

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

A History of the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, West Malling, Kent. Compiled by the Rev. A. W. LAWSON, M.A., Vicar of West Malling, and Colonel G. W. STOCKLEY, R.E., Churchwarden; with contributions from the Rev. G. M. LIVETT, B.A., F.S.A., LELAND L. DUNCAN, Esq., F.S.A., and F. J. BENNETT, Esq., F.G.S. Illustrated with Photographs, Plans, and Etchings by Colonel STOCKLEY. (West Malling: Henry C. H. Oliver. 1904.)

WEST MALLING CHURCH has been subjected to many vicissitudes. It still retains its Norman tower and portions of its Norman chancel, but the Georgian nave after serving its purpose for one hundred and twenty-four years has been replaced by a far more beautiful building from the designs of Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite. This is no doubt a matter on which the Vicar and parishioners deserve congratulation, and few antiquaries would be slow to acknowledge that the work has been thoroughly well done. All this has been carefully put on record in the book before us, which will be of great service to future generations. We must, however, take exception to the way in which Mr. Lawson treats the sale of the celebrated Elizabethan flagon. Although opposed at the time by a representative of our Society, we are quite ready to admit that the result was so surprisingly successful, from a money-making point of view, that a certain amount of elation on the part of the vendors was natural and perhaps pardonable. We opposed the Faculty on the ground that a dangerous precedent would be created. Mr. Lawson therefore seeks to disarm criticism by heading his chapter "The Romance of a Jug." He will not even call it a flagon. It was "obviously made for quaffing of beer or sack or other wine," and he quotes with approval the grounds of Dr. Tristram's judgment, that "the Jug was clearly not designed for Holy Communion, and could not be used for that purpose. That it was not in use, and that when Church property was no longer of use he sometimes granted permission for its sale. Some antiquarians (*sic*) feared that an evil precedent would be set, and that the clergy

would be tempted to sell old and valuable plate. It was also urged by some that such relics of the past ought to be preserved in the Church and parish to which they belong. But as no Church property can legally be sold without a Faculty, Chancellors can always prevent acts of vandalism, and would certainly refuse to allow Church Plate in use to be sold." Now as to the Chancellor's first contention that the flagon was "clearly not designed for Holy Communion," we should reply that no Elizabethan Communion Plate was so designed; the "decent Communion Cups," which were at this period and a little earlier substituted for the "Massing Chalices," followed the form of cups used for secular purposes. That the vessel could not have been used for sacred purposes because of certain non-Christian ornamentation is quite opposed to fact. A chalice at Canterbury Cathedral, which dates from Laudian times (still we believe occasionally used), is decorated in a way far more obtrusively secular. Moreover, the distinction the Chancellor sought to draw between Church Plate in use and in disuse is practically valueless. All that an Incumbent, who might be desirous of selling a piece of Church Plate, would have to do would be to lock it up in his study for a year or two. Indeed we know of several instances where this has been done, notably in the case of some of the fine old hanapers which are deemed too cumbersome for present-day use, and which we have reason to fear will at no remote date come under the hammer with the approval of the Commissary-General.*

Mr. F. J. Bennett contributes a chapter on the old gravestones, in which he says "our Churchyard is especially rich." He then proceeds to excite our curiosity by remarking that "the reason for this . . . may have something to do with the Great Fire of London," etc., but after mystifying us in this way it is a little unkind of him to add, "but as the evidence is not quite complete and the story a long one, this cannot be gone into here." The examples of which Mr. Bennett gives illustrations call for no particular notice. The earliest tomb is a coffin slab of the thirteenth or fourteenth century bearing a cross pattée with floriated stem in low relief. "This," says Mr. Bennett, "I thought taken from the double battle-axe,

* On the very day this notice was written the following appeared in the *Morning Post* (May 4th, 1905): "A fine collection of Old English silver plate was sold at Christie's yesterday, and high prices were realized. A keen struggle took place between Mr. Crichton and Mr. J. S. Phillips for possession of a 'Norwich' *Chalice*. This rare article bears the London Hall Mark 1671, Maker's mark H.G., and is mentioned in Cripps' *Old English Plate*."

half military and half ecclesiastical, as shewn by the Early English stiff-stalked foliage of the lower half, might be the tomb of a Knight's Templar (*sic*), as this was both a military and an ecclesiastical order." The slab probably commemorated a former Vicar of the parish, and very likely was removed from the Church during the alterations made in the eighteenth century.*

The architectural portions of the book have been entrusted to the practised pen of Mr. Livett, who, in spite of considerable difficulties owing to the entire destruction of the mediæval nave, has succeeded in presenting a fairly convincing theory as to the development of the Church.

Dover Charters and other Documents in the possession of the Corporation of Dover. Transcribed and translated by the Rev. S. P. H. STATHAM, B.A. 8vo., pp. 483. (London: Dent and Co. 1902.)

MR. STATHAM, whose *History of Dover* we noticed in our twenty-fifth Volume, has now added a valuable supplement to his former work by printing 135 Charters and Deeds from the Dover Muniment Chest, to which he has added in an Appendix others now preserved in the Library of the British Museum and in the Public Record Office.

The Records of Dover are less numerous than those of several other of the "Ports." A large number of them, including the very valuable Port Domesday Book, are said to have found their way into the Surrenden Library when Sir Edward Dering retired from the Lieutenancy of the Castle in 1636,† and were dispersed when the Surrenden Library was sold forty years ago. Hence the majority of the documents now printed by Mr. Statham have no great historical interest, and should be termed Ancient Deeds rather than Charters. A few, however, have a wider interest, amongst which we would place an early record of the Constitution and Proceedings of the Ancient Court of Shipway (No. XXVI.). This is of especial value as affording (as far as we know) the only record remaining of the Court's Mediæval practice.‡

The Court was held before Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, Con-

* The cross may be compared with that on Archbishop Langton's tomb in St. Michael's Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral.

† See Larking's *Domesday Book of Kent*, Appendix V.

‡ Professor Montagu Burrows says of "Shipway": "No records of its mediæval practice have survived" (*Historic Towns, Cinque Ports*, p. 185). Nor does it appear that the late Mr. Edward Knocker, the author of the *Grand Court of Shipway*, knew anything of this interesting fragment of its history.

stable of Dover Castle and Warden of the Five Ports, on Saturday, April 14th, in the 32nd year of King Edward III. (1358). Mandates had been addressed to the Mayor, Bailiff, and twelve good and lawful men from each of the Head Ports, with the exception of Hastings, from which Port only six were summoned. The Corporate Members were expected to send six, but all were in default in point of numbers with the exception of Faversham. Pevensey sent no representatives, their Head Port (Hastings) pleading that "they of Pevensey are not bound to come to Shipway except with the Port of Hastings." The Court, however, ruled that "the Barons of Pevensey were accustomed to come to the said Court in times past . . . just as the Port of Faversham, which is a Limb of Dover." The names of the various representatives are given in the Record, and the order is from West to East, Hastings heading the Roll and Fordwich ending it.

As a specimen of the cases of which the Court took cognizance we may quote the following: "John Giroid of Dover was attached to answer to the Lord Warden for contempt in that he arrested a certain ship of Richard Archer of Dover in the town of Calais called the *Lancashire* for a certain contract made in the Port of Dover, against the Liberty of the Cinque Ports, and in contempt of the Warden, wherefore the said John is bound to the said Warden in £10. And this was proved by Nicholas Eppeloun, Mayor of Sandwich, Vincent Finch, Bailiff of Winchelsea, and by several others, that if it were so done by the said John that in such case he is bound to pay the Warden £10. And upon this he is asked if he has, or knows, anything to say on his own behalf wherefore he should not pay the said £10 to the Warden. Who appears and says that he arrested no ship at Calais as is alleged above, and this he is prepared to prove howsoever the Court shall decree, etc. Therefore a day is appointed to him at the Church of St. James of Dover on the Thursday next before the Feast of St. George the Martyr next ensuing, and it is ordered to the Mayor and Bailiff of Dover that they should cause to come on that day," etc.

On the said Feast (April 13th) John Giroid appeared before the Lieutenant in the Church of St. James, and on the oath of the Jury of twelve it was found that he did arrest the said ship, "Nor was the said John able to deny it any longer; it was therefore decreed that the said John should pay for that deed to the Warden of the Cinque Ports £10."

Other documents of especial interest are those relating to the regulation of the passage across the Straits. No. XVII. is an instru-

ment in Norman French, dated 14 Sep., 6 Edw. II. (1312), which recites "that whereas debates, contests, riots have been stirred up in Dover to the great peril and loss of the whole Commonalty of the same town, by reason of which many . . . have been impoverished and like to be ruined because they could not pass with their ships nor gain as the powerful and rich could. It is agreed and assented by all the Companions of the Company called 'fferschip' . . . that from the day of the making of this Document henceforward no passenger ship shall cross except by turn, that is to say each ship three fares, and after the three fares finished and completed that ship shall not cross with passengers until all the passenger ships that belong to the Company of the 'fferschip' shall have made three fares in like manner, provided that the said ships be certified fit and sufficient by the Wardens, who shall be elected and assigned for that purpose."

No. XXIII. relates to the same matter, and is a charter of King Edward III., dated 24 March 1343, in which the King confirms a Charter dated twenty years earlier by Edmund, Earl of Kent, Warden of the Cinque Ports, granting to the Burgesses a tax of two shillings for every "Passager" [ship] freighted with horses from Dover to Wytsand, and twelve pence for every "Passager" freighted with foot passengers.

Amongst the ancient deeds printed in the Appendix is one relating to a conveyance of land made in the Hundred Court of Dover. It is undated, but from the fact that William Huntingfield, the Constable, is one of the witnesses, Mr. Statham places it between 16 Sep. 1203 and 9 Sep. 1204. At the head of the witnesses is one Simon the Dean (*Decanus*). From the fact that he signed before such a celebrity as the Constable, Mr. Statham argues that Simon the Dean was the chief Civic Officer, the *Doyen*, "elected by the inhabitants of the Vill." We do not think, however, that there is any evidence that the title *Decanus* was given at this period to any except to an Ecclesiastical Officer. The Hundred Court, according to Bishop Stubbs, was attended by the lords of lands, the *Parish Priest*, the reeve, and four best men of each township. (*Const. Hist.*, vol. i., p. 103.)

Simon the Dean may possibly have been connected with one of the Churches in Dover, and a "Dean of Christianity," the mediæval representatives of our modern Rural Deans. Mr. Statham has supplied accurate translations of the various instruments, and

the book is printed in the clearest type on hand-made paper. We congratulate Mr. Statham on having made a very valuable contribution towards the elucidation of the history of one of the most ancient and interesting towns in the Kingdom.
