The Hospital of S. Margaret, Taunton.

BY THE REV. THOMAS HUGO, M.A., F.R.S.L., F.S.A., ETC.,
HONORARY MEMBER.

FEW who possess a taste for the work of mediæval hands can enter Taunton by the London road without having their attention arrested by a picturesque old building wherein, although of humble aspect, the evidences of such presence are conspicuous. It occupies the angle between the highway and a lane, still called Mill Lane, which led to the famous mills of Tobrigge on the Tone, now and long since removed, and of which, apart from the information derived from ancient documents, the name of the green lane which led to them is the only existing memorial. The building is a long, low, and narrow structure, unmistakeably a row of almshouses, and consists of seven distinct tenements, each with a staircase communicating with a room above. The walls are of stone, faced for the most part with plaster, and covered with a thatched roof of considerable pitch. The first and last tenements stand out in advance of the five middle ones, but the roof is carried on continuously from one

PANEL ON THE HOSPITAL OF S. MARGARET, TAUNTON.

(Vol. xviii., p. 101.)

to the other, supported along the intervening space by thirteen wooden posts rising from a parapet wall, and thus forms with them a kind of cloister out of which the doors open to the several apartments. The entrance to this cloister, or gallery, is in the centre of the row, and a passage runs straight from it through the building itself to a well and large kitchen garden in the rear. Each tenement had a second door at the back, now walled up, communicating with the garden. In the wall between the window and the front door of one of the tenements is a curious recess, apparently original, the use of which is doubtful. The easternmost house is terminated by a high gable, much patched, as are all parts of the structure, with modern work, and a projecting chimney, whose ancient offsets yet remain. The western gable, which abuts on Mill Lane, is without a chimney, but preserves more of its original character than the other portions of the building, and has still a finial, coping, and plinth course of the sixteenth century. Most of the woodwork of the doorways and floors is of the same period. Before and at right angles to the western tenement, but not in actual contact with it, is a modern house, which, as I believe, occupies the site of a chapel that formed a part of the original establishment. In the front wall of the eastern house, facing a slip of carefully tended garden, gorgeous with fair colours and redolent of sweet perfumes, which lies between the edifice and the highroad, a very beautiful work of art is inserted, which is the principal object of the traveller's notice. It is a block of stone, two feet four inches in height and one foot seven inches in breadth, on which is boldly yet most delicately sculptured a shield bearing the interlaced letters R.B., and surmounted by a mitre which, and the strings that hang from it, are represented as richly

ornamented with jewels and embroidery. It is clear from these indications that Holy Church has here exercised Her sacred power for good, and that in this quaint old roadside Almshouse we have before us the remains of one of those establishments where the Divine precept was obeyed to the letter—to minister to the sick and to befriend the poor.

The building, which is still called "The Spital," was part of a Hospital for lepers, dedicated, as were many similiar institutions, to S. Margaret, and founded at a time when victims of that terrible disease were far from uncommon. And the shield, with its monogram and fair surroundings, tells us of an endeavour by a princely Churchman long ages afterwards to perpetuate a blessing to which, if not a sudden catastrophe, at least the lapse of many generations had bequeathed its customary legacy of decay.

I will endeavour to furnish my reader with such an account of the old building and its fortunes as a long and careful search into multitudinous Records has enabled me to give him. It is only, I must admit, at rare intervals, among vast masses of manuscript documents of all descriptions, that a grain of information is to be acquired—all the more precious, however, from the obscurity in which it has been hitherto buried, and the labour involved in its exhumation. My reader must accordingly expect no more than this—for fragmentary the particulars which I can offer him must necessarily and unavoidably be. Indeed we may congratulate ourselves that the search has resulted in the discovery of so much which would have appeared to be lost to us for ever.

The history of the place, indeed, had all but passed into oblivion. A few lines are the most which are devoted to it either by general or by local historians, and even the sketch

which they furnish is unhappily made to give an erroneous notion of the most important fact in their account, the period of the foundation of the House. Tanner, Collinson, Toulmin, and the late editors of Dugdale, all the latter copying, as usual, from the first-named writer, unite in the assertion that the Hospital was "built by Thomas Lambrit,* about the year 1270,"† and that "the advowson and patronage was granted about the year 1280 to the Abbot and Convent of Glastonbury" by the same Thomas Lambrizt.‡ Collinson says that it was "founded by one Lambrizt, or Lambright, a merchant of Taunton, in the time of Henry III.," and loosely and indefinitely adds that it is mentioned before 1269, which is three years anterior to the end of that King's reign.‖ Mr. Savage, referring, however, to Tanner for "the only notice that we possess of the place," evidently copies the last-named writer when he tells us that it was founded in the reign of Henry III., before the year 1269, by Thomas Lambright, whose successors about 1280 annexed the advowson thereof to the Abbey of Glastonbury. He adds that "Tradition assigns the foundation of this house to the time when St. Mary Magdalene's Church was built in Taunton."§

The authority on which all these writers depended for their imaginary fact was a MS. referred to by Bp. Tanner as "Cart. Glaston. MS. Macro, f. 119 *b*." Most unhappily its whereabouts is at present and has for a long time past been unknown. It is said to have been rescued from

* Through the whole of this Memoir I give the names of Persons and Places in the orthography of the authority from which the information is derived.

† Collinson, Hist. of Somerset, III. 456.

‡ Tanner, Not. Somers. XI. 2. Dugdale, Mon. Angl. VI. 774.

‖ Hist. of Somerset, III. 236.

§ Savage, History of Taunton, pp. 98, 99.

destruction by Bp. Tanner in a grocer's shop at Oxford in the year 1692, and to have passed into the hands of Dr. Cox Macro, of Norton, near Bury S. Edmunds, who died in 1767, and whose library has long since been dispersed. Where it is now, although it has oftentimes and by many enquirers been studiously sought for, I am unable to say. After I know not how many investigations pursued in various quarters, I think I have a clue to its recovery, but the MS. has been so long out of sight that I am by no means sanguine of success.

The truth, however, is—and this may tend to mitigate our regret at the absence of an authority of whose information on other points we might possibly have been rejoiced to avail ourselves—that the Hospital of S. Margaret was founded upwards of at the very least eighty-four years before the earliest of the dates which have been hitherto before us. It does not occur among the Chapels with which William Gyffard, Bp. of Winchester, enriched his infant Priory of Taunton about the year 1110. But I can prove its existence at little more than half a century subsequent to that date. I have found in two of the great Wells Registers a Charter of Stephen, Prior of Taunton, and his Canons in which they concede to Reginald, Bishop of Bath, among other matters, that all their Churches and Chapels shall make returns to him and his successors and their officials in all episcopal customs after the manner of the other churches in the diocese of Bath, except the chapels of S. James, S. George of the Well (Wilton), S. Margaret of the Sick, and S. Peter of the Castle, which the aforesaid Bishop had permitted to be exempt.* In the "Capella S. Margarete Infirmorum" we have doubtless

* Reg. Well. I. ff. 35 *b.*, 36. Reg. III. f. 342. Appendix, No. I.

the House whose history I am endeavouring to elucidate. Among the witnesses to this agreement are William Abbot of Keynesham, Geoffrey, Thomas, Ralph, and Richard, Archdeacons respectively of Salisbury, Wells, Bath, and Coutances, and Walter Prior of Berlich. It is from these principal and attesting parties, for the instrument is un-dated, that we may obtain a very close approximation to the period at which this charter was made. Stephen was Prior of Taunton, as appears from various documents, from and perhaps before 1159 to and perhaps after 1189. Reginald was Bishop of Bath from 1174 to 1191. William was Abbot of Keynsham in 1175, and Walter was Prior of Berlich in the same year. Geoffrey was Archdeacon of Sarum in Oct. 1173, and his successor occurs in 1188. Thomas was Archdeacon of Wells in 1175, and his successor in 1185. Of Ralph and Richard I know nothing but what is here asserted. A moment's comparison of these various intervals will reduce us to a period between at the latest the years 1174 and 1185 for the date of the charter. This, it will be seen, does not give us the actual date of the foundation of the Hospital, but simply a proof of the fact of its existence at a period of at the very least eighty-four years before the date to which its foundation has hitherto been attributed. How much earlier than that time it came into being we have no present means of determining.

It would also appear from this charter that, although the Abbot and Convent of Glastonbury were the patrons of the parish Church of West Monkton, the Chapel of S. Margaret was in the patronage of the Priory of Taunton. And, further, that it was so poor as to be exempt from Episcopal customs—a fact which will presently have abundant corroboration.

In further proof of the more ancient date, I have been so fortunate as to find on the Patent Roll of the 20th year of Henry III. the grant of a Protection from the King to the Master and Brethren of the Leper Hospital of S. Margaret of Taunton, dated, witness the King, at Middelton, the 22nd of June, 1236.* The Protection is described as having the clause *Rogamus*, and was accordingly of the kind which was usually granted to collectors of alms for the poor of a Hospital, or in behalf of any other works of mercy, piety, and charity; and commanded the King's subjects to maintain, protect, and defend such collectors, and neither to bring on them nor to permit to be brought on them by others any injury, trouble, damage, violence, hindrance, or grievance.† I am afraid that all this is proof positive of the low estate of the Hospital, and that, if the absence of endowments be an ingredient of strength, it was at least in possession of this attribute in a very considerable degree. The institution, it is clear, was struggling for life, and its needs may not improbably have attracted the good offices of the worthy to whom has been attributed the honour of the foundation.

For the claim of Thomas Lambrit, how little soever he may be allowed to be the founder, to the honour of a benefactor of the Hospital is not to be disputed. What has been already advanced is only intended to correct an error in the date of the foundation, and not to interfere with the attribution of a part of the good work to him to whom the whole of it has hitherto been assigned. The name of Thomas Lambrit is not unfrequently found in the records of the time. In the "Hundred Rolls," which contain inquisitions taken in the second year of Edward I.,

* Pat. 20 Hen. III. m. 6. Appendix, No. II.
† See Fitzherbert, Nat. Brev. Ed. 1794. I. 29.

he is mentioned in union with the Abbot of Glastonbury, who, with his Convent, as I have already said, were the patrons of the parish Church of West Monkton, Henry de Wykesande, John de Reyni, and Adam de Cari, as possessed by ancient usage of right to take and hold the cattle of estrays found in their tenements in the Manor of Monketon.* In the Bodleian Library there are several agreements between the Abbots of Glastonbury and the Lambrights in connexion with lands in the Manor of Monkton; as of Thomas Lambright with land called Wadelesham in 1250, with common of pasture at Tobrugge in 1281, and with the mill of Crich about the same period,† but no mention is made in them either of S. Margaret's Chapel or Hospital. In this manor the same Thomas Lambrit was the master also of a Chapel, which may well be believed to be that on whose history we are now employed. For in a List of Charters concerning divers rents and gifts to the Church of Glastonbury, belonging to that Church in the time of Abbot John of Taunton, who ruled the Abbey from 1274 to 1290, there is a "Cautio," sans date, of T. Lambrit respecting his Chapel in the manor of Muncketone.‡

Added to this, and conclusive of the fact that he was a benefactor, there are accounts of various legal proceedings in the years 1279 and 1280 which distinctly prove that property had passed from Thomas Lambrith to the use and benefit of the Hospital. In the assizes before the Justices Itinerant, held at Montacute on the morrow of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the 7th year of Edward I., or the 16th August, 1279, examination was made as to whether John, Abbot of Glastonbury, and Henry, Master

* Rot. Hundred. II. 137. † MS. Wood, 1. p. 280.
‡ Joh. Glaston. Hist. Ed. Hearne, p. 392. E Cod. Cantab. f. 81 *b*.

of the House of S. Margaret outside Taunton, had unjustly disseised Thomas Lambrich of his free tenement in Moneketon, and of two shillings of rent, with appurtenances, issuing from a certain tenement in the same vill. The jurors returned a verdict on oath that the aforesaid Abbot had not disseised the aforesaid Thomas of the aforesaid rent; and therefore it was ordered that the Abbot should retire from the action *sine die*, while the plaintiff was judged to be *in misericordia* for his false claim. In behalf of the Master the jurors returned a verdict that the assize between him and the plaintiff ought not to proceed, inasmuch as the said Thomas was a suitor against him before the King's Justices in Banco by a certain writ touching customs and services, in which the rent aforesaid was contained. A further hearing was ordered at Ivelchester on the feast of S. Edmund, King and Martyr, the 20th of November, during the interval before which the rolls might be examined for proof of his declaration.*

This must not be considered a matter of litigation, but an amicable suit which was the common practice of the courts at that period in order to substantiate a right of possession. The opposition of the plaintiff was a legal fiction, and the verdict of the jury and sentence of the court on a difference which had no existence in fact had the effect of creating a legal title of the most public and notorious kind. As in the Final Concords, ordinarily called Fines, it was seen that no title could be so indubitable as one which had been the subject of legal enquiry, contested by one party and secured to the other by the ratification of a sentence of a court of law. A suit was

* Plac. de Jur. et Assis. 7 Edw. I. N 2 3 2. rot. 17. Appendix, No. III.

accordingly commenced, and, on the hearing of the case in court, a composition of the suit was entered into and judgment given for one of the parties, which was thus acknowledged as the legal owner of the land in question. The transaction was reduced to writing, and this perpetual memorial was preserved henceforth among the other records of the realm.*

Of like nature, I presume, was an action which I have found reported on the Roll of an Assize before the Justices Itinerant at Somerton on the morrow of the Ascension, in the 8th year of Edward I., the 31st of May, 1280. The Master of the House of lepers of S. Margaret outside Taunton was summoned to respond to Thomas de Lambrigg (in a duplicate roll† he is called Lambrich, which together with the one just given are evidently but forms of the name already familiar to us) in respect of the plea that he should do him customs and services due from a free tenement which he held of him in Munketon, as in rents, arrears, &c. The service was of two shillings a year. By the unjust detention of this service by the aforesaid Master for three years past, the plaintiff averred that he was injured to the value of twenty (in the other roll it is forty) shillings. The Master appeared to the summons, and showed that he did not hold the aforesaid messuage from the aforesaid Thomas. Sentence was given for him accordingly.‡

* See Preface to Pedes Finium, vol. I.

† Plac. de Jur. et Assis. 8 Edw. I. $\left.\begin{matrix}\text{M}\\5\\13\end{matrix}\right\}$ 4. rot. 30.

‡ Plac. de Jur. et Assis. 8 Edw. I. $\left.\begin{matrix}\text{M}\\5\\13\end{matrix}\right\}$ 3. rot. 18 dors. Appendix, No. IV.

$\left.\begin{matrix}\text{M}\\5\\15\end{matrix}\right\}$ 1. r. 29 dors.

A similar case occurred at the same Assizes. Joan de Reygny preferred a claim against the Master of the Hospital in regard of two acres of meadow with appurtenances in Hanerich (or Hanecrich in the duplicate roll), into which the said Master had no entry except through Cecily la Brune (or Brutte), to whom William de Bikebury, father of the aforesdid Joan and whose heiress she is, demised them to the term now past. The Master defended his right, and alleged that he had not entered into the said land through the aforesaid Cecily, inasmuch as he found his Church seised of the same on the day whereon he was made Master. As Joan could not disprove this statement, the Master obtained judgment in his favour, and a secure title to the aforesaid land.*

It may be supposed that in these transactions we have a tolerably perfect series of the titles on which the House relied for the security of its little property. No doubt it also depended for aid in a considerable degree on the great Monastery with which it was connected, and on the vast revenues of which it could have been at the utmost but a trifling burden.

From the time at which we have arrived in its humble annals, it appears to have quietly done its work of mercy to the sufferers in whose behalf it was founded. Nothing, so far as I am aware, occurred for many ages to force it into the notoriety which would have been the certain effect of any marked accession of either good or evil fortune. The very progress of time, however, unchequered though it might be by circumstances of outward importance,

* Plac. de Jur. et Assis. 8 Edw. I. M 5 13 } 3. r. 16. M 5 13 } 4. r. 85. M 5 14 } 1. r. 89. M 5 14 } 4. r. 23 dors.

brought at least one and that a necessary result in its train. The buildings needed repair, and renovations of all kinds were imperatively demanded after a long period of constant use. These were attempted to be supplied by a means to which those ages afforded abundance of charitable parallels. The immediate neighbourhood might have been unequal to all that was required, and recourse was had to the favourite mode which should bring the claims of a deserving charity before the kindly notice of a larger circle of friends and helpers. Accordingly, on the 10th of November, 1418, Bishop Bubwith granted at Banewell an Indulgence of thirty days to all who in a state of grace should contribute of their means to the Hospital of lepers by Tanton. The Indulgence was to last during pleasure.*

Of the result of this appeal we have no further means of judging than that it was upwards of fifty years before a similar mode of acquiring aid was put in practice. On the 2nd July, 1472, Bishop Stillington followed the example of his predecessor, and issued a Letter of Indulgence on behalf of the Hospital. He commences his missive with the usual benediction—health in Him through Whom is obtained forgiveness of sins—and proceeds to say that he is of opinion that men of his order exhibit pious obedience and what is well pleasing to God as often as they earnestly strive to incite the minds of the faithful to works of charity or other devotion by the persuasives of indulgencies. Relying, therefore, on the boundless mercy of Almighty God, and of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary His Mother, and on the merits and prayers of S. Andrew, SS. Peter and Paul, his patrons, and of all Saints, he grants to all Christians wheresoever throughout his diocese, and others

* Reg. Bubw. f. clj. *b*.

whose diocesans shall allow his indulgence to be in force and accepted, being truly penitent, contrite, and confessed, who to the relief of the poor, infirm, and leprous people of the Hospital and Chapel of S. Margaret, Virgin and Martyr, situate and standing at the eastern part of the town of Taunton, and to the restoration, repair, and support of the said Hospital, shall extend helping hands, and make grateful contributions of the goods given them of God, or leave legacies, or in any way convey charitable aid, forty days of indulgence, as often as they shall perform the aforesaid acts or any one of them. The letter was to last for five years from the date of the presents. It had the Bishop's seal appended, and was issued from his Inn outside New Temple Bar, in London, on the day abovementioned.* The Bishop of Winchester, William Wayneflete, was pleased to follow his brother of Bath and Wells in his endeavour to benefit the Hospital, and granted from Suthwerke, on the 8th of the same month, a similar letter of indulgence of forty days for the works of charity above specified, and to last for the same period.†

We now arrive at a very important period in the history of the Hospital. There is an old legend that the edifice was burnt down in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., and that it was rebuilt by an Abbot of Glastonbury. I hardly need add that the beautiful sculpture to which I referred at the commencement of my memoir very strongly confirms the accuracy of this tradition. The letters on the shield, which is identified by its surmounting mitre with an ecclesiastic of high rank, are the initials of the great Abbot of Glastonbury under whose superintendence the rebuilding was effected. Richard Beere was

* Reg. Still. f. lxxxj. *b*. Appendix, No. V.
† Reg. Wayneflete, tom. ij. f. 152.

confirmed Abbot on the 12th November, 1493, and died on the 20th of January, 1524. In the 22nd year of Henry VII. he was sent ambassador to Rome, and on his return, as indeed before his departure, he was employed in making great additions to his Abbey Church and Conventual buildings. Close to the Abbey he built an Almshouse, with a Chapel, for seven or ten poor women,* and rebuilt considerable portions of the Church of S. Benedict in the same town. A memorial of his labours in the last-named place exists in a sculptured stone of a precisely similar character to that before us. A shield, surmounted by a mitre and bearing the same initials, records the work of the same beneficent hand. From a comparison of these facts there will be little difficulty in our attribution of the re-erection of the House to its proper date. Remembering that Henry VIII. succeeded his father on the 22nd of April, 1509, and bearing in mind the tradition to which I have referred, we shall not be wrong in assigning the rebuilding of S. Margaret's Hospital by Abbot Richard Beere to one of the five years between 1510 and 1515.

Apart from its artistic beauty, and it is unmistakeably as well as superlatively great, it is worth while to direct attention to the monogram itself. It has been engraved in the Gentleman's Magazine for October, 1785, in the Journal of the Somersetshire Archæological Society for 1858, and elsewhere, but the present illustration is the first which can be said to be in any degree worthy of the original. Singular, also, has been its power to create confusion in the minds of antiquaries! Some when they observed it on S. Benedict's Church have considered that the first letter of the name of the Saint, with its

* B. Willis, Hist. of Mitred Abbeys, I. 106, 107. Leland, Itin. Ed. 1744. III. f. 86. pp. 103, 104.

sacred prefix, "S.B.," was intended to be represented. Others, who thought that the older was the work the more it was to be admired, have boldly insisted that both when it occurred on the Church and on the Hospital it meant nothing less than that each of these edifices was to be referred to the early period of A.D. 1133.* More singular still, perhaps, is it that the latter opinion, though as opposite as possible to the teaching actually conveyed by the object which was believed to furnish it, is nevertheless far closer to the truth than any conjecture of the date of the foundation which has hitherto been presented to the reader's notice.

This brings us down to about the year 1515. Twenty years afterwards the "Valor" was taken of ecclesiastical property in general, but no return of this seems to have been furnished. Ten years, however, had hardly elapsed before S. Margaret's Hospital had encountered some few drops of the fiery storm which was laying in ruin so many of its wealthier brethren. I need not enter into a narrative of the atrocities with which in other memoirs I have endeavoured to make my reader familiar, but will confine myself to the fortunes of the immediate subject of my research.

On the 1st of March, 36 Hen. VIII., 1544-5, a Request to purchase a part of the property was made by William Chaplyn and John Selwood. The enumeration of the various tenements and lands for which application was made comprises the denomination, extent, and reported value of each, with the names of the several occupiers, and includes an acre of land in the northern part of the Chapel of S. Margaret by Taunton, in the tenure or occu-

* Hearne, Hist. of Glaston. 8vo. 1722. p. 104. Gentleman's Magazine, Oct., 1785. p. 779.

pation of divers poor persons of the Spittelhowse there, the rent of which was vj*s* a year.* The bargain was speedily struck, for four days afterwards, on the 5th of the same month, the King granted to the aforesaid William Chaplyn and John Selwood, together with a number of other possessions, the following in Taunton :—Sundry tenements, gardens, cottages, and burgages, in Taunton extra portam, Canon-street, Middle-street, and S. James's-street, in the parishes of S. Mary Magdalene and S. James, formerly belonging to the late Priory of Taunton, four acres called Baldwynsland, certain parcels of land by Crechburgh Hill in the parish of West Monkton, certain parcels of land called Hyll in the same parish, and an acre of land in the northern part of the Chapel of S. Margaret by Taunton, then or lately, as aforesaid, in the tenure or occupation of divers poor persons of the Spittel-house there. Also a void tenement and garden by the cemetery of the Chapel of S. Mary Magdalene. Also a house and void piece of land and a garden adjacent to the same called Seint Poles Chappell, situated in the western part of the town of Taunton, in the parish of Hill Busshopp. Also a piece of void ground and a garden adjacent to the same called Seynt Leonardes Chappell, in the northern part of the town of Taunton, in the parish of S. James, all formerly belonging to the late Priory of Taunton, and parcel of its possessions. The Taunton and West Monkton property was valued, one part, including that of the Hospital, at £6 19*s.* 7½*d.* a year; another at £29 12*s.* 4*d.*; and that of S. Paul's Chapel and S. Leonard's Chapel at 3*s.* a year. The property was to be held from Michaelmas last past, in free socage and not in chief, by fealty only for all

* Parts. for Grants, Will. Chapleyn and John Selwood, 36 Hen. VIII.

services, as of the Manor of Canford. Corrodies, fees, and annuities of all kinds whatsoever were given up and surrendered. The grant was passed, witness the King, at Westminster, on the day abovementioned.*

The Chapel in which age after age the Holy Sacrifice had been offered for the spiritual strength and soundness of those to whom it would seem that few temporal blessings had been vouchsafed, was the next to be engulphed in the common destruction. An Act for the suppression of Hospitals, Chapels, and Chantries was passed in the second year of Edward VI. It had been projected during the life of his abandoned father, but difficulties connected principally with what appear to have been some workings of remorse hindered its immediate operation. On the accession to the throne of his weak and ill-directed successor there was no longer any impediment in the way of unlimited aggression. The locusts devoured what the hail had spared. In order to extract the most from that which still remained to whet the appetite for plunder, a careful examination was made of the various properties, and a Certificate was returned of the state, value, and other peculiarities of each, which should form the basis of the future sale. In the Certificate of the Chapel with which we are now employed it is stated that the salary of the priest celebrating there is yearly worth in ready money to be levied and received out of the issues and revenues of the late Priory of Taunton, lxvj*s* viij*d*. Its plate consisted of a chalice of silver weighing xij oz., and its ornaments were praised at xiij*s* iiij*d*. It possessed a bell of the weight of xl*lb*. The incumbent was William Callowe, clerk, M.A., "of verray honest conversation." The building is

* Orig. 36 Hen. VIII., p. 4, r. 93. Pat. 36 Hen. VIII., p. 14, mm. 13 (27), 12 (28), 11 (29). Abstract in Appendix, No. VI.

said to be covered with stones, and was praised for sale at xx*s*. Lastly follows a memorandum connected with the inmates of the Hospital :—"Ther be w^t^in the same Hospitall vj poore lazare people, having for their relief, the mansion house of the same Hospitall, w^t^ a litle orcharde, adioynyng to the same wo^r^the yerely v*s*, and also other smalle p*ar*cell*es* of lande of the yerely value of xxiij*s* x*d*, and other relief they haue none, wherfore they make humble petic$\bar{o}$n for augmentac$\bar{o}$n of lyving."*

Such was the state of things in S. Margaret's Hospital in the summer of the year 1548.

It did not long remain so. On the 24th of January, 1548-9, the Chapel was rated for John Norres, of Taunton, and sold to him together with the bell for the sum of liij*s* iiij*d*. I presume he was unable to furnish the money, or perhaps voluntarily transferred his right, for on the 7th of the following March a Request to Purchase it was made by Giles Keylwey, of Strowde, in the County of Dorset, Esquire, and William Leonard, of Taunton, merchant, wherein the same details are given as those which I have just quoted from the Certificate, with the addition of the name of Christopher Davy as a presentor and appraiser. The document is signed by the examiner William Moryce, Supervisor of Particulars, and by the Commissioners Ry. Sakevyle, Wa: Mildmay, and Robt. Keylwey. In the margin is the note, in the autograph, I believe, of the execrable Sir Richd. Ryche, in favour of the petitioners, "The said Chapell and the bell is sold for liij*s* iiij*d*." On a slip of parchment fastened to the Request is an erroneous entry by Will. Burne, deputy of Will. Morice :—"Westmonketon. M^d^. The Chapell

* Cert. of Chantries, No. 42, n. 31.

lately apperteyning to the Hospitall or Almosehowse ther is scituate within the paryshe of Saincte James, nere Taunton." Among the terms stated on the Request it is particularly expressed that the purchase money is to be paid all in hand, and on the other part that the King's Majesty is to discharge the purchaser of all incumbrances, except leases and covenants in the same and rents before allowed, and that the purchaser is to have the issues from Michaelmas last.*

Not a month escaped before the grant was made which it was the object of these preliminaries to secure. On the 2nd of April, 1549, the King granted to the parties aforesaid, for the sum of £1,676 14*s.* 9*d.*, a large amount of Church property in various places—and among them "all that chapel in the parish of S. James' by Taunton, with appurtenances, lately belonging to the Hospital or Almshouse of Westmonketon, and all the walls, lead, bells, iron, glass, timber, and stones to the same late chapel belonging and pertaining, and of, in, or on the same remaining and being." In the same grant were conveyed to the same Keylway, who was possessed by an insatiate greed after Church lands—among much in various counties,—houses, tenements, and lands belonging to the Chantries of S. Mary Magdalene, Holy Trinity, Name of Jesus, Braddon, S. Mary the Virgin, Swinges, and S. Andrew, and the Fraternities of S. Sepulchre and Holy Cross—all in Taunton, with others in the same county. The patent was dated, witness the King, at Lieghes, on the day abovenamed.†

From comparison of the dates it is not improbable that I have found the record of the transfer of some of the

* Parts. for Grants, Keylweye, Giles. 3 Edw. VI., sect. 2.
† Pat. 3 Edw. VI. p. 1, mm. 35 (8)—39 (4). Appendix, No. VII.

"ornaments" of these very Taunton Chapels. On the 16th of February, 3 Edward VI., 1548-9, the following "Parcels of the Ornaments belonging to the late Colleges, Chantries, Free Chapels, &c., within the County of Somerset," were passed "for Robert Freeke, serjeant of Rob. Keilway, Esq., for the sum of CXV*s.* to be paid all in hand:"—

Five vestments of crimson velvet, priced at v^{s} the piece, one with another ..	xxv*s.*
Four deacons and subdeacons of the same colour, priced at v^{s} the piece ..	xx*s.*
Seven vestments of blue and purple velvet, priced at iiij^{s} viij^{d} the piece ..	xxxij*s.* viij*d.*
One old cope of cloth of gold, flowered with blue velvet	xiij*s.* iiij*d.*
One cope of crimson velvet, with flowers of gold	x*s.*
Two other copes, one of blue velvet, another of murrey velvet, priced at vj^{s} viij^{d} the piece	xiij*s.* iiij*d.*

Examined by me W$^{m.}$ Morice, Superv$^{r.}$*

As the master had obtained the Chapel, it is not improbable that the servant had secured the "ornaments," and that some of these vestments and copes had been in long and sacred use in the various functions at S. Margaret's.

We must now retrace our steps for a short period to introduce matter which my unwillingness to break the thread of my narrative has hitherto made me postpone.

It will be remembered that William Callowe was Incumbent of the Chapel. He was also incumbent of the

* Parts. for Grants, Edw. VI., vol. I., p. 102 *b.*

Chantry of S. Etheldred, in the Church of Taunton S. Mary Magdalene. His salary of lxvj*s.* viij*d.* for his duties at the Hospital was paid by the Prior. This was by an arrangement, the exact date of which I would have given in its chronological order if I had discovered it, whereby the Abbot of Glastonbury assigned to the Prior of Taunton sixty acres of land in his manor of West Monkton, to find a priest to say mass thrice a week in the Chapel of the Almshouse. Perhaps this was done at the time of the rebuilding by Abbot Beere, but I have not found the original grant, nor does any notice of it appear in the "Valor" before nor in the "Ministers' Accounts" after the suppression. We learn it, however, from a Survey of the possessions of the Abbey made immediately subsequent to the dissolution, from which, as it is full of interest for many of my local readers, I will give the portion which relates to the Manor of West Monkton exactly as it stands in the original Return. It was taken in the 31st year of Henry VIII., 1539-1540, for the purpose of furnishing the Court of Augmentations with an exact description of the property, and thus of facilitating its ultimate disposal.

"The Surveye of alle the Woode*s* Comens seu'all waters and benefyce*s* app'teynyng to the Kynge*s* Maistie w^t^ the lordships ensuyng, videlt.

WESTMOWNTON.

There ys a fysshing extending from the Mylles nowe in the tenure of M^r^ Sooper vnto the see in length vj myles, the whiche ys letten to M^r^ Thomas Warer by copy for vj^s^ viij^d^ by yere	vj^s^ viij^d^
There ys also a Quarre of Tylestone and Ragg whiche renteth by yere	v^s^

There ys no Woodes.

There ys a Comen called Lynche cont' C acr', of the whiche the Kyng may let yerely vnto Tyllage to the ten^{a}nts x acres for ij^{d} an acre (for yt wylle bere but ij Croppes together) another Comen called Mounten Hethfeld cont' xl acres whereuppon groweth c'teyn Shrubed Okes whiche ar letten w^{t} the Courthous to John Totehille. There ys another Comen called Bathpoole grene cont' xx acres .. ..

The personage is of the Kynges Highes gefte M^{r} Payne is Incombent. And it is worth by yere aboue alle charges .. .. .. xx^{li}

The persone payeth xxvj^{s} viij^{d} pencōn to the Sexton of Glastonbury .. .. xxvj^{s} viij^{d}

M^{d} to se the booke of accompt whether vj^{s} viij^{d} for the rent of Courthouse and iij acres of land be charged or not.

M^{d} there is lx acres land and pasture by estymacōn lying togethers seu'alle nowe voyd and in the Kynges handes for default of a Ten^{a}nt whiche was late assigned by the abbot of Glastonbury to the prio^{r} of Taunton to fynd a prest to saye Masse thrise a weeke in the Almeshowse at Taunton townesende.

[*A side note to the last memorandum.*]

Will'a' Waltō the yōger offeryth for the sāe iiij^{li} by the yere & iiij^{li} for a fyne.

S$\overline{\text{m}}$—iiij^{li} Terr' div's'

S$\overline{\text{m}}$ acr' bosci ib'm—n^{l}'"*

The stipend thus accounted for was continued to him, though no doubt paid as others were irregularly enough;

* Miscel. Voll. Off. Augment. 420. ff. 53. 53b. Add MS. B.M. 15,662. ff. 164–166.

and we find him in 1556 among the surviving pensionaries in Cardinal Pole's Book, where he is called "the last Incumbent of another Service in Weste-monketon," as there was one in the Parish Church, and in the receipt of his old allowance.*

From the time of the Suppression down to the end of the reign of Edward the VI., 1553, the "Ministers' Accounts" furnish us with sundry particulars, given with very little variation year after year, in connexion with S. Margaret's Hospital and its neighbourhood.† The following are literally translated from the Return for the year 32-33 Henry VIII., from Michaelmas, 1540, to the same feast, 1541, and will be of similar interest to the Survey already quoted. The four pence and the pound of cummin of annual rent carry us back—it is probable—to the early days of the Hospital, when these payments were not so much equivalents of property possessed as acknowledgments of subjection to the superior lord.

Account of All and Singular Bailiffs, &c., of our Lord the King, of the late Monastery of Glastonbury, for one whole year, &c., as above given.

WESTEMONKETON.

Rents of Assize.

The bailiff answereth for iiij^{d} of rent of assize of the Almshouse called Seynt Margarettes by the town of Taunton, for certain lands there by year. But for j lb of Cummin, of rent of assize of the same Almshouse, he doth not answer, because it was delivered to the Auditor of our Lord the King there for his fee.

* Card. Pole's Pension Book, fol. xxxj.

† Ministers' Accounts :—32-33 Hen. VIII. No. 103. 33-34, No. 156. 34-35, No. 159. 35-36, No. 183. 38 Hen. VIII.—1 Edw. VI. No. 60. 1-2 Edw. VI. No. 45. 2-3, No. 48. 3-4, No. 52. 4-5, No. 47. 5-6, No. 38.

Farm of the Mills.

And for xxiij^{s} iiij^{d} of the rent of the farm of one mill there, so demised to Roger Adamps by year. And for xxiij^{s} iiij^{d} of the farm of one mill there, so demised to William Adamps by year. And for cvj^{s} viij^{d} of the farm of the mills there, called Bathpoles Mylles, so demised to Margaret Soper by year, &c.

Sum :—vij^{li} xiij^{s} iiij^{d}

Issues of the Manor.

And for xij^{d} of the issues of the new stone quarry, so demised to Thomas Drayton and Hugh Smythney by year during their life. And for iiij^{s} iiij^{d} of a certain custom there paid by the tenants, called Ploughsylver, to wit, every tenant pays for every plough by ancient due xiiij^{d}, and so in charge this year by oath of accountant as above. And for vj^{s} viij^{d} of rent of the manor house with the dovecot, and the herbage of a garden there by year, in the tenure of John Totehyll, &c.

Sum :—xij^{s} *

The manor of Westmonketon, together with the advowson of the Church and the pension of xxvj^{s} viij^{d} which the incumbent paid to the Abbey of Glastonbury, was granted to William, earl of Wiltes, witness the King, at Westminster, on the 1st of May, 1547.†

No Request that I can discover was made during all this time to purchase the Almshouse itself, and I feel tolerably sure that it would not have escaped me if the document were still in existence. It is therefore probable that, as was the case with the Hospital of S. John Baptist at Bath, thanks to some powerful man in the neighbour-

* Ministers' Accounts, 32-33 Hen. VIII. No. 103. 4-5 Edw. VI. No. 47. Add. MS. B.M. 15,662. ff. 167, 168.

† Orig. 1 Edw. VI. p. 1. rot 88.

hood, the old building continued without interruption to be devoted to its ancient use, though of so much that had made it a blessing to its inmates they had been thus summarily dispossessed. The continuance of the payments before mentioned—I presume by its inmates—leads to the same conclusion. I have found, however, a Request to Purchase various lands in the Parishes of West Monkton and Bishop's Hull, which from the occurrence of certain names appear to have had some connexion with the Hospital property. This, however, is conjecture and conjecture only.

On the 8th June, 1554, a Request to Purchase was made by William Morgan of Pentrebagham, gent., and Jerome Halley of London, gent., of two acres of arable land in Bishop's Hull called Courthaies, rented at vj^{s} viij^{d} a year; of two acres of arable land by Hamewoode Barne, rented at xvj^{d} a year; and of one house called the Churchehous, in the tenure of the Churchwardens of Bishop's Hull, rented at iiij^{s} a year. In Westmonkton there was the first crop of grass in four acres of meadow in a certain meadow called Hankeridge Meade. In another Particular for the Grant of the same property, in the 7th of Edw. VI., which did not lead to the intended result, it is stated that "the gresse or furst vesture, growing vpon the foure acres of meadowe was gyven to the Prior of Taunton by S^{r} Hughe Pawlett*es* Auncetours, and after the gresse thereof was Cutt downe and caryed awaye, then the said S^{r} Hughe Pawlett*es* Auncetours and there heyres did alwayes injoye the same meade all the yere after."* It was now in the yearly tenancy of John Cuffe and John Norrys, and was rented at

* Parts for Grants, Bysse. 7 Edw. VI.

iiij^{s} a year.* All these properties were parcel of the possessions of the late Priory of Taunton. On the 11th of the same month the grant was passed. The lands were to be held in free and common socage, as of the manor of Estgrenewyche, witness the Queen, at Westminster, on the above-mentioned day.†

I have already said that the old building seems to have escaped the general fate of its fellows in the reign of Edward VI., and to have been still employed in accordance with its previous use. Those were days, however, of universal misrule, when men did very much what was right in their own eyes to the injury of all besides. The proudest in the land had set an evil example, and the lowest did but follow where the highest had led the way. Thus, although in a few places some of the old foundations had been allowed to survive the general catastrophe, hardly one of them was permitted to retain the whole of its former possessions. We have seen that even of the little property of the poor inmates of S. Margaret's a part had been surrendered to the greed of the spoiler so early as the year 1545. At the period of its history at which we have arrived there were evidently some further attempts in the same direction. Various irregularities were reported, and summary steps were taken for their suppression. Indeed the evil was at once so flagrant and so general that a statute had been passed, entitled "An Act to redress the misemployment of lands, goods, and stocks of money heretofore given to charitable uses,"‡ which gave the Lord Chancellor, or Keeper of the Great Seal, power to issue a Commission which should take evidence on oath, and

* Parts. for Grants, William Morgan and Jerome Halley. 1 Mary.
† Pat. 1 Mary, p. 6, mm. (4) 32, (5) 33.
‡ 43 Eliz. c. 4.

after such enquiry set down such Orders, Judgments, and Decrees, as they should deem proper for the future prevention of the wrong.

S. Margaret's Hospital fell under the wholesome operation of this statute. A Commission was awarded, as above described, out of the Court of Chancery, directed to Sir John Portman, knight and bart., Thomas Warre and John Tyms, esquires, and others his Majesty's justices of peace for the county of Somerset, to make the necessary examination. They found upon oath of certain parties whom they called before them a very sufficient reason for the interference of the Court. They reported, among other usurpations, that "one Humphrey Quick, late of West Monkton, deceased, heretofore hath taken away and embezzled such writings and evidence as did concern the ordering and governing of the Almshouse in West Monkton, commonly called the Spattall House."* It appeared, further, to the said Commissioners that the election of the Governor of the house for the time being, and the poor there placed, and the ordering thereof, had hitherto been by the consent of two justices of peace there next adjoining, and of the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of West Monkton, for the time being. This arrangement was approved of, and ordered to take effect for the future. Upon this, accordingly, was passed an unanimous Order of Sessions, dated 15th September, 1612, regulating for the time to come the management of the Almshouse in the manner aforesaid, and electing one George Orchard to be Governor of the house and family there, during pleasure and on his good behaviour.†

* Report of the Commissioners of Charities, vol. 11, pp. 492–496.
† Ibid, p. 496.

In Mr. R. King Meade King's excellent paper on West Monkton in the time of Elizabeth and James I., where, if the local records could have supplied such information, we should have been sure to find it—not but that a country parish is the most unlikely place in the world to discover any MSS. Records of its ancient state,—the earliest date at which mention is made of the use of the Hospital as the Parish Almshouse is that of 1612.* The local archives can supply us with no further details. And as for "the deeds relating to the Spital Charity," Mr. Meade King further informs me in a most obliging letter, "all of them have unfortunately long been lost, and therefore what is now known respecting it rests mainly on tradition."

By indenture, dated 12th February, 16 James I., 1618-9, Rd. Parr, Lord of the Manor of West Monkton, leased to the Churchwardens of the Parish, and a person styled the Governor of the Hospital, to John Clawsey, all that tenement in Littleton, and certain parcels of land and pasture thereto belonging, named Crowell, Warley, Mead Furland, Middle Furland, Vinigrove, upon Haiwell, next Hurcotfield, above Chassell, and Stichens, &c., &c., all in Littleton, in the Parish of Compton Dundon, then in the occupation of John Clawsey aforesaid, for three score years, determinable with his life, and paying to the Governors of the said Hospital £2 13*s.* 4*d.* per annum.†

The Hospital is also said to have a piece of land at Maddox Tree, in the Parish of Thorne Falcon, of 6 acres and 36 poles customary measure, but the Report is silent as to the source from which it was obtained.‡

Although it would appear from the foregoing names and

* Proceedings of Somers. Arch. Soc., vol. xj., p. 169.
† Charity Commissioners' Report, vol. 11, pp. 492, 493.
‡ Ibid, p. 493.

situations of the lands, from which the present income of the Charity is mainly derived, that most of them are the benefactions of more recent times, I think there are evidences that some of the ancient gifts were permitted to remain without alienation. The Commissioners' Report before cited asserts that the House is and has long been entitled to three small closes in the immediate neighbourhood—indeed it would appear from the Certificate of 1548 that these small parcels of land and that mentioned subsequently were then its sole possessions,—a "field next the Turnpike-gate," another "field next the Spittal," and another "field next Mr. Glover's," amounting in all to $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres, which certainly may be those to which reference was made in that document; while the Hankridge Farm, called in the Charity Report "North Anchorage," near the high London Road, from which a yearly payment of £2 10*s.* is still derived, can hardly be any other place than the two acres with appurtenances in Hanecrich, which, as we have seen, was the property of the Hospital before the year 1280—six hundred years ago. With the exception, therefore, of localities which Religion has more than ordinarily identified with Herself as the site and scene of Her special ministrations, it would be difficult if not impossible to point to a spot in the County of Somerset which has for so long and continuous a period been associated with pious uses as the humble abode whose history I have endeavoured to rescue from the undeserved oblivion into which it had fallen.

To bring down that history to our own time, I would add that from the year 1612, when the Court of Chancery regulated the government of the Almshouse, the place has been uninterruptedly devoted to its present use. In 1750 there were six residents, and the number has usually been the same. Here for century after century have many

who deserved well from those able to help spent the last days of a life of labour, and have gone down to their graves, neither dishonoured nor disregarded by their connexion with the place or its associations. More than one of the old inmates I have known in days when I lived in their neighbourhood, and the remembrance of them is the very reverse of painful. Within the last few days also I have made the acquaintance of the present residents, seven in number, and I have never seen seven consecutive tenements more eloquent of home and home comfort. Every one of them with its cheery fire, its shelves full of old china and glass, its gay prints of occurrences in Sacred Scripture, and its bright array of culinary adjuncts and well-worn furniture, is a charming picture of a poor woman's abode. I am informed, however, by the same gentleman to whom I have already expressed my obligations, that "the only advantage the inmates derive from the Charity is that they live house-rent free, but they are all recipients of Parish Relief. As a *quid pro quo*, the Overseers receive the rents of the various lands, amounting at present to £45 10*s*., which rents are regularly credited in their yearly accounts passed by the Union Auditor, and go into the general fund in aid of the Poor Rates. The Overseers out of their funds keep the 'Spital' in repair."

Such is the history of S. Margaret's Hospital, so far as existing Records have enabled me to present it to the reader, from the twelfth to the nineteenth century. From an use which by God's great mercy has ceased to be necessary, it has passed to be a quiet and not unhappy refuge of venerable old age; and still, seven hundred years and more after its first foundation, through mediæval to modern England, appeals, humble though it be, to sympathy and kindly interest, as the home of some whose very help-

lessness constitutes their power, and breathes to us, from every open door in its old cloister, the consolatory truth that even here may happiness be found, and that even such as these,

"of native strength possess'd,
"Though very poor, may still be very bless'd."

Before I conclude I wish to make a few observations on a subject which could hardly fail to be suggested to the reader during the latter part of the previous Memoir, and to illustrate the same by means of two documents which cannot but be of considerable interest to Tauntonians in general. It must have struck him as a thing of unsurpassed enormity that Chapels and Hospitals, institutions of general utility and whose office was commensurate with the needs of human nature at large, should have been as summarily and unconcernedly dispossessed of their means of imparting benefit, as though there were none to require their aid or they themselves were unwilling to supply it. It is well known that I am entirely opposed to the feeling, but I can so far throw myself into the minds of others as to understand some of the grounds of dislike to monastic institutions and of a desire for their suppression. These grounds are in my judgment based on modern prejudice, and ignorance of that which the maligners revile. But even these are absent when we endeavour to understand the causes of the aggression on the Chapels and Hospitals. The deduction is inevitable that at the time when these establishments were suppressed in England, hostility to them was based far more on a robber's reason than on any other. The rents rather than the religion of the Monasteries gave the impulse to men whom it would be simple absurdity and a clear proof of ignorance of history to regard in any other light than as the basest, most infamous,

and abandoned of mankind. The whole of what we know of their lives, both public and private, forbids any other conclusion. For widely different reasons from those by which these miscreants were actuated many of the moderns look with favour on the result at which they arrived. They have in many instances little or no sympathy with them in the greed which urged them forward in their horrible work, while they regard that work from a point of view of which the actual perpetrators of the wrong had very little if any idea. The one look at the matter from what they imagine the point of morality, the other from that of self-aggrandisement. And the fate of the Chapels and Hospitals proves to demonstration the accuracy of my view. Here was money to be appropriated, but no abuses to be rectified; and as money and not abuses was the real consideration, the Chapels and Hospitals were doomed. To us their suppression appears unaccountable, simply because we have been taught to regard the movement in a false light and have not mastered the characters of the actors. Their one object was to "take possession," like the tyrant of older date. And if the death of the owners and the total cessation of spiritual blessings throughout whole neighbourhoods were the result of the appropriation, it gave them no manner of concern.

It would seem indeed a curious kind of benefit which should summarily remove the means of grace from places where they had been abundantly offered, religiously appreciated, and heartily and gratefully enjoyed. It would appear a singular way of promoting the illumination of the people to turn Churches and Chapels into dwelling-houses or farm buildings, and to convert their ornaments into coverings of chairs and tables,* and other ordinary

* Heylin, Hist. of Edw. VI. p. 134.

adornments of secular abodes. Without extending his view to the neighbourhood, and to say nothing of the country at large where the same atrocities were visible at every turn, let my reader confine his attention to Taunton, and picture to himself the loss which religion must have sustained by the suppression—not of the Priory, for on that I am not now employed, calamitous as I most firmly believe that suppression was, but—of the various Chapels with which every part of the town was furnished. There was, to give precedence to that which has been the subject of the present investigation, S. Margaret's Chapel, at the eastern end of the town. Not far from the Conventual Church was Nethewayes Chapel. S. Mary Magdalene's Chapel was near the Church of the same name ; S. Paul's Chapel near the present Church of St. John, and S. Leonard's Chapel in Northtown—the very localities, I beg the reader to remark, where either similar edifices have been erected by the munificence of later times, or the continued absence of which is pronounced by common consent a thing to be deplored. Granting that religious worship and priestly direction are valuable, which is no very great concession, the suppression of these places can be regarded in no other light than as an outrage done to religion in general, and a return, so far as the perpetrators could effect it, to the heathenism from which in earlier and better times the system of which they were a part had blessedly rescued the land. Nor must it be forgotten that the individuals to whom these consecrated places were thus summarily disposed of, as so many common tenements and fields, were bound by the purchase to no acts of piety, kindness or charity to the neighbourhoods from which the benefit was taken. The bell ceased to summon the worshippers to prayer, the priest was no longer at hand to do his sacred

function, the thousand influences for good which a House of God can originate—all were gone, and in their place was some godless grantee who cared for nothing but his pelf, and to elevate a family which until those days of rebuke and blasphemy had never so much as been heard of. The result was soon conspicuous. Irreligion, immorality, a disruption of the ties that bind society together, lack of spiritual direction, absence of education for the young and of charitable aid to the sick, the desolate, and the poor—such were the precious fruits of the new system of things, the weeds which indicated the nature of the soil on which they grew. Taunton soon discovered the change from the old days when what she had lost was possessed and enjoyed, and yearned after blessings which were beyond recall. She first poured forth her complaint in a request to the Commissioners for the sale of Chapels and Chantries in 1548, and thus states her requirements in one of the particulars to which I have referred:—

"Memor^{d}. Thenhabitaunt*es* of the towne of Taunton aforesaide, the vjth Daye of Aprill an^{o} R*egis* E. vj^{ti}. ij^{do}. make humble request vnto the cõmyssiono^{rs} in man*er* and fo^{r}me followinge. Wher ther is w^{t}in the said towne of Tawnton, beinge the greatest, and best m*ar*ket towne in all that shire, scituate in a verray holsome good, and plentyfull Soyle a faire large and goodly howse, new buylded erected and made for a Schole-howse about xxv yeres nowe past. Wherin was a Scole Mr, and an Vssher founde the space of xij or xiiij yeres, for the vertuouse educacõn and teaching of yewthe, aswell of the saide towne of Taunton, as of the hole contrye, to the nombr of vij or viij score Scolers, by the devocõn of one Roger Hill of the same towne m*er*chaunt nowe deceased, a great Relief also to the same towne of Taunton. And now sythe the deathe of the same Roger Hill the saide Schole-

howse standyth voyde, w^t^out either Mr, Vssher, or Scolers, to the great p*r*eiudice hurte and discom̄oditie of the com̄en Welthe of the saide Shire. Whervppon the saide enhabitaunt*es* make most humble sute vnto the King*es* ma^tie^. that yt maye please his highnes to graunte, and assigne suche landes and ten*ementes* in p*er*petuytie as shalbe thought mete vnto his grace and his most hono^r^able counsaile, to the mayntena^n^ce and finding of a Maister and Vssher, to teach in the same Scolehowse, w^ch^ no doubte is most bewtifull and most necessarie place of all that shire."*

I am afraid that the records of the College School will not present a very favourable account of the answer to this petition.

As an evidence of the decline of religious duty which presently ensued on the removal of the ancient means of grace, I may add from the already quoted Certificate that after a short declaration of the value of the vicarage, name of incumbent, &c., occurs the following :—"Partakers of the Lord's Holy Supper there MMMM (4,000) persons." After the lapse of more than three hundred years, with all their accessions of so-called progress, can Taunton show the like number now? I leave the Clergy to answer the question.

The second document which I will give, and with which my Memoir shall conclude, is copied from an original paper of the time of Queen Elizabeth, for which I have to thank a friend in London. Of Taunton Clergy, School, and Poor the MS. thus bears its unhappy testimony. The impoverished town had indeed found out its great and irremediable loss. There was all the difference in the world between "now and then."

* Certificate of Chantries, No. 42. n. 20.

"There is w^th^in the towne of Tanton a p*ar*ishe of the greateste Cure w^th^in the countye of Som*ers*^t^ w^ch^ was wonte to be discharged by the Pryor, and now thallowance out of the vicarag is but eightine pounde by yere, Soe that the towne besides theise eightine poundes doethe Supplie all the reste of the maintenance for a Preacher and a Curat w^ch^ they alwaies there maintein.

"It'm there is in Taunton a great Scoole wherein ar comenlie taught two hundred scollers and but twentie mark*es* be longinge vnto it, so that the reste above that toward*es* the maintenance of a Scoolemaster and Vssher w^ch^ they haue alwais there the towne doeth supplie of his owne Charge.

"It'm there ar w^th^in the towne and p*ar*ishe of Tanton xliiij^or^ almshowses full of poore people where vnto there was certen Lande belonginge w^ch^ by the Suppression of Chaunteries was taken awaie, Soe that now thinhabitaunt*es* doe beare the whole burden them selves."

Endorsed :—

"Som*erset.* the consyderacōns for the graunte of the lyb*er*tyes in Taunton."

Comment on these documents is altogether unnecessary. I leave them to speak for themselves, and will but draw from the whole matter, as the moral of the tale, the conclusion of the learned antiquary :—"I am not by any means an enemy of Reformation, but then—I hope wickedness will not be called such."

THOMAS HUGO.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

[E Reg. Well. I. ff. 35*b*, 36.]

Carta de Priore. S. Tantoñ. & de conuentu de Cap'llis suis.

Vniu'sis xp'i fidelib' ad quos p'sens scriptum p'uen'it. Stephanus P'or & canonici Tantonie Salut'. Nou'it uniu'sitas u'ra nos concessisse domino & p'ri n'ro Rain' dei gr'a. Bathonie ep'o. qu'd omnes eccl'ie & cap'lle n're respondeant ip'i & successorib'. & officialib' suis in omnib' consuetudinib' ep'alib' more aliarum ecc'liar' ep'atu Bath' consistencium. exceptis capellis s'ci iacobi & s'ci Georgij de fonte. & sancte Margarete infirmorum. & Sancti petri de castello q^{a}rum immunitatem nob' p'fatus d'ns ep'c' indulsit. Concessim' p't'ea [&c.] Quod ut ratum h'atur & firmum. p'senti scripto & sigilli n'ri appo'ne duximus 'f^{r}mandum. Hiis testib'. Will'o abb'e de Kaynesham. Galfrid' Saru'. Thom' Well' Rad'. Bathon. Ric. Constanc' Archid'. Mag'r' Waltero Priore de Berliz. Jocelino cap'll'o. Will'o cap'll'o. Mag'ro alexandro. Mag'ro Gilb'rto de Axeb'g'. Mag'ro Rogero.

No. II.

[Pat. 20 Hen. III. m. 6.]

De P'teccione. Mag'r & f'res lep'si Hospital' S'ce Margar' de Taunt' h'nt litt'as de p'teccōne pat' sñ t'mīo cu' hac clausula Rogam' T. R. apud Middelton'. xxij° die Jun.'

No. III.

[Plac. de Jur. & Assis. 7 Edw. I. $\left.\begin{matrix}\text{N}\\2\\3\end{matrix}\right\}$ 2. rot. 17.]

Assis' Jur' & attingte capt' apud Montem Acutu' coram

Walt'o de Wymborn & Thom' de sc'o Vigore anno regni reg' Edward' Septimo. In c^{a}stino Assumpcōnis be' mar'.

Assis' ven'. ret'. Si Joh'nes Abbas Glaston' & fr' Henr' Mag'r Domus S'ce Margar' Lep'sor' ext^{a} Tanton' Iniuste &c. disseis' Thom' Lambrich de lib'o ten' suo in Moneketon' post p^{a}m &c. Et vnde quer' q'd disseis' eu' de duob' solid' redditus cum p'tin' que p'uen' de quoda' ten' in eadem villa.

Et p'd'ci Abbas & alii p' Ric'm Pyk Ball' d'ci Abb'is ven' et dic' p' p'd'co Abb'e q'd p'd'cus Abbas nō disseis' p'd'cm Thom' de p'd'co redd' & de hoc pon' se sup' ass^{a}m Et Thom' simil'r.

Jur' dic' sup' sacr^{a}m suu' q'd p'd'cus Abbas non disseis' p'd'cm Thom' de p'd'co redd' Et Ideo cons' est q'd p'd'cus Abbas inde sine die. Et p'd'cus Thom' in m'ia p' fals' clam'. p'donat^{r} q' paup'.

Et p' p'd'co mag'ro p'd'ci Hospital' dic' q'd assis' int' ip'os nō debet p'cedere quia dicit q'd idem Thom' inplacitat ip'm coram Justic' d'ni Reg' de Banco p' quoddam b're de recto de cons' & s'uic' in quo continēt^{r}. p'd'ci. duo sol' redd' Et de hoc ponit se sup' rot'los p'd'cor' Justic'

Dies datus est eis apud Iuelcestr' die s'ci Edmund' Reg' & m^{a}rtir' & int'im querant^{r} rotuli &c.

No. IV.

[Plac. de Jur. & Assis. 8 Edw. I. $\left.\begin{matrix}\text{M}\\5\\13\end{matrix}\right\}$ 3. rot. 18 dors.]

Pl'ita de Jur' & Ass'is Coram Salom' de Roff' & Soc Suis Justiciar' Itiner' Apud Som'ton' In Com' Som'ers' In Crastino Ascensionis D'ni Anno Regni Reg. E. viij. Boylūd.

Mag'r Domus Lep'sor' S'ce Margar' ex^{a} Taunton' sum̄ fuit ad respondend' Thome de Lambrigg' de pl'to q'd faciat ei consuetudines & recta s'uicia que ei fac'e debet de lib'o ten' suo quod de eo tenet in Munketon' vt in reddit' arrerag' & aliis. Et vnde dicit q'd cum p'd'cus mag'r teneat de eo vnu' mes' cum p'tin' in Munketon' p' s'uiciu' duor' solidor' p' annu'. Et ip'e fuisset inde in seis^{a} p' manus p'd'ci mag'ri. quousq' iam trib' annis elaps' p'd'cus mag'r p'd'cm s'uiciu' ei iniuste detinuit & adhuc

detinet. vnde dicit q'd det'ioratus est & dampnu h'et ad valenc' viginti solidor'. Et inde p'ducit sectam &c.

Et mag'r venit & defendit vim & iniur' qu' &c. Et dicit q'd nō tenet p'd'cm mes' in Munketon' de p'd'co Thoma nec de eo ten'e clam'. Et id'o cons' est q'd p'd'cus mag'r eat inde sn̄ die. Et Thom' nich' cap' p' br'e suum set sit in mīa p' fi'o clam'.

No. V.

[E Reg. Stillington, fol. lxxxj*b*.]

Littera Indulgencie. Vniuersis sancte matris eccl'ie filijs ad quos presentes l're p'uen'int Robertus p'missione diuina Bathonien' & Wellen' Ep'us Salutem in eo p' quem fit remissio p'ccor' Pium obsequiu' & deo gratum tociens impendere opinamur quociens fidelium mentes ad caritatis vel alterius pie deuocōnis op'a allectiuis indulgenciar' munerib' p'pensius excitamus. De dei igitur om̄ipotent' im̄ensa misericordia et beatissime Marie Virginis matris sue ac beator' Andree Petri & Pauli Ap'lor' p'ronor' n'ror' oīmq' s'cor' meritis et precib' confident' cunct' xpīcolis p' n'ram dioc' vbili't constitutis & alijs quor' diocesani hanc n'ram indulgenciam ratam habuerint p'iter & acceptam de p'cc'is suis vere penitentib' contritis & confessis qui ad releuacōem paup'um infirmor' & leprosor' hospit'lis ac Capelle b'te Margarete Virginis & martiris ad orientalem p'tem ville de Taunton' n're p'dict' dioc' sit' & erect' refeccōem rep'acōem & sustentaco'em manus porrex'int adiutrices ac aliqua de bonis sibi a deo collatis grata contulerint legau'int seu quouismodo assignau'int subsidia caritatis quadraginta dies indulgencie tociens quociens p'missa vel aliquod p'missor' fecerint gracōse concedimus p' p'sentes p' quinquenniu' post dat' p'sentiu' t'mmodo duratur' In cuius Rei testimoniu' Sigillum n'r'm fecim' hijs apponi Dat' in hospicio n'ro extra Barram Noui Templi, London' Londonien' dioc' secundo die mens' Julij Anno d'ni Mill'imo cccc^{mo} septuagesimo secundo Et n're Cons' Anno septimo.

No. VI.

[Abstract of Pat. 36 Hen. VIII. p. 14. m. 13.]

Rex om'b' ad quos [&c.] Sciatis q'd nos [&c.] dedim'

[&c.] Will'o Chapleyn & Joh'i Selwood [&c.] c't' t'ras ten' gardina cotagia & burgagia n'ra cum suis p'tin' iacen' & existen' ext^{a} portam Canonstrete Middelstrete & Seynt James strete in parochijs S'ce Marie Magdalene tam infra q^{a}m ext^{a} burgum de Tawnton S'ci Jacobi & Westmonkton p'pe Tawnton [&c.] nup' Prioratui de Taunton modo dissoluto dudum p'tin' siue spectan' [&c.] Ac quatuor acras t're n're ibidem vocat' Baldwynsland modo vel nup' in tenura Nich'i Walrond aut assign' suor' ac c'tas p'cell' t're n're iacen' p'pe Crechburgh Hill infra dict' parochiam de Westmonkton p'dict' modo vel nup' in tenura Joh'is Totehill aut assign' suor' Ac c'tas p'cell t're n're iacen' in d'ca parochia de Westmonkton p'dict' vocat' hyll modo vel nup' in tenura Johanne God vidue aut assign' suor' Ac totam illam acram t're n're in boriali parte Capelle S'ce Margarete iuxta Taunton modo vel nup' in tenura siue occupacõe diu'sor' paup'um de le Spittelhouse ibidem Necnon om'ia illa t'ras ten' gardina curtilagia cotagia siue burgagia n'ra cum suis p'tin' iacen' & existen' tam infra q^{a}m ext^{a} dict' portam Canonstrete Midlestrete & Saint James strete p'dict' [&c] ac eciam vnu' vacuu' ten' & gardinu' iuxta Cemitoriu' Capelle d'ine Marie Magdalene [&c.] Seint Poles Chappel [&c.] Seynt Leonard' Chappell —[&c.] In cuius &c. T R apud Westm' quinto die marcij.

No. VII.

[Abstract of Pat. 3 Edw. VI. p. 1. m. 35.]

Rex omnib' ad quos &c. salt'm. Sciatis q'd nos [&c.] dedimus [&c.] Egidio Keylwey & Will'mo Leonard [&c.] totum illud mesuagiu' [&c.] in Taunton nup' cantar' s'ce Trinitatis in Taunton dudum spectan' [&c.] Ac totam illam nup' Capellam in p'ochia s'ci Jacobi iuxta Taunton in Com' n'ro Som's' cum suis p'tin' nup' spectan' hospit'li seu domui Elimosinarie de Westmonketon in d'co Com' Som's' ac om'ia muros plumbum campanas ferrum vitrum maerem' & lapides eidem nup' capelle spectan' & p'tinen' ac de in vel sup' eadem nup' Capella remanen' & existen' [&c.] cantar' no'is Jesu—s'ci Andree—alte crucis—b'te Marie—[&c.] In cuius rei &c. T R apud lieghes sc'do die Aprilis. P' ip'm Regem &c.

T. H.