

## The Constitutions of the Hospital of St. Paul (Normanspittel) in Norwich.

COMMUNICATED BY

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In the Dean and Chapter Muniment Room at Norwich is a narrow roll ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  ins. by 21 ins.) of the Ordinances or Customs of the Hospital of St. Paul. The foot of the document is frayed, and it is clear that a portion is missing.

The document might be dated by the writing as of 1200 to 1250 A.D., which would determine the Bishop John, therein mentioned, as either John of Oxford (1175 to 1200), or John de Grey (1200 to 1214), both of whom were interested in the Hospital.<sup>1</sup> One is, however, reluctant to accept this dating. The Ordinances open by declaring them as "ab antiquo institute." But Bishop Eborard, in whose time the Hospital was founded, retired in 1145, and an interval of fifty or so years would scarcely justify one in referring to the deeds of those days as ancient history. It would be tantamount to speaking of the events of one's youth as "of old." On

<sup>1</sup> *Pr. Reg.*, f. 17, dated 1198, a confirmation of all the possessions of the Hospital; *id.* f. 21, the grant of Ormesby.





the other hand, the phrase is characteristically mediæval, and we may be unwise in making any deduction therefrom.

This raises another important point. Certainly the Hospital was called *Normanspitel* from the second half of the 13th century. Blomefield and Kirkpatrick, followed by the *Victoria County History*, confidently assert that Norman was the first monk "Procurator,"<sup>1</sup> and that, consequently, the Hospital carried his name; but for this we have seen no authority, and the name is not used in the *Primum Registrum* (c. 1300). In a Charter, *temp.* Henry I., there is mention of "Sir Norman the monk,"<sup>2</sup> but this does not prove that he was the *first* Master.<sup>3</sup>

And opposed to this accepted origin is the opening sentence of this document mentioning Ralph the monk. In a will of 1558, the testator, a London priest named Thomas Salter,<sup>4</sup> refers to Norman as Vincent Norman,<sup>5</sup> which seems to prove that Ralph could not be the same. But one must not attach much weight to the statement of an elderly London testator, whose connection with the Hospital was in his youth, many years before. Had the first Master really been Vincent Norman, it is highly improbable that he would ever have been called "Norman." "Vincent the Norman" would have assumed the title "Brother Vincent." It seems to me that the testator, habituated to the custom of his contemporaries carrying both christian and surname, felt himself called upon thus to present this assumed first Master of the Hospital.

<sup>1</sup> In this matter Kirkpatrick is cautious, pp. 213-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Kirkpatrick*, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Yet—"In offering on day of Norman's anniversary, 1d." (*Hosp. Account Roll*, 1434), which is probably the strongest evidence in support of the orthodox explanation.

<sup>4</sup> This is a good instance of the continuity of charities. Thomas Salter's legacy was a gift of the Salters' Company of London, on condition that they arranged to provide ½d. loaves weekly to the poor sisters of this Hospital. £1 6s. 0d. is still paid by the Salters' Company by virtue of this bequest and is received by the Norwich Consolidated Charities.

<sup>5</sup> *Kirkpatrick*, p. 216.

On this point Dr. G. G. Coulton has kindly sent me the suggestion that "it is just possible that he was Radulfus Vincentii Normannus—Ralph, the son of Vincent the Norman—who might also be called Vincentius Normannus by corruption." This seems a most inviting solution of the problem.

It is surprising that hitherto no reference has been made to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*. Such a reference presents a new problem, for it declares therein "Richard the Archdeacon"<sup>1</sup> to have been the founder. In making deductions to estimate the net income of the Cathedral, it says:<sup>2</sup> "To divers women called Power<sup>3</sup> Sisters in the Hospital of St. Paul dwelling there as well as divers poor coming daily to pray for the soul of Richard, formerly Archdeacon and Founder of the Hospital, and of Henry I. and Stephen, formerly Kings of England, and Matilda, formerly Queen of Stephen and their children ("et puer's") which Hospital belongs to the Prior and Convent."

To sum up: the documentary evidence seems to show that the Hospital was founded before 1131 largely through the initiative of Richard the Archdeacon. About this time, a monk named Norman was Master. The land round about soon became known as Normanneslond, or Normany's pytelle. In the course of time, by an easy transition, it became known as Normanspitel, probably to correspond with Hildebrondspitel in Conesford. As Hildebrond founded the latter, so a later age guessed that Norman founded the former.

<sup>1</sup> Richard the Archdeacon is mentioned in a document quoted by *Kirkpatrick*, p. 197, but he is of *Suffolk*. The document can be dated approximately, however, as the Robert mentioned in it was Sheriff of Norwich before 1131. There was a Richard, Archdeacon of Norwich, 1107—1115. He was Richard de Bellafago, and became Bishop of Avranches (*Kirk.*, p. 198).

<sup>2</sup> *Val. Eccl.*, III., p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> Power—pouer—poor.



We are inclined to place this set of Ordinances to the credit of Bishop John Salmon,<sup>1</sup> as the writing might quite possibly date about the year 1300, for the *formal* writing of one half of a century is frequently persisted in. In freer writing, as of ordinary accounts, one can date with greater certainty.

Such a dating is supported by the fact that the interests of Salmon were broad and varied, and we have other matters (besides Palace, Cloisters, Carnary and Cathedral restoration and building) to the credit of that Bishop. The fact also, that in 1301 he confirmed the whole twenty charters of the Hospital, may give some support to this dating. Further, there is no internal evidence pointing to an anachronism when giving him the credit.

The history of the Hospital has received much attention. Kirkpatrick devotes thirty-seven pages in his *Religious Houses* to this single institution.<sup>2</sup> The account is valuable for the external sources cited. But the *Victoria County History*<sup>3</sup> says that John Kirkpatrick "wrote this work having full access to all Chapter and Episcopal documents."<sup>4</sup> Not only was he unacquainted with the subject of this paper, but he made no use of, or reference whatever to, either the obedientiary rolls of the Priory or to the rolls of the Hospital. Had he done so, not only would a new field have been opened up, but such examples of vagueness, as "in process of time the use of the Hospital was changed," would have been avoided.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Norwich, 1299 to 1325.

<sup>2</sup> His references to the Cathedral Registers are of little value, for not one of those which I have verified corresponds with the pagination he gives. Those relating to the *Primum Registrum* should read: 11, 11d, 12, 17, and 21. None of these folios he mentions.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. 11, p. 448.

<sup>4</sup> The dates in the V.C.H. of the Hospital Accounts are nearly all wrong. They should read: 1422-3, 1433-4, 1434-5, 1436-7, 1450-1, 1452-3.

Attention can here be drawn to the foundation date of the Hospital. All are agreed, on the strength of the doubtful 1119 document (in Kirkpatrick), that the Hospital was started in Herbert de Losinga's time.<sup>1</sup> The *Primum Registrum*, however, gives the entire credit to Bishop Eborard.<sup>2</sup>

But in spite of this liberal attention given to the history of the Hospital, no document yet published defines its composition, constitution or operations.

Blomefield, and the *Victoria County History* following him, say that the revenues were sufficient to support fourteen poor men and women. Here the number is given as twenty (numbers naturally fluctuating from age to age); but, as we discuss below, it is not clear whether this twenty was, apart from the Procurator, the full complement of the House, or whether the initiated were a community of a different and higher status.<sup>3</sup>

The activities of the Hospital, clearly defined in the document, are of special interest.

(1) These twenty, to whom we have referred, were permanent residents, and formed a kind of old men's and old women's hospital. The qualification for entry was that they were totally incapacitated by lack of health from earning their own living.

(2) Temporary relief was administered. The "tramps" received bread, and something with it, on arrival; they had a night's lodging; and departed the next day with bread for the next stage of their wandering.

<sup>1</sup> *Bl.*, IV., p. 432, and *V.C.H.*, p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> *Pr. Reg.* "Temporibus istius Eborardi episcopi Norwyci fundatum est hospitale Sancti Pauli," etc. *Cf.* Kirk., p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> Some ground for deduction is found in *Val. Eccl.*, III., p. 285:—"Vicecomite Com: Norf ex dono dni Regis in relevamen sororum et pauperum commorantium in hospitale Sti Pauli in Norwico per annum £4-11-3." This entry may bear on the point raised above, *i.e.* sisters and poor.

"It is probable, I think, that the *fratres* sworn in were what we should call alms-folk, life residents, as distinguished from the *pauperes*." Note by Dr. G. G. Coulton.



(3) The place functioned as a maternity home. The whole tone of this section is pleasing: there is no time limit, no hurrying, and at the end—"in pace recedant."

(4) The traditional distribution of bread occurred here also daily. But it is difficult to determine how the poor recipients were selected.

(5) Finally, at Christmas, there was an extra burst of charity. Shoes of good materials cost,<sup>1</sup> *circa* 1300, 1s. 6d. to 2s. a pair. We can assume that less expensive ones were distributed on these occasions, and that about fifteen to twenty pairs were given away. The three marks (£2) expended on cloth would have produced 80 to 100 ells of "Worsted" (about 6d. an ell), or 60 ells of "Blanket" (8d. to 9d. an ell). If "Walshams" were purchased, such being frequently used for leggings, the number of ells would be about eighty. Such charity consequently was a known and appreciated event.

The privileges accorded to the inmates are of the slightest, and the women are not mentioned in that connection, but probably "fratres" is short for "fratres et sorores." The brethren have at Christmas  $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; at Easter  $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; and at the Feast of the Purification (Candlemas) a candle to burn before the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The final section of this document needs elucidation. Are we compelled to assume that the "xx pauperes et languentes" are the actual brothers and sisters of the Hospital? Or were they the care of a number of semi-regulars who officiated as wardens and nurses? For the former interpretation we have the fact that the revenues of this institution were declared as capable of supporting the number of twenty. Had there been brothers and sisters beyond that complement, surely the capacity of such a greater institution would have been declared!

<sup>1</sup> For these particulars of prices I have made reference to the Chamberlains' Accounts of the Priory.

On the other hand, the oath taken at the time of induction of these inmates implies that they were not all entirely "pauperes et languentes." Probably some were so, and the rest enough "pauperes" to count. They were assumed to have property, which on entry they had to surrender. In fact, they were differentiated from the real poor. Accepting this as the interpretation, our picture of the labours of the House will be somewhat modified. It will mean the poor and feeble caring for the weaker. It will mean that the new mothers were in the care of the aged and not nursed by women who specialised in such works.<sup>1</sup>

This we must leave. Anyhow, the House functioned in the dual capacity: (1) as an almshouse, (2) for casual poor, not necessarily mixing with each other; that is almsfolk looking after themselves (as nowadays) and the Procurator, a monk of the Priory, giving doles and keeping discipline. Later, when the Hospital assumed the character of a women's hospital, a Dame, or head woman, officiated under the Procurator whose duties were then almost confined to the administration of the Hospital property.

We draw attention to the interesting and impressive induction of the inmates—the hand of fellowship, the oath of honesty, and the kiss of peace.

The change from the dual character of the House must have occurred before 1423, for, in the Account Roll of the Hospital of that date, apart from the provision for the "famuli," the "Hall of Sisters" section of the account embraces all that was expended on food.

By 1434 the Sisters were divided into "great" and "middle" sisters. The former, of whom there were then thirteen, received 8d. a week, whilst the eleven middle sisters got but 3d. a week.

<sup>1</sup> "I think not. There were probably *sorores*, nurses, who are not mentioned here." Dr. G. G. Coulton.



By this time the charitable external aspect seems to have gone, and the institution corresponded to a department (obedientiary) of the Priory, meeting all the obligations of internal and external character.<sup>1</sup>

By 1509-10 the numbers were down to seven "great" and five "middle" sisters; and, just before the Dissolution, the total was further reduced to ten.

Its post-Reformation character was that of a Bridewell, or house of correction for beggars. So ends in a sordid scene the history of this old hospital, the earliest extant record of whose labours is this document, now for the first time brought to light.

#### NOTE.

In the preparation of this paper I have had access to the exhaustive transcripts made by Dr. H. W. Saunders of Cathedral documents, and especially to the Accounts of the Hospital and the Chamberlains' Rolls. Frequent use has also been made of his "Introduction to the Obedientiary and Manor Rolls of Norwich Cathedral Priory." Dr. G. G. Coulton and Mr. B. Cozens-Hardy have also very kindly made valuable suggestions.

I am indebted to the Dean and Chapter for their kind permission to edit this document.

<sup>1</sup> The following typical obligations are taken from the roll of 1434:—

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| To the Almoner for the Anniversary of Bp. Jo. Grey . . . . . | 3/4    |
| To the Sub-Prior at the "O" of the Convent . . . . .         | £1/6/8 |
| In a pension of one Scholar . . . . .                        | 3/9    |
| Given to the Scholars by favour . . . . .                    | 6/8    |
| In the 4th part of one tenth . . . . .                       | -/5    |
| In butter & eggs for the Convent . . . . .                   | 1/9    |

Note also that the master was supported to some extent by the Hospital over which he presided:—

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| In expenses of the Master in autumn . . . . .                      | 12/-   |
| In one riding hood (capa equitatis) while the Master was . . . . . |        |
| in this office, in alternate (alternis) years. . . . .             | £1/-/- |

There were others besides the Prior who were paid for performing duties connected with the Hospital, such as holding the Leet of Normans, keeping the notice board (custodient tabulam nostram); etc.

## APPENDIX.

## INSTITUTIONES HOSPITALIS SANCTI PAULI.

Hec sunt institutiones hospitalis Sancti Pauli in Norwico ab antiquo institute et observate a tempore Magistri Ranulfi monachi. De quibus prohibitum est sub interminacione anathematis a Johanne episcopo Norwici et toto conventu, ut nullus eas inminuat vel evertat vel inmutet nisi in melius inmutaverit.

In domo illa debent esse xx pauperes languentes quorum nullus pretio recipiendus est nec sanus aliquis qui aliquo modo sibi victum querere potest. In domo etiam debent hospitari et recipi omnes pauperes qui hospitium petunt et habere sero panem et aliquid companagium et in mane recedentes panem quantum preposito deum timenti visum fuerit, ut ita provideat quod nullus omnino illusus dimictatur sine suffragio quin aliquam elemosinam recipiat.

Preterea egrotantes et infirmi et parturientes pauperes in civitate illa recipiantur ibi et jaceant in hospitali et pascantur ibi dum infirmantur et cum convaluerint et sibi sufficiant in pace recedant.

Monachus etiam qui procurator est domus semper debet habere j liberationem fratrum quia unus fratrum debet esse, et illa liberacio omni die debet dividi in duo et distribui ad hostium hospitalis duobus pauperibus qui inveniri possunt pro deo et pro ipso monacho procuratore.

Debent autum ter in anno fratres habere obolum. In die nathalis domini quilibet obolum; in die pasche quilibet obolum; in die purificationis quilibet candelam.



## TRANSLATION.

These are the customs of the Hospital of St. Paul in Norwich established long ago and observed from the time of the monk Master Ralph. With regard to which it is forbidden under everlasting curse by John Bishop of Norwich and all the Convent that anyone should impair, overturn, or alter them, unless he should alter them for the better.

In that House there should be twenty poor and feeble people, of whom no one should be admitted on payment. Neither should any healthy person be admitted who can in any way earn his own living. In the House also there ought to be entertained and received all poor people who seek hospitality: and at night they ought to have bread and something with it for a meal; and in the morning when they depart they should have as much bread as seems right to the God-fearing steward.<sup>1</sup> So that he should take care that no one shall ever be sent away disappointed without receiving alms from the House.

In addition, the sick and infirm, and child-bearing poor of the City shall be received in that House and shall lie in the Hospital. And they shall be fed there while they are sick. And when they have grown strong and are recouped, they shall depart in peace.

And the monk who is Provost of the House ought always to have one allowance of the brothers (*i.e.* the monks), because he ought to be one of them: and that allowance ought daily to be divided into two and at the gate of the Hospital to be distributed to two poor people such as can be found, for God and for the monk Provost himself.

The brothers ought also, three times a year, to have a halfpenny. At Christmas each should have a halfpenny; at Easter the same; and on the day of Purification, each shall have a candle.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "prepositus"—steward or provost; the common term for a *reeve* of a manor.

<sup>2</sup> Each candle would cost  $\frac{1}{3}$ d.

Omni anno contra nativitatem domini in sotularibus largiendis pauperibus j marcam ad minus et in pannis distribuendis pauperibus iij marcas ad minus vel plus si quid dividi timuerit.<sup>1</sup>

Fratres vero et sorores hoc modo recipiendi sunt. Monachus procurator debet ducere eum in domum fratrum et sororum et dicere quod recipit eum in societatem eorum ut inveniat ei necessaria secundum constituta domus usque ad finem vite sue et ille debet jurare presentibus omnibus fidelitatem beato paulo et ejus hospitali et quod faciet ea opera que facere poterit secundum quod jusserit monachus et quod omnia que de cetero lucrari poterit hospitali relinquet, nisi per licentiam procuratoris alicui aliquid dederit. Postea monachus osculabitur eum et per manum dextram tradet eum omnibus fratribus et sororibus osculandum et assignabit ei lectum et locum, et prohibebit sub interminacione anathematis ut de elemosina nichil vendat alicui, sed de residuo liberacionis sue pauperibus largiatur et hoc per visum prepositi et in juramento predicto erit quod omnes possessiones quas habuit illo die quo concepit divertī in hospitale secum deferet in hospitale per manum procuratoris. . . .

<sup>1</sup> s' q' dni (or dvi) timu'it. This seems an unsatisfactory rendering. One would have preferred "si quid dividi (dividendi) cumulaverit," or "si quid dividendi tumuerit." I have translated with this liberty, though the contracted form as given in the document permits of neither of these extensions.

The following note bearing thereon is kindly sent by Dr. G. G. Coulton:—  
 "?? secundum quod domini cumulaverint—i.e. according to what the monks have amassed. I should like to read 'jusserint,' but cannot."



Every year at Christmas time there should be distributed in shoes to the poor one mark at least, and in cloth three marks at least, or more if there be sufficient to be divided out.<sup>1</sup>

The brothers and sisters shall be received in this manner. The monk Provost ought to lead him into the House of the brothers and sisters and to say that he receives him into their society in order that he may find there all things needful according to the constitutions of the House to the end of his life. And he shall swear, in the presence of all, fidelity to the blessed Paul and to his Hospital, and that he will do those things which he shall be able to do and shall perform all things which the monk shall order. And that all things which he shall be able to earn subsequently he shall relinquish to the Hospital, unless by permission of the Provost he shall have given any part to anyone. After that, the monk shall kiss him and by the right hand shall lead him to all the brothers and sisters to be kissed, and shall assign to him a bed and a place, and shall forbid him under pain of everlasting curse to sell any part of the alms to anyone. From the remainder of his allowance he can distribute, under the control of the Provost, to the poor. And in the aforesaid oath it shall be stated that all possessions which he had on the day on which he commenced to enter the brotherhood of the Hospital he will bring with him to the Hospital and hand over to the Provost.

or, according to whether there be more that can be distributed;  
or, *see ante*, suggested reading of Dr. G. G. Coulton.