

## On Walsoken Pardons.\*

BY

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No. 397. *Patent Roll, 2 Henry V. part 3, m. 10.*

De Cantaria fundandam.

Rex omnibus ad quos, &c., salutem. Sciatis quod de gratia nostra speciali et intime ut pie operis subsequentis participes effici valeamus concessimus et licenciam dedimus pro nobis et heredibus nostris quantum in nobis est Galfrido Colvyle Armigero Johanni Fynne Capellano, Ricardo Blaber Capellano, Roberto Flete Capellano, Ade Wykene, Johanni Langham de Wysebeche et Ade Baryng de Walsoken quod ipsi ad laudem Dei et honorem Sancte Trinitatis quandam fraternitatem sive gildam perpetuam de se ipsis ac de aliis personis tam hominibus quam mulieribus qui eorum devocione de fraternitate sive gilda illa esse voluerint in quadam Capella Sancte Trinitatis juxta fossatum vocatum le Stathedyke in Walsoken situata de novo incipere inire facere

\* This Paper was originally intended by the late learned and lamented author for the Society of Antiquaries; but he was induced to make it a contribution to our Norfolk Society: it is believed to be the last Paper that proceeded from his pen, and was left by him somewhat incomplete.

fundare ordinare et stabilire ac personas illas et alias quas-  
 cunque eis grato animo imposterum inherentes et fratres et  
 sorores fraternitatis sive gilde predicte recipere admittere  
 et acceptare possint et quod fratres fraternitatis sive gilde  
 predicte cum sic incepta inita facta fundata ordinata et  
 stabilita fuerit et successores sui singulis annis imperpetuum  
 de seipsis unum Magistrum sive Custodem qui regimen  
 gubernacionem et supervisum fraternitatis sive gilde hujus  
 ad custodiam omnium terrarum tenementorum redditum  
 possessionum bonorum et catallorum que eidem fraternitati  
 sive gilde exnunc acquiri dari sive assignari seu ad eandem  
 fraternitatem sive gildam quoquo modo pertinere contingent  
 habeat eligere ordinare et successive constituere ac Magis-  
 trum sive Custodem illum de tempore in tempus cum opus  
 fuerit et expediens amovere et exonerare, et alium ejus  
 loco et nomine pro ut eis placuerit ponere et substituere,  
 necnon communitatem inter se et de se ipsis facere et inire,  
 et sigillum commune pro negociis et agendis fraternitatis  
 sive gilde predicte deserviturum habere et exercere possint  
 et quod idem Magister sive Custos pro tempore existens  
 habeat et gerat nomen Magistri sive Custodis fraternitatis  
 sive gilde in Capella Sancte Trinitatis juxta fossatum vocatum  
 le Stathedyke in Walsoken scituata ac quod idem Magister  
 sive Custos per hujus nomen necnon fratres et sorores fra-  
 ternitatis sive gilde predicte et successores sui sint persone  
 habiles et capaces ad terras tenementa redditus et alias  
 possessiones quascunque perquirendum et ad eadem terras  
 tenementa redditus et possessiones ac alias terras tenementa  
 redditus et possessiones quecumque que eidem fraternitati  
 sive gilde seu Magistro aut Custodi ejusdem fraternitatis  
 sive gilde pro tempore existenti ad usum sive commodum  
 predicte fraternitatis sive gilde dari legari acquiri seu quovis  
 alio modo in futurum concedi seu assignari contigerit reci-  
 piendum et tenendam idemque Magister sive Custos et  
 successores sui per hujus nomen pro fraternitate sive gilda



illa ac pro terris tenementis redditibus possessionibus bonis et catallis ejusdem fraternitatis sive gilde in quibuscunque actionibus et placitis tam realibus et personalibus quam mixtis cujuscumque generis sint vel nature in quibuscumque Curiis placeis et locis nostris et heredum nostrorum ac in Curiis locis et placeis aliorum quorumcumque infra regnum nostrum Anglie coram Judicibus secularibus et ecclesiasticis quibuscumque juxta juris exigenciam placitent et placitentur ac placitare et implacitare possint et debeant necnon omnia alia facere et recipere pro ut et eodem modo quo ceteri ligei nostri persone habiles et capaces faciunt et facere ac recipiunt et recipere poterunt in quibuscumque locis et placeis predictis et quod predictus Magister sive Custos ac singuli fratres fraternitatis sive gilde predictae et successores sui congregaciones licitas fratrum et sororum ejusdem fraternitatis sive gilde facere ipsique convenire locis et temporibus oportunis ad tractandum et ordinandum necnon ad statuta et ordinaciones pro saniori regimine et gubernacione fraternitatis sive gilde predictae ac fratrum et sororum ejusdem secundum necessitatis exigenciam faciendum quociens et quando opus fuerit et necesse valeant libere et impune in perpetuum. Concessimus eciam pro nobis et heredibus nostris quantum in nobis est prefatis Galfrido, Johanni, Ricardo, Roberto, Ade, Johanni et Ade quod ipsi vel eorum aliquis per se aut per eorum seu alicujus ipsorum executores unam duas tres vel quatuor Cantarias perpetuas videlicet quamlibet earundem de uno Capellano divina in Capella predicta pro bono statu predictorum Galfridi, Johannis, Ricardo, Roberti, Ade, Johannis et Ade seu alicujus eorum dum vixerint et pro animabus eorum aut alicujus ipsorum cum ab hac luce migraverint, necnon pro bono statu fratrum et sororum fraternitatis sive gilde predictae et eorum successorum necnon eorum animabus cum ab hoc seculo decesserint et animabus omnium fidelium defunctorum juxta ordinacionem predictorum Galfridi, Johannis, Ricardi, Roberti, Ade, Johannis, et

Ade vel alicujus eorum seu executorum suorum predictorum in hac parte faciendam celebraturo imperpetuum similiter facere fundare et stabilire possint et quod iidem Galfridus, Johannes, Ricardus, Robertus, Adam, Johannes et Adam vel eorum aliquis seu eorum vel alicujus ipsorum executores ad hujus Cantarias sive Cantariam cum sic facte fundate et stabilite fuerint sive facta fundata et stabilita fuerit quasdam personas idoneas sive quandam personam idoneam presentare possint vel possit. Et quod predictus Magister sive Custos fraternitatis sive gilde predictae et successores sui Magistri sive Custodes ejusdem fraternitatis sive gilde in singulis vacationibus Cantiarum predictarum sive Cantarie predictae sive sit per mortem resignationem per mutationem vel cessionem predictorum Capellanorum sive predicti Capellani ad Cantarias predictas sive Cantariam predictam ut premittur primo presentandorum sive presentandi et successorum suorum temporibus futuris quosdam alios Capellanos sive quendam alium Capellanum sufficientes et idoneos seu sufficientem et idoneum ad predictam Cantarias sive Cantariam presentare possint in perpetuum Concessimus insuper et licenciam dedimus pro nobis et heredibus nostris predictis quantum in nobis est Johanni Claycroft de Wysbeche et Nicholao Chawell de Walsoken quod ipsi unum mesuagium et triginta et duas acras terre cum pertinentibus in Walsoken ac Capellam predictam infra mesuagium illud scituatam que de aliis quam de nobis tenent in capite dare possint et assignare predictis Magistro sive Custodi fraternitatis sive gilde predictae cum sic incepta inita facta fundata ordinata et stabilita fuerit ac fratribus et sororibus ejusdem Fraternitatis sive gilde Habend' et tenend' sibi et successoribus suis in auxilium supportacionis onerum eidem Magistro sive Custodi et fratribus et sororibus et successoribus suis imposterum incumbencium imperpetuum. Et eisdem Magistro sive Custodi ac fratribus et sororibus fraternitatis sive gilde predictae cum sic incepta inita facta fundata ordinata et



stabilita fuerit quod ipsi mesuagium Capellam et terram predictam cum pertinentibus a prefatis Johanne Claycroft et Nicholao recipere possint et tenere sibi et successoribus suis predictis in auxilium supportacionis onerum predictorum in forma predicta sicut predictum est imperpetuum tenore presentium Similiter licenciam dedimus specialem Statuto de terris et tenementis ad manum mortuam non ponendis edito non obstante Nolentes quod iidem Galfridus, Johannes, Ricardus, Robertus, Adam, Johannes, Adam, Johannes et Nicholaus vel heredes sui seu predicti Magister sive Custos fratres et sorores seu successores sui ratione permissorum per nos vel heredes nostros Justicios Escaetores Vicecomites aut alios Ballivos seu Ministros nostros vel heredum nostrorum quoscunque inde occasionentur inquietentur molestentur in aliquo seu graventur Salvis tamen nobis et aliis Capitalibus dominis feodi illius serviciis inde debitis et consuetis. In ejus, &c. T. R. apud Westmonasterium secundo die Februarii.

Per ipsum Regem et pro Centum solidis solutis in hanaperio.

At Walsoken, near Wisbeach, there formerly existed for more than a century and a half a small religious establishment, which was designated as the "College or Hospital of the Holy Trinity."

Blomefield gives but slight notices of this foundation, and they are chiefly derived from other documents like the present. "In this parish (he states) was a chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity, at the place called the Stathe Ditch, in which was a famous guild or fraternity, with custos or master." But as to the particular objects of the foundation, or of the fraternity by which it was occupied, the Norfolk

historian affords no information. The locality, I am kindly informed by Mr. Davies, was an acre of ground, now part of the glebe of the rectory, by the side of the road leading from Walsoken to Wisbeach. It was close to the old wall or embankment, supposed to have been formed in Roman times, which kept in the waters of the Wash, and at that time extended to Wisbeach. The floods had made a breach near this spot and formed a large pool, which still remains, and is used for washing sheep. The old name of "The Stathe" shews, further, that a landing-place was adjacent; for so at Norwich, by the side of the river, there is (or was) the Five-Bridge Key or Stathe.<sup>1</sup>

But though Blomefield knew nothing of the objects of the foundation, he was prompted to term it "famous," because he had met with several examples of its Charters of Pardon, such as this now before us.

The College or Hospital of Walsoken evidently acquired its peculiar importance from being what was termed "privileged," that is to say, endowed with the vicarious power of imparting certain spiritual indulgences sanctioned by the Pope. These were first obtained in the pontificate of Urban VI., which lasted from 1378 to 1389; and they are said to have been confirmed by his several successors, Boniface IX., Martin V., Nicholas V., Paul II., and Sixtus IV.

They are set forth as follows: to those who aided the house from their substance, or by their benefactions constituted themselves members of this holy fraternity, the Pope released yearly the seventh part of the penance enjoined upon them. He granted them three years and a hundred days of pardon as often as they performed this, or merited it; and also plenary participation of all masses and other prayers made, or hereafter to be made, in the Universal

<sup>1</sup> Map in Blomefield's *History*, published September 29th, 1746.



Church, even if the churches to which they belonged should be interdicted. If they should happen to die either excommunicated or interdicted by name, or should be public usurers, Church sepulture should not be denied to them; and the curates having the cure of their souls might absolve them from all their sins confessed and contrite, and even if forgotten, except they had committed such as the Apostolic See rightly claimed to be consulted upon; and, moreover, plenary remission at their last hour, *in extremis*, of all sins.

Such were the presumptuous indulgences which the Church of Rome was in that age ready to sell to any willing purchaser, and the same were retailed at very moderate rates to the faithful penitents at other stations of no greater importance than this small Norfolk hospital. This was, in reality, a device by which the laity were supposed to place themselves in a position of equal advantage with the religious orders, in respect to a state of acceptance with heaven; just as, in somewhat earlier times, men of large possessions, when despairing of recovery to health, made a summary purchase of admission to monasteries, and, as Milton expresses it, "to be sure of paradise, dying put on the weeds of Dominic."<sup>2</sup>

Smyth, in his *Lives of the Berkeleys*, thus explains this phase of religious sentiment: "Lay people of all sorts, men and women, married and single, desired to be enrolled in spirituall fraternities, as thereby enjoying the spirituall prerogatives of pardon, indulgence, and speedy despatch out of purgatory."—Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeley Family*, MS. iii. 443.

Foxe, in that chapter of his *Acts and Monuments of the Church* in which he relates "The Life, Actes, and Death of the famous and worthy Councillor, Lord Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex," tells a story how Cromwell in his early life,

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book iii. 479.

being at the Court of Rome, when as yet he "had no sound taste nor judgment of religion," promoted a suit there in progress for a guild at Boston, which possessed a papal privilege corresponding to this of Walsoken. It was designated the "Guild of our Lady in St. Botolph's church at Boston." It had received its first privilege of pardon from Pope Nicholas V., who reigned from 1455 to 1458, consequently almost a century later than the privilege of Walsoken; and the same had been confirmed by two subsequent popes, Pius II. (1458—1464) and Sixtus IV. (1471—1484). It was about the year 1510, as Foxe suggests, that Cromwell assisted in procuring a fresh confirmation from Pope Julius II., and in 1526 the same pardon was again confirmed, at the request of King Henry VIII., by Pope Clement VII. It accorded to those who visited the chapel of our Lady in St. Botolph's church the same pardon as if they visited the chapel of Scala Cœli, or that of St. John Lateran, at Rome.

Foxe's story in regard to Cromwell and Pope Julius II. is, that the young Englishman, who knew his Holiness's personal weakness in liking "new-fangled strange delicates and dainty dishes," cajoled him into a ready compliance with the suit of the Boston men, by "preparing certain fine dishes of jelly, after the best fashion, made after our country manner here in England, which to them at Rome was not known nor seen before. And thus (writes Foxe) were the jelly pardons of the town of Boston obtained, for the maintenance of their decayed port;" for, like the Ephesians of old, the Boston men well knew what "gain came to their town by that Romish merchandize, as all superstition is commonly gainful."

Foxe gives, in English, "the effect and contents of the Boston pardon," a very curious document not brought into the collection of the late Mr. Toulmin Smith, but copied in the *History of Boston* by Pishey Thompson, together with



large particulars of the several other guilds in that town upon which Mr. Toulmin Smith has not touched.

When such religious guilds were fully established in their functions, and became objects of frequent resort with penitent and pious devotees, it will readily be imagined that the forms of admission and of pardon, such as that which is now presented to our notice, were kept ready prepared, just as marriage licenses or other kindred documents are in our own day. This is the case with all that I have seen or read any account of, and proofs of this characteristic will be observed in the example before us. It is engrossed by a skilful scribe upon a piece of parchment measuring 12 in. by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in., and occupies a little more than thirteen long lines. A capital letter W, illuminated in gold and colours, is prefixed, extending to the depth of three lines: this can scarcely be called an initial, for the word to which it is prefixed is *Univerſis*; but the W would intimate at first sight, even to the unlearned, that this document was issued from Walsoken.

The exordium is in red ink, and so are the names of the popes in the two places where they occur. The names of the purchasers, *Jok'em Smeth' et Izabelam co'sortem suam*, are inserted, perhaps by the Chaplain or Warden of the hospital, in penmanship somewhat inferior to that of the professional scrivener. The seal of the hospital was suspended by a label of parchment drawn through slits in the folded lower margin, as in an ordinary secular charter, but it is now lost. A form of absolution is written on the back of the document in two and a half long lines, in terms addressed to a single individual.

It appears to have been customary to write such a form of absolution or pardon by way of indorsement upon documents of this character. And that document also resembles the present in another respect—it was drawn for an individual. The form of absolution says *te absolvat*, but the blank in the

charter itself is filled in with a plurality of recipients: *Thom's Wheler capellano* [*sic*] & *parentes*, in ink of a different colour.

The indulgence of the Castle of St. Peter emanated from the head quarters of all this system of remission of sins at Rome. It is said to have been set on foot by Pope Alexander V., who reigned only for less than a twelvemonth in 1409-10, and it offered plenary remission to all such who, according to their abilities, should contribute to the defence of the faith, the fortification and safe keeping of the Castle of St. Peter, and the confusion of the enemies of the aforesaid faith. There is a second example, granted by the same Sir John Seyville and dated in 1412, translated in Sir Peter Leycester's *History of Cheshire*, p. 376.

These were the pardons which were often carried about by travelling hawkers called Pardoners, like him of whom Chaucer tells us—

“ His wallet lay before him in his lappe,  
Bretful of Pardon come from Rome al hote.”

Whether the pardons of Walsoken were in like manner hawked about the country we have no proof or presumptive evidence; but from the number of documents resembling the present, which by some combination of accidents have been preserved to modern times, one may imagine that they were industriously distributed, and were held in considerable estimation. Including this example, I have traced as many as five charters of the Indulgence of Walsoken, ranging from the year 1452 to 1481.

1. The earliest is that which is now before us; but the date of this is more than sixty years later than the time when the hospital is said to have first acquired its privilege from Pope Urban V.

2. The next was granted in 1468, by Thomas Jackson, then chaplain and warden of the hospital, to Maurice ap



Jenkin and Margaret his wife—the name written *Morrys ap Jancen*. This was in the possession of Bishop Tanner when he wrote his *Notitia Monastica* in 1744, and is probably still preserved, but where I have not ascertained.

3. Another, granted by the same Thomas Jackson in 1472, was noticed by Dr. Whitaker among the Townley MSS.<sup>3</sup> It was granted to Henry Nowell and Joan his wife; which Henry Nowell was of Little Mearley in the parish of Whalley in Lancashire, and survived until the 8th Henry VIII. (1516.)

4. Blomefield mentions another, granted in 1476, in favour of John Berners, Esquire, who was the second son of Thomas Berners, Esquire, second son of Sir John Berners, Lord Berners.

5. The last of which I have found a notice was conferred, in 1481, on more obscure persons, Thomas Hutton and . . . . Dekkys, and this is printed, nearly entire, in Blomefield's *History of Norfolk*.

These documents furnish the names of four Wardens of Walsoken Hospital: Robert Rymie in 1452, Thomas Jackson in 1468 and 1472, . . . . Hewett in 1476, and Eborard in 1481.<sup>4</sup> A fifth, named Thomas Honyter, appears in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* in 1539.

Blomefield describes the seal of the fraternity, which was attached to the charter dated in 1481, in the following

<sup>3</sup> Whitaker's *History of Whalley*, first and second editions, third edit. 1818, p. 292; fourth edit. 1874, vol. ii.

<sup>4</sup> "In 1461 Eborardus was custos, as he stiles himself, of the chapel and hospital of the Holy Trinity of Walsoken."—Blomefield, iv. 729. But the date is a misprint for 1481, as shown by the document which follows. Blomefield also states (p. 728) that in a window of the parish church of Walsoken was anciently this coat: Gules, a fess undée between 3 mullets argent—*Everard*. This may possibly have been commemorative of the chaplain. Blomefield at p. 339 of the same volume notices the same coat in the church of North Repps, but differently blazoned, as, Everard, gules, a fess nebuly between 3 estoils or.

terms: "The seal is oblong, having under an arch the effigies or representation of God the Father, supporting our Saviour on the cross, as was frequently and profanely used in the Church of Rome; below that, the custos at prayers, with a legend: *Sigill . . . . . confrat . . . . . et consoror . . . . . hospitalis sancti Trinit. de Walsoken.*"

But the matrix of another seal of this hospital is still in existence, and is in the possession of Mr. Cocks, late of Hatfield Broadoak, in Essex. An impression was at that time exhibited by the late Mr. Charles Spence to the Archaeological Institute, and is described in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. xvii. pp. 69, 76. Its device is a representation of the Holy Trinity under a canopy of tabernacle work; and on a shield below, instead of a figure of the warden, is a shield charged with the chalice and holy wafer.<sup>5</sup> This



device is that which was more usually the ensign of guilds of Corpus Christi, of which that of the Corpus Christi Guild at York, lately published by the Surtees Society, furnishes an example. The legend is: *Sigillū hospitāl sante trinitat<sup>9</sup> de Walsokȳ.*

<sup>5</sup> Misdescribed as a paten in the *Archæological Journal*.



I have already stated that the account of Walsoken Hospital given by Blomefield is composed almost entirely from what he gathered from the three charters of fraternity which came under his notice. The other items of information which he has recorded are these: that on the 4th March, 1487, John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, granted forty days' indulgence to all who contributed to the support of this hospital; and that in 1512 Thomas Martynson, a priest attached to it, desired in his will to be buried in the chapel, or the chapel-yard, as the master might determine.

In the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, 29th Henry VIII., the Chantry of the Guild of the Holy Trinity of Walsoken is very briefly noticed. Without specifying items, it returns the clear yearly value of the foundation as Cvjs. viiij*d.*, with the name of Thomas Honyter as chaplain.<sup>6</sup> After its dissolution, King Edward VI., on the 21st August in his sixth year,<sup>7</sup> granted it to Mary Duchess of Richmond and Somerset, with all the messuages, lands, &c., belonging to it in Walsoken, West Walton, Wisbeche, Leverington, Elme, and Emnyth, to be held by knight's service, and *in capite* of the king.

<sup>6</sup> *Valor Eccles.* edit. 1817, iii. 398.

<sup>7</sup> I have been favoured by Mr. John L'Estrange with the following abstract of this grant from the original remaining among documents relating to the manor of Congham. By letters patent, tested at Ely 21st August, 6th Edward VI., [it must not be supposed that the king himself was there, but merely the great seal, in the custody of Bishop Goderych then Chancellor] the grant of Henry VIII. was recited dated 26th Sept. a.r. 37, conveying to Ralph Stannow for life "totam capellam sive messuagium nuper fraternitatis sive gilde capellæ sanctæ Trinitatis juxta fossatum vocatum *le Strathedyke* in Walsoken in com. Norf. cum pertin., &c., in Walsoken, West Walton, Wisbyche, Leverington, Emnyth, et Elme." In consideration of the sum of £330 paid by Edmund Pelham for Mary Duchess of Richmond and Somerset, Countess of Nottingham, King Edward grants to the said Duchess the reversion of the said Trinity Chapel, &c., together with the Rectory of Naseby, formerly belonging to Combe Abbey. This grant remains among the title deeds of Mr. Elwes of Congham.

Some further particulars of the subsequent descent of its lands are given by Blomefield.

It is remarkable that there was also at Walsoken another small religious establishment, of the nature of a hermitage, mentioned in the 2nd of Henry V., and probably identical with the Chapel of St. Roche, named in the will of the priest Martynson in 1512, by his making a bequest to the light of St. Anne which was there burning.

Whilst the Rev. Mr. Davies was recently Rector of Walsoken, he was not able to recover any traditional particulars of its Hospital, which is now totally forgotten by the surrounding population, and its chapel and buildings have entirely disappeared. But the Pardon or Indulgence granted to John Smith and his wife, which is now before us, had been safely preserved at or near the place for more than four centuries. Mr. Davies bought it from a corn-porter at Wisbeach, named Oldham, whose account was, that it had been a kind of heirloom in his family, and that there was a tradition among them that it had been handed down, through each successive generation, from the parties whose incorporation it records. As Oldham was a respectable man in his class, and of good repute, there is no reason to doubt the truth of his statement.

None of these documents specify the money payment or other charitable benefaction in respect of which they were granted ; but some such consideration there always was, for it was remarked towards the close of the fourteenth century that "Abbots, monks, and other religious men that have possession, will receive no man into their fraternity, or make them partakers of their spiritual suffrages, unless he bestow somewhat upon them, or promise them somewhat." This observation was made by Walter Burte, a layman of the diocese of Hereford, in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, in the year 1391. The consideration varied according to the devotion and the means of the recipients. This particular



is abundantly illustrated by the passages from the Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross at Stratford upon Avon, engraved in facsimile by Thomas Fisher, F.S.A., and published together with that artist's copies of the wall-paintings in the chapel at Stratford, to which work the descriptive letter-press was supplied by myself in the year 1838.

Of this guild John Mayelle, senior, had been a brother before the register that has been preserved was made in 1407; and in his time he provided for the chapel of the guild diverse ornaments, as all the lead on its roof, a table of alabaster for the high altar, and had paid for the confirmation of the bull of privileges granted by the pope, as well as other necessary matters; wherefore *Orate pro animabus dicti Johannis et Agnetis uxoris ejus.*

John Mayell, barker, who was probably his son, and Alice his wife, on being received into the fraternity of the same guild paid a fine of 40s. and 20*d.*; and the like was paid by several other townsmen and their wives. In 1407 Thomas Schepard, chaplain, was received into the fraternity of the guild, and made his fine to stay as chaplain of the same guild for his whole life, by paying £6. 13*s.* 4*d.* (Plate 12), thus purchasing his preferment.

In 1413 Henry Brouman was received into the same fraternity upon a fine of 20*s.*, one-third of which was remitted by the master and aldermen of the guild upon the said Henry engaging to keep all the goods and chattels of the guild that were in the church, at the altar<sup>s</sup> of the Holy Cross, the blessed Mary, and St. John, during his life as long as able to work.

<sup>s</sup> Not "three altars," as in 1838 I understood it, following Mr. Fisher in *Gentleman's Magazine* . . . . p . . . It was evidently the special altar belonging to the guild, in which the Saviour on the cross (their peculiar emblem) stood as usual between figures of the Virgin and St. John. It was in the north aisle of the parish church at Stratford, previously to the guild

In 1414 John Overton, cook, of Warwick, and his wife, were admitted on condition of his being cook yearly at the common feast of the guild during his life, taking nothing of the guild but his hood, and his expenses in coming from Warwick to Stratford for the guild's service.

Again, in 1416, John Prynce, cook, of Warwick, master cook of the household of Richard Earl of Warwick, and Joan his wife, were received, giving nothing for fine but that he should always be ready to contribute his counsel and assistance at the common feast, receiving only a hood when he came.

In 1415 Thomas Barbour, on his admission, agrees to renew all the lights before the altar of the Holy Cross, and before the image of St. Mary in the chapel of the blessed Mary, in the church of Stratford, yearly once in the year,<sup>9</sup> for a term of ten years, the master and proctors of the guild finding wax and wykeyary (wickery, materials for the wicks of the tapers.) A like agreement was made with John Barbour in 1429.

In 1417 John Smytht, alias Colyere, and Agnes his wife, were admitted, and for their fine agreed to make a horologe in the Drapery Chamber, and to remove the klokke (or bell of the horiloge) so that it might have its course (or swing) within that chamber, together with a diole next the street with a painted hand and all its letters gilt; and to keep the said klokke and diole, without any wages, for four years after they were perfectly finished.

subsequently erecting their chapel in the centre of the town, which was commenced in 1450, and which is still standing and used for divine service. Fisher seems to have fallen into the misapprehension that there were originally three guilds as well as three altars above named "afterwards incorporated into one."—See Toulmin Smith's *English Guilds*, p. 219.

<sup>9</sup> Gigantic candles were made which, being lighted only for a short time during mass, lasted the whole year round. See the expenses of making the great light at Yeovil in 1457, which required four pounds of wax and twelve pounds of rosin, in *Collectanea Topog. et Geneal.*, iii. 136.



In 1426 John Storge gave for his admittance four cart-loads of plaster of Parys, to be carted by the guild; and agreed to work for six days at his own cost, the master of the guild finding him food.

Other artificers—masons, carpenters, and glaziers—were admitted without payment, in return for their work done in the new chapel of the guild, which is still standing at Stratford.

Henry Aldebury, of Bynton, made fine for himself and wife, and the souls of several deceased members of his family, in twenty rams, worth in all 30s.; and John Uske, the warner (that is, the warren-keeper) of Warwick, agreed to furnish eight couple of rabbits yearly, to be delivered at the common feast. Robert Dudley gave two ewes with lambs. Philip Scharpe, of Henley, agreed to give a boar annually, and receive the hood of the guild.

In 1427 William Goddys, a weaver coming from the distant city of Salisbury, was received into the guild of Stratford upon Avon, together with Alice his wife, upon his agreeing to be a proctor, or purveyor, in procuring striped cloth, probably for the hoods of the guild, and also to provide a new banner painted with an image by the next feast day.

In 1429 Eminencia Chebnore, of Pobworth, and the soul of Rose her parent, were received into the fraternity of the guild, making fine by one load, containing seven bushels, of wheat, and one brass pot worth 13s. 4*d.*, and one basin and ewer.

The servants of great men were received with more than usual favour. John Verney, caterer of the Earl of Warwick, was excused from his fine; and Richard Cussen, an esquire of the same earl, made fine by 13s. 4*d.*

In 1438, when Joan Praty, mother of Richard Praty, Bishop of Chichester, was received into the fraternity, her fine was respited until the bishop's coming, he having been some years before warden of the college at Stratford.

But persons of still higher rank were members of the Guild of Stratford upon Avon. At the anniversary feast of 1441 were present Sir Ralph Nevile the Baron of Ounsley, Sir Thomas Burdet, John Hubaude, esquire, and John Hugford, esquire. In 1453 were admitted Walter Bekenysfeld the Abbat of Keynsham, and John Galys the Abbat of Tewkesbury. At a later period, in 1477, the King's brother, George Duke of Clarence, and his wife Isabella, the heiress of the Nevilles, with Edward Earl of Warwick their son, and Margaret their daughter (afterwards Countess of Salisbury), were received into the fraternity, and made their fine by five marks.

In 1479 were admitted Robert Pate, Prior of Worcester; Sir Thomas Lytelton, one of the Justices of the King's Bench, the celebrated author of the *Tenures*; Thomas Wood, Prior of Stodeley in Oxfordshire, and Robert Woode, Canon of the same house, probably his brother. It is remarkable that the higher members of the monastic orders should, for some reason, have so frequently condescended to join these fraternities; for we find further, at Stratford, in 1518, Clement Lychefyld, Abbat of Evesham, and William Grafton, Prior of Alcester; in 1529 Robert Kynge, Abbat of Bruerne; in 1523, Thomas Skeventon, Bishop of Bangor; in 1526, William Moore, Prior of Worcester, and shortly after William Taylor, Abbat of Hayles, and John Seeley, Abbat of Bordesley.

I trust that I may be excused in detailing these particulars, although they have been already published, and that by myself in a book now five and thirty years old,<sup>1</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> "Ancient, Allegorical, Historical, and Legendary Paintings, in Fresco, discovered in the Summer of 1804, on the walls of the Chapel of the Trinity, belonging to the Gilde of the Holy Cross at Stratford upon Avon, in Warwickshire, from drawings made at the time of their discovery, by Thomas Fisher, F.S.A. Also, a View and Plan of the Chapel, a View of New Place, the Residence of William Shakspeare, Facsimiles of various Grants



that book is a folio which has had a very limited circulation, and probably, like other folios, has had very few readers. Nor were they noticed by the late Mr. Toulmin Smith, in his unfinished work on *English Gilds*.

and Indulgences to the Gilde, with representations of an hundred and fifty Seals appended to them; facsimile extracts from the Register of the Gilde, the Rolls of Accounts, &c., described by John Gough Nichols, F.S.A." 1838. Folio.

Other extracts from this Gild Register were communicated by Mr. Fisher, in a translated form, to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, April, 1835, pp. 375—380; and these, with more from Mr. Fisher's MSS., are reprinted by Mr. Halliwell in his book above specified; but their accuracy must not be relied upon, as will be perceived on comparison of some of them with the original entries occurring in Fisher's engraved plates, see particularly fol. 14 (about the horologe), and the two following:—

In 1414 Richard Gylberd, junior, of Lodyngton, was received into the fraternity of the gild, making his fine by twenty shillings, to be paid, at his entrance 6s. 8d., at the next common feast of the guild 6s. 8d., and a third 6s. 8d. within the year then next ensuing; and when he should take a wife, then he was to pay for her fine 13s. 4d. within a year next following, fol. 9. (This is given by Fisher: "Richard Gylberd, jun., of Lodyngton, and for any woman he may introduce as his wife, makes a fine of 20d.")

In 1426 Robert Dudley, a servant of Henry Aldebury of Bynton, and for the souls of Walter Dudley and Amicia his parents, made his fine by a couple of ewes with lambs worth 15s., and besides by 13s. 4d. and 2s. 6d. for the light (fol. 24.) In Fisher's translation of this entry are these four errors: *Richard* for Robert, *tenant* for servant, *the ancestors* for Amicia, and 14s. for 15s. This entry is remarkable as showing that there were Dudleys in humble life in Warwickshire early in the fifteenth century.

The Register of the Stratford Guild is altogether so valuable that it may probably at some future time be considered worth publication, which it equally deserves with that of the Corpus Christi Gild at York.

"English Gilds. The Original Ordinances of more than one hundred Early English Gilds, &c., &c., edited, with Notes, by the late Toulmin Smith, Esq., Fellow of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (Copenhagen). With an Introduction and Glossary, &c., by his daughter, Lucy Toulmin Smith. And a preliminary Essay in five parts, On the History and Development of Gilds, by Lujo Brentano, Doctor Juris utriusque et Philosophiæ. London, printed for the Early English Text Society, 1870." 8vo.

Mr. Toulmin Smith, at p. 220, mentions my name, and quotes my preface to the documents on the Stratford on Avon Guild, but so far as appears, he

I should add, however, that besides the fine on admission, an annual contribution was also expected from each member. This at Stratford upon Avon was fourpence to be paid quarterly, a penny at each of the four terms, another penny being imposed as a penalty for non-payment. In the Corpus Christi Guild at York there were two annual payments of twopence, one for the feast (solatium), the other for the lights. At Boston the payments were higher, the entrance money 6s. 8*d.*, the annual contribution 12*d.*, which went to the finding of seven priests, twelve choristers, and thirteen beadsmen, to the lights, and to a grammar school.

This money was expended in the purchase of wax for the candles and tapers constantly in use, and it therefore went by the name of "light silver."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood has shewn, in his work on *English Etymology*, that the original meaning of a *Gilde* was a feast, or festive company, in the Danish or Low Dutch; and that it has been a mistake to derive the term from the German *geld*, payment.<sup>3</sup>

Of a large number of these fraternities the main objects, as at Stratford, appear to have been these two, the annual feast, and the perpetual support of the wax lights used at their altar during mass and at the obsequies of any deceased member. In one instance, at Lubeck,<sup>4</sup> a guild was established

had not read my explanations of the engraved facsimiles. He prints (for the first time) the original Ordinances of this Guild, as certified by the Wardens in 12th Edward III. (1389); and refers to later Ordinances, of the year 1441, which were first printed by Mr. Fisher in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for Feb., 1835, and reprinted by Mr. Halliwell in his "Descriptive Calendar of the Ancient MSS. and Records in possession of the Corporation of Stratford upon Avon. 1863." Folio (seventy-five copies). These were not inserted in the folio volume of 1838, because Mr. H. Bohn, the publisher, requested brevity, and little more than an explanation of the engravings.

<sup>2</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1835, iv. 167.

<sup>3</sup> *English Etymology*, i. 191; and note by F. J. Furnivall in *English Guilds*, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Wilde, p. 347; Toulmin Smith, p. 83.



originally and principally for the maintenance of a wax light. But most of these associations proposed to themselves one principal and special object, at the same time that other objects were pursued in attendance upon it; as with the Corpus Christi Gild at York the grand object was to add all possible magnificence to the annual procession upon Corpus Christi day, with its concomitant drama of the Scripture history which was so popular in that city, as in many others, as Chester and Coventry. Some guilds were for the special aid of pilgrims, furnishing them for their journey, and receiving them on their return. Many were for mutual assistance in case of fire, shipwreck, theft, or sickness, as in a modern benefit society; and all, it is believed, paid regard to funerals and the religious services that belonged to them.

It has been a question whether guilds of this class should be termed religious guilds, which is the designation given them by Madox in his *Firmus Burgi*, or Social Guilds, which with some show of reason was suggested by Mr. Toulmin Smith. Dr. Brentano remarks (p. 58), "I fully agree with Mr. Toulmin Smith that the objects of these Guilds were social ones. But the exercise of these very social duties, to which Gild brethren were bound by the Gild statutes—mutual assistance, the aid of the poor, of the helpless, the sick, of strangers, pilgrims, and prisoners, the burial of the dead, and even the keeping of schools and schoolmasters—was considered in the time when these Guilds existed as an exercise of religion, *obsequium religionis* as Hincmar calls it." It is further remarkable that, though these fraternities were prevalent all over Europe, Dr. Brentano (p. 57) gives his opinion most emphatically that he considers England to have been the birthplace of guilds, so that their earliest history is to be traced for several centuries before the Norman Conquest. As to their numbers, Mr. Toulmin Smith remarks (p. 82) that there were many in every town.

Thus there were twelve in Norwich, as many in King's Lynn, in Bishop's Lynn nine; while abroad, Gallienus counts even eighty in Cologne, Melle about seventy at Lubeck, and Staphorst more than a hundred at Hamburg. In Norfolk they seem to have been especially numerous. Mr. Richard Taylor, in his *Monasticon* for that county, gives a list amounting to nine hundred and nine. Of these five are assigned to Walsoken, named respectively after the Assumption of our Lady, Saint Thomas the Martyr, the Nativity of our Lord, Saint John, and the Holy Trinity.

Dr. Brentano states that "The Reformation shook the whole system of Gilds to its foundation, and this was especially the case with the Religious Gilds of the laity . . . . . The Gilds were therefore abolished in all Protestant countries." (p. 90.)

Under the Act for the dissolution of Colleges and Chantries (37 Henry VIII., c. 4) the possessions of certain fraternities, brotherhoods, and guilds were included; and that measure was completed by the Act of 1 Edward VI., c. 14. By these two Acts all the possessions of guilds became vested in the Crown, except such as crept out by being trading guilds. This saved the corporate companies of the city of London, though they were forced to relinquish, in most cases redeeming and repurchasing, such estates as they held in trust for obits or other "superstitious uses."

Mr. Richard Taylor remarks that "The revenues of the Gilds, which certainly appear to have been most usefully appropriated in supporting the poorer brethren, were suddenly withdrawn; and the alienation of so many small but useful endowments, in addition to the deprivation of other charitable sources, had an injurious effect, for a time at least, upon the class of men that composed those bodies. A few of these small endowments were transferred to the respective parishes, and now form the principal portion of the town



lands. The guildhalls sometimes became the parish poor-houses. At Tibenham in Norfolk is an instance of this."<sup>4</sup>

By the former Act, of 37 Henry VIII., section 12, the king was empowered to send out commissioners to survey all lay corporations, guilds, fraternities, companies, and fellowships of mysteries or crafts incorporate, and to seize such as they thought proper, returning certificates of their lands, &c., into the King's Court of the Augmentation and Revenues of his Crown. Many of these certificates are still preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office, and a few of the more curious of them have been edited by Mr. Toulmin Smith. I have been to the office in the hope I might discover one relating to the Guild of the Holy Trinity of Walsoken. I found, however, that notwithstanding the vast number of guilds in the diocese of Norwich of which Mr. Richard Taylor has found the names, the certificates for that county, according to the calendar in the office, are now comparatively few.

So that, after all, I am unable to say for what specific object the Guild of the Holy Trinity at Walsoken was founded. Unless further information should unexpectedly arise hereafter, we must be content to know that it was famous, as Blomefield says, because it afforded to its benefactors a plenary remission of their sins.

I ought not, I think, to terminate these remarks without noticing that the long-neglected subject of guilds has been recently illustrated by the publication of several important materials in addition to those so ably edited by Mr. Toulmin Smith.

In the *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society* for 1871, vol. iv. pp. 1—59, have appeared the ordinances of some secular guilds in London, ranging from 1354 to 1496, discovered among the records of the

<sup>4</sup> *Index Monasticus*, p. 17.

Commissary of London by J. Robert Daniel Tyssen, Esq., one of our members, and edited by another, Henry Charles Coote, Esq. They belong to the Glovers, the Blacksmiths, the Shearmen, the Water-bearers, and to three guilds of Germans residing and trading in London.

One of the latest publications of the Surtees Society is the register of the great Guild of Corpus Christi in the City of York, from the year 1409 to 1546 inclusive, containing the names of upwards of 14,850 persons who joined that fraternity during its comparatively short existence of not quite a century and a half, and among them the names of many individuals of the highest rank, both civil and ecclesiastical.

A small register of a Fraternity of the Assumption, at Hythe in Kent, dating from 1466 to 1522, has also been recently edited by Mr. H. B. Mackeson.

And, lastly, I may be allowed to allude to a series of very curious documents relating to the Guild of the Name of Jesus, in the Crypt under St. Paul's Cathedral, to which I have already made some reference. These are included in a volume of the Statutes of St. Paul's Cathedral, which has been printed at the expense of the Dean and Chapter, and most carefully edited by our fellow, the Rev. William Sparrow Simpson, D.D., but is not as yet made public.