

Wells Cathedral Statutes.

BY F. H. DICKINSON, ESQ.

WHILE I was examining some books in the Archbishop's library at Lambeth, Mr. Kershaw, the very obliging sub-librarian, shewed me a copy of the Gospels written in Ireland, which Athelstain gave to Christ Church, Canterbury. As the library closed before I could examine it, I referred to Dr. H. J. Todd's catalogue, not finding it there, and having therefore to pay another visit to the library, I looked over the catalogue to see if there were any MSS. relating to Somerset, and was surprised to find the Statutes of Wells Cathedral and Elizabeth's Charter. The latter I had always understood to be among the "secreta capituli" and to be the code according to which everything was regulated, and whenever I had enquired about old statutes had always been referred to the Charter. I lost no time in calling for the MSS, and was shewn two parchment books copied for Archbishop Laud when he visited Metropolitically in 1636, by order of the Chapter whose names appear on the first leaf of each.

The Statutes consist of about 104 pages, rather more than half of which are occupied by a code very similar to the *De officiis ecclesiasticis tractatus* of Salisbury, published by Dr. Rock at the end of the last volume of his work on Ritualism, so similar that it is not impossible the one may have been copied from the other. The remainder

of the volume contains nearly the same matter as the Harleian MS, 1682, the contents of which are given in Dugdale, vol. ii, p. 284, and the Psalms which each member of the Cathedral body was to recite daily, certain particulars about property and rules for the colours to be used for the vestments and altars on different days, to which I shall refer presently.

I conclude that the code in the original form must have been made previous—perhaps long previous—to the other documents which follow and bear dates. The earliest of them is of 1241. In its present form the code is later, for the feast of Corpus Christi, which seems to have been instituted about 1263, is mentioned in its proper order. It seems only reasonable to suppose that as copies of the code were made from time to time they would be altered—it would by no means be fair to say interpolated—according to the changes that had been made about the services, just as now the clergy are required to alter the Prayer Books in church as changes occur in the Royal Family.

Mr. Bernard, the Chapter clerk, has most kindly given me access to all the MSS at Wells in his possession, but I cannot find among them any document from which the Lambeth MS can have been copied. Dean Cosyn has given the Chapter a book written in 1506, which contains at the beginning nearly the same matter as the Harleian MS, and after that a fragment of the code, ending abruptly and not at the end of a page, consisting of less than half; the rest of the book contains other matter.

As the Statutes appear therefore to exist complete in no other copy than that at Lambeth it may be worthy of consideration whether they should not be printed in a future volume of our Transactions; at present I propose to give a translation of the last, or almost the last, document

in the book, the rules relating to colours. These are followed by a calendar of Saints' Days to which I need only refer, as they give perhaps a clue to the time when this part of the original MS was written. It does not contain the feasts of St. David and St. Chad which were ordered to be observed in the province of Canterbury, by letters of Archbishop Walden in 1398, or that of St. John of Beverley, which was ordered by Archbishop Chicheley in 1416. If this kind of evidence is to be depended on, it would follow that the end of the original MS from which that at Lambeth was copied, and probably also the rest, was written some time before the close of the fourteenth century.

The Chapter possess also two copies in MS of a History of Wells written by Nathaniel Chyle, who was secretary to Bishop Peter Mew nearly 200 years ago. In this work are copious extracts from the ancient Statutes, the Charters, the Registers, and Accounts of the Dean and Chapter, and the Vicars Choral. The book is disfigured by the bitterness caused by the civil war, but it contains a mass of curious matter tolerably put together, and it may be worthy of consideration whether the Society should not ask to be allowed to print it, a thing which some of those who have examined the book have urgently pressed on the committee. I do not feel sure that Chyle had a copy of the ancient statutes before him. He quotes generally from a book he calls Mr. Creighton's MS, which appears to have contained copies of many of the more curious documents relating to the cathedral, which it would be very desirable to identify now if it lies hid in some public library. Chyle's book seems to me of less importance than the Statutes.

My friend Mr. Chambers has been good enough to give me the following more accurate summary of their contents.

Notice of the MS No. 729, in the
Lambeth Library respecting
Wells Cathedral.

BY J. D. CHAMBERS, ESQ.

THE volume is on parchment, of a large quarto in size, 113 pages, on an average 34 lines in each page, and 11 or 12 words in each line.

First page has this :—Statuta Antiqua Ecclesie Cathedralis Wellensis Reverendissimi in Christo Patris providentia Divina Archi-Episcopi Cantuarensis cum metropolitice visitavit Anno 1634, mandato transcripta, eidemque omni cum reverentia humillime consecrata. Georgius Warburton Decanus, and the names of seven others said to be Canons Residentiary.

George Warburton, Dean
Dr. Wood, Archdeacon of Wells
Dr. Young, Chancellor
Dr. Reuet, Archdeacon of Bath
Dr. Warde, Archdeacon of Taunton
Dr. Godwyn, Prebendary of Holcomb
Mr. Crichtone, Treasurer
Mr. Abbot, Precentor

Canonici
Residentiarii

The first page is entitled *Ordinale et Statuta Ecclesie Cathedralis St. Andreæ Wellensis*. The first part, the

Ordinale, extends from p. 1 to 55 inclusive. The *Antiqua Statuta* (the second part) from p. 55 to the end.

The whole MS is written apparently in a hand intended to imitate closely the original MS. The characters are very distinct, but the scribe was probably ignorant of the exact meaning of many of the ancient Ritual terms. He writes "Respondium" for Responsorium, "Trinitas" for Tractus, "Gratias" for Gradale and "Medius" for Indicus, probably Indigo, and in some places he makes nonsense of the passages.

The date of the original "Ordinale" is most probably from 1310 to 1320. It contains directions for the celebration of the Festivals of Corpus Christi, of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and of the Assumption, all of which were instituted in the course of the thirteenth century and are not to be found in the Sarum Ordinale, made for the use of the new Cathedral about A.D. 1241. Orders are also given for genuflection of the clergy and choir at the elevation of the host and cup after consecration, which custom began on the Continent, in the twelfth or thirteenth century, according to Le Brun, (*des Ceremonies de la Messe. I. p. 470*), but is not noticed in the Sarum Ordinale. Besides this, in the second part, p. 58, is a Statute made A.D. 1241, temp. Bishop Jocelin, and again in the time of Bishop William de Button, Bishop A.D. 1273, requiring the Ordinale to be corrected, and a subsequent Statute of later date—the early part of fourteenth century—directs this corrected Ordinale to be rigourously observed.

This Ordinale closely corresponds with that of Sarum but is shorter. The directions for performing the Ordinary of the Mass are the same word for word. There are some additional orders, as for instance for the three days before Easter and All Saints, which are not in that of Sarum.

On the other hand there are some things contained in the Ordinale of Sarum which are not in this, but are found in the second part, or "Antiqua Statuta :—" for instance, as to the luminaria and as to turning to the altar at Gloria Patri. The whole Ordinale consists of 121 chapters or headings, the Sarum of 105.

The order in choir was as follows, beginning on the west side :

Decanus			Cantor
Archdeacon of Taunton			Abbas of Muchelney
if a Canon			Succentor
Abbas Beccensis			Præpositus Cumbæ
Sub-decanus			Canonici
Canonici			Clerici, &c.
Magister Scholarum			
Vicarii Presbyteri			Abbas Aylington
Diaconi seniores			Thesaurarius
Chancellor			Archdeacon of Bath
Archdeacon of Wells	(Second Form) Younger Canons, Deacons, and Choirmen.	(Third Form) Boys.	

The order in Chapter was nearly the same. The choir-men and boys changed sides every ordinary week. But special rules are given for their positions on great festivals.

The list of double and minor festivals differs in several particulars from that of Sarum. Those of Wells being some of later origin and more numerous, and a distinction is made between the Ferial and Sunday Mass not to be found in the Sarum. The Ferial was to be said *sine dalmaticâ et tunicâ*.

The duties of the Treasurer are set forth at very great length, one half of which at least were to provide lights, the number and weight of which are minutely set forth. He was, in fact, the main organizer of the public services and the custodian of the vestments, treasures, ornaments, &c.

He was to find and pay the Sacristan c. 116. It was the duty of the Dean to take the principal part in the service, to look after and instruct the boys.

The Chancellor was the schoolmaster who had a *magister scholarum* under him, and he had the care of all the books.

This chapter also defines the share which each Dignitary (Quinque Personæ) were to have of the "Communia," viz. "Decanus, Cantor, Archi-diaconus, Cancellarius, et Thesaurarius" were to receive a double portion each. The remainder of the Canons a single portion—and they together with the sub-cantor and sub-dean were bound to perpetual residence except in case of absolute necessity or with leave. Chapters 120 and 121 give formal rules for the celebration of the obsequies and praying for the souls of brethren who had died. An actual funeral was to be said "immediate post pulsationem *ignetegü*,"—curfew.

Misplaced about the middle of the volume is found a long office for "chrismate faciendo" nearly resembling that of Sarum; and pages 104-5, the form for the "reconciliatio penitentium" also closely resembling that of Sarum.

The second part beginning p. 56, is entitled "*Antiqua Statuta de officiis cujuslibet Personæ Ecclesiæ Cathedralis Wellensis.*" They extend from the time of Bishop Jocelin 1241, to Radulph 1348, (De negotiis et ministris Eccles. Wellensis). They are copied in an imitative hand generally resembling that of the Ordinale, but varying somewhat in each piece. The last three or four pages are in a different hand and clearly more modern.

I. The first chapter contains a repetition nearly verbatim of c. 116 of the Ordinale, as to the dignities and duties of the different personages.

II. *Statuta edita per Decanum et Capit^m tempore Jocelin, Episcopi* on the morrow of St. Augustin Angl. Ep. 1241,

contains rules as to the residence and pay of Canons, for the reform of the Ordinale, and rules for the institution and precedence of the Dignitaries, the same as those in the Ordinale 1 and 2.

III. P. 58, Statutes of the Dean and Chapter in the time of William de Button, the second, 7th June, 1273, the same Bishop being present : They reiterate order for correction of the Ordinale and observation of it : Canons and vicars, to have a year's probation.

IV. Statutes in time of Walter de Haselshaw, Dean, morrow of St. Andrew, 1298.

1. As to behaviour of vicars who were to attend at all the Canonical hours : Not to wander about the pillars of the church whilst the divine offices were celebrated, but to attend upon their Lords (*Dominos*.)

3. No buying and selling in church. The Sacristan to ring the bells according to the ancient rule, and he was to keep order in choir.

5, 6. Vicars not to go to market in their clerical dress, and not to come into church without it : to forewarn their Lords (*Dominos*) if written in the Tabula for any duty.

7, 8. As to the behaviour of the rectores and choirmen at Gloria Patri : "Summâ devotione et reverenter vestant se psallentes sicut moris est ad magnum altare."

8 to 12. Various rules as to their vestments, &c. from which it appears that at the ordinary hours they all wore black copes as at Sarum, and were not to put their silk copes when used over the black.

12. Contains directions for saying the Bidding prayer on Sundays after the procession, "Ebdomadarius statim indutus vestimentis et capa serica vadat in pulpitem lumine precedente et ibidem preces pronunciat consuetas."

13. As to behaviour and correction of vicars : How they were to celebrate their *annalia* : No vicar allowed to remain alone in church : Several stringent canons against those who have concubines, against them or any other clerk who introduces meretrices, &c : A subsequent canon directs how they are to be paid, and they seem to have been numerous. Who these vicars were, and what their peculiar duties, is not stated more than above : they existed also at Sarum, and at St. Paul's, London ; they were equal in number to the Canons at St. Paul's, at Sarum, and at Exeter, and attended always one on each of the Canons and performed his duties when from any cause the Canon to whom the vicar was attached was absent.

P. 69, it is said, "Bydesam prebenda St. Andreae cujus vicarius est Magister Scholarum."

98 to 99. The "Altaristæ dicant Psalterium singulis diebus pro episcopo et capitulo et benefactoribus." If any one failed to do so he was to be removed.

The "Tabularius" or clerk, usually the precentor, or sub-cantor, whose business it was to mark in the Tabula at the end of the week the order of services for the next seven days, and who were to perform them, was to see that these Altaristæ performed their duty.

Who these "Altaristæ" were appears p. 73. The Bishop and Prebendaries, 54 in number, had to say the Psalter among them once every day for the Bishop, Chapter, and Benefactors, and they might be the substitutes for those who were absent, and did not, or might not have performed that duty for themselves. They were probably the same persons as those who were afterwards called Chantry Priests.

Statutes were also made tempore Johannis de Godele Decani Anno 1331, which order (p. 75) "Volumus et ordi-

namus quod in Magna Missa omnes presentes in choro canonici, vicarii, cujuslibet gradus ministri in elevatione Corporis Christi ob reverentiam tanti sacramenti et laici et circumstantes ad majorem devotionem ad hoc frequentius provocentur, sicut olim in ipsa ecclesia fieri consuevit, flexis ad terram genibus et cum omni humiliatione provolutis suas ex corde devotas ad Dominum fundant preces." This order is a repetition of what is found in the Ordinale (see p. 36, ante) a gesture which would seem to have been then recently introduced and imperfectly observed.

Another set of Statuta are in p. 81, et seq. in the time of Radulph, Bishop, A.D. 1343. By one of these it was ordered that before every hour from Matins to Compline the Lord's Prayer and Ave were to be said devoutly. Also (p. 87,) that the reserved Eucharist and Chrism were always to be kept under lock and key in the church.

The remainder of the Statutes relate to the morals and behaviour of the vicars and to the mode of managing and dividing the revenues of the church, which contain many curious particulars respecting them, and shewing particularly the respective values of each prebend and office which are summed up in a Taxation Summary which gave the share which each was to contribute towards the expenses of the church. In 1339 an imposition of a tenth was made for this purpose, and for repairs, to raise £300 (*libras*) to be payable in five years.

Another table, p. 73, describes "omnes anniversarios et presbyteros seculares in Ecclesia Well. et ad quæ Altaria et pro quibus animabus tenentur celebrare et quantum quilibet percipiet et qua forma debet conferri vel admitti Holy Cross, (2); St. Stephen, St. Calixtus, St. Martin, B. V. M., St. Mary Magdalene, Corpus Christi, (2); St. Edmund, (2); St. Catherine.

P. 95. In a different hand, but apparently of the early part

of the fourteenth century, is a long and particular calendar of all the colours used in the church of Wells on Sundays, Festivals, Seasons, Fasts, and Saints' Days.

During Advent all were "omnia indica" or indigo, except on Thursday in Ember week when the Deacon and Sub-deacon wore white: Christmas, all white except in the Second Mass: St. Stephen, all red: St. John Evángel. all white: St. Silvester, green and yellow: On the Circumcision, the principal Rulers of the Choir in white, Secondaries in red: At the Mass one of the Secondaries in red, the other white: The Epiphany, white: Septuagesima to Passion Sunday, all (colour omitted, probably indica): Passion Sunday, red: Palm Sunday, all red: Thursday in the Cena Domini, all red, with white banner: Good Friday, all red, but Deacon and Sub-deacon may be of (colour omitted), or "purpura:" Easter Eve, all red: Easter week, all red: Sunday after Easter, white, and so on to the Ascension on Sundays: Ascension Day, and on Vigil and Octave, white: The next Sunday, red: The Season of Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday, all red, and so on to Advent: Dedication of Church, red and indica: Corpus Christi, red: Apostle or Martyr, red: Confessor, all indica and green, or as best may be adapted to the feast: Virgin not Martyr, white: If Martyr, red and white: Confessors, yellow, or green and yellow: St. Gregory, green and yellow: St. Benedict, omnia indica: St. Mary Magdalene, ditto: St. Anne, ditto: All Saints, red and white: The Blessed Virgin, always white: In Funerals, and All Souls, and Commemorations, all black. The appropriate colour is given for every Feast Day in the year. *Festum Reliquiarum rubea et alba.*

The last in the book is the oath of the Bishop on his installation which seems to have been written in the days of Laud.

A paper was then read on