

THE CONDITION OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL
AT THE RESTORATION IN A.D. 1660.

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THE following paper is copied from a volume of documents in the handwriting of the well-known scholar and antiquary, Somner, who was auditor of Canterbury Cathedral from 1660 until his death in 1669. In the Catalogue of the Cathedral Library,* by the Rev. H. J. Todd (afterwards Archdeacon of Cleveland), it is described as "a memorial which records the liberality, the publick spirit, and the piety of the Dean and Chapter;" but this description would hardly lead the reader to understand that it is really a defence against charges which represented the capitular clergy as signally wanting in such virtues. It would seem that, on recovering the Cathedral property after a long alienation, they found themselves receiving, at once, a large sum of money from fines, which in the ordinary course would have been spread over several years;† and that on this comments were popularly made which were supposed to require some answer. But it may probably be

* Canterbury, 1802.

† Hasted quotes, from the Harleian Miscellany, vol. iv., ed. 1745, a letter of Peter du Moulin, one of the canons; in which it is said that they spent £12,000 on the Cathedral, and that "exclusive of this, they divided out of their first fines £1,100 a-piece, besides having made out of them a handsome present to the King" (iv. 519).

inferred, from the blanks in the last line, that after all the paper was not published—perhaps because the chapter may, on mature consideration, have thought that such attacks are best met by silence.

The most remarkable part of the document, however, is that which describes the state of the Cathedral at the Restoration of 1660; and it was chiefly for the sake of this passage that I offered to transcribe the whole, as a contribution to the ‘Archæologia Cantiana.’ I have since found that it has been used by the late Mr. Britton, in his account of Canterbury Cathedral (pp. 39-40); but his extracts are so much mutilated, that, although perhaps sufficient for his special purpose, they cannot be regarded as a satisfactory representation of the original. J. C. R.

ECCLESIA CHRISTI CANTUAR.

Not for ostentation sake or popular applause with the vain-glorious, but for the honour of God and our King, by whose favour and goodnes we were put in a capacity for the doing of that good whereof we are here about to give the world an accompt, and to stopp the black and slanderous mouths of the professed enemies of us and that prosperity which, after many yeares of adversity and suffering, we now enjoy; who do beare the world in hand that we have turned all that envied ample cropp of profit reaped by and since our restauration into our owne private barnes and baggs, without due regard either of our Church, the Poore, the Publick, or Posterity:

To wipe away, we say, this as false as fowle aspersion and calumny, and to do our selves and the truth that right which the impudence and malice of these detractors on the one hand, and a prudent regard to our good name and reputation on the other, have extorted from us:—We the Deane and Chapter of Christchurch Canterbury do here present and tender to the world the following accompt of what since our returne and restauration, upon the repaires of our Church, for the reliefe of

the Poore, and the good and benefit of the Publick and Posterity, we have expended ; and, for the restoring of our said Church to its due and wonted beauty, are not more obliged, than resolved and ready, further to expend, as speedily as the dispatch of one worke will give way for another.

But first (as a necessary premonition) we shall here recount and represent the sad, forlorne and languishing condition of our Church at our returne ; which (in short) was such as made it look more like a ruined Monastery than a Church ; so little had the fury of the late Reformers left remaining of it besides the bare walles and rooffe, and these, partly through neglect, and partly by the daily assaultes and batteries of the disaffected so shaken, ruinated and defaced, as it was not more unserviceable in the way of a cathedral, then justly scandalous to all who delight to serve God in the beauty of holines. The windowes (famous both for strength and beauty) so generally battered and broken downe, as it lay exposed to the injury of all weathers : the whole rooffe, with that of the steeples, the Chapterhouse and Cloyster, extremely impaired and ruined, both in the timber work and lead : the water-tables, pipes and much other of the lead in almost all places, cut off, and with the leaden cisterne of one of our Conduites, purloyned : the Quire stripped and robbed of her faire and goodly hangings, her Organ and Organ-loft : the Communion table, of the best and chiefest of her furniture and ornaments, with the raile before it, and the skreen of Tabernacle-worke, richly overlayd with gold, behind it : many of the goodly Monuments of the dead shamefully abused, defaced, rifled and plundred of their brasses, iron-grates and barres : the common Dortor (affording good housing for many members of our Church)* with the Deanes privat Chapell, and a faire and goodly Library over it, quite demolished, the Bookes and other furniture of it sold away : our Houses, with those of our six Preachers and Peti-canons, (many of them) much impaired, some by neglect of reparations, other by mangling and parcelling them out into tenements, and as (most of them) not recovered out of the invaders hands without the charge and trouble of a suit in law, so not reduced afterward

* See Somner's *Antiquities of Canterbury*, ed. Battely, pt. I. p. 108 ; pt. II. p. 96.

to their wonted estate (fit for our reception) without a greater charge: our Stables, some of them pulled, others suffered to fall downe, the rest ruinous: our very Common Seale, our Registers and other books, together with our Records and evidences of all sorts, seized and distracted; many of them irrecoverably lost, and the rest not retrived without much trouble and cost: the goodly Oaks in our common Garden, of good value in themselves, and in their time very beneficial to our Church by their shelter, quite eradicated and sett to sale: generally, whatever was money-worth made prize of and imbezilled: and in fine, a goodly brave Cathedral become no better (in respect of those who gott and kept possession of it) than a Den of thieves and plunderers: and to make the better way for such invaders to abuse it, the Churches guardians, her faire and strong Gates, betimes turned off the hooks and burned.

Now this being the sad and wofull case and face of our Church at our returne; as it was impossible to restore it without vast expences, so out of a zeale to God's house and glory, and for the good example of the present and future generations, we presently applied ourselves to the cure to our very great charge, the Accompt whereof, and of our almes to the Poore, especially in the late hard times (over and above the 100^l p. annum set out by statute)* carefully taken from, and compared with the records, memorials and bills we have kepte of all particulars (both for materials and workmanship), and which we are able and willing to demonstrate to the satisfaction of any that shall require it of us, amounteth to the summe of 4148^l 2^s 10^d.

And as we have already expended thus much upon the necessary repaires of our Church, Church-houses, furniture of our Quire, and other pious and charitable uses: so (to proceed in our Accompt) we have purposely sett apart and sequestred a full 1000^l more to carry on the worke of perfecting the furniture of our Quire with an Organ, and of our Communion-table with Plate and other necessary utensils and ornaments, which partly by contract, partly by the estimate of judicious persons, we find cannot cost us lesse than 1000^l 0^s 0^d.

* See c. 38 of Charles I.'s Statutes for Canterbury Cathedral (Laud's Works, v. 539, Oxford, 1853).

Into this Accompt of our expences for the Publick and pious uses, our Royal Present (in token of our gratitude to his sacred Majesty, under God, the Author and Fountain of all our Cathedral enjoyments) and what we have contributed towards the redemption of the poore Captives at Algier,* will properly come, which together amounted not to lesse than 3230^l 0^s 0^d.

Nor is it lesse proper and pertinent to recount here what we have donne for the Improvement of our Quire-men's wages, which is, that for the augmentation of them, we purposely took a Lease of one of our Manors into our owne hands, and presently made it over to them, for which we might have had a fine of more than 700^l 0^s 0^d.

All which particulars put together, the total of what we have expended, and by decree of Chapter are obliged to expend upon our Church, and other public and pious uses, since our Restauration, is upwards of - - - - - 10000^l.

To all this, we can, as without breach of modesty, so with much content and comfort to ourselves, very truly add, that, as in the generality we have treated our Tenants (suing to us for the renewing of their Leases) with so much moderation and kindnes, in the point of Fines, as that our very adversaries (to whom we dare appeale) are inforced to confesse it; whilst others of more ingenuity daily take notice of it with applause; so in charity and commiseration of the poverty of many of them and their families, we have remitted, to some the whole, to others the greatest part, to many of them a very considerable part, of their Fines, to the foregoing of some thousands of pounds: whereof we are so farre from repenting us, that as we thinke our charity well bestowed, so we cannot but withall adore and celebrate that good hand of divine providence, for the happy change of our condition, from that of so much poverty as once made us to become the objects of others charity

* See pp. xiv-xvii and 137-8 of Bargrave's "Alexander VII. and the College of Cardinals," published by the Camden Society, 1867. Bargrave was a member of the Canterbury Chapter at the time when this vindication was drawn up, and had been employed on a mission to Algiers for the redemption of captives.

and kindnes, to that of so much plenty (and a heart withall to use it) as inables us to make others the objects of ours.

And now hoping we have well acquitted ourselves of these fowle aspersions of niggardize, and the neglect of those good and pious works and duties in a more than ordinary measure incumbent on us, in respect both of the sad condition of our Church at, and our more than ordinary income since, our restauration to it, We the said Deane and Chapter, being capitularly assembled, in full testimony of our owning and readiness to justify this Accompt of ours, have hereunto subscribed this day of 1662.