

THE MEDIEVAL OFFICIALS-PRINCIPAL OF
ROCHESTER.

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INTRODUCTION.

OF the ecclesiastical conditions that brought these officers into being Neander is informative. "In the course of the twelfth century," he writes, "the bishops (of Western Christendom) empowered proxies in the administration of their jurisdiction, under the name *officiales* to preserve their authority against archidiaconal encroachment." (*Church History* VII, 284, ed. 1851.) That the innovation answered its primary purpose can be admitted, but on the other hand it incidentally provided a whip for lashing laymen and clerics suspected of or charged with breaches of canon law. And the strictures passed on the administrative iniquities of these officers, at any rate on the Continent, by Peter of Blois¹ are sufficiently pertinent for quotation: "Tota officialis intentio est, ut ad opus episcopi suae jurisdictioni commissas miserimas oves quasi vice illius tondeat, emungat, excoriet. Isti sunt episcoporum sanguisugae" (*Ep.* 25). This, epitomized, may be rendered:—These officials are employed to shear the wretched sheep within their jurisdiction; they are the bloodsuckers for the bishops. Be this as it may, one hesitates to believe that the enormities to which the writer refers could ever have obtained on an equal scale in the freer atmosphere of England, and where judgments given in a Consistory Court were subject to revision or disallowance on appeal to a bishop in person. As a matter of fact the bishop who appointed could also dismiss his Official, unless the Cathedral Chapter had confirmed the appointment, when it became a benefice and thereby tenable for life. (O. J. Reichel,

¹ Peter of Blois, c. 1135-c. 1205, employed by H. II, secretary successively to Archbishops Richard and Baldwin; Archd. of Bath, 1175; Dean of Wolverhampton, c. 1190; Archd. of London 1206-12. (Dr. Armitage Robinson, *Somerset Historical Essays*.)

Canon Law, 80.) Apart from this exception, when death or translation voided a bishopric, it voided also the officiality, whereupon an ordinance of Archbishop Boniface dated 18 January, 1262-3, governed the procedure to be adopted for providing a *sede vacante* Official in the southern Province. "So often as the See shall be vacant the canons¹ present on the spot shall nominate 3 or 4 within two or three days to the archbishop, who shall choose one of them as Official to exercise episcopal jurisdiction . . . and he shall account to the said archbishop concerning all receipts and profits during his office: the Official to have adequate allowance for expenses out of profits and sequestrations." (Wordsworth, *Lincoln Statutes*, 103.)

An Official-Principal during the Middle Ages was an extremely important personage in every diocese—he was the bishop's legal adviser and secretary for his public correspondence, the custodian of the episcopal seal—acting head of the Consistory Court—the medium through which general mandates such as those relating to excommunication, were executed; he was responsible for the publication of parliamentary writs and summons to provincial councils, or mandates for public intercessions on the occasion of important public events and crises. He was, further, the medium through which papal letters were published. But as John Ayliffe points out, powers of enquiry, correction, punishment were outside his province, he could neither collate, institute nor deprive incumbents unless *specialty* empowered by a patent of commission (*Parergon*, 509, *ed.* 1726). But over and above the duties already enumerated an Official-Principal as judge of the Consistory Court of a diocese exercised a jurisdiction over persons charged with such offences as perjury, fornication, usury, defamation, divorce, and all questions of legitimacy (save one) or neglect to pay tithe or other dues of the church. Again, when a clerk arraigned before a lay tribunal claimed benefit of clergy (statutes 45 of Henry III, 3 Edward I, *c.* I and 5

¹ At Rochester the privilege would be vested in the Cathedral monks and the form of nomination when so vested is printed in Wilkin's *Concilia* II, 185, *ed.* 1738.

Edward II, c, 16), he was transferred to the custody of the Ordinary. Not infrequently the accused remained in prison for years before the bishop judged that the time for investigation had come. If the Official-Principal found the charge to be neither serious nor well substantiated, "purgation" was allowed, and it was only by purgation that the suspect could obtain discharge. But if the offending clerk be adjudged guilty in the Consistory Court, the sentence pronounced was severe enough: by the earlier Edwardian statute, the Ordinary had to provide a prison, the *Custodia Carceralis*, and nothing more dreadful than an episcopal prison can be imagined, that is, if the one discovered in the last century at Ross in Herefordshire be a fair sample: an underground chamber *sans* light, *sans* air, *sans* drainage, of which the stone bench and rusty chains by which "*in compedibus, collaribus, feris, arneboltis et neck-cheyenes*" the prisoner was literally "fast bound in misery and iron."¹

Again, when Convocation made grants to the king, or when popes consented to the alienation of a moiety of the first-fruits, or courts of civil law sentenced clerks for failing to pay their debts, the dues could only be collected by distraint upon the defaulter's goods and chattels through the agency of the bishop's Official. Writs also were constantly issuing from the crown courts, often with imperfect data or perhaps concerning persons outside the jurisdiction of the bishop to whom the writ was directed; and it was then for the Official or archdeacon to make the needful enquiries or execute distraints, and to explain, if required, any delay that occurred. A crown writ was not always accurate in its particulars, *e.g.* in 1339 the then Bishop of Chester complained to the Justices that he was distrained to have in Court one who was his clerk, whereas, while the suit was pending, the clerk had changed his benefice; whereupon Justice Shareshull in discharging the suit, commented "It is unreasonable to distrain a bishop when the clerk had passed out of his jurisdiction" (*Year Book*, 13-14 Ed. III, p. 74, *ed.* R.S.).

Like a medieval canonry, the Officiality of a diocese

¹ Reg. John Trillek, bishop of Hereford. Ed. C. and Y.

did not in itself carry income. At Rochester, however, the several occupants enjoyed pensions¹ levied on the revenues of Stoke chantry in Hoo; the Free Chapels of St. Lawrence in Halling and Longesole; the prebends of Cobeham Bury and of the Great Mass in the conventual church of Malling; the chantries of the B.V.M. at Dartford and West Peckham; and the Mastership of the chantry or hospital of Milton juxta-Gravesend (*R.R.*, 136). Apart from these sources their main income, like that of officers of the crown, was derived from the rectories they held, while they made a good deal extra out of fees paid by applicants for their services. Moreover there were other sources such as the perquisites, lawful or unlawful, of their office. Medieval propriety was not outraged by public officers receiving "gratification" in cash or in kind from all who came to transact business with them. In the accounts of collegiate or monastic communities we find *curialities* are always entered as given to such and such a person "*ut favorabilis esset*" or "*pro amicitia sua habendo*." Gifts, no doubt, were offered by both parties to a suit and were considered rather as matters of courtesy and compliment than as likely to bias the judgment or action of a public officer, and, at the same time, it would be impolitic in either party to withhold them. The acts of the past must not be judged by the ethical standards of to-day.

An Official-Principal might or might not be in priest's Orders. In sober fact there was little need for them to accept more clerical responsibility than was absolutely necessary. Disabilities as well as advantages attended Holy Orders: it was more important that he should be a trained lawyer and capable man of affairs, both because of the jurisdiction he exercised and also for the responsibilities he carried. A shrewd business agent was indeed valuable to a medieval bishop.

As will appear in the text the seal of the Officiality was frequently invoked to give validity to diocesan instruments,

¹ Pension, i.e. a rent charge which differs from a portion in being a definite sum, whereas a portion is of indefinite value. (Oswald Reichel, *Devon Arch. Trans.* XXXIX, 390.)

and in the first volume of Mr. W. de G. Birch's monumental edition of seals in the British Museum are catalogued the following :

" A.D. 1423, no. 2160. Red : imperfect and very indistinct. About $1\frac{3}{4}$ by 1 *in.* when perfect. Pointed oval : in a niche, below a trefoiled canopy, the bust of the bishop, full face. S'Officialitatis. Eccl : Rofen.

" A.D. c. 1431, no. 2161. Red : upper part imperfect. Pointed oval : a bust, full-face, coupé at the neck, in a Gothic niche. . . . Gillum Officialitatis Civitatis (et) Eccl'ie Rof."

None of the seals anterior in time to those quoted seem to have survived, but whatever legend they were bearing at the accession of Edward I had to be revised for the insertion of phraseology which tacitly acknowledged the royal supremacy in causes ecclesiastical. 1 Ed. I, c. II enacted that all processes in ecclesiastical courts should be made out in the king's name, but tested in the name of the Ordinary ; " that all persons who exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction shall have . . . in their seals of office the king's armes decently set with characters under the armes for the knowledge of the diocese ; and shall use no other seal of jurisdiction, but whereon His Majesty armes be engraven."

While the consistory court of Rochester normally functioned in the Cathedral City, sessions were held, not infrequently, in the hall of the manor at which the bishop chanced to be in residence. Dartford also enjoyed the privilege of a visit about six times a year. Much of the work of the courts was routine work which would not necessarily entail the presence of an Official-Principal, any more than the work of a modern County Court involves a constant presence of the judge of the circuit. These minor duties could be performed by the consistory clerks who in process of time constituted a miniature bureaucracy, an administrative body to which the ordinary Englishman has never persuaded himself to refer save in terms of contempt. A decree of the Council of Oxford (1222) ordained that

neither Officials of bishops or archdeacons or other clerks might make a meal in common, they were to appear suitably vested, honourably tonsured and properly shaved at sittings of a consistory court (*Art. XXVIII*). A curious distinction in rank between lay and clerical judges is disclosed in an ordinance of 3 Ed. II. Written in French, lay judges are styled Monsignor, while clerical judges are styled Sire (Selden Society, IV, xix). In ecclesiastical precedence an Official-Principal ranked after a Dean of a Cathedral (Lyndwood, *ed. R. O. Sharrock*, 1664). Lastly a bishop's Official must not be confused with other personages, who, more or less, enjoyed a similar title. This arose through the existence of three Church courts, *i.e.* that of the Province, that of a diocese and that of an archdeaconry, each presided over by its proper Official acting for and on behalf of the dignitary by whom he was appointed (*Reichel, Canon Law*, 255). An impression of the functions pertaining to other ecclesiastical officers mentioned in the text may not be amiss. (1) The Vicar-General—a dignitary in charge of the spiritualities during voidance of a See, or when the diocesan was called out of the diocese to serve on foreign embassies or attendance in parliament, or by other affairs public or private; and being the bishop's representative for the time being, his commission contained all the spiritual jurisdiction *except* the hearing of cases in the consistory court; the Official on the other hand exercised his powers whether the bishop was present or absent. It will be seen as the narrative advances that the bishops of Rochester frequently nominated their Officials to act as V.G. when occasion arose. (2) A Commissary. This officer was termed *officialis soraneus* in the Clementine Constitutions, being endowed with a temporary jurisdiction in such places and for such acts as by reason of distances, etc., were inconvenient for the chief Consistory (Lyndwood, 987).

Like other lawyers of the Middle Ages, those engaged in the administration of Canon Law were often satirised by their contemporaries as grasping and covetous. A picture of proceedings in a Consistory Court drawn by an evidently disgruntled litigant, *tempo* Ed. I, is worth quotation :

“ First there sit an old churl in a black gowne,
 Of all that ther sitteth seemeth best Syre,
 And lays his leg along.
 A hem in a cloake with hanging sleeves,
 & more than 40 before him to write my bales,
 in sins,—they pink with ther pens on Parchment—
 And say I am briefe & brought in—ther I must, out
 of respect give some bribe, & gratefully thank them,
 Yea, the master & his men both. . . .”

(*Camden Society*, VI. 156.)

In justice, however, an alternative view must be submitted. It reads, “ Ecclesiastical jurisprudence in the Middle Ages was much more perfect in its plan, more just and more equitable than in the civil courts: It therefore became such an object of admiration and respect, that exemption from civil jurisdiction was courted as a privilege and conferred as a reward ” (Jacob’s *Law Dictionary*, 9th ed.).

The narrative to follow, it must be admitted, is not rich in human interest and has no connecting link save the thin thread of the office held by its successive tenants; it is a mixture in which, owing to the biographical character, the same ingredients occur. The plums are few and far between.

The writer is indebted for the names of the Officials compiled, as it is said, by Ducarel, and now in the Bodleian Library. No attempt has been made to modernize the place-names as they occur in Thorpe’s invaluable edition of Rochester Registers, hereafter indicated in the text by the letters *R.R.*

For an exhaustive treatment of the rise and functions of the bishop’s Official, *Les Officialités au moyen âge* by M. Fournier, Paris, 1886, may be consulted with advantage.

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Master ROBERT, first of these ecclesiastical personages to be known, is styled OFFICIAL in attesting rectorial acknowledgment of Gilbert Glanvill’s alienation of 10s. p.a. from the revenues of Cuxton Church to provide lamps and oil

for the bishop's new foundation of St. Mary's Hospital, Strood (*R.R.*, 257).

Master RICHARD de WENDOVER, in 1222 is styled "our OFFICIAL" in a convention between Benedict de Sanstun, *thesauris regis*, and the Cathedral monks touching their respective properties (*R.R.*, 56 and 63). Collated rector of Bromley in 1226 by the bishop aforesaid, on whose death, however, 18 December of that year the rule quoted by Lyndwood operated, viz. "*per mortem Deputantis cessat Potestas Officialium*" (p. 104). But from Wendover's attestation to an episcopal appropriation of Brenchley Church to the Austin canons of Tonbridge (*R.R.*, 185), re-investment in the Officiality by bishop Henry Sandford "magnus philosophus" may be inferred. Moreover when Sandford's death voided the See it was for Richard de Wendover that the Cathedral monks postulated the succession. After prolonged negotiation the Roman Court ratified the nomination, and on 26 November, 1238, he was consecrated bishop of Rochester. But as the story of his episcopate has been told elsewhere, it will be sufficient to record the bishop's¹ death on 12 October, 1250, and to quote the judgment of Roger de Wendover that he was "*virum in liberali scientia eruditum*" (*ed. R.S.*, III, 102).

ROGER DE CANTUAR, KING'S CLERK.

Apart from a tenure of the Officiality, details of his career available from non-ecclesiastical sources seem to place him among the sons of Robert de Cantuar, one of the king's chaplains² at Windsor, upon whom and his family Henry III bestowed many benefactions.³ But passing from the realm of possibilities to historic fact we first meet Roger among the household clerks of Richard de Wendover, who

¹ A contemporary with whom the bishop shared a name and surname, canon of St. Paul's, physician to Gregory IX, outlived an episcopal namesake by the space of two years.

² These chaplains were actually clerks who occupied their time between the services in writing the king's letters, from which developed in time the Court of Chancery.

³ *Vide* the Calendars of *Liberate Rolls* 1 May, 1242; Close Rolls, 1246, 1257; the Patent Roll, 13 Feb., 1257.

witnessed the bishop's diversion, 17 December, 1238—of 10*li.* p.a. from the revenues of Plumstead Church to the convent of St. Augustine's, Canterbury (*R.R.*, 525); and an appropriation of Tudeley Church to the canons of Tonbridge (*ibid.*, 664); and as "our OFFICIAL" that of Ryarsh Church to the canons of Merton, 29 November, 1240 (*ibid.*, 597); and in 1242 that of Eltham Church to the Somerset abbey of Keynsham, subject to a life pension of 100*s.* p.a. to Robert de London, parson there (*R.R.*, 344). Litigation, however, followed the last alienation. On 7 October, 1242, the Prior of Rochester obtained a decree in the Consistory Court, prohibiting the V. of Eltham from withholding the profit of a tenement and tithe of a field called Folkesland at Moddingham, which the priory had enjoyed from time immemorial and for despoiling the convent of 28 sheaves of corn and 8 shocks of oats. The Vicar was ordered to make restitution and refrain from further molesting conventual rights (*ibid.*, 348). Again from a Bodleian Charter (no. 59) we learn that Roger, the Official, attested a conveyance by Simon de Bereshe of all his lands in Speldhurst to the convent of Tonbridge. However, on voidance of the bishopric by Wendover's death, Lawrence de St. Martin, his successor, king's clerk, jurist and diplomatist, apparently did not re-invest Roger with the Officiality, so in this capacity the diocese knew him no more.

WALTER DE LONDON, *alias* SALERNE. PAPAL CHAPLAIN.

The place-name and its alternative may connote a Londoner by birth, who acquired a name and fame as a physician after studying at Salerno in southern Italy, as famous for its school of medicine as Bologna was for law, and as Paris was for theology.¹ Be this as it may, the recurrent favours he received from successive Popes suggest a clerk in personal touch with the Roman court. It is not, however, as Walter de Salerne, but as Walter de London that he occurs in 1218 among the clerks in the service of Hubert de Burgh, the Great Justiciar (*Lrs. of Henry III*,

¹ Rashdall, *Med. Universities*, ed. Powicke and Emden, I, 82.

R.S.I. no. X). In 1238 Gregory IX required the bishop of Ely to dispense W. de L. clerk of legitimate birth, to hold an additional benefice (*C.P. Lrs.*, I, 176). The same Pontiff in 1239 when appointing three arbitrators to settle a dispute between the Cathedral monks and the church of Aylesford, included W. de L. the *Official* among them (*Wharton*, I, 349). Again, in company with four justices of the Bench, W. de L. the *Official* of Rochester witnessed the instrument which terminated a dispute between the Convent of St. Mary Overie and Warin de Mountchesney touching the advowson of Swanscombe (*R.R.*, 657, *undated*). In 1244 Innocent IV awarded W. de L. the archdeaconry¹ of Norwich after litigation with Simon de Norman,² a rival claimant (*C.P. Lrs.*, I, 210) and in a dispensation to hold the dignity in plurality, he is entitled a Papal Chaplain (*ibid.*, 211), an honour without emolument but much sought after by medieval clerics. A somewhat compressed notice of Walter's career may close with a record of his appointment to the bishopric of Tuam by Alexander IV in 1257; the bishop-elect, however, never personally visited the diocese, being claimed by death in London, on the way home in 1258.³

Mag. STEPHEN DE BOKELAND.

An element of uncertainty hangs round the territorial name of this clerk. The transcriber of bishop Grosseteste's register gives Boelund, the Close Roll has a variant in Rokislund, while the compiler of the Bodley MS. surely errs in linking him with the Roskele family. But on one point there is agreement, *viz.* in the bestowal of Stephen for a christian name.

Coming to the few facts that are available, we find in Grosseteste's register a record of the institution in 1248 of a Stephen de Boelund to the rectory of Colsterworth in the

¹ Of the tenacity displayed in sustaining archidiaconal rights, *vide Bloomfield's Norfolk*, II, 515.

² Simon the Norman, celebrated among the few men who forfeited the Chancellorship by refusing to do an unconstitutional act. *Campbell's Chancellors*, I, 132.

³ Henry Cotton. *Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae*, Vol. IV, p. 6.

county and diocese of Lincoln, patron Lawrence de St. Martin, canon of Sarum and prebendary of Grantham Australis in Lincoln Minster. Moreover in the Close Roll of 1251, the year of Lawrence's consecration, we read that Mag. Stephen de Rokislund, Official of the bishop of Rochester, claimed the delivery of Robert, son of William, chaplain, and Benedict de Wuldham, clerk, disturbers of the king's peace, to the custody of his lord, the bishop. Mandate from the King bidding the sheriff of Kent surrender the accused persons. Co-ordination, then, of the two records favours an identification of the clerk presented by Lawrence to the Lincolnshire rectory with the Official of Lawrence at Rochester. Again when the aforesaid bishop appropriated St. Werbergh's church, Hoo, and the chapel of All Saints to the Cathedral monks, the instrument dated 26 November, 1253, was witnessed by Stephen the Official and Alan his brother (*R.R.*, 421), styled in the Patent Roll of 1270, Alan de Bokeland, Official of Ely. Finally, Stephen occurs in a Bodleian charter (no. 58) which runs—"Stephen, Official of the bishop of Rochester admitted Edmund de Osseham, clerk to the church of Tudley, void by the death of John Geldtwyne, patron the Convent of Tonbridge. Dated at Malling 125 . . ."

Mag. NICHOLAS DE BOKELAND.

The difficulty recurs of appraising an exact place-name for this ecclesiastical lawyer who appears to have held at different times the Officiality in the dioceses of Winchester and Rochester. A transcriber of the register of John Pontissara has Bokeland, while a MS. list bound with Thorpe in the Bodleian gives Rokelund with Roskele as an astonishing variant. At any rate when appointed in 1262 a scrutineer at the election of John de Rensham to the priorate of the Cathedral church voided by the resignation of Simon de Clye, he is entitled Mag. Nicholas "our Official" (*R.R.*, Thorpe). A recording scribe or his redactor would seem to have erred in registering a notification of the bishop's right to the manor of Beresh by Richard, abbot of Lesnes c. 1267. In sealing the instrument he is

termed Mag. Nicholas Rokelund R. of Trottescliffe, but in attesting its confirmation he is styled Mag. Nicholas de Roskele, Official (*R.R.*, 321). In 1270 he officially witnessed the grant of a small portion of land at Freckenham to the bishops of Rochester (*ibid.*, 64). Nicholas¹ of Ely, bishop of Winchester, now enters the picture by presenting the Official of Rochester to the church of Adderley, co. Oxon (Gravesend Reg., *ed.* C. and Y., 1272-3), and when the death of Lawrence de St. Martin in 1274 terminated his tenure of the Officiality, Nicholas of Ely invested him with the Vicar-Generalship and Officiality of Winchester. Two entries in the register of John Pontissara are relevant to the preferment—(a) as V.G. on Ascension Day, 1274, he presented Hugh Tripacy to Earl's Worthy rectory, the Convent of Merton having preferred an unworthy person, and (b) on 15 April, 1286, Pontissara wrote requesting Mag. Nicholas de Bokeland "the last bishop's Official" to give evidence in his favour in a suit² between the bishop and the Burgesses of Southampton. Like his predecessor in the Officiality, Nicholas appears to have been a clerk biddable and capable in character.

Mag. ROBERT DE LACY, KING'S CLERK.

Surname and many preferments ultimately acquired in Lincolnshire indicate affinity with the fierce baronial house of de Lacy, in particular with Henry, the earl of Lincoln who died in February, 1311. On voidance of the bishopric of Rochester *per mortem* of John Bradfield, archbishop "Friar John" created R. de L. his Official, *sede vacante*, with instructions to order all chaplains, religious and others, to celebrate one mass within ten days for the deceased bishop's soul; to diligently obtain a list of vacant cures, the names of the last rectors; also to guard the manors and goods of the See (Peckham Reg., 23 April, 1283). The enthronement, however, of Thomas Inglethorpe automatically terminated his term of office.

¹ Chancellor 18 Oct., 1260 to July, 1261, and 19 July to Dec., 1263. (*E.H.R.*, XXVII.)

² For the end of the controversy, see "*Rolls of Parliament*", I, 20 a.

Mag. JOHN DE MORLEY.

A christian and surname shared with the John de Morleys, father and son, citizens of Norwich, parliamentary representatives of the city between 1296 and 1324, is suggestive of Norfolk origin for a clerk preferred in 1275 to the vicarage of the prebendal church of Nassington in Northants (Gravesend Reg., *ed. C. and Y.*). The consecration, however, of another East Anglian in the person of Thomas Inglethorpe to the bishopric of Rochester proved conducive to attainment of high ecclesiastical office. For in the first year of his episcopate the name of John de Morley occurs among the episcopal clerks who witnessed the bishop's payment of homage to Edmund earl of Cornwall, for the Northants manor of Middleton (*R.R.*, 501). Moreover, on 2 January, 1284, Inglethorpe nominated John and Thomas de Morley his attorneys during absence overseas (*Cal. of Patent Rolls*). Again, when attesting a capitular confirmation of Inglethorpe's benefaction to the vicars of Frensbury in 1289 (*R.R.*, 371), or a release of the advowson of Isleham—a Peculiar jurisdiction of the bishops of Rochester (*ibid.*, 438), or two undated grants of lands in Dartford for the enlargement of the scanty revenues of the See, John de Morley is invariably designated "our Official" (*ibid.*, 292, 293). But with the death of the nominating bishop his tenure of the Officiality ended.

GWYNAND *alias* WYNAND DE DRYLAND.

On the death of Thomas Inglethorpe, 12 May, 1291, a certain Solomon de Rochester occasionally an itinerant justice *tempo* Henry III, sought the suffrages of the monks for his election to the vacant See. The electoral body, however, rejecting his candidature, chose Thomas de Wuldham, their Prior, who was consecrated to the bishopric at Chartham on the feast of the Epiphany, 1291-2. Enraged at the rebuff, in a suit between the bishop and the convent in 1294, Solomon is reputed to have persuaded the justices in eyre sitting at Canterbury to decide against the monks. Whereupon, according to common fame, Wynand the

bishop's Official entered the house in Rochester where Solomon resided, ate and drank with him and put poison into his food and drink, so that he died fifteen days afterwards (*Placit. Abbr.*, 290). He was charged with the murder, but pleading his Orders, he was successfully claimed by the bishop as a clerk. Finally he purged himself at Greenwich and was liberated. According to Matthew of Westminster, Wynand only made Solomon drunk (*ed. R.S.*, III, 82-3). Styled rector of Snodland in 1295, this Official witnessed a charter of Wm. de Haudlo, rector of Cooklestone, confirming the payment of 10s. annually to St. Mary's Hospital, Stroud (*R.R.*, 260).

Mag. JOHN DE FODERINGEYE.

There emerged during the reign of Edward I, four clerks inheriting a place-name from the Northants village of Fotheringay who acquired a measure of distinction in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the day, viz.—Ralf, archdeacon of Ely, 1307 (*Le Neve*); Walter, Warden or Principal of Balliol Hall, Oxford, in 1291; William admitted to the Sarum prebend of Rotherfield in 1305 (*Gandavo. Reg.*) and John who entered history as "Scribe of the Acts" in the archdiocese of Canterbury.

But c. 1310 Archbishop Winchelsey—a secular clerk who had taught with distinction at Paris and Oxford, and was mainly conspicuous for sanctity of life and ability as a preacher¹—having reason to believe that Mag. John de Foderingey sometime clerk of Audience,² and certain others were holding back the Primatial Act books and registers which had been handed over to them intact, instructed his Official to investigate the matter (*Reg. I*, 454). What the upshot of the scrutiny may have been we do not know, but we do know that when Thomas of Wuldhm sickened at his manor of Bromley and died there 28 February, 1317, the archbishop on 18 March, 1317, created his Scribe Official of Rochester with authority to *visit* all religious houses in the

¹ *Political History of England*, III, 199.

² See *Canterbury Administrations*, Dr. Irene Churchill, I, 470.

diocese (*Winchelsey Reg. f.*, 118*a*). In passing it may be observed that the records of *sede vacante* visitations show much formality ; the occasion furnished a lucrative windfall ; the time was generally too short for real disciplinary purposes ; the main object, therefore, was so to visit as to secure the right of future visitation and to collect the statutory procurations. In resuming the narrative we reach the episcopate of Hamo de Hethe (*i.e.* Hythe) consecrated at Avignon 26 August, 1319, who, after enthronement¹ at Rochester, appears to have made J. de F. his OFFICIAL. As judge then of the Consistory Court he would preside, 23 January, 1320, at the indictment of Joan de Pirton and others for offering violence to the Benedictine abbess² of Malling ; and at the trial (30 *ibid.*) of Alexander de Wodere of Dartford, suspected of despoiling the body of John Long, a citizen of London drowned in the Thames, who had in his purse xxviiij s. *sterling* and had detained xviijs. *vjd.* ; the defendant being found guilty was excommunicated unless he refunded the money within a period prescribed by the Court (*Hamo Hethe reg. ed. C. and Y.*). Again in December, J. de F. and Thomas de Alkham,³ the bishop's commissaries fined Geoffrey atte Wood, a priest, admitting adultery, 100s. for pious uses ; and in the same year John, a chaplain, was arraigned in the Consistory Court for administering the sacrament and burying a hermit at Aylesford, to which he replied that he acted as the rector's deputy, who received the obventions.⁴ Again, on 5 October, 1321, Henry de Elham, knt., being too ill to attend the Court to answer a charge of adultery and for assaulting William Ifeld, a clerk, appeared by a proctor who admitted the guilt of his client and accepted the penance imposed, *viz.* to make

¹ The enthronement of Hamo Hethe can be dated by his letter from Boarstall inviting the prior of Tonbridge to be present at the ceremony on the Octave of the Epiphany (*Turner & Coxe. Bodleian Charters*, 83-88, p. 126).

² Presumably the unnamed sister of Bartholomew de Badlesmere, into whose alleged mismanagement of the Nunnery estate the king ordered Hamo to enquire.

³ Concerning this clerk, see *Arch. Cant.*, XXIV, p. 161. Will proved 10 Feb., 1356, to be buried in his rectory church of Southfleet.

⁴ "Obventions, oblations, offerings are generally one and the same thing, though obventions has been esteemed the more comprehensive." *Jacob's Law Dict.*, ed. 8.

four pilgrimages annually for six years, and every year to provide the cathedral church with a candle weighing 3 lbs. on St. Andrew's Day, and give 20s. annually during the period prescribed for distribution among the poor at the bishop's discretion (*Reg. Hamo Hethe*). The foregoing courts appear to have been held in the hall of the episcopal manor house at Bromley.

On 12 January, 1325, J. de F. received letters of protection, renewed 15 January, 1328, in each case for one year, while in Spain on the king's business (*C.P.R.*); and that he returned without misadventure we learn from a Bodleian muniment, calendared p. 129. Under date 14 July, 1330, the Official of Rochester cited the prior and convent of Tonbridge to appear themselves or by a proctor to answer certain articles of Roger, warden of Strode Hospital, alleging subtraction of tithes at Horsherst in Aldyng parish for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. In the following December, J. de F. and Hugh Forsham, rector of Sundridge, were commissioned by the bishop to determine a tithe dispute between the cathedral monks as appropriators of St. Mary's Church, Rochester, and the convent of Leeds as appropriators of Chatham Church (*Bodleian Charters*, 216). On 15 May, 1331, the Official directed a mandate bidding the Archdeacon promulgate a sentence of excommunication passed upon the convent of Tonbridge for non-payment of procurations to the pope in 1329 and 1330 (*ibid.*, p. 130). Sentence relaxed on discharge of the liability 23 May, 1331 (*ibid.*, p. 99). Finally by recording his appointment 7 October, 1331, to the Vicar-Generalship during Hamo de Hethe's absence from the diocese and institution of clerks 13 December, 1332, to the rectories of Stone and Freckenham void by the death of the *vir verabilis* Mag. John de Foderinghey, we bring the narrative to a close (*Reg. Hamo Hethe*).

Mag. WILLIAM DE HONINGTON.

Immediately after the death of the preceding Official, Honington enters the picture bearing the title "Chancellor" in Hamo Hethe's register on 8 January, 1332, and should the designation have then carried its later implication, he

exercised the dual functions of V.G. and Official. Conceivably he was the unnamed Official mentioned 18 May, 1332, but otherwise between 6 February, 1332, and 1336, he is styled, when functioning, "Commissary and rector of Wilkesly in the diocese of Lincoln", e.g. on 11 April, 1332, he sentenced in the Consistory Court, William Couel to make a pilgrimage barefoot to St. Thomas' Canterbury and Rochester, paying 20s. in each place. On 25 September, 1334, Hamo collated him rector of Chislehurst, where he died 25 February, 1336 (*Reg.*).

Mag. EDMOND DIGGES DE BERHAM.

An ecclesiastical lawyer whose name should link him with the de Berham family descended from Roger de Mildenhall of the parish of St. Stephen *alias* Hackington near Canterbury (*Hasted, Blackheath*, 163). His early advancement appears to have been due to Hamo Hethe by whom he was collated¹ with bewildering rapidity to the following rectories: Woolwich, 19 December, 1335; Chislehurst, 25 February, 1336, void by death of William de Honington; Snodland, 3 June, 1337, void by resignation of Thomas of Hythe; Stone, 1 March, 1338, void by death of William de Shireborn (*Reg.*). The date of his admission to the Officiality is obscure, but in view of Hamo's partiality his succession thereto on the death of Honington is not improbable. Be this as it may, on 15 June, 1341, Edmond Diggs entitled Commissary-General, conducted with a mixed jury of clergy and laity an inquisition "as to the dilapidations at Kemsing² rectory with Seal chapelry, claimed by Thomas Hope rector, from the executors of his predecessor Gilbert de Keleshulle. As Gilbert only held the benefice for two years and had to spend 60*li.* on the repairs left undone by Richard Durant his predecessor, and had bequeathed to the church books and ornaments worth 5 *marcs*, the Court adjudged the executors to pay only 5*m.* for rebuilding a barn and repairing

¹ Collation connotes episcopal patronage, "It differeth from a common presentation, as it is the giving of a church to the parson, while presentation is the giving of the parson to the church" (*Jacob's Law Dict.*, ed. 8).

² *Vide Arch. Cant.*, XX, 258 sq.

the chancel and rectory and 7s. for minor repairs to vestments and ornaments, to which both parties agreed" (*ibid.*). He is again styled commissary when deputed 13 October, 1347, by Hamo to visit the Cathedral monks, but in a mandate of Clement VI, dated June, 1352, authorizing him to choose two clerks and admit them papal¹ notaries, after examination by the bishop, he is entitled Official of Rochester (*C.P. Lrs.*, III, 472). Conceivably the papal permit was complementary to the visitation, as the Cathedral Priors habitually employed one or two notaries for the despatch of business brought them by delegation from the Roman Court (*Hasted*, IV, 504). When Hamo² de Hethe, old and infirm, died at Bromley 4 May, 1352, Archbishop Islip, reputed to have been aloof and lofty in demeanour, created Edmund Diggs his Vicar-General with jurisdiction in causes spiritual and temporal, *sede vacante* (Islip *reg.*). In 1355 the archbishop acknowledged the receipt from Edmond Diggs, Official of Rochester, the profits and emoluments accrued during voidance of the See (*ibid.*, F.77b), and from the wording of the foregoing record, it may be inferred that Hamo's *protegé* John de Sheppey³ consecrated at St. Mary's Southwark, retained a favourite clerk of his predecessor in the Officiality. His days, however, were drawing to a close and after receiving an indult to chose a confessor to give him plenary remission at the hour of death (*C.P. Lrs.*, III, 598), he is said by Thorp to have entered the land of No Return in 1361.

SEDE VACANTE OFFICIALS.

Upon the death of John de Sheppey, 19 October, 1360, archbishop Islip created John Bradwell, rector of Shoreham,

¹ In the Middle Ages the notary was an important official preparing and attesting wills and deeds, somewhat after the manner of the modern conveyancing solicitor. At admission they were invested with pen, ink and paper, symbols of their functions.

² Charges brought against Hamo, bishop and builder, at Winchelsey's visitation of the diocese do not suggest an episcopate of unruffled placidity. He was cleared by a definite sentence of the court, though not without intervention of money *mediante tamen pecunia* (*Hook, Archbishops of Cant.*, III, 504).

³ John de Sheppey, S.T.P. Oxon., educated at the cost of Hamo, made by him a Benedictine monk; Prior of Rochester 1333; a long list of books he collected will be found in the *Cole MSS.*, *Brit. Museum*, 114, 166.

his Official in the diocese on the 22nd of the month (*Reg. f.222b*). But Mag. John de Kennington rector of Rotherfield occurs 28 November, 1361, as Official instructed to excommunicate anyone inflicting damage on the manors or lands of the See (*ibid.*, f.223b). As a papal notary he had sealed, 25 February, 1351, the late bishop's ordination of a vicarage at Leigh (*R.R.*, 467).

JOHN DE SWINESHEVED, M.A., L.L.D. Cambridge.

We now reach a clerk who knew where to set his "springs to catch woodcocks," and it may not be discordant with the territorial name to place him among the sons of John de Swinesheved, a wealthy "merchaunt" of Coventry mentioned in the *C.P.R.* of 24 November, 1358. Moreover, the ease with which he obtained favours from the Curia is suggestive of financial resources derived from an affluent parent. For example in July, 1343, Clement VI directed Raymond Pelgrini his nuncio "to provide John de S. of Lincoln diocese with a benefice in the gift of the Benedictines of Bardney" (*C.P. Lrs.*, III, 104), a mandate amplified in the Calendar of Papal Petitions "notwithstanding he expects a benefice value 15*m.* in the gift of Croyland abbey" (p. 62). Again, he received in 1353 a papal reservation of a benefice worth 40*m.* in the patronage of the bishop of Ely (*C.P. Lrs.*, III, 487), and from the *C.P.P.* (p. 367) we learn that he was also enjoying an altar worth 24 florins in the church of Stranmeel in the diocese of Cambrai. In 1358 he obtained a papal indult to choose his confessor at the hour of death (*C.P. Lrs.*, III, 597). So much for a compressed narrative of ecclesiastical preferment acquired before 3 February, 1361-2, when he was appointed Vicar-General of Rochester during Whittlesey's¹ absence (*Bodley MS.*), an honour repeated during Whittlesey's tenure of the bishopric of Worcester (*Reg. Lewis Charlton, Hereford*).

Meanwhile he had been deputed in 1363 to determine a dispute between John de Bishopston,² rector of Clyffe at Hoo

¹ "Alumnus primo Oxoniensis, postea hospitii S. Petri, Cantabrigiæ"; author of "*Synodales Conciones*" (Tanner, *Bibl. Hist. Brit. Biog.*, 784).

² *Vide Arch. Cant.*, XV, p. 230.

and his parishioners. An illuminating light is now thrown on the screen illustrating the troubles of Anglican clergy during the Avignon exile, when the papal power of provisions was largely exercised in favour of Paris graduates during the pontificate of Clement VI and his successors. To restore the balance at home the two English Universities began the custom of sending a *rotulus nominandum* to the pope (*Rashdall, Med. Univ.*, ed. *Powick*, I, 533). In 1363 his name occurs among Cambridge graduates for whose preferments the masters and bachelors of the University petitioned. "To J. de S. M.A. bachelor of canon and civil law, priest, provision of a canonry of York, with expectation of a prebend, notwithstanding he hath Wetheringsett rectory." The response of the Curia sounds slightly contemptuous: "Let him have what he asks, in Exeter" (*C.P.P.*, 407). And from a mandate of Urban V in 1364 we incidentally learn his possession of the prebend of St. Maurice value $2\frac{1}{2}m.$ in the collegiate church of Abergwily (*ibid.*, 477). Any association he may have had with the Officiality of Rochester definitely terminated with Whittlesey's translation in 1368 to Canterbury, whose register under date 27 April, 1369, records, "Testament of Bartholomew de Burwash, knt., probate granted before Mag. John de Swynsheved, Chancellor and Commissary of the archbishop, specially deputed" (*f.* 98). On 16 July, 1369, the Primate created J. de S. his Official in the diocese of Exeter, *sede vacante* by death of John Grandison (*ibid.*, *f.* 135). However, on receiving the Lincoln prebend of Langford magna, patron the king *sede vacante* (*C.P.R.*, 20 April, 1370), Kent knew him no more, and as a recitation of the many benefices subsequently enjoyed would make tedious reading, it will be sufficient to relate that a clerk endowed with a capacity for trimming his sails to catch every breeze of patronage reached the end of his pilgrimage 17 March, 1395-6 (*Le Neve*).

Mag. ROBERT DE BOURNE.

Presumably a Bourne of Bishopsbourne. His first preferment of which we know was his presentation by the crown to St. Matthew's rectory, Ipswich (*C.P.R.*, 10 July,

1342), relinquished, however, on collation to Wuldhams rector, 27 May, 1349. Created Vicar-General of Rochester on Whittlesey's translation to Worcester (*Islip, Reg. f. 245*); Commissary-General of Canterbury 8 November, 1366 (*Langham Reg.*), Auditor of Causes *sede vacante* by the monks of Christchurch, 16 January, 1368 (*Whittlesey Reg.*, I, 1b). Coming to the episcopate of Thomas Trilleck, we find the Bishop in 1368 collating R. de B. to the rectories of Freckenham, 25 January (*Reg. 334b*) and of Southfleet 9 August (*ibid.*, 332b) and in September appointing him to the OFFICIALITY (*Bodley MS.*). Again Vicar-General of Rochester, *sede vacante*, on Trilleck's death c. Christmas, 1372, and when the decease of Whittlesey (1375) voided the Primacy, he once more was appointed Commissary-General of the Archdiocese (*Sudbury, Reg.*). Moreover Archbishop Sudbury, before embarking at Dover to negotiate peace with France, nominated R. de B. rector of Southfleet, R. de Warmington rector of Wingham, Richard, Prior of Christchurch Vicars-General in his absence (*ibid.*, f. 16). Reverting to Rochester, we find R. de B. re-invested with the Officiality by bishop Thomas de Brintone,¹ and as such attested the appropriation of Cowdham Church to the Benedictine Nuns of Kilburn, 21 June, 1377 (*R.R.*, 266) and of Horton to the college of Cobham, 10 April, 1378 (*ibid.*, 431). By a will proved in 1385, he desired burial in the Conventual church of Boxley and bequeathed the residue of his estates to the monks (*P.C.C.*, Rous, I).

WILLIAM DE LAAS OF LACE. LICENTIATE IN CANON LAW.

The course for the legal degree of Licentiate in Canon Law was a long one, extending (in the case of those who had not graduated in arts) over six years.² Styled a clerk, Laas entered history as recipient of a licence to take overseas a letter of exchange for 100s. issued by the merchants of Lucca in England to their fellows abroad (*Close Roll*, 2 Dec., 1382). A gap now occurs in the narrative until 1392, when

¹ Author of "*Sermones coram pontifice*"; "*Sermones alios Solemnes*" (Tanner, *Brit. Biog.*).

² *Vide Medieval Universities*, ed. Powick and Emden, III, 446.

William de Bottisham (Bottlesham) S.T.P. translated by papal provision 27 August, 1389, from Llandaff to Rochester, created William de Laas his Official (*Bodley MS.*). It would probably then be his duty to fulfil a mandate from Boniface IX dated 1391, bidding the Official of Rochester collate John Merys, priest of Canterbury, if found fit after examination in Latin, to Gillingham vicarage, void by death of William not more than two days' journey from Rome, where the pope was residing (*C.P. Lrs.*, IV, 400). The mandate illustrates the exercise of a right claimed by the popes of providing to all benefices voided by the death or resignation of a clerk who died within three days' journey of the papal court. Moreover, the allusion to a knowledge of Latin is noteworthy, for a command of that language was a *sine qua non* to success in life. The clerk, too ignorant to write a letter, keep accounts, maintain a conversation with a continental *confrère* or preach a sermon in Latin had little hope of preferment otherwise than as a chantry priest.

In 1396 he received ratification in his estate as parson of West Wycombe (*C.P.R.*, 18 December), and as Official he sealed and attested, 17 July, 1392, a composition touching tithes between the R. of Cookestone and the Cathedral monks (*R.R.*, 263); in 1393 the ordination of a vicarage at Leigh by the canons of Tonbridge (*ibid.*, 468); in January, 1393-4, a composition between John Turner, R. of St. Clements Church and David Whyte, chaplain of the chantry of the Holy Trinity, adjoining Rochester Bridge (*ibid.*, 558). On 21 September, 1394, Bottisham appointed him V.G. of the diocese (*Bodley MS.*). A medieval bishop when planning a Visitation generally inhibited the archdeacons from holding their visitations, and thereby deprived the subordinate officer of his procurations. In 1395 William Laas witnessed a compromise between the dignitaries on the point. However, probate of his will granted in 1395 (*P.C.C.*, 5, Rous) indicates his death shortly afterwards.

JOHN LAUNCE, L.L.B.

This prolonged series of only partially related fragments may begin to bore even readers of good-will, and the scanty

notices of Launce's career, when gathered and garnered, do not relieve the tedium. Let that be, however—it is as a lawyer of established repute that he flashes into the limelight, licensed 23 June, 1391, to represent the *D.* and *C.* of Winchester before the Curia in a suit against their diocesan, William Wykeham, and styled “king's proctor at the papal court” he received authority to stay there and exchange money as often as he willed (*C.P.R.*). That he did not avail himself of the latitude allowed is clear, for his name occurs among the episcopal clerks who witnessed at Halling manor, 17 July, 1392, the Cathedral *cum* Cookestone composition (*R.R.*, 263). Moreover, on 13 October, 1395, William Bottlesham conferred the Officiality upon John Launce, priest, and on the 27th by archepiscopal collation he was instituted to the rectory of Lambeth, exchanged, however, for Padlesworth 28 November following (*Wykeham reg.*); also when the death of the aforesaid bishop voided the bishopric, archbishop Arundel (15 March, 1399-1400) created Launce (rector of Southfleet by collation, 28 July, 1397; *W. Botte reg.* f. 106*b*) custodian of the spiritualities and empowered jointly with William Hunden¹ to conduct a *sede vacante* visitation of the diocese (*Arundel reg.* f. 464). But whether William Bottlesham's² successor, John, “*ejusdem cognominis, clericus, de familia domini*³ *Cant.*,” Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, consecrated at Canterbury 4 July, 1400, continued Launce in the Officiality is doubtful. At any rate historical continuity is disturbed until we read his collation by *p.p.* 10 June, 1406, to the Chichester prebend of Firles, and excused attendance at a meeting of the Chapter, 18 July, 1407, to elect a dean in place of John Maydenhythe, “as being notoriously outside the Province,

¹ Archdeacon of Rochester, 1401; Warden of the Free Chapel of St. Laurence, Halling; Archdeacon of Totnes, 1407. By will pr. 10 March, 1415-16, he bequeathed to the church of Roksley a vestment for ferial days (*Reg. Stafford, ed. Hingeston-Randolph*, 408).

² For a notice of William and John Bottlesham, see *Cambridge Anti-quarian Society*, XIV, 84, *sqq.* The contributor, however, attributes the authorship of “*Sermones coram rege; Disputationes Scholasticus; Opus quoddam tabulare pro utilitate studentium*” to John and not to William Bottlesham.

³ *Walsingham Hist., Angl., ed. R.S.*, II, 248.

place and kingdom of England" (*Robert Reade, reg.*). On 19 February, 1406-7, he received, after litigation, ratification in his estate as prebend of Penfoos in St. David's Cathedral (*C.P.R.*). Not that these acquisitions deflected his activities from the diocese and his parish. In 1413 he occurs in an instrument releasing lands at Great Charte (*Cal. of Ann. Deeds*, III, D.420), and in 1419, styled rector of Southfleet, witnessed a grant of lands, etc., in the parish (*ibid.*, D.1001). By a resolution of the Council of Siena, 19 February, 1423-4, another was to be called in seven years at Basle, and though the time fixed was so remote, John Langdon—consecrated 24 May, 1422—seems to have soon been designed for one of the English deputies and, some time before 20 July, 1422, appointed Launce and Andrew Sandars his Vicars-General in spiritualities. Death, however, the grim yet semi-jocular skeleton in medieval jest and picture, terminated in 1424 the activities of a clerk who seems to have performed his tasks with quiet efficiency. Will proved the same year, *P.C.C., Luffenham*, 2.

JOHN MARSHAM OF MARTHAM, BACHELOR IN DECREES.

Another of these busy men of affairs. He appears to have entered the hierarchy of ecclesiastical activity by admission 8 January, 1392, to Beckenham rectory, though in an indult (1398) of Boniface IX to have a portable¹ altar he is styled a "priest in the diocese of Norwich" (*C.P. Lrs.*, V, 137). But it was as a clerk of archbishop Chicheley and his commissary in the Peculiar of Shoreham, that he made contact with Rochester, for at the Primate's visitation of the diocese in 1418 he was entitled the Official, and on its completion Chicheley empowered John "Martham" Warden of Strood Hospital, to punish the contumacious and correct all that was amiss (*Reg. II*, 342). Moreover, during voidance

¹ The permit of 1398 to possess a portable altar needs a note of explanation for which the writer is indebted to Professor Hamilton Thompson: "The great advantage of a portable altar would be that the recipient could use it upon journeys, during illnesses, and at any time when he was prevented from saying or hearing Mass. The 'altar' was in such cases merely a consecrated stone which could easily be carried about and used upon any suitable surface. It was not an altar in the ordinary sense of the word, but was sufficient for use at Mass."

of the See by death of Richard Young, Marsham is entitled V.G. (*sede vacante*) in the Patent Rolls of 16 February, 1419, and 6 March, 1420, but when Chichele commissioned him jointly with John Launce, Thomas Moonie to hear the purgation of William Northwood, barber of Tonbridge, indicted for wounding a man to death in March, 1421-2, the certificate of innocence was signed by John Marsham Official of Rochester and Dean of Shoreham (*Reg. Chich.*, II, 352). Again in his official capacity he appears to have devised a solution of a local squabble between the Cathedral monks and a section of their fellow-townsmen, which had originated in Richard Young's licence (May, 1418) for the parishioners of the altar of St. Nicholas in the Cathedral nave to build a church on the north side of the cemetery in which to worship. Various objections raised by the monks, however, delayed progress until 1421 when the contending parties reached a composition, which Marsham the Official sitting in the consistory court, ratified and sealed with the seal of his office 7 March, 1421 (*R.R.*, 566). And on 18 December, 1423, in the presence of John Launce and Andrew Sanders Vicars-General, the parishioners solemnly renounced all their rights in the said altar (*R.R.*, 568).

ANDREW SANDERS, the next Official to be extracted from our pigeon-cote, was admitted in rotation to the following benefices: Gravesend rectory, 17 September, 1399; Dartford vicarage (by exchange), 20 January, 1427; Yalding vicarage, 3 October, 1430 (*Bodley M.S.*). Over and above what already has been told concerning him three fragments remain for recital. In the Consistory Court, 20 July, 1422, Andrew "Sondre," clerk, V.G. licensed John Elmey, chaplain of the chantry called Stampit, to celebrate annually certain divine offices for nine years, the residence being ruined (*Act Book*, f. 21). On 18 December, 1423, Andrew Sanders and John Launce licensed the consecration of St. Nicholas Church "under seal of the Officiality at present in our hands" (*R.R.*, 570). Lastly Andrew Sanders, Official of Rochester, witnessed 3 May, 1425, Kemp's approval of an annual payment of 20*d.* by the

Vicars of St. Nicholas to the Cathedral monks (*ibid.*, 571). He died rector of Mereworth in 1438 (*Bodley MS.*).

JOHN GOREWELL, L.L.D., Oxford, a lawyer of distinction, with a place-name derived from a hamlet¹ in the Devonshire parish of Hemyock, was appointed Official 8 October, 1425 (*Bodley MS.*), successor, to quote his own words—to “*venerabili viro magistro Andrea Sanders, antecessore nostro*” (*R.R.*, 355). Of his previous history we learn from the register of Edmund Stafford, bishop of Exeter, that while a subdeacon he enjoyed the rectory of Roborough, from which he obtained, 1 February, 1403-4, a licence of non-residence for three years to study for the doctorate at Oxford. Designated doctor of laws, he was appointed a commissioner 23 July, 1406, to hear and determine at Exeter an appeal from the recently instituted Admiralty Court² (*C.P.R.*), and on 5 August was admitted to the Cornish rectory of Week St. Mary, patron Henry IV (*Stafford Reg.*). In 1411 he received a papal dispensation to hold an additional benefice with cure of souls (*C.P. Lrs.*, VI, 221), a benefaction possibly relevant to his acquisition of the Herts rectory of Ickleford, subsequently surrendered in exchange for the Mastership of the Newark Hospital,³ Strood (*Bodley MS.*). During his tenure of the Officiality he decreed in the Consistory Court a pension for the R. of Chelfield from a field in Tonbridge (*R.R.*, 355-6, *undated*). In 1430 and 1432 the clergy of the diocese elected him their proctor in Convocation, and by *L.P.* dated 17 December, 1432, John Langdon,⁴ before leaving to attend the Council of Basle, opened in December, 1431, created John Gorewell, the Official, William Lyndewood, L.L.D., and Andrew Sanders his Vicars-General

¹ A William Gorewell of Fremington, Devon, “gentilman,” occurs in the Fine Roll of 12 Aug., 1419.

² Consult “*Selden Society's Publications*,” VI, xiv-li, for a study of the origin and jurisdiction of the Admiralty Court.

³ The hospital was sometimes called “The New Work at Stroode” to distinguish it as Tanner suggests from a house which the Templars had in this town, called “the Temple” (*Dugdale, Mon.*, VI, 655).

⁴ In July, 1432 Langdon and Dr. Brown were sent to it as representatives of England, the former being allowed 100*l.* for the journey, and the latter 20*s.* a day for his expenses at Basle (*Rymer*).

with spiritual jurisdiction (*Bodley MS.*). In 1434 he was one of crown commissioners to administer the oath not to maintain peace-breakers (*Rolls of Parl.*, IV, 422) and died R. of Stone 30 December, 1439 (*Arch. Cant.*, III, 101). Epitaph in Weever, 333.

WILLIAM SPREVER,¹ L.L.D., a skilful lawyer and diplomatist, was Warden or Provost of the free chapel or hospital of Milton² by Gravesend and rector of Rotherfield by collation 12 July, 1430 (*Praty reg.*). William Wells after consecration at Durham House 24 March, 1437, in succession to Thomas Brown translated to Norwich, seems to have gone post-haste to Basle, though before proceeding overseas created (8 April) Sprever and John Warren his Vicars-General and joint Officials (*Consistory Act Book*). But it was by juridical and diplomatic ability rather than by a brief occupancy of the Officiality that Sprever made a name and fame. For instance we find him with other eminent lawyers of the day, commissioned to hear and determine appeals from the Admiralty Court on the following dates: 23 November, 1436; 25 April, 1437; 26 July and 20 October, 1441; 26 January, 1442; and 13 November, 1446, an appeal from a military tribunal (*C.P.R.*). Further as an accomplished jurist he was frequently employed in diplomatic work. We read in the *P.R.* of 24 November, 1430, the provision made for his voyage as senior ambassador to the Hanseatic League and kingdom of Denmark, for the expenses of the mission parliament in 1433 allowed him 258*li.* xjs. vjd. (*Rolls of Parl.*, IV, 438). And 22 March, 1437, a treaty of commerce and amity with the League, drawn up by Wm. Sprever and Lyndwood, keeper of the *P.S.*, doctors of laws and other notables, was ratified in London (*C.P.R.*). On 29 May, 1439, he was commissioned to negotiate a similar treaty with Holland (*Rymer, Foedera*), and in 1441-2 as legal adviser he accompanied bishop Wells, deputed to

¹ The surname occurs at Cobham and Milton by Gravesend in the fifteenth century.

² In Ducarel's excerpts from Lambeth registers it occurs as a college (*Dug., Mon.*, VI, 764).

negotiate peace with France (*Bodley MS.*), a mission that failed as the French ambassador refused to treat with the English commissioners on the plea of their inferior quality. A somewhat disjointed narrative woven of many threads may now fittingly close with a record of his ecclesiastical preferments subsequent to avoidance of his Sussex benefice. He was instituted rector of Stone 17 November, 1441; admitted 29 November, 1443, prebendary of Consumpta super Mare in St. Paul's; archdeacon of Bath 10 December, 1449, and of Chichester in 1459 (*St. Alban's Chron.*, ed. *R.S.*, I, 336); Proctor in Convocation 1437, 1442, 1450. He was probably a clerk of decorous habits, but clearly acquired church preferments as a steady source of income, and simply performed the functions for which he was paid.

JOHN WARREN, L.L.D. collated Vicar of Dartford 21 June, 1431, exchanged to the rectory of Staplehurst 1437-8; Vicar-General and Official jointly with Sprever 8 April, 1437; Proctor in Convocation 1432, 1433. But as his activities were largely centred in Exeter diocese, there is nothing of local interest to relate.

THOMAS HANWELL, Bachelor in Canon and Civil Law. The figures now pass swiftly across the stage. The Bodley MS. dates his appointment to the Officiality in 1439, and jointly with Sprever was Custodian of spiritualities and temporalities 6 February, 1443, to 14 June, 1444 (*Reg. Stafford*, f. 43 and 44b). Tentatively identifiable with Thomas Hanwell, clerk, who occurs in a grant by *L.P.* dated 6 February, 1461, of the rape of Hastings, a parcel of the honor of Richmond to William Lord Hastings, the king's Chamberlain (*Sussex Arch.*, xxxvii, 41). He died, dean of South Malling; will proved 1473, *P.C.C.*, 12, Wattys.

JOHN BASOCK, Bach.-in Decrees, the next Official in the Bodleian roll, occurs as Official and Commissary 27 January, 1442, and if the compiler has read the name correctly he is otherwise unknown to history.

JOHN HORLEY or HORNLEY, S.T.B. scholar and educationist, collated V. of Dartford 20 January, 1441-2; Commissary and proctor for bishop Wells while serving on a commission "empowered 24 April, 1440, to conclude a final peace with France at a convention to be held at Calais" (*Rymer*); created Official 11 November, 1443 (*Bodley MS.*); probably one and the same person as the John Horley for whose assistance in the foundation of "Goddeshouse" (Christ's College), Cambridge, William Bingham obtained a licence, 25 August, 1446 (*C.P.R.*). Also by the foundation charter dated 18 August, 1448, John Hornley "*insignem illa tempestate virum*" was appointed President with 13 Masters and 17 Bachelors to inaugurate William Waynflete's new Society of Magdalen Hall,¹ Oxford. On the 29th the President received possession of the Hall by his attorney (*Chanders*, "*Life of Waynflete*", 51, *ed.* 1811). On 14 February, 1450, the king presented him *sede vacante* to the Chichester prebend of Colworth (*C.P.R.*). Moreover, styled "V. of Dartford who had studied for many years in the University of Oxford", he received a licence in November, 1450, from Nicholas V. to hold with the said church, value not exceeding 40*li.* p.a. another benefice (*C.P. Lrs.*, X, 89), whereupon on 23 June, 1453 the Convent of St. Marie Southwark presented him to the church of St. Bennet Sherehog² (*Kemp reg.*). We now come to an incident related in the *P.R.* of 31 October, 1452, which reveals Horley not only as an erudite scholar, but as a parish priest alive to the responsibilities of his office. "In a high chamber within 'le Hert' of Dartford, Master Horley, vicar, said that on the eve of SS. Peter and Paul last, John Wylkins, convicted of high treason, was brought from the Tower to Dartford and there the king's officers laid him on 'le hurdell' to draw him to the gallows outside Dartford, and the vicar asked one Joskyns, king's serjeant, whether it was necessary for Wylkins to be confessed, and Joskyns answered it would

¹ Subsequently Magdalen College.

² The small church of St. Osyth *alias* Bennet Shorne or Shrog or Shorehog for by all these names Stow saith he hath read it; but the ancientist is Shorne: the church was burnt down in the Fire; afterwards annexed to St. Stephens Wallbrook (*Newcourt*, I, 303).

not, because Wylkins had had with him all day a confessor chosen by him ; and the vicar saw no man confessing him at that time or sethens afore his death." He appears to have quitted the Officiality before 1447, but during his tenure of the office he inherited in the *C.C.* a curious issue for adjudication, *viz.* whether a clerk engaged to officiate during a rector's holiday was to be provided by the wardens or by the Incumbent, the churchwardens being the complainants. After many arguments and seventeen hearings, a compromise was reached on 3 June, 1443, when the Official was prepared to pass a definite sentence. The bishop, however, took the matter into his own hands and inhibited his Official from proceeding further (*Act Book*). In 1456 he resigned the Presidency of Magdalen and retired to Dartford¹ where he died and was buried in 1477. Will, dated 6, pr. 19 June, 1477, *P.C.C.*-30, Wattys. Of this Official it can be said that in his personal character and in his multifarious activities he reflected much that was best in his age.

THOMAS CANDOUR, Chamberlain to Pope Nicholas V, Chaplain to Edward IV, took his degree in canon law at Padua, described as "de Salopia Lichfieldensis, parochialis ecl. de Tarentundeville Saresburiensis dioc", 2 December, 1446. Though entirely out of chronological order, it may here be mentioned that by will dated 30 September, 1475, he desired burial at St. Antholin, London, and left a sum of money (not decipherable) to his church at Pimperne, Dorset, three books to Rochester priory and his MSS. to St. Antholin (*P.C.C.*, 33, Wattys).

Entitled doctor of canon law and formerly Chamberlain to Eugenius IV he received in June, 1448, a dispensation from Nicholas V to hold for life any other benefice not exceeding 20*li.* in value as well as his vicarage of Basschurch in the county of Salop and diocese of Coventry (*C.P. Lrs.*, X, 101). But as he was already enjoying the fruits of two benefices in co. Dorset by presentation of Richard, Duke of York, *viz.* Tarrant Gunville by institution 8 March, 1441,

¹ A letter of Hornley, dated 18 April, 1465, and written from Dartford, is printed in *R.E.*, 315.

and Pimperne 29 November, the permit with its limitation to one additional living was valueless. Whereupon in October, 1450, the Duke petitioned for the union of the two parishes into one benefice, "whereby Thos. Candover, his proctor at the Roman court would be better off" (*ibid.*, 113). Thus by intervention of a powerful patron the pluralist retained the parishes until his resignation 7 November, 1454 (*Ascough, Sarum reg.*). Moreover, the promptitude with which this lawyer proclaimed Edward, Earl of March, as *jam regis Angliæ* at a sitting of the Consistory Court at Rochester on 27 April, 1461 (*Act Book*, 431b) demonstrated his loyalty to the house of York. And incidentally we learn from the same source how the War of the Roses impeded the functioning of an ecclesiastical court, for it is particularly mentioned that Master Thos. Candour, the Official, did not attend at Malling 27 May, 1465, *propter gravem multitudinem arcuatorum cum rege contra nautas*, also, that proceedings were interrupted between 22 April and 17 June (*ibid.*, 413-14). On 12 December, 1467, he exchanged (*sede vacante* by death of John Low) his Southfleet rectory with Richard Fryston for the Lincoln prebend of North Kelsey (*Bouchier reg.*). In 1470 he resigned the rectory of St. George's Southwark (*Waynfleet reg.*, II, 2b), and after admission 5 January, 1470-1, surrendered 9 February following the rectory of St. Edmund the king, Lombard Street (*Kemp reg.*). Like certain of his predecessors his name occasionally occurs in the *C.P.R.* as a crown commissioner deputed to exercise an appellate jurisdiction. His tenure of the Officiality apparently terminated shortly after hearing the purgation of William Chalke in the Cathedral Church, 16 April, 1473 (*Madox Formulæ*). This energetic, versatile, erudite clerk probably viewed the ministry of the church as a lucrative profession and doubtless considered himself a *bon chrestien*.

JOHN PERROT, L.L.B., Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, Dean 1478-81, while in minor orders began to receive the benefices which were the reward of a promising ecclesiastical lawyer, *viz.* by collation the chaplaincy of Freckenham chantry 20 May, 1459; Stone rectory 4 August, 1461;

Woldham rectory 27 May, 1465 ; Snodland rectory 15 June, 1469 (*Bodley MS.*). Designated a sub-deacon of Lichfield diocese in about his twentieth year, and has studied at Oxford, he was dispensed 5 June, 1462, to receive any benefice and need not take higher orders before his 24th year (*C.P. Lrs.*, XII, 156). Entitled r. of Stone and by both parents of noble birth, he obtained a second dispensation 24 February, 1463-4, to the same effect, notwithstanding the constitutions of Ottobon (*ibid.*, 224).¹ From the records of Oriell College we learn that Mags. John Taylor, S.T.P., Provost, John Perrot and other proprietors of the churches of St. Mary, Oxford, Coleby and Abberford, nominated 10 April, 1479, Wm. More their proctor concerning these churches (*O.H.S.*, 85, 104). Styled "Venerable" in 1483, he appeared as a counsel engaged in determining the nuncupative will of Agnes Glover dwelling lately *in vico vulgariter* of *Cattes Street* (*Anstey, Ep. Acad. O.H.S.*, 36, 486). Created Official of Rochester in 1475 (*Bodley MS.*), he presided in the following year at a suit in the Consistory Court between John Mapulton r. of Upper Halstow and Richard Fletcher r. of St. Mary's Hoo, concerning a marsh called *le Spert*, and awarded the property in dispute to the first (*Act Book*). On 2 April, 1486, he was commissioned with Mag. Peter Vasor to investigate a proposed union of the benefices of Barming and Nettlestead (*R.R.*, 162). Further, the bishop on 9 April, 1493, directed his Official with a jury of 6 clerics and 6 laymen to ascertain the validity of the preferment of his chaplain John Whitmore to a stall in the conventual church of Malling. In due course the commissioners reported that *6m.* would barely put the mansion house into repair ; that the clerk preferred was in full orders, of good

¹ In an endeavour to combat the administrative abuses prevailing, Otto the papal legate with consent of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York convened in 1237 a Council to meet in St. Paul's, London. A number of constitutions (canons) were enacted and are printed in *Willkins Concilia*, I, 647-656.

With the same purpose in view, the cardinal-legate Ottobon afterwards pope Adrian V (11 July to Aug. 18, 1276) convened another Council in 1268 to re-enact the constitutions aforesaid. The Osney chroniclers comment that after displaying skill in stopping opposition, Ottobon left enforcement of the canons to the bishops because he was timid. (*Osney Annals R.S.* IV, 215, 216.)

fame and learning ; that the prebend was presentative and not collative : whereupon the Official admitted the said clerk to the benefice (*R.R.*, 489). Of his later days it will be sufficient to relate his installation to the Pauline prebends of Harlesden 12 August, 1498, and of Brounswood 28 October, 1499, and following his bishop (Savage) to the northern Province, he was appointed, 20 October, 1503, Precentor of York, where he died in February, 1518, and was there buried.

In a certain sense, Perrot was the last medieval Official of Rochester, for during his life the battle of Bosworth stilled the strife of the Roses, and the harsh glare of the Tudor autocracy replaced the mellow twilight of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance was at hand, in which the medieval church was to be shattered by offspring of its own nurture. In closing a series of somewhat disjointed records, perhaps a reader may remember that a medieval church dignitary was not expected to be a theologian or a saint, and that the same code of morality does not apply to all men at all times.