

Extracts from a Manuscript belonging to the Parish of
Morebath, Devon.

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BELONGING to the parish of Morebath there is a MS., ostensibly a record of church expenses; it is on paper, foolscap size, and has been rudely bound, but is now in detached batches of folios, mixed together in no regular sequence. By far the greater part of it is in very fair preservation, and quite legible: the writing is "Court" hand.

Its great interest consists in—

- (a) Its period—1520—to end of century.
- (b) Its having been written for some 50 years by one hand.
- (c) Its quaint illustrations of the religious, civil, and social life of the time, by means of
- (d) Its many by-records and allusions, not immediately connected with its ostensible purpose.

The following extracts, some in facsimile spelling, others in modernised spelling, are mere samples, which might be greatly multiplied, especially in respect of illustrations of the various changes in the matter of worship, church equipment, vestments, etc., that prevailed in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII, and in the reigns of Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth.

1520. Orate pro animabus sequentibus.

NOTA BENE.

Me^m Y^t here after schall y^e see and knoo how y^s church

was p'vayled by y^e dethe of all those psons; y^t here after ys exp'ssyd by name; y^e wyche all and synguler gefts was gewyn and bequeuyd unto ys Churche, syn y Sir Xofer Trychay was made vicar here; y^e wyche was an^o d^m 1520 et 30 die mensis Augusti et in eo an^o dextera d^m exaltavit me: cujus animæ propicietur Deus, amen, orate.

[Then follows the list of gifts, from which the examples below are selected; the spelling being modernised.]

1523.

Margaret Lake gave to this Church in wax 5s. I^t She gave again a Altar cloth to S^t Sidwell's Altar, and a basin of Latyn to set light on afore S^t Sidwell; price of all 2s.

1529.

Thomas Tricky of Culmstock gave unto the store of John, and to the store of S^t Sidwell, a swarm of bees, to maintain a taper before them, the which bees resteth now in John Morse's keeping at the Half Moon, and John Morse shall find the butts.

1529.

Eleanor Nicholl gave to the store of John a little silver cross parcel gilt, of value 4d.

She gave again to the store of S^t Sidwell her wedding ring in value 8d., the which ring did help make S Sidwell's shoes.

[The list includes gifts to the stores of—S^t George, our Lady, S^t John, S^t Sidwell, and S^t Anthony.]

1529.

Keziah Timewell bequeathed her best gown to help to buy a new image of our Lady, for the which gown was received 4s.

1531.

I^t Of the bequest of Catherine Robins a pair of beads

of curryll [coral] double gawded with amber of 15, set with a (*sic*) 11 silver paternosters, and a ring like a hoop, the which beads must hang upon the new image of our Lady every high day, by her mind.

[The following are entries in the ordinary accounts.]

1531.

It To Thomas Glass for a full payment of his Five pounds for our Lady I have paid him twenty shillings, as now we be at a clear point with him that he shall make us a new George and a new horse to our dragon to his own proper cost and charge, and we to fetch our patent where we will, and for the making of these he shall have our George again and 13s. 4d. of money, and if he do well his part he shall have of us 15s. when it is done and set up.

PETER'S PENCE. Peter his penny is thus gathered.

Thus Peter his penny is gathered, as thus, every householder doth pay $\text{öb. } [\frac{1}{2}\text{d.}]$ and every cotter doth pay $\text{qđrans } [\frac{1}{4}\text{d.}]$ and in this parish there be five cotters dwellings and no more, that is Harry Hurley and William Sceley and Lewis Trickey, John Nickoll and John Don, and all other be place holders. now if there be a dweller at Brokholle the sum of this aforesaid gathering is $15\frac{1}{4}\text{d.}$, and if there be no dweller at Brokholle, the sum is $14\frac{3}{4}\text{d.}$, whereof there is paid at the visitation $13\frac{1}{2}\text{d.}$, and sic restat for the gathering $1\frac{3}{4}\text{d.}$, if Brokhole do pay and if Brokhole do not pay there resteth but $1\frac{1}{4}\text{d.}$

[The following is the heading of a page of "our Lady's" account.]

Adsit nobis pia nunc sancta virgo maria.

[Mem^m There were stores of Sheep, at these (foregoing) dates, belonging to our Lady, S^t Sydwell, S^t Anthony; and perhaps more. These sheep were held by various men in trust,

and an account rendered of them yearly; with reference to which may be quoted the following.]

NOTE.

Sent

Sydwyll	Sent Sydwyll ys scheppe have a nevyll
ys scheppe	apon y ^e furder ere and ob apon y ^e same.
ys merk.	

[And again.]

NOTA BENE.

M^{dun} that y^e scheppe of y^e store of John ys full in our laydy merke: and to y^t they have agayne a ob a pon y^e nere ere in seculum seculi, a^{me}.

1534. [There are two or three records like the following.]

NOTE.—y^e stelyng of y^e chalys of y^s Church: y^t was y^eere of owr lorde 1534.

M^{dun} y^t yn y^s forsayd ere y^e xx day of November - hoc esset (*sic*) in festo Sancti edmundi Regis and Martiris y^e wyche was a pon a fryday and bytwyxt y^t fryday and y^e Saterdag a theff w^t a ladder gat up a pon y^s church and pullyd up y^e ladder after hem and sett y^e ladder to y^e tower wyndow and bryck uppe y^t windoo and so gate yn to y^e bells. and fro y^e bells came a downe yn to y^e church and w^t a fyre box strake fyre and to proffe y^s he lefth hys yre y^t he strake fyre w^t all by hynd hem: and was fownd: and then bruke oppe y^e stok coffer: and y^e wother grett coffer: and tok a way y^e challis y^t was yn y^e stok and sent Sydwyll ys schow of sylver and no nother thyng: and so gat owt to y^e quire dore: and pullyd y^e quyre dore after hem: So a pon y^s y^e yong men and maydyns of y^s parysse dru them selffe to gethers and w^t there gefts and provysyon the bofth yn a nother challis w^t ow^t ony chargis of y^e parysse: as hyt ys here after expressed and schowyd by a cownt: bothe of y^e valure of y^e challis and also of y^e gefts.

[Then follow the names and contributions—81 in number—the total amount collected being 30s. and a ½d.]

[There are many interesting entries about vestments, etc., in the time of Edward VI and Mary.]

[Here is a curious entry, the spelling modernised.]

NOTE, that we received by the death of Johanna Rumbelow, widow, to a new image of our lady, the which image was her executor with us wardens: as is expressed before upon her testament—summa xix^s by her death.

[The will and inventory of goods, with prices, are given.]

[In 1538 are entries—]

It for y^e churche boke callyd y^e bybyll, xiii^s and iiij^d

It for y^e boke of y^e new testment in iglis and yn latyn, iij^s

It for a boke to wrytt there namys yn y^t be cristenyd or weddyd or buryed a cording to y^e Kynggs injuncons, xij^d

[There are also entries about this time of tiles, brought from Barlynche, spelt “barlye,” and also of a window, stone work, iron gear, and all.]

[Here is an entry at present unexplained.]

The contents of the bill for buying of the clappers.

This bill was made 27 day of June in the 5 year of our sovereign lord Edward the 6, by the grace of God of England France and Ireland King, defender of the faith, and of the church of England and Ireland in earth the supreme head: Witnessed that we John Courtney Esquire and Edward Ford gentleman have received of John Norman and Thomas Myll and Edward Rumbelow, 26s 8d, for the bell clappers of Morebath, with the whole furniture appertaining unto the said bells, to the use of Sir Arthur Champernon, Knight, and John Chechester, Esquire, to them given by the King's majesty his letters patent: in witness whereof we have subscribed our name the day and the year above written;

By me, John Courtney.

By me, Edward Ford.

We gave Rumbelow x^s in the buying of them for his father-in-law's sake.

[There is mention also of an apparently unknown saint.]

1538.

Moreover hereafter followeth y^e Count of the store of Sent Sunday, ye which John Norman at Court is yearly warden of:

PRIMO—RECEIPTS.

Mem^m, that this last year then rested in John Norman's hands, xxiiij^d

And to this he hath received for the wool of this year of this foresaid store, j^s and iiij^d

Also he received again for his ewe and her lamb of this year, and for a ram hog that came from Robt. at Hayne, and for Robt. at Hayne his ewes lamb of this year, for all these iiij he received, iij^s and iiij^d

Also John Norman hath in his keeping as yet, A ewe hog, and a ewe that came from Robt. at Hayne, and as for John at Court's ewe and her lamb, was sold—ut predixi—Richard Norman hath a wether in his keeping.

Thomas Borrage a wether is gone I wyne (ween)

Robt. at Hayne's ewe is delivered to John at Court, and her lamb and the ram hog was sold ut predictum est.

Summa totalis Rec: is vere, vij^s and vij^d

unde, he asketh allowance as hereafter foloweth pro expenses.

PRIMO.

I^t for iiij schepyn lesse [? sheep lost], xij^d

I^t for wax and wick and making for the whole year, vj^d

Summa xviiij. This cost allowed then resteth still in John Norman's ward clear, (one of the iiij men), vj^s and j^d ann. et die predic, and for this money the iiij men shall count hereafter, and our lady warden shall count for these sheep and all other sheep concerning the church in future.

NOTE.—let all the Church sheep in future be put in our lady mark full, what store so ever they be of.

[A RETROSPECTIVE SUMMARY.]

Anno dom. 1548 was high warden of this Church Lucy

Scely: And by her time the church goods was sold away without commission (ut patet postea) and no gifts given to the church, but all fro the church.

1553.

And thus it continued fro Lucy's time unto Richard Cruce: And fro Cruce unto Richard Hucley: And fro Hucley unto Richard Robyns: And fro Robyns unto Robyn at More: And by all these men's time the which was by the time of King Edward the vj, the church ever decayed: And then died the King: and queen mary's grace did succeed: and how the church was restored again by her time, here after this ye shall have knowledge of it: and in this last year of the King: and in the first year of the Queen was Lewis Trickay high warden.

1549. VESTMENTS AND COPES.

Mem^m that in eodem die there rested with John Norman at Court a Suit of black vestments of Fustain naps, and a cope concerning the same, q^d. iterum deliveravit ecclesiæ.

W^m at Comb habet the suit of white vestments.

Nicolus at Hayne habet the vestment of red velvet and the altar cloth of red satin.

Thomas Rumbelow habet the Lent vestments of blue.

I^t the cope of red velvet and the cope of blue satin restant nunc in ecclesiâ.

John Norman at pool habet the streamer and the banner rolled in a altar cloth, and the blue vestments restant nunc in ecclesiâ.

Will^m Hurley habet the black pall of satin.

1552. NOTA BENE.

That in anno predicto John at Court, Will^m at Co^me, John at Borston and Lewis Trickay, did deliver unto M^r Gawyn Carow at Exeter and to Antony Harny and M^r Hache, a cope of blue satin, another cope of red velvet with splede egyptys of gold, a blue velvet tunicle with splede egyptys, a silken tunicle of blue with broncs (*sic*) of

gold, a pax of silver of iiij ounces and half parcel gilt and the paten of the less chalice of ij ounces and half, and this was all the church goods that they had in anno predicto.

[A heading of the annual account in 1554, in original spelling.]

1554.

The cownte of Jone morsse wydow, and Thomas at Tyme-well beyng hye wardyngs of y^e goodds and y^e catyll of Sent iorge of morebath yn y^e yere of owr lord god 1554; and yn y^e furste yere of y^e Rayne of kyng Phelyppe ys mageste; and in y^e secund yere of ye Rayne of quyne marys grace; kyng and quyne of ynglonde, fransse, napylls, jurusalem, and yerlonde, defenders of y^e fayrthe, prynces of spayne and cecill, archduke of austria, duke of melion, burgoine and brabande, cownteyes of hospurch, flawnders, and tyroll; madyn y^e Sunday a pon alhallow day.

[There are at least three instances of a woman being "high-warden."]

[There are many regularly recurring entries of church ales; as:

It we made freely of our church ale all cost quit,—iiij marks v^s and j^d

[There was a great controversy about the payment of the clerk, the account of the squabble occupying four closely-written pages.]

NOTE,—y^e clerkescheppe of morebath.

[Spelling modernised].

Mem^m, that anno Do^m 1531 at Michaelmas, Sir Christopher Trickay that time being Vicar here, and this parish they could not agree for a clerk, by cause the clerk could not have his duty, therefore the Vicar at that time would find them no clerk no longer, where upon the Vicar and this Parish did so agree that the order of the clerkship was put unto the Vicar

and to v men chosen by the Parish, and as these v men and the Vicar could agree upon the clerkship, so the Parish would be contented to perform the same, so upon this at last the Vicar and these v men were thus agreed; that fro thence forth for the love of god and to increase the more love in his parishioners, the Vicar was contented to find them a clerk as he had done before, and the clerk should be charged with nothing, but to keep one chalice and the key of the Church door as he will keep his own, thus were we agreed.

Item, moreover again; these v men did thus agree; that fro thence forth when service is done, within half an hour after the clerk, or one for him shall knock the church dore, and if there be any persons within the church when he doth knock, and if they will not come forth then by and by, but they will tarry still within the church, whereupon at last peradventure when they come forth they let stand ope the church door all the night after; and if any such fortune there be whereby the church do take any hurt, the pain and the jeopardy shall rest to them, and not to the clerk, that do remain in the church afterward the clerk hath knocked the church door.

Moreover again, we were thus agreed; that fro thence forth the clerk shall have j^d a quarter of every householder.

Item, again we were thus agreed; that the clerk here after this shall have his hire meat at easter of every householder when he doth inquire for it.

Item, again we be thus agreed; that fro thence forth the clerk shall have a stitch of clean corn of every householder, and for lack of clean corn to pay one stitch of such as he hath, and if he have no corn then shall he pay iiij^d yearly for his stitch; and a cotter ij^d and no more.

Moreover again, because business hath been often times in payment of this stitch in times past, therefore now we be thus agreed, that fro thence forth when the clerk doth send for his stitch he shall have him, and if he be cut, and if the clerk be

not served when he doth come for his stitch, the owner of that corn shall keep the clerk his stitch safe till the clerk do send for him again, and if it be hurted when the clerk doth come for it again, then it shall be to the clerk his pleasure whether he will take the stitch that is set out for him, or else to leave the stitch, and the owner of the corn shall pay him *iiij^d* if rye be above *vij^d* a bushel, and if it be under *vij^d* a bushel he shall pay the clerk *ij^d* for hurting of his stitch, so now upon all these points is the Vicar and these *v* men full agreed; and these *v* men have promised unto the Vicar substantially that they will see the clerk truly paid of all such duties as is expressed before without any trouble or vexation. *an^o et die predict.*

These be the *v* mens names—William Tymewell at wood, Richard Raw, John Norman at Court, Richard Hucley, and Thomas Norman.

[The controversy arose again five years afterwards, and another award was made, as follows.]

NOTE, that here followeth a fresh ward upon the clerkship of morebath, maden by Mr John Sydenham and by 3 men of the Parish chosen for the same cause, and by the consent of the whole parish; that was W^m Tymewell at Wood, and John Norman at Court, and Rich^d Hucley.

Mem^m, that An^o Do^m 1536 at Michaelmas time, Will^m ledon would not pay his stitch of corn unto the clerk according to the ward that was made by *v* men of this parish an^o do^m 1531 at michaelmas time (as it appeareth upon the book of accounts the same year *ut supra*), and also Will^m Scely and Brochole when they had no corn they would not pay the *iiij^d* for a stitch according to the ward; nother the two cotters at Exbridge did not pay their quarterlage truly unto the clerk, but they *ij* householders at Exbridge paid *ij^d* for their stitch truly eno once a year; both John Don and John Nicholl also, according to the ward of the *v* men, and also according to the

ward of Sir W^m Trystram some time Vicar of Bawnton, and by John Norman at Wood; whereupon now for lack of true payment the Vicar that found the parish a sufficient clerk before that time would not meddle no more with the clerkship, by cause he could not have his duty truly paid without displeasure taken of his parishioners. Wherefore to avoid their displeasure the Vicar warned out the clerk at Christmas following after the date of this present writing, desiring the parish whole to be contented to provide them a new clerk, again our lady at lent then following for he would meddle no more with it. So upon this our lady day being upon palm Sunday was come, and clerk the parish had provided none; whereupon for lack of a clerk again that busy time of Easter, the parish universal desired the Vicar that he would find them a clerk till little Easter day then following upon a better provision; and so did he at their desire. And when that day was come, communication was had and they could not agree about a clerk; whereupon it was put forth at Visitation the thursday following thoo [then] at Uplummon (Where as our authority was granted out at that time; that iiij honest men chosen by the whole parish should rule and govern the parish in all causes concerning the wealth of the church, as it appeareth upon the Count book, an^o predicto, under the official his seal). Upon the which complaint, they were commanded that came at that visitation, (that was the Vicar Sir Christopher Tryckay, and John Norman at court, and harry hurley, warden, and Thomas Rumbelow that spelyd John Swyrth at that time) to go home and take and desire M^r John Sydenham unto them, and all such order as M^r John Sydenham and iiij men of the parish by the whole parish elected do make upon the clerkship, the Vicar and the parish shall be contented withal. Upon this there was a fresh day set of communication to be had, that was in vigiliâ Stⁱ Georgii being upon a Sunday, and so at that day came together M^r John Sydenham and Matthew the Sumner, and asked of every man of the parish by name, whether they would

be contented to choose iiij men of the parish, and all such order as M^r Sydenham and these four men do make upon the clerkship the rest to be contented withal, (now how say ye to this ye parishioners they said). Upon this they said they were contented, whereupon the iiij men were chosen by the whole parish that should see a order taken, with M^r Sydenham's advisement, upon the clerkship (the which iiij men were the same self persons that were chosen afore: and admitted by the ordinary to rule and govern the church goods, as is expressed upon the book of account and under the ordinarys authority); and when these men were all chosen then was the parishioners whole examined again to kown their minds whether they would be contented to bide all such order as M^r John Sydenham and these four men do make or no; and there were xxvj in one part that was contented that M^r Sydenham and these aforesaid iiij men should see an order taken upon the clerkship, and there was v men of the other part that would not be ordered by no man quæ (*sic*) essent Thomas Norman, Ric. Webber, Will^m Norman, and John at Borston. Wherefore at that time they could not agree about a clerk, in so much that we had no clerk tho at evensong following, neither the morrow that was sent jorge his day, for lack whereof the church was homely served that day, in so much that the morrow upon sent jorge his day, when the Vicar should say mass for mark's child at exbridge, tho mark was glad to go to John at Court to fetch the church door key and the chalice, and also he fette (*sic*) the old John Waterus to help the Vicar to mass, before he could have any mass said for his child, and all was for lack of a clerk. And when mass was done, we went to Will^m at Tymewells, to the betrothing of margyd Tymewell and Will^m Tayler, and there all that day we reasoned shamefully about our clerkship, in so much that mark and Will^m Leddon were a most by the ears for the same cause, by cause that Will^m Leddon had not brought home his corn before michaelmas, as well as he did the tuesday afore the Visitation (the which was half a bushel of rye and

the last peck by heap). So in conclusion the parish whole concluded there and said let us have a fresh day of communication and we will be ordered every one of us, whereupon they desired the Vicar to find them a clerk again till a fresh day of communication and at the parishioners desire so did he, till the Sunday afore rogation week : and in the mean space M^r Hugh Powlytt kept court at Morebath, and he exhorted these foresaid v persons, and so did M^r Hugh Stycly also, that they should be contented to be ordered as the most part of the parish were, and if they would not he would order them he said : so upon this there was a fresh day set, of communication to be had ; again the which day there was set out a citation to a cite all such persons as would not be ordered by M^r Sydenham and by the iij men, so in conclusion when the day was come that the matter should be reasoned again, the which was the Sunday afore rogation week as is expressed before, then was the parish singularly demanded again by name to know whether they would be contented that M^r Sydenham and iij of those men elected by the parish should see an order taken in the clerkship or no : (for the iijth man was sick that time that was Rob^t at Hayne) and they said yea, all that were in the church that time ; and there lacked no more that day but Will^m at Tymewell and Will^m Leddon and Will^m Scely : and by cause that every man was contented to bide the order of M^r John Sydenham and these iij men, the citation that was set was void, so upon this M^r Sydenham and these iij men at the parishioners instance took the matter in hand, and so with M^r Sydenham's advice this was the order that they did make, and so concluded and said ; that fro thence forth this shall be the clerk's duty by our award, to have (whatsoever he hath had afore this) to this intent, to have the more unity and peace among us, and to have this church the better served (thus it is) : primo, he shall have a stitch of clean corn of every house, where as there is corn upon the bargain, (as Brochole and one other more) and he that hath no clean corn shall pay a stitch of oats, and he that

hath no corn shall pay the clerk iiiij^d for his stitch, and ij^d a cotter, as it hath been in times past. And under this manner the clerk shall demand his stitch; once he shall come for him and if he be a ready, and if not he shall come again; and then if the stitch be not sufficient, he shall leave him till that some of the persons that made the ward do see the stitch, and then if the stitch be sufficient after their justment then the clerk shall fetch him, and if he be not sufficient then the clerk with out any business shall fetch a stitch with Richard Hucley, (if it be in the west part of the parish), and if it be in the east part of the parish he must fetch his stitch with John Norman at court: for these ij men be surety to the clerk, to see all his duty paid truly unto him that these men have ordered, without any trouble or vexation: and the whole parishioners hath made their answer unto these foresaid ij men, that they will wear them harmless, if any froward fellow will not pay his duty to the clerk according to this award. And also and if the clerk be warned to fetch his stitch and peradventure he can not come for him by and by, then the owner of the ground shall keep him till he come. Also he shall have j^d a quarter of every householder: And the clerk shall have at every wedding ij^d: Also at every corpse present and at every month's end that is sung by note, the clerk shall have ij^d: Also the clerk shall be charged with nothing saving only with one chalice and with the church door key, this for to keep and hide as he will do his own: Also he shall go about the parish with his holy water once a year when men have shorn their sheep, to gather some wool to make him coat to go in the parishioners livery: and here fore the clerk shall help the warden to make up the vestments and to dress the altars, etc. Also this year only for losing of his duty in times past, the parishioners shall help to drink him a cost of ale, the Sunday upon Trinity Sunday (et sic factum esset (*sic*) and ibi essent (*sic*) omnes, duntaxat Borston and Scely: Webber and Will^m norman. Also at every Easter hereafter the clerk shall gather his hire meat, and then the

parish shall help to drink him a cost of ale in the church house. And this is all the ward that Mr John Sydenham, and Will^m Tymewell at Wood, and John Norman at Court, and Richard Hucley, did make upon the Clerkship, an^o et die predicto, before the parisioners, and John Dysse then being bayly there under Mr Hugh Powlytt, and Matthew the Sumner, etc. In witnessing where of this note was made here upon this count book to testify truly the clerk his duty and our award to avoid all other unconvenience.
