



Fragment of the Column
which once formed the East end of the
Chapter House of Durham Cathedral.

Ronulph Flambard, in conformity with the instructions of William Carliphe, the founder, placed "the portraiture of a milkmaid milking her cow on the outside of the north-west turret of the Nine Altars, in thankful remembrance of that maid, who so fortunately, in their great perplexity, directed them to the appointed spot, where the body of their great saint was to rest until the resurrection; and this monument, though defaced by the weather, is there to be seen to the present day." There too the same is to be seen in our own day; but not in the defaced and mutilated state in which it is described by the editor of the *Rites and Monuments*, and is figured by Hutchinson; for the zeal and piety of the nineteenth century have replaced it with modern sculpture.

The Column is an object that seems to call for no other observation than that it is remarkable for the obvious antiquity displayed in the sculpture as well of the capital as of the shaft, and is deserving of notice as one of three, the only specimens now left of the architecture of the Chapter House, denominated by Carter, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1809, p. 33, as "a relic of superb Saxon workmanship," and by the learned historian of North Durham, in his *Brief Account of Durham Cathedral*, p. 108, as "unique in its architecture, venerable for its age, and associated with the history of the See more than any other part of the Cathedral." But these are points upon which it would be out of place here to offer any remarks; and still more so would it be to touch upon the former glories of the building, upon the much interesting matter connected with it, as recorded in the book of the *Rites and Monuments*, or upon the motives and details of its destruction. The last was an "abomination of desolation," which, far as Durham is removed from Norfolk, all the members of our Society will join in lamenting; and of the first some slight, very slight, idea may be formed by what is here offered to their notice.

LETTER FROM SECRETARY WALSINGHAM

To the Lord Treasurer,

DESIRING HIM TO PROMOTE THE ERECTING OF

A HOUSE OF REFORMATION IN NORFOLK FOR VAGABONDS
AND OTHERS; WITH A BILL ENCLOSED :*From the Lansdowne Manuscripts in the British Museum, No. 18, art. 97.*

COMMUNICATED BY

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THE following very curious document affords a remarkable exemplification of the ethos of the Elizabethan age, being one of the experiments made during the establishment of the existing system of the Poor Laws. From the first concoction of that system, the legislature seemed unable to discriminate between poverty and crime; and every measure intended for the relief of the poor was envenomed by harshness. The system, however, was embodied in the reign of Edward VI. by the conversion of the Royal Palace of Bridewell, which had been the residence of several of the English monarchs, even as early as King John, into a place of correction for vagabonds of each sex and all denominations. The building had fallen into decay; and the citizens of London accordingly petitioned the King's Council, in 1552, praying that it might be "granted to them as a house of occupations, wherein, as well the child when he is brought up and grown to years, and found unapt to learning, neither any honest person desireth or would have his service, may there be exercised and

occupied; as also the sore and sick when they be cured, who shall not be suffered to wander as vagabonds in the commonwealth, as they have been accustomed, but shall there be exercised. And unto this shall be brought the sturdy and idle; and likewise such prisoners as are quit at the sessions, that there they may be set to labour." The citizens at the same time more particularly detail the use they hoped to derive from the establishment, stating their intention, that, "in this house shall be erected sundry occupations, wherein shall be trained all the former sorts of people, and those occupations shall be such as may be profitable to all the King's Majesty's subjects, and hurtful to none: as the making of caps, which shall be made as good, as well dressed and died, and more substantial than any are made in France; and yet shall be afforded at as low a price, or lower, than the French caps are, for there shall scarcely so much gain or profit be taken of their labours as shall countervail their charges and expenses. Also the weaker sort of people, that is to say, such as are lame of legs and whole of hands, shall be occupied in making feather-bed ticks, wool-cards, drawing of wire, spinning, carding, knitting, and winding of silk, and other profitable devices; and the stubborn and fouler sort shall be exercised in making of nails and other iron work, even such sorts as are not made within any part of this realm." Bridewell hence became the model prison throughout England; and the establishment of it was followed by the Act 18 Eliz. cap. 3 (1575-6), whereby the justices were empowered to establish houses of correction, in which the poor and the rogue, both being invariably associated by Elizabeth's legislation, were set to work; and the House of Reformation at Acle seems to have been a voluntary establishment, in anticipation of those which were shortly afterwards sanctioned by Parliament. Crafty Walsingham observes, that the house was opposed by those who disliked that any good work should be done in the time of the Gospel; and it is

therefore obvious that one object intended to be effected, was the discouragement of the feelings in favour of "Papistry," which so long lurked and lingered in Norfolk; and that the austere relief afforded by the House of Reformation was to compensate for the former charities of the monasteries. The monthly meetings of the Governors constituted a species of irregular petty sessions,—jovial, social, legal and illegal,—tending very much to consolidate the interests of the higher classes, by bringing the gentry and substantial yeomanry into contact. The most amusing portion, perhaps, is the scene after dinner, the offenders brought up by the constable as the dessert. A document somewhat analogous has been printed by Sir F. M. Eden, in his *History of the Poor*, (III. App. No. XXX.) being the Regulations of the House of Correction at Bury.

"My verry good Lord, I sende your Lordship hereinlosed the note delyvered unto me touching the house of reformation lately erected at Acle in Norfolke; as also a coppye of a letter drawn to that purpose, that sooche as are favorers of this good worke desyre to be sent from my Lords to the cheffe of that shire; for I founde of them whoe mysleeke that any good worke shoold be don in the tyme of the Gospell, do secretly spurne at yt. Yt were great pyttye that an act, so necessarye and so full of pyetye, shoold lacke any furtherance or contenance that may be gyven yt. Oure dayes brynge foorthe fewe of them: yt were therefor great pyttie that thos fewe shoold quayle for lacke of the countenance of thos whoes authoryte is bounde to maynteyne all Christyan and honest actyons. Yt may pleash^r your Lordship therefor (after some necessarye correctyon given to the inclosed draught) to yeald youre favorable fortheraunce unto

the same. And so, leavyng forther to troble your Lordship, I most humbly take my leave. At Batterseye, the xxvth of Decembre, 1574.

“Y^r L. to command,

“FRA. WALSYNGHAM.

“To the right honorable and my verie good lord the L. Threasurer.”

*The Causes and Mannor of the Metinge at Acle
in Norff.*

First ther is bought a howse at the chardges of the lymitts adjoyning, wher, after the manner of a Bridewell, ther is appointed bothe worke and ponnishment for such idle laborers, stubborne servants, vagabond roges, and other disordered people, as were wonte to annoye those partes.

Upon the Wednesday, beinge market day ther, the Bysshoppe, with certan gentlemen and chief yomen therabouts, do mete once in thre wekes or a moneth, at ix of the clocke, when they firste repare to the church ther and spend one howre in prayer and preachinge, the chief effect wherrof is to perswade love, obedience, amitie, concorde, &c.

That done, they returne to ther inne, wher they dyne together at ther own charges, observinge the lawe for Wednesday: in the meane while, betweene sermone ended and dynner, they go to the said howse of Bridwell to consider and examyne howe all things ther ar provided and ordered; as well for ther due punisshment and reasonable worke, as for ther meate and necessaryes, without which often sight and overseinge the said howse and orders wold come quicklie to nothing.

After dynner, if any chief constable ther prove of any

disorder or misdemenor within ther hundreds, redresse wherof belongeth to the Justices of Peace, which els wold require the said constables further travile to some justice's howse, if he will complaine of it ther, the offender is eyther openly punished, or other order taken as the cawse requireth. And if, besides all this, ther be anye private controversies betwene pore neighbours, whereof the hundred courte had wonte to be full, they bestowe the rest of the day in intreatinge them to peace one with another, by accorde between themselves, or by arbytrament of ther neareste neighbours. So that nowe in some hole hundreds ther is scarcely one of those unneighbourly quarrells and suetes founde.
