

The Ecclesiastical Buildings of Wells.

BY J. H. PARKER, ESQ., F.S.A.

IN the last volume of the Society's Transactions I gave a concise account of the Bishop's Palace, and I now proceed, as requested, to give a brief description of the Deanery and the other ecclesiastical buildings of the middle ages in the city of Wells. I wish, however, in the first instance, to add a few more lines respecting the Palace.¹ Since my account of it was written Mr. Williams has published his very valuable biographical notice of Bishop Bekynton, chiefly taken from a contemporary document printed in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra* (vol. ii., p. 357) and translated in a note in Britton's *History of the Cathedral* (p. 46). From this account of the buildings it is evident that he must have built something at the Palace in addition to his other numerous works in the city; yet it is certain that nothing now remains which corresponds with Bekynton's other buildings, except the entrance gatehouse from the market-place, which may be all that was meant, as this,

with the houses on each side of it, originally forming wings to it, was really an important building. It is, however, most probable that the corner tower and the domestic cloister with the inner gatehouse, which I have described as having formerly existed and having been entirely destroyed, were part of his work. The four-centered doorways pierced in the stair-turrets, which Professor Willis thought Elizabethan, may have been as early as the time of Bekynton. They are so extremely plain that there is nothing by which to judge of their age, excepting that they are certainly not early.

The DEANERY was rebuilt by Dean Gunthorpe (1472-1498), and, though a good deal spoiled by modern sash windows and other alterations, it is still nearly a perfect specimen of a nobleman's or gentleman's house of the 15th century, and has its own gatehouse and wall of enclosure. The principal apartments were all on the first floor, which was a very common arrangement in mediæval houses, the ground rooms being commonly cellars and storehouses, for the state of the country, the want of roads, the scarcity of shops, and the bad supply of the markets, made it necessary to keep a much larger quantity of provisions in store than is called for in these days. The saltinghouse, the bakehouse, the brewhouse, the spicery, and many other similar apartments were quite necessary in a large house, and the whole of the ground floor, was frequently occupied in that manner. In the Deanery the principal apartment was on the north, or in the garden front, or back of the house, on the first floor, and it is a valuable example of the transition from the earlier mediæval hall, with its lofty roof, to the more comfortable dining-room of later days. At the upper end it has two beautiful bay windows with vaults of rich fan

tracery, one at each end of the dais, but not exactly opposite, nor on the the same level ; the one at the south end of the dais is on the level of the dais itself, the other is at the foot of the steps on a level with the floor of the hall, this was to contain the sideboard for the use of the servants for carving, &c.; the other probably had the cupboard for the wine, and from this there would be a doorway leading to the wine cellar and to the withdrawing room. The same arrangement of two bay windows, and in the same position, occurs in Wolsey's Hall, in Christ Church, Oxford. Two buffets, or sideboards may have been required, one for the use of the guests at the high table on the dais, the other for the people in the body of the hall. At the lower end of the hall is a stone arch, of wide span, carrying a small chamber, probably for the musicians, curiously squeezed in, the want of height in the hall, owing to its having another story over it, not allowing of sufficient space for a regular music gallery ; this chamber is pierced with three small windows opening into the hall. At the north end of the arch is a staircase to the state bedrooms, or, as they would formerly have been called, the guest chambers. Under this stone arch is the lavatory, a stone niche with a water-drain at the bottom, similar to the piscina in a church ; in the niche was suspended on a hook, or fixed, a small cistern of water with a tap letting out a thin stream of water for the guests to wash their hands before they passed through the screen into the hall, according to the invariable custom of the middle ages. In those days people did not wash their hands in a basin, as we do, but let a small stream of water pass over and through the hands and washed them in that manner. The same custom is still common in France ; any traveller who

The ARCHDEACONRY appears to have been a house of at least equal importance with the Deanery, in fact, the hall of it is larger and more imposing, and in this instance it occupied the whole height of the building from the ground to the roof. The house was originally built in the time of Edward I., as is shown by the windows in the gable at the east end, and one of the doorways near to this end, which has a fine suite of mouldings on the exterior and a foliated arch within. This was the back door to the servants' court, the front door towards the Close was larger and more important, but only a part of the foliated inner arch can now be traced in the wall, the front of the house having been entirely modernised. The hall occupied about two-thirds of this part of the house and still retains a very fine open timber roof of the early part of the 15th century, probably of the time of Bishop Bubwith, as it agrees with the roof of the hall and chapel of his almshouse. In the east wall of the Archdeacon's hall are the three doorways of the buttery, pantry, and kitchen, as usual, showing that the offices were at the east end of the house, but have been destroyed. At the further end of the house, beyond the dais, it was divided into two stories, the cellar, or store room, or parlour below, and the solar, or lord's chamber, or withdrawing room above; this solar is itself a room of considerable size. The whole of the arrangements indicate that the Archdeacon was a person of considerable importance, and able to exercise hospitality on a grand scale, or the house may have been a sort of residentiary, where the Chapter exercised their hospitality as a body, like the Guests' Hall, recently destroyed at Worcester.

The HOUSE of the CHOIR-MASTER, at the east end of the Cathedral, is a small gentleman's house of the

15th century, tolerably perfect, with the roof and the upper part of the windows of the hall remaining, but disguised and concealed by modern partitions. The porch, with the room over it, remains perfect, and adds much to the picturesque beauty of the house, the rest of which is entirely modernised, and the original offices seem to have been destroyed, as is frequently the case.

The SINGING SCHOOL is over part of the west wall of the cloister and joins on to the south-west corner of the Cathedral. The ORGANIST'S HOUSE is close to this, and the original communication between the two remains, though now blocked up ; it is one of the smaller houses of the 15th century, the plan of which was that of the letter **T**, the hall forming the top stroke and the rest of the house the stem ; but the house has been almost entirely spoiled during the last century, vile additions having been made to it, encroaching on the small space originally left between the house and the cloister and destroying the outline of the house, which, when it stood clear, must have been extremely picturesque. The interior is also spoiled by modern partitions, now becoming more old-looking and more rotten than the original roof of the hall which remains.³

Most of the CANONS' HOUSES have been either rebuilt entirely or much spoiled by modern alterations, one of them to the north-east of the Cathedral has a good porch and a panelled battlement of the 15th century.

Another house rather farther to the east (now the school), is partly of the 14th century, with a good finial on the gable, and the moulded arch of a doorway of that period, evidently the chief entrance to the hall originally, but long blocked up. This hall has a fine timber roof with angel corbels, but quite concealed by modern lath and plaster ceilings ; the cellar or store room remains with

several lockers in the wall, and is now the school room ; the solar over this is modernised, but this also retains the old roof with its gable and coping. To this wings have been added in the 15th or 16th century, apparently to obtain additional bedrooms, and it is probable that at that time the original kitchen and offices at the other end of the hall were destroyed and new ones made in the new wing. Such a change as this was very frequently made in the 16th century.

The very remarkable and picturesque VICARS' CLOSE is so well known that it is not necessary to repeat any long story about it, but the outline of its history may be mentioned. The Vicars Choral formed part of the original establishment of the Cathedral and were incorporated by Bishop Joceline in the beginning of the 13th century, and, as he was a great builder, it is probable that he built houses for them, but all that we have remaining of his time are some fragments of beautifully sculptured ornament used up as old material, and built in the spandrils of the arches of the windows, and in the parapet of the chapel. These correspond exactly with his work in the Cathedral and with the remains of his palace at Wookey ; but they may have been brought from some part of the Cathedral now destroyed, and the original Vicars' houses may have been of wood only, as was very usual at that period. These were rebuilt by Bishop Ralph, of Shrewsbury, in the 14th century, and he expressly mentions in his will the houses that he had built for the Vicars, and the present houses are substantially his work, as shewn by the askew doorways and the mouldings of the few original windows that remain ; we have also of his work the hall, with its west window and side windows. The east end over the gateway was lengthened in the time of Henry VIII. by Richard Pomeroy. The houses of Bishop Ralph are on one uniform

plan, and several of these remain nearly perfect, though in many cases they have been altered, and two houses thrown into one; nor can we complain much of this when we remember that the houses were originally intended for bachelors only, and each consisted of two rooms with a staircase and closet at the back, but no offices. The Vicars dined together in their common hall, and required no kitchens in their houses. The Close was, in fact, a college, in which each student had a separate small house instead of living together in a large one. These houses were restored or repaired by the executors of Bishop Bekynton, late in the 15th century.

According to the original institution of the Vicars Choral they had two Principals, and it seems natural that each of these should be provided with a house of more importance than those of the other Vicars, and we find at each end of the long narrow Close, which, in this instance, takes the place of the square college quadrangle, a house of more importance, one attached to the west side of the chapel and library at the north end, the other to the hall at the south end. The house at the south end of the Vicars' Close has the kitchen belonging to the common hall on the first floor, level with the hall, and carried upon a groined stone vault, introduced in the time of Henry VIII. by Pomeroy at the same time that the hall was lengthened at the other end. This vault has evidently been introduced within the walls of the 14th century, and was left unfinished until the recent restoration of the house in 1863. This house had for a long period been converted into a brewhouse, and was in a very dilapidated state; it has now been carefully restored and decorated in the style of the period when it was built.

The very beautiful gatehouse and bridge over the road

from the Vicars' Hall to the Cathedral is part of the numerous works of Bishop Bekynton, one of the greatest benefactors of the city. The southern arch of this bridge, the one nearest to the Chapterhouse, has long been concealed from view on the east side by a wall, which has lately been removed ; on the west side by a building, formerly used as the County Record Office, and erected probably in the 17th century, but constructed of old materials so ingeniously put together as to deceive the eye at a very short distance and to appear like part of the original structure. This obstruction, I am happy to say, is about to be removed, and the arch left open, which will greatly improve the effect of this very remarkable bridge. I can see no reason for keeping the passage across this bridge always closed, or why the theological students should not be allowed to go across it from their library, formerly the Vicars' Hall, to the Cathedral, as the Vicars did of old. This would be, in fact, restoring it to the purpose for which it was built, for the present theological students much more truly represent the class of persons for whose use the Vicars' Close itself and the bridge were built, than the present Corporation of Vicars does. The degradation of the class of Vicars Choral generally, now called singing men, is one of the curses brought upon the Church by the change in the value of money.

The only other mediæval house in Wells is, I believe, BISHOP BUBWITH'S ALMSHOUSE, near St. Cuthbert's Church. This is remarkably perfect and interesting, though much spoiled about a dozen years ago. The original plan was a great hall, with a chapel at the end of it and with cells along the side for the almsmen, which were open at the top to the lofty and fine timber roof, so that each old man had the benefit of many hundred cubic feet of air, and

in case he became ill or infirm he could hear the service chanted daily in the chapel without leaving his bed, and so could always attend divine service however old or infirm he might be. At the opposite end of this hall there is a change of plan, the building is here of two stories, like the cellared solar of a mansion of the period. The upper chamber was the old Guildhall.⁴ In this apartment is now preserved a very fine money-chest of the 15th century, with the usual three locks and painted in the old style with a scroll pattern; this is supported on a stand, made for it in the time of James I., with some curious doggrel verses upon it.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to observe that the arrangement of the cells along the sides of a large hall is exactly the same as that of the dormitory of a monastery. This arrangement is the most economical of space consistent with an abundance of air, and has been adopted in the dormitory of Radley School and some other large schools where the masters are enlightened enough to profit by the wisdom of their ancestors. The same arrangement is also adopted in some of the public baths, lately erected in various places, and for the same reasons; the partitions of the cells give privacy without losing space, and, being open at the top to the roof, there is plenty of air. At Glastonbury an almshouse of this description has had the hall roof destroyed and each of the cells roofed over, so as to turn them into a little street of cottages. I cannot see the advantage of this change; when the old arrangement obtained, the almsmen or the monks were kept warm in the winter by hangings and an awning over the cell.

I have omitted to mention the Bishop's Barn, which is a very fine and perfect one of the early part of the 15th century, probably built by Bishop Bubwith, as the construction of the roof is the same as that of his almshouse, although plainer.

NOTES TO MR. PARKER'S PAPER
ON
"THE ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS OF WELLS,"

BY MR. THOMAS SEREL.

¹ THE PALACE.

(From an old MS.)

"Bishop Barlow sold the Palace to the Duke of Somerset, upon whose attainder it came to S^r John Gates, who sold the lead and timber to the almost ruin of all, but totally of the Great Hall. He was a great Puritan and afterwards beheaded for joining Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, against the Queen. He destroyed an elegant Chaple, built by Bp. Stillington for his own monument, near the Cloysters, for the sake of the materials, so that there is no part of it left. Cornelius Burgis, afterwards, in the time of the Rebellion, got possession and stripped it, sold the materials of the whole, except the Gatehouses, which he let out to poor people. It continued in this ruinous state until the Restoration."

This sale to the Duke was made in 1550, and confirmed by the Dean and Chapter 29th December, 1550. The Manors of Wells and Westbury, the Hundred of Wells and Wells Forum, and Westbury Park, were included in the sale. There is an exception out of the grant of collations to dignities, prebends, and other benefices, the gift of Canons' houses and Close Hall. The money paid by the Duke was £400, with a grant of the Deanery House for the Bishop's residence. It is said that the purchase money originally agreed to be paid by the Duke of Somerset to Bishop Barlow was £2,000, but the Duke cheated the Bishop out of £1,600, making it up, in part, by the grant of the Deanery House, &c.

The 6th August, 6 Ed. VI., the Bishop recovered possession of the Palace, &c., and part of the arrangement was that the Bishop should give up the Deanery House, &c., and surrender a lease of Sharpham Park, &c.

THE CHAPTER HOUSE.

The Chapter House appears to have been granted to Dr. Cornelius Burges, as shown by the following extract from an old MS. in my possession :—

“The Chapter House was granted to Doctor Burges, Per Verbum Messuagium, and therefore they would infer it was no part of the Church.”

The MS. referred to is indorsed

“17 Junij 1650.

My deposition touchinge the Chapter house.”

The MS. relates to certain disputes as to the building the Chapter House, and the purposes for which it was erected.

THE DEANERY.

From a MS. in Dean Creswicke's writing.

“Edw ^d 3rd 1350	}	Dean Charleton builds the Deanery
61		(none of which is now remaining) and
1472	}	Dean Gunthorpe builds the Tower and
98		West Front, and improves the whole,
1497		where, after the defeat of Perkin War-
		beck, Henry the Seventh was entertained.”

The fact of the visit of Henry VII. to Wells is confirmed by a Record in the proceedings of the Corporation of Wells, under date 30th Sept., 1497, which may be thus rendered in English :—

“Item. On the same day after the hour of the reception of the said Lord Bishop, the aforesaid Nicholas Trappe and the Burgesses received the most serene Prince our Lord Henry the Seventh, by the Grace of God King of England, France, and Aquitaine, who came with ten thousand men in arms against a certain Perkyn Warbek, a rebel, and other rebels against the said Lord the King in the Counties of Cornwall and Devon, and others at Taunton, then being.”

The Bishop referred to is Bishop Oliver King, and this was the first time he came to Wells, though he succeeded in 1495. Nicholas Trappe was the Mayor and he was sworn on the same day.

The Bishop being non-resident and the Dean resident, it is probable that the Palace was not in a proper state to receive the King, who therefore went to the Deanery. The tradition as to the King having been entertained at the Deanery, there is good reason for assuming, is founded on fact.

The house on the east side of the Deanery was formerly the residence of the Chancellor of the Church of Wells. On a stone mantle-piece in the house could be seen, about 150 years ago, these words, "Ric'us Edgeworthe, Cancellarius, 1557." The Chancellor's house is now on the east side of the Vicars' Close. Early in the reign of James I. a house on the east side of the Deanery was occupied by Paul Methuen, and another on the west by George Upton, Esq., M.P. for Wells. Both these were then added to the Deanery; that is to say, the present eastern wing was added about this time, where there had only been a wall before, thus completing the quadrangle, with a small court in the centre, since unfortunately covered over and spoiled. The house on the west side must have been always a distinct building, as at present.

The Deanery House has been enlarged by several successive Deans. In the reign of Edward III. the King confirmed a gift of Bishop Ralph's to John Carleton, then Dean, of a house adjoining the Deanery, then much out of repair.

The Deanery of Wells was surrendered to the King by Dean Fitz Williams, with the Manors of Mark, Modesley, Wedmore and More, the hundred of Bempstone, &c., with the Rectory of Mark, More, and Prebend of Biddisham, the Vicarage of Mark and More, &c. Deed dated 16th March, 1 Edward VI.

Soon after this an Act of Parliament was passed, ostensibly for constituting a new Deanery, but really to confirm and strengthen the sacrilegious surrender.

The Act of Parliament here referred to was passed in the Parliament begun 4th November, 1 Edward VI., and continued to 24th December following. The Act contains curious particulars relating to the Deanery, as well as the Archdeaconry.

16 March, 1 Edw. VI.—Dean Fitz Williams surrendered the Deanery and its possessions to the King.

Parl. began 4 Nov., continued to 24 Dec., 1 Edw. VI. Act of Parliament recites that the late Archdeacon and Dean, by their several deeds (the Archdeacon 26 Dec., 38 Hen. VIII., the Dean 16 March, 1 Edw. VI.), granted to the King the Archdeaconry and Deanery, to hold to him, his heirs and successors; by which the dignities of Archdeacon and Dean were absolutely extinct. The Act confirms these arrangements and creates a new Deanery, with usual corporate privileges, and a stall in the Quire of the Cathedral, &c.

By this Act the new Deanery was made up of the Prebend of Curry, the Archdeaconry of Wells, the Provostship, and the Subchantership,—the Archdeaconry being extinguished, and it so continued united to the Deanery until 1556, when Bishop

Gilbert Bourne petitioned Queen Mary to restore the Archdeaconry to its ancient state which it was in before its dissolution consequent on Polydore Vergil's resignation; and to legalize this, May 10, 1556, Queen Mary, by her charter, new founded and endowed the Archdeaconry of Wells, and enabled the Bishop and his successors to collate to it as formerly.

The dealings between Bishop Barlow, the Duke of Somerset, and the King, &c., I need not refer to, as they are, of course, well known.

Jan. 7th, 1547.—The King granted the Deanery, as newly created, to John Godman, who was deprived in 1550 and restored in 1553, and again deprived in 1560.

24 Nov., 34 Eliz.—Queen Elizabeth's charter to the Dean and Chapter of Wells recites that "on account of the diversity of titles of the Dean and Chapter" appearing in the charters of her predecessors, it was no incorporation, and if it were, alleging nevertheless that on account of the surrender of Wm. Fitz Williams, late Dean, and the Act of Parliament of Edw. VI., the same was dissolved; the Queen (*inter alia*) created the dignity or office of Dean, to be for ever called "the Deanery of the Cathedral Church of Wells.

The first Dean, as named in the charter, is "John Harbert, Master of the Requests."

The Queen also grants to said John Harbert, Dean, the Prebend of Currie, with usual corporate powers, &c.; and to the Dean and Chapter, the Cathedral, &c., the Canonical Houses, then occupied by the Canons Residentiary. To the Dean, also, (*inter alia*) "all that Messuage with the appurtenances, in Wells, aforesaid, now in the tenure or occupation of John Harbert or his assigns, which Valentine Dale, late Dean of the Cathedral Church, aforesaid, in right of his Deanery had held or enjoyed," &c.

From a MS. History of the Cathedral.

The Duke of Somerset having obtained a Grant of (*inter alia*) the Deanery house, with the Gardens, &c., attached, at first settled upon the Bishop (who had been compelled to give up his Palace, the Deanery House, &c.), and then for the Bishop's maintenance, &c., he also settled on the Bishop the Manor of West Coker, with the Advowson thereof, the Borough and Hundred of Wellington, Stogursey, Wedmore, Park, the Vicarage of Mark, all of the annual value of 60*l.* 2*s.* 11*d.*, besides a yearly rent of 17*l.* issuing out of the Manor of Glastonbury, and also a lease for certain years (if the Bishop's wife Agatha and his son William should live so long) of the Lodge and Park of Sharpham, near Glastonbury.

This Settlement is dated at Wells, 2nd December, 4 Edward VI.

Dr. Cornelius Burges refused to give up the Deanery to Dean Creyghton (after the Restoration) and forced the Dean to bring an action of ejection, and to proceed to trial. Before he would give it up he printed and published his "Case," wherein he justified his buying Church Lands by alleging that he had lent the State £3,400, and having a wife and ten children to provide for he took such lands, &c., as the only means of repayment. It is said that Burges was a "Sot," and was so unwise as to refuse an offer of £10,000, made by Desborough about six months before the Restoration, for the Deanery, Manor, &c., of Wells, &c., &c. Burges, it is said, died (of canker and ulcers in his throat and mouth) in gaol where he had been put by the Corporation of Wells; the result of a lawsuit respecting some of the Bishop's possessions, which had been purchased by the Corporation.

As to this account there is evidently some truth. It is certain that lawsuits did take place between Dr. Burges and the Corporation. There are numerous receipts and disbursements in the Receiver's Book, examples of which here follow:—

"RECEIPTS.

1654-5	And of nine pounds disbursed by me in my travell to London in Trinitie Terme last about D'tor Burges	} ix ^l
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PAYMENTS.

1655-6	P'd to Mr. Standishe, by order, for the defence of the House about D'tor Burges at several times this yeare	} cxxx ^l
1657-8	P'd Mr. Smith and Mr. Salmon for £20 w'ch Mr. Mead rec ^d of Mr. Byrt against the time of the Tryall w th D'tor Burges,	} £20

RECEIPTS.

1661-2	And of Mr. Thomas, whoe rec'd an execucon levy'd on D'tor Cornelius Burges in Trin. 1657	} £80
	And for chardge in law against him already paid "	} £10

During Dr. Burges's residence in the Deanery he was appointed "Preacher" at the Cathedral. His sermons were not agreeable to the citizens, who annoyed him by walking up and down the cloisters "all sermon time." In 1652 he complained to the County Justices, in Quarter Sessions assembled, and an order was made that the Constables of the Liberty of

St. Andrew should stop the disturbance. In the order Burges is called "Cornelius Burges, Doctor of Divinity," and it is said of him that he had been appointed "by authority of Parliament to preach the Word of God in the late Cathedral Church of St. Andrew, in Wells."

King James, by deed of Confirmation to Benjamin Heyden, Dean, reciting Act of Parliament creating new Deanery, &c., sets forth that there had been added to the Deanery two houses, one on east side, then lately occupied by Paul Methuen.* Another on west side, then lately occupied by George Upton, Esq.†

CORNELIUS BURGES, &c.

The sacrilegious sale of Church property in Wells, including the Palace and Deanery to that fatanical puritan, Dr. Cornelius Burges, is well known.

The following extracts are from the Book of the General Receiver of the Corporation under date 1659‡—

"RECEIPTS

"Of Cornet Sam ^l Bridges for his second and last payment of his fine of £150 for his house wherein he himself inhabiteth in the Libertie, late Doct ^r Smith's, besides the interest due ever since the 30th of June, 1658, after the rate of sixe pounds per cent. for his £100	} £100 0 0
"Of Mr. Humph. Cordwent for his second payment of his fine for the house late call'd Doct ^r Webber's house in the Libertie, payable at Midsūmer, one thousand sixe hundred & fifty nine"	} £61 0 0

* Paul Methuen is named in Queen Elizabeth's Charter as Prebendary of Coomb 11th.

† This George Upton was M.P. for Wells in 1585 and 1601. He and his family afterward lived at the fine old mansion, at Wormister, one of the Wells Prebendal Estates.

‡ In recording the settlement of the account of the General Receiver the Corporation allowed him £5 extra for his "greater care and paynes taken about the Canons' Houses, and about the Estreats."

By a note in the margin of the book it appears that £10 17s. 0d. had been received for goods sold out of the late "Canons' Houses."

³ The Corporation of Wells obtained from Cromwell's Commissioners five of the Canons' houses, viz:—

- 1.—Dr. Wood's.
- 2.—Dr. Ward's.
- 3.—Dr. Walker's.
- 4.—Dr. Godwyn's.
- 5.—Dr. Smith's.
- 6.—Dr. Young's.

The Corporate body dealt with these houses as their own, in the following manner:—

- No. 1.—Let at Rack Rent.
 „ 2.—Ditto ditto
 „ 3.—Granted on Lease to Humphrey Cordwent, of Wells, who paid to the Corporation a fine of £85.
 „ 4.—Let at Rack Rent.
 „ 5.—Granted on Lease to “Cornett Samuel Bridges,” of Wells, who paid to the Corporation a fine of £150.
 „ 6.—Let at Rack Rent.

It is certain that one, if not two, of these Canons' houses, so obtained by the Corporation, was pulled down, and the materials sold to divers persons in the neighbourhood. The names of the purchasers and the sums received are all entered in the Receiver's Book. The following are examples of these receipts:—

	£	s.	d.
Rec ^d of sev ^r all p ['] sons for stones	2	2	2
Rec ^d of sev ^r all p ['] sons for tile	1	1	8
Rec ^d of Jn ^o Amer for 2000 of tiles	1	5	8
Rec ^d of Mr. Sam ^l Reed for stones and timber ..	3	8	6
Rec ^d for freestone windowes		15	0
Rec ^d of Mr. Bord, of Croscombe, for timber ..	3	0	0
Rec ^d of Rich ^d Brocke for timber	3	0	0
Rec ^d of John Greenslade for freestones		6	0

Besides these sales of old materials, the Corporation also sold a considerable quantity of household furniture, left by the Canons when they were forcibly turned out of their houses by the Commissioners, as the following extracts will prove:—

By a memorandum at the end of the Receiver's Account for the year 1658-9, it appears that he owed to the Corporation a balance of 16*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.* On settling, the Corporate body allowed him “for his greate care and paynes taken for them the last yeare abowt the Cannons' Howses and abowte the Estreates,” 5*l.*; and then comes another “allowance.”—“M^{d.} At the day of this acc^t, Mr. Barrett the Receyv^r brought in another

acc^t for Goods soul'd by him out of the Cannons' Howses, w'ch came to 10*l.* 17*s.* 10*d.*, w'ch was likewise p'd over to Mr. Thomas the p'sent Gen'all Recyv'r. He alsoe broughte in a Noate of Goods w'ch he hath taken to his owne use, w'ch came to 27*s.*, w'ch the Howse did likewise allow him for his care and paynes."

THE ARCHDEACONRY.

Polydore Vergil, who is well known as the author of several books, amongst others a treatise *de Inventoribus Rerum* and a history of the reigns of Hen. VI., Edw. IV., and Rich. III., was collated to the Archdeaconry of Wells early in 1508 on the King's nomination, to whom the right had been granted by the Bishop, Adrian de Castello, a relative of Vergil. This man was remarkable in many respects, particularly as a confidante and one of the earliest tools of Wolsey.

His official residence in Wells was the house opposite the north porch of the Cathedral,—a spacious mansion, well befitting so high a dignitary of the Church.

In 1550 Polydore obtained the King's license to reside abroad, on the ground of his great age and infirmities, though the same instrument allowed him to retain the profits of his Archdeaconry. At this time he is said to have sold his house at Wells, but by what authority does not appear, and since then it has continued severed from the Church. In a memoir prefixed to a reprint of Polydore's history of the reigns of the three kings before mentioned, published by the Camden Society, is the following note:—

"Newcourt says he sold the perpetuity of the house at Wells at this time, which belonged to the Archdeaconry."

The house in question has been much altered and modernized. The chief author of this is said to have been Mr. Peter Taylor, father of the late, and grandfather of the present Sir Charles Taylor. This was done chiefly for electioneering purposes, the house being used as a kind of assembly room and place of meeting for the political supporters of the Taylor and Tudway interest. After the influence of these parties had somewhat failed the house became the residence of a brewer and still continues so. In electioneering phraseology the house was usually known as "The Salt Box."

After the original archidiaconal residence had passed from the Church, the Archdeacon had a house which stood on or near the site of the present Town Hall at Wells. This house was sold to the Corporation of Wells in 1779 for £700 consols, under the authority of a local Act of Parliament. The house

was taken down soon after to make way for the Town Hall. The yearly dividends of the £700 are still paid to the Archdeacon for the time being.

The Surrender was made to Henry VIII. about a month before the King's death. The Deed of Surrender is, or was, in the Augmentation Office, and is dated 26th December, 37 Henry VIII. It begins "Omnibus Xti fidelibus, &c., Polydorus Vergilius Archidiaconus Wellensis," &c.

Notes and Queries, Vol. 1, Third Series, p. 55.

Extracts from a Law Bill of Mr. B. Cox, formerly Town Clerk of Wells:—

Mich's 7, Car. I.

"For searching the First fruits office for the Archdeaconry of Welles and the p'ticulars of the Corp.	} iij ^s iiij ^d
For two Conslats or Composic'ons for the said Archdeaconry—one for Mr. Rugg, the second for Mr. D'cor Wood	} ciiij ^s iiij ^d
For searching for L'res Patent made vnto Polidor Virgill for life, of the Archdeaconry	} j ^s iiij ^d
For view of the Patent made vnto Polidor Virgill to absent himselfe from the Archdeaconry & to travell beyond the seas	} j ^s iiij ^d
For the search of the two Surrenders of Polidor Virgill w'ch was 26 th Decemb'r an ^o 38 H. 8"	} j ^s iiij ^d

THE CHORISTERS.

One of the statutes of Bishop Bekynton orders that the Choristers, when they rise in the morning, shall wash and dress, and go without noise into the school, and wait the Master, or Sub-Master, who was to instruct them according to their several voices in plain song, and those who served in the Choir were to be at the school until 11 o'clock, &c. As to their behaviour in "Hall," whether at time of refection, or dinner, or supper, they were to go into the Common Hall without noise, &c.

The Archdeaconry of Wells was restored to the Church by letters patent of Queen Mary. Dated 10th March, 3 Philip and Mary.

The Corporation of Wells contracted with Cromwell's Commissioners for the purchase of the Court of Record, the Royalty of the Borough, &c., &c., besides buying several of the Canons' houses, &c.

4 BUBWITH'S ALMSHOUSE.

The Hall at the western end of Bubwith's Almshouse was built by the executors of Bishop Bubwith, and given to the citizens of Wells as a Guildhall. In the record of certain disputes between the Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Corporation of Wells (15 Henry VII.), it is said :—

“And in the xvth yere of Kinge Henry the VIth the executors of the goode Lorde Bysshoppe Bubwith bilded a newe Hall oonlye for the Meetynges, Assemblyes, and Besynesses of the said Burgess's, and for ther synguler plesour, by the curteyes assente of the late ther righte goode lorde Bysshoppe Stafforde, whoes sowle God reste.”

The meetings of the corporate body and the Parliamentary Elections, &c., were held in this hall until about 1779, when the new Town Hall was built.

The original Statutes of the Hospital required that the revenues of the establishment should be placed in a common chest with three locks and keys ; one to be kept by the Mayor of Wells, another by the Chaplain, and the third by one of the Chapter of Wells. The Chest now to be seen at the Almshouse is probably the same as that originally provided in pursuance of the statute here referred to. The chest stands on a frame-work of wood, and at each end there are four lines of doggrel poetry referring to the Almshouse of Bishop Still. The initials H. S. are on one end, and the date 1615 on the other. The initials are probably those of Henry Southworth, Esq., who was a man of much local influence in Wells about that time. He was the donor of the east window of the Library over the Chapel at the north end of the Vicar's close.
