Nowadays the matter would be put right by the issue of new title deeds, but it was not so in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth. Incredible though it may appear, Elizabeth from time to time granted commissions to one or other of her courtiers authorising them to search for these "concealed" lands, with the promise that she would lease to the discoverer all the lands he could find which had not a valid title, regardless of the fact that they were already leased to other tenants by the Church. The commission ordered the Lord Treasurer and the Chancellor to effect the necessary transaction, with the proviso that any dispute arising therefrom should be heard in the Exchequer Court and that any grants should be suspended until the case had been decided. The result was that during the reign of Elizabeth these "greedy cormorants," as one exasperated bishop termed them, might visit any ecclesiastical body and examine its title deeds in the hope of finding a flaw in them. They even had the power to empanel juries and take evidence on oath. It is hardly likely that they expected to be able to retain permanently the "concealed" lands which they discovered, but they rightly calculated that their owners would rather come to terms with them than undertake an expensive law suit. So they were prepared to sell their title for a consideration and the lawful owner of the land was often only too glad to buy it.

It is an amazing story. For example, the Bishop of Norwich joining the Master and Brethren of a Hospital in 1547 in surrendering its lands to the Crown, by an oversight surrendered all the lands of his bishopric. This was not discovered until 1585 when they were granted as "concealed" lands to Lord Wentworth.⁶³ The Dean and Chapter of Norwich were also in danger of losing all their lands, and to the same man, on the grounds that the Priory of Norwich at the Dissolution was transformed into the Dean and Chapter without having been first surrendered or dissolved; for the Priory (said the lawyers) could not have been transformed without the consent of the founder,

⁶³ Cal. State Papers, Dom. 1591-1594, p. 576.

who was one Herbert, Bishop of Norwich in the reign of William Rufus !⁶⁴ What a lucrative time the lawyers must have had in the sixteenth century.

We are now in a position to understand the documents which Randle Holme so industriously copied out and which are preserved in the British Museum. It will be remembered that in 1575 the Dean discovered the flaw in the Cathedral title deeds which had the effect of making all the Cathedral land Crown property. It also made them technically "concealed" lands. This came to the ears of a man named Francis Hitchcock who joined with one Lancelot Bostock in turning it to his advantage. The man who actually got the commission from the Queen to search for these lands was Peter Grey, but it is evident that he was acting in collusion with the other two. On September 10, 1577, he "had a bill assigned by Her Majesty for having in fee farm lands and tenements to the value of £200 p.a. The 16th day of the same month, 18 Q.E., Hitchcock knowing the imperfection of K. Henry 8 grant aforesaid and also the subtilty of Sir Richard Cotton, did bargain and compound for the passinge of the said lands in the first booke that should pass from her Majesty of concealed lands. Whereupon the said Peter Grey got a commission for Cheshire to find the said lands," and it would not take him long to do so. "The Treasurer did give the bill," is written in the margin of the next document, and on March 8, 1577-8, Peter Grey was granted by the Queen a lease of Boughton, Ball's Farm, Upton, Wervin, the Long Meadow in Backford, Moston, Upton (*sic*), Salghton (Saughton), Tilstone Fernall, Tarvin. On the following day he conveyed all the above lands to Hitchcock and Bostock, who, however, did not take possession in due form of law until 1583. Meanwhile the Dean, probably quite oblivious of what was going on, was fighting it out with the fee-farmers before the Privy Council with the result that we already know and on July 15, 1580 "Her Majesty granted again all the said lands to the fee-farmers and the rents to the Dean and Chapter, they not regarding or making any account of her Majesty's former grant of the same lands . . . made two years before unto Peter Grey, dated March 8, 1577."⁶⁵

It was now Hitchcock's business (Bostock had died soon after this) to exploit as fully as he could the situation he had contrived to bring about. He seems by this time to have been possessed of much more than lands to the value of £200 p.a. as specified above—in fact all the fee-farmers found their leases were in danger. As no doubt Hitchcock expected, many of them came to terms with him and bought up his title, and others were expected to do so.⁶⁶ Among them was no less a person than Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor

⁶⁴ Strype, *Annals of Elizabeth*, Bk. 1, xxvi.

⁶⁵ Harl. MS. II. 2071, f. 146; 2760, f. 51.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2071, f. 147, give lists of those who have and have *not yet* purchased Hitchcock's title.

of England, who had years ago bought the lease of some Cathedral land from Sir Richard Grosvenor. When Cotton seized the lands he sold those leased to Sir Christopher to Sir Hugh Cholmeley. Sir Christopher, in order to strengthen his claim against Sir Hugh, bought up Hitchcock's title through his agent, Thomas Knight. (The lands in question were the manors of Great and Little Sutton, Ince and Bromborough, and the parsonage of Ince.) Sir Christopher died in 1591, but the case was contested in the law courts after his death, which brings us to the following letter, important for the light it throws on the Cathedral in the 'nineties and upon the equivocal position of the Dean and Chapter at that time. There is no clue to the identity of the writer of the letter, or to the person to whom it was written except that he is addressed as "your Honour"; he was evidently a party to the suit and a member of the Privy Council.

The writer, having outlined the previous history of the case, proposes that "your Honour," having received the lands from Hitchcock and Knight, "will proceed presently to the trial of the title by law," Hitchcock to pay the costs and "your Honour" to supply the necessary influence—"Your Honour to do your best that the cause may be favoured in right by Her Majesty and others—in obtaining the lands by the said title of Hitchcock." The loot when obtained was to be divided on a fifty-fifty basis between "your Honour" on the one side and Knight and Hitchcock on the other. "And the same lands so obtained by law the one moiety to be and remain to your Honour and your heirs for ever, and the other moiety to Mr. Knight and Hitchcock and their heirs for ever." Then follow his proposals about the Cathedral. "And if your Honour do recover these lands you may give the Cathedral Church of Chester the parsonage of Astbury, the parsonage of Bebington which is worth £500 yearly; then they have besides that £115 of the old rent yearly in tithes and tenements . . . within the City and liberties of Chester, which is a large and sufficient portion to repair (?) the Church and bear all other charges. And after the death of the Dean and six prebends let their pensions [stipends] die also. And then there may be a parson and a vicar [i.e. a curate] and 6 singing men in the place of the said Dean and Chapter, and so it will be a good parish church; for it is used no otherway at this time; it lieth unpaved like a barn floor, for nether the Dean nor the six prebends are there all the whole year except 20 days before Christmas to receive their rents and make division thereof among them, and so departeth every man away till the next year. If they deliver a sermon before they depart that is all their labour and charge and good they do in the City and whole shire. This may be required of those that are the fee farmers of the said lands." An abstract of this letter is given in the catalogue in the British Museum and against it the compiler of the

catalogue has written in the margin "Fowle instructions," which shows where his sympathies lay. If this suggestion did not find favour with his Honour the writer has another suggestion to make—that his Honour should take the fee farm of the lands to himself and his heirs and "assure the Dean and Chapter a sure and good estate in law of their old yearly rents," and give the fee farmers leases of 31 years for the lands they hold.

"Thus doing," he writes, "the Churchmen may think themselves much bound to your Honour for providing the security of their rents for their maintenance, which now they have no assurance of. So your Honour shall have the commanding of a great many tenants besides the friends of the freeholders and the perquisites of the courts."

We gather from this that the award of 1580 was in danger of being set aside and that the Dean and Chapter, having lost the freehold of their land, were not even sure of getting the rents.

What a light all this throws on a little known side of social history in the 16th century. Everything is dominated by the scramble for land, in which scramble the highest in the country were not ashamed to take part. Evidently land was expected to increase in value, as of course it did, and when we see the price the speculators were prepared to pay for it and the expensive law suits they were prepared to engage in in order to keep it, we realise what a blow it must have been to the Dean and Chapter to lose their freehold rights.

I said at the beginning of this paper that I hoped to be able to show amongst other things what effect the Reformation had on the everyday life of the people, and it would appear from the foregoing that this effect was not good. Nor is this to be wondered at when we consider the many religious changes the people had had thrust upon them by force and the natural drift of the really keen people to one of the two wings, Puritan and Papist, both of which were for political reasons suppressed by the Government. There is no doubt that religion was at a low ebb at the end of Elizabeth's reign. On the other hand we must realise that the most prominent weaknesses of the Church—pluralism, absenteeism and simony—were not due to the Reformation but were an inheritance from the Middle Ages and were accepted as the normal thing in the sixteenth century. It is all too easy to fall into the mistake of judging past ages by present standards. It must also be remembered that historical records are more likely to preserve the vices rather than the virtues of a past age, for the latter are taken for granted and moreover are not "news." It is at least something that in these disturbed times the cathedral services were carried on, the cathedral itself kept in being, and there can be no doubt that in spite of the shortcomings of those in high places there were many simple nameless folk who continued to worship devoutly and to live sober and God-fearing lives.