

TRANSLATION OF THE DEED OF APPROPRIATION

OF THE

CHURCH OF ST. PETER OF MUNDHAM TO THE HOSPITAL OF ST. GILES IN
NORWICH, BY ANTHONY [DE BEC], UNDER HIS EPISCOPAL SEAL:

DATED AT HOXNE, 30TH JUNE, 1340.

COMMUNICATED BY

THOMAS BRIGHTWELL, ESQ.

THE Hospital of St. Giles, situate in Bishopgate street, Norwich, and now more commonly known by the name of the "Great Hospital," or the "Old Men's Hospital," was the most important among the establishments of this description in the city. It was founded in 1249 by Walter de Suffield, the tenth Bishop of the See, whose act was two years subsequently confirmed by a Papal Bull, issued by Innocent IV. The original object in view was to maintain four resident chaplains there, who might for ever celebrate divine service for the soul of the prelate; to assist in supporting all the poor and decrepit chaplains in the diocese that had not the means of providing for themselves; and to lodge thirteen poor people, and supply them each with one meal a day. The same Bishop in 1253, by a second deed, assigned to the Hospital further property, and enacted further ordinances; entering at the same time into a variety of details, many of which may appear extraordinary, and some even absurd, to the greater part of us of the present day; but by those who view them aright will be seen to be well adapted to the thirteenth century, and full of curious information regarding the manners and customs and feelings of our ancestors of those days. Of all this, as likewise of the

possessions of the Hospital, and its revenues, benefactors, indulgences, rights, immunities, privileges, and internal regulations, a circumstantial account will be found in the *History of Norfolk* (II., p. 757, 1st edition). The author of that work subsequently proceeds to relate, how Anthony de Bec, ninth in succession to the Episcopal Mitre after the death of Walter de Suffield, followed his example as a patron to the establishment; and how, in pursuance of a special licence from the King in 1334, for appropriating to it the rents and profits of the parochial church of St. Peter of Mundham, he issued the deed of which a translation is here subjoined. For the accuracy of this translation a sufficient voucher will be found in the fact of its coming from the hands of Mr. W. H. Black, whose learning and abilities are so well known in the Record Office, where he is engaged. The deed itself, which is preserved among the muniments of the Hospital, has never been published; nor has the Norfolk Archæological Society yet inserted any similar instrument in their Transactions. As illustrative therefore of the general tenor and character of such deeds, as showing the then condition of the Hospital and the consequent care bestowed upon the providing for the poor at a period when no compulsory laws were in existence for their relief, and as a not uninteresting document in connection with the history of Norwich, it is here submitted to the Society.

DEED.

To all unto whom the present letters shall come, ANTHONY, by divine permission Bishop of Norwich, salvation in the Lord everlasting.

Whereas, by the pastoral office enjoined [on us], the general care of our subjects hangeth on us; yet more attentively about those it behoveth us to watch, who, oppressed with

the inconveniences of poverty that hath come upon them, cannot undertake [their] wonted works of piety.

Forsooth heretofore, on the behalf of the Master and Brethren of our Hospital of St. Giles in Norwich, it had been suggested unto the Lord William de Ayremynne of good memory, our immediate predecessor, that, whereas the said Hospital had been founded by the Lord Walter formerly Bishop of Norwich, our predecessor, for the sustenance and hospitality of the poor and infirm, and principally to minister the necessaries of life to priests of the diocese of Norwich, who, broken down with age, or destitute of bodily strength, or labouring under continual disease, cannot celebrate divine [services] as they ought, nor have wherewithal they may be supported elsewhere; but the number of such priests and poor [persons] and infirm, flocking to the same Hospital, for the sake of having sustenance and hospitality, hath now so grown, and daily groweth; and the floods and inundations of waters have broken in upon some possessions of the said Hospital, situate in marshy and watery places, (out of which they had been accustomed to take great part of their substance,) and so reducing them to barrenness and, without their fault, irrecoverably wasting [them,] that for a long time they brought not the fruits nor made the produce accustomed; also the buildings of the said Hospital, very needful to the same Master and Brethren and infirm [persons,] in manifold wise without their fault threaten ruin; and that, by the malicious practice of certain sons of iniquity, they have, at successive times, for recovering and defending the rights and rents of the said Hospital withholden and withdrawn, undergone and undergo heavy burdens of expenses; and thus the means of the said Hospital are so weakened and rendered insufficient, that they cannot support [the works] of due sustenance and hospitality, and other works of piety, and charges incumbent according to the foundation of the same Hospital.

For which [things] it had been, on the part of the said Master and Brethren, to our said immediate predecessor humbly supplicated, that for these causes he would deign unto them and their Hospital to appropriate, and into their proper uses to grant, the parochial church of Saint Peter of Mundham, of our diocese, and of their patronage, (the rents and profits whereof, by common estimation, exceed not the yearly quantity of twelve marks and a half of sterlings,) with all its rights and appertainances.

Whose supplications the same predecessor embracing, upon the causes premised, had commanded to be inquired and caused diligent inquisition to be made; but he in no wise committed the business of such appropriation and union to farther execution, being prevented by death; and lately the same Master and Brethren have more instantly supplicated us, that we, having compassion on such their poverty, with fatherly affection, and having examined and discussed the merits of such inquisition upon the [matters] suggested, [which had been] made by authority of our said predecessor, as it is premised, would deign, in the respect of charity, to deliver to farther expedition and due effect the begun business of such appropriation and union.

For so much as we, more inwardly examining the [matter] suggested and the merits of the said inquisition, and considering that by how much any [men] are oppressed with too heavy a burden, by so much must the right hand of a more ample succour be stretched forth to such oppressed, by the fervor of charity and the earnestness of piety; and whereas by the merits of such inquisition and other lawful documents, we have clearly found the said causes to contain the truth, and the supplication of the said Master and Brethren to be consonant unto reason, the same Master and Brethren lawfully appearing before us by master Thomas de Lenne, clerk, having sufficient power in this behalf, and humbly supplicating our pronounciation to be made upon the

premises,—do pronounce the same causes for making such appropriation to have been and to be true, just, and lawful; and, whereas the necessity of the same Master and Brethren of the Hospital aforesaid so urgeth, and evident utility requireth, from the causes aforesaid, we, with the consent of our Chapter, having first had a solemn and diligent treaty with the same Chapter hereupon, and the order of law which is in this behalf required being observed in all things, do, to the aforesaid Master and Brethren and their successors, and to the Hospital aforesaid, for the causes premised, appropriate, and into their proper uses by these writings grant, in times perpetual to be possessed, the aforesaid church of Saint Peter of Mundham, together with the fruits, profits, and appertainances of the same.

And, that Sir Ralph de Trymingham, who now is Rector of the said church, may, so long as he shall hold it, possess the same in the name of the said Master and Brethren, we will and ordain that the same Rector, so long as he shall hold that church, pay yearly, by our authority, in the Easter synod at Norwich, a pension of twelve pence to the said Master and Brethren who for the time shall be, for the fruits of the church aforesaid; yet so that the consent of him, the Rector, shall intervene in this behalf.

We will also, grant, and ordain, that, the aforesaid Rector resigning or dying, it be lawful to the said Master and Brethren and their successors, by themselves or by their proctor hereunto especially constituted, to enter the said church by authority of us and of the presents, and to take all the fruits and profits of the same, also to dispose of the same and all the rights and appertainances of the aforesaid church whatsoever, as it shall seem to them expedient, without seeking or obtaining any other authority or license of the Diocesan hereupon;—

Saving a congruous portion for the sustenance of one perpetual Priest, there to serve for exercising the cure of the

said church and its parishioners ; which portion, considering the slenderness of the same church, we ordain and will to consist of six marks and a half of sterlings, in told money, by the said Master and Brethren every year in the synods of Saint Michael and of Easter, at Norwich by yearly portions faithfully to be paid ; (then at length to take effect on the resignation or decease of the Rector of the said church who now is ;) to the which exercise of the cure, both at first and so often as the exercise of that cure shall happen to be vacant, the said Master and Brethren shall perpetually present a fit Priest unto us and our successors the Bishops of Norwich who for the time shall be ;—

Saving also to us and our successors the canonical obedience of the Master of the Hospital aforesaid, who for the time shall be, by reason of the said church to us and our successors to be performed, and visitation, and other episcopal rights and customs due and accustomed in the church aforesaid ; and saving to us and our successors, in the person of the same Priest who for the time shall be, the episcopal rights and customs due and accustomed ;—

Saving moreover to us, to our Church of Norwich, and to our successors, in every vacancy of the said Hospital,—to wit, on the resignation, death, or removal of the Master of the said Hospital who [now] is and who for the time shall be, or the same Hospital howsoever being vacant,—the tax of the church of Saint Peter of Mundham aforesaid, for the first fruits of the same church, to us, our Church of Norwich and our successors who for the time shall be, by the approved custom of Norwich, to the Bishop and Church of Norwich due and accustomed ; so that we and our successors, for every vacancy of the aforesaid Hospital, may, by sequestration of the fruits and profits of the church of Mundham aforesaid, and by sentences of excommunication, suspension, and interdict, and any other ecclesiastical censures, upon any [persons] rebellious in this behalf, by the authority of us

and our successors, without any contradiction, levy and take the said tax, as is aforesaid.

All and singular which things we ordain, decree, and define, inviolably to be observed in times everlasting.

In witness and faith of all which things, we have caused our seal to be set unto these presents. Given at Hoxne, on the thirtieth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred [and] forty, and in the fourth year of our Consecration.

A true Translation from the original Instrument.

WILLIAM HENRY BLACK.

London, 25th November, 1837.
