

## INTRODUCTION

IN the course of an article on *The Benedictine Abbey of Westminster* in the *Church Quarterly Review*, April, 1907, Dr Armitage Robinson, now Dean of Wells, laid down the lines on which investigations into the history of the Abbey can be most profitably pursued. He paid to Richard Widmore<sup>1</sup> a tribute, to which every searcher among the Muniments will gladly subscribe. He pointed out how much was done by his great predecessor in the Deanery, Dr A. P. Stanley, to familiarise the English people by means of wonderful word-pictures with the innumerable occasions on which the Abbey church has been the scene of stately national functions, and the present writer may venture to add himself to the number of those who, having been children when Stanley was Dean, can now trace their first impression of what Westminster means to one of his vivid addresses at the annual children's service on Holy Innocents' Day.

But Stanley, as Dean Robinson rightly insisted (*op. cit.* p. 59), "had no kind of sympathy with the monks," whether the actual denizens of our Convent or the devotees of Benedictinism in general. His heart was with the kings and queens, the courtiers and statesmen, the men of arms and of the toga, whose bodies are buried in peace here, rather than with those whose lot was to offer incense, to prevent with their orisons the dawning of the morning, to make the darkness of the Abbey to be light by burning hundreds of candles round the tombs of the mighty, and in other ways so to commend the monastic vocation to the wealthy and to the powerful that the church and its surrounding buildings were gradually helped on to completion.

Now the question which the present instalment hopes to answer may be stated somewhat on this wise. The church of St Peter being in some respects the national ecclesiastical centre, it was natural for Kings and their craftsmen to glorify it, as Professor Lethaby<sup>2</sup> has shown, and for Abbots and their Brethren to labour at the finances and

The nature of  
the inquiry.

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Church of St Peter, Westminster, commonly called Westminster Abbey, chiefly from Manuscript Authorities.* By Richard Widmore, M.A., Librarian to the Dean and Chapter, and Author of *An Enquiry into the Time of the First Foundation of the Abbey.* London, 1751.

<sup>2</sup> *Westminster Abbey and the Kings' Craftsmen*, 1906.

the quarry-work of construction, as Mr Räckham<sup>1</sup> has shown; but what can be gathered about the Convent on its personal side? The Abbey was the home of monks as much as its church was the oratory of Kings. The Confessor and Henry III and Richard II and Henry V and Henry VI may at certain periods have continued instant in prayer, but priests must have ministered to their liturgical necessities. If so, who were these priests? The great Dormitory, again, still stands, though it is now divided in its service to the two semi-independent societies, the Chapter and the School; but can we not re-people it with the ancient occupants of its cubicles? There remains also the northern wall of the Refectory, and a little technical ingenuity would fashion that building anew for us and restore the tables and make the *skilla* tinkle for grace or for the reading of the lection; but who in a given year sat at the tables, and what was the total muster, when the last laggard had arrived at his accustomed seat at the board? The Great Cloister, as we know, served the purposes of a common-room, a school for novices, a play-centre, and the like; the signs of these things are still there; but who were the teachers and the taught and the players of the games? To these might be added certain actuarial and hygienic considerations. Was life in the monastery marked by its brief duration, or did many seem to “pass beyond the goal of ordinance”? What evidence is there as to the incidence of disease upon a society living out its life on a system that may fairly be described as non-natural? These and many other such lines of inquiry would be satisfied if we had an adequate list of our monks with the years of their entry and their decease.

Let us reckon up what *data* we already had. The actual heads of the house at any time,—the Abbots and the Priors,—could be fairly well ascertained, the latter less completely than the former. John Flete gives information, with a certainty which we cannot now support, about the dates at which the Abbots succeeded one another, but from the middle of the eleventh century onwards there is not much question about their names. Widmore<sup>2</sup> gives connected records of each of them, which always bear witness to his amazing knowledge of the Muniments; and Dr Robinson<sup>3</sup> has further defined and diminished the uncertainties as to some of Flete’s dates. Within limits, then, there is no doubt about the Abbots.

The Priors are more elusive, and no clearer witness could be borne to the thoroughness of Widmore’s investigations than that which is contained in the list of Priors (some with and some without

<sup>1</sup> *The Nave of Westminster*, British Academy Proceedings, Vol. IV; issued separately by the Oxford University Press. *Building at Westminster Abbey, from the Great Fire (1298) to the Great Plague (1348)*, Archaeological Journal, Vol. LXVII, No. 267; issued separately, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 1—128.

<sup>3</sup> *Flete*, p. 140 ff.

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dates), which he prints<sup>1</sup>, and of which he truly says that "it is fuller and more exact than what has been hitherto printed." The roll of Priors is liable to addition and correction at any time, as Dr Scott proceeds with his great work of describing and indexing the Muniments. For, up to the time when the rolls of the Chamberlain or of Queen Alianore's manors begin to contain full lists, we are dependent upon the miscellaneous documents that survive,—acquittances, leases, the collection or payment of tenths, and the like; though in most cases the name of the Prior is not given, but simply the corporate title of "the Prior and Convent." As a rule, the most that we have in the way of personal touch is an initial; thus the person of William de Huntyndon [q.v.] is concealed under the description "W Prior." Let us take him as an instance of the difficulty. It happens that we possess rather more than 70 documents that refer either to him by name or to the Prior during his tenure of that office. In his case the number is largely due to the fact that he (or, as is sometimes stated, he and the Convent) was commissary in the archdeaconries of London and Middlesex to Richard de Gravesend, Bishop of London, and Bartholomew de Ferentino, Canon of St Paul's<sup>2</sup>, the official collectors of the tenth imposed for three years by Boniface VIII. Widmore dates him as Prior in 1298, but we cannot trace his actual election, though we do know that it was by compromise<sup>3</sup>. Neither can we certainly date his decease. There are documents connected with the collection of the tenths which imply that he was alive in Feb. 1305. There is also a draft<sup>4</sup> of the protest addressed by Roger de Aldenham, after Prior Huntyndon's death, against the interference of Abbot Wenlok with the accepted custom of filling the vacancy, but the protest does not include a date. All we can show from the Muniments is that by Jul. 1307 Huntyndon's successor, Reginald de Hadham, had been both elected to the priorship by the Convent and deprived of it by Abbot Wenlok. It appears from *Flores Historiarum* (III, 129) that the election occurred on 2 Aug. 1305.

If we pass back to the twelfth century, when the business papers are more scarce, the difficulty of naming and dating the Priors is proportionately greater; often all that we know, as in the case of William Postard, is that such an one was Prior at the time of his election to the Abbacy. If, again, we pass on to the middle of the fourteenth century, we begin to have the help, such as it is, of the manorial lists and of those of the Chamberlain. In every case these lists begin with a payment of money or an assignment of clothing to Dominus Prior, but it is not till late in the fifteenth century that they give us the Prior's name. We have to detect his election by the disappearance of his name from its accustomed place in the list of monks, being careful to note that he is not included *inter mortuos*; that is, in a

<sup>1</sup> Appendix xviii, pp. 228—9.

<sup>2</sup> He held the prebend of Twyford. Hennessy, *Repertorium Londinense*, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 73, 92.

<sup>4</sup> *Mun.* 9508.

little group added at the end after a slight gap. Even so, we are without the day and the month of his election, and, failing any dated documents in which he is styled Prior, all we can say is that he had become so by the point of time in the autumn when the scrivener engrossed the compotus roll or when the obedientiary with whom we are dealing balanced his accounts. In this and in other ways it has been possible to add four names—Eadwye, Richard Excestr', William Walsh, and Roger Blake—to Widmore's list of Priors.

Widmore provides also a list of the Archdeacons of Westminster. He "had no intention at first," he says, to publish this list and "may have omitted some of the oldest<sup>1</sup>." It is a matter of interest, indeed it is quite unique, that the Dean and Chapter of Westminster should yearly appoint one of their number to be Archdeacon, with the right to a place in the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation. But the obedientiaries' rolls make no mention of this office and our Muniments include very few documents that record its doings. The Archdeacon, as such, had no apparent authority inside the Convent and to this day he has no intrinsic precedence in the Chapter. Long after the courtesy adjunct of "Venerable" had become usual in the case of other Archdeacons, it had no place in the records of our Chapter, which speak even in May 1887 of "the Rev. Archdeacon Farrar." The fact is that the Archdeacon of the monastery concerned the public more than the monastery; his sphere was that of causes matrimonial, excommunications, and the like. At the same time a right performance of "archidiaconal functions," whatever they were, was in practice recognised as a qualification for higher office. We learn about the earliest known Archdeacon, Richard de Crokesley, only through his having been such when he was elected Abbot, [16] Dec. 1246; we do not know when he became Archdeacon nor any thing that he did as such<sup>2</sup>. In the same way William Colchester [q.v.], one of the most notable of our Abbots, was certainly Archdeacon just a month before his promotion to the highest room (10 Dec. 1386), and we can trace him at the same work in 1382<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, when we examine the careers of the monks who filled this office, we find that William de Zepeswych [q.v.] could hold the Precentorship with the Archdeaconry; that William Colchester could be at once Archdeacon and Sacrist; John Stowe [q.v.] Archdeacon and Almoner; John Borewell<sup>4</sup> [q.v.] Archdeacon and Treasurer both of the Convent and of the Royal manors. In each of these

<sup>1</sup> He could have added six Archdeacons to his list, if he had examined the account-book of Prior Walsh (*Mun.* 33289).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Flete*, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. E. H. Pearce, *William de Colchester, Abbot of Westminster* (S.P.C.K. 1915), p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Dr Basil Wilberforce, the late Archdeacon, presented to the Chapter a die of Borewell's official seal, copied from an impression preserved in the British Museum (cxxx. 12). This is handed to the Archdeacon of Westminster in Chapter at the time of his annual election, keys being similarly delivered to the Treasurer and the Steward.

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cases the responsibilities of the monastic office were considerable and the Archdeaconry would scarcely be added if its duties too were of any great weight. In Abbot Ware's time it was usual to address the Archdeacon in the cloister and in Chapter not by his title but by his name. He must get leave from the Prior to go as far as the City of London, but, being "in exteriore cura spirituali specialis domni Abbatis vicarius," he could go freely to the Palace and to other parts of Westminster in the discharge of his proper functions, leaving word that he would be absent for a time<sup>1</sup>. In the same way when Abbot Colchester drew up in 1407 a deed appropriating the revenues of the church at Aldenham to the purposes of his anniversary at the Abbey, he inserted an instruction that the Archdeacon of Westminster for the time being should be in direct charge of the church and should give account of the receipts<sup>2</sup>.

Apart, then, from these three lists, containing in all about seventy-five different names spread over the long period A.D. 1000–1540, we have been left hitherto to the task of re-peopling our buildings with stray personalities discovered here or there. Camden<sup>3</sup>, and those who came after him and copied his notes, have given in their lists of Abbey burials the names of a very few of our Benedictines not already included in the list of Abbots, such as William Amondesham, Ralph Selby, Thomas Brown and Robert Humfrey; but no attempt seems to have been made to check these records by reference to our official lists; for in the last case, through a misreading of the inscription, Camden gave the monk's name as Humphrey Roberts, and he has been contentedly followed in so doing by Dart<sup>4</sup>, Neale<sup>5</sup>, Crull, Stanley, and the rest. Again, if we turn to Abbot Ware's *Consuetudinary*, which is our prime authority for the manner of life of the Westminster Benedictines in the middle of the thirteenth century, we find the compiler much more concerned with the small details of the life than with the personalities, great or small, who lived it. Omitting Abbots, whom we knew otherwise, we find him including less than ten names of ordinary monks, of whom three are mentioned<sup>6</sup> as having taken their journey together to the Roman Court for negotiations about the church at Esseville (Ashwell).

When we pass to John Flete's History, we gather, as we should expect, a larger amount of personal detail. For instance, a single incident, the investigation of the Abbey's traditional right to take tithe of Thames salmon<sup>7</sup>, gives him the opportunity of recording nine

<sup>1</sup> *Customary of St Augustine's, Canterbury, and St Peter's, Westminster*, ed. Sir E. M. Thompson, II, 95.

<sup>2</sup> *Mun.* 5260 A. E. H. Pearce, *William de Colchester*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Reges, reginae, nobiles, &c.* (London, 1600).

<sup>4</sup> *Westminsterium*, II, 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Westminster Abbey*, II, 204.

<sup>6</sup> *Customary*, II, 72–3. See p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> *Flete*, p. 64. An examination of the names of these witnesses and the offices which they

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names, of whom only one, John de Wrattig, is on the list of Priors. In the rest of Flete's story, without reckoning the Abbots, about whom he is frequently our only source of chronological information, we find that in all he alludes to twenty brethren, of whom six were Priors, and that Dean Robinson's introduction makes us acquainted quite incidentally with six more.

A Westminster historian, who might have been expected to introduce us to some of his companions in the Refectory, is the author of the Chronicle of the years 1346-67, who calls himself "quidam frater Johannes de R. monachus Westmonasteriensis," and whom Dr Robinson<sup>1</sup> has finally identified with John de Redyng [q.v.]. The full text of this interesting document has recently been edited with introduction and notes by Professor James Tait<sup>2</sup>, and it turns out to be entirely disappointing to any one who approaches it with our present needs in view. There is mention of four Abbots—Simon Bircheston, Henle, Langham, and Litlington,—and of one Prior, the unfortunate Benedict de Cherteseye, but no monk below that rank is allowed to intrude his name or concerns into Redyng's pages.

One other chronicler raises the same expectations, even though his own name can only be conjectured. In a communication to the British Academy (Proceedings, Vol. III; issued separately and entitled *An Unrecognised Westminster Chronicler, 1381-1394*), Dr Robinson has given reasons for supposing that the continuator of the Polychronicon for those years<sup>3</sup> was a Westminster monk. This document (*op. cit.* pp. 9, 22) introduces us to John Lakyngheth [q.v.] as the king's candidate for the Abbacy when Colchester was elected, but it does no more to add to our knowledge of individuals.

In the mere number of monastic names we make a large advance when we open the pages of Richard Widmore, whose thorough examination of the Muniments has already been referred to<sup>4</sup>. Now, Widmore's index, if it were complete, would mean that we must prepare for disappointment. Apart from Abbots and Priors it includes only eight monks, of whom five are otherwise known as chroniclers or men of letters,—John de London, Richard Circestr', John de Redyng, Sulcard, Warner; the legend of John Canterbury's [q.v.] great stature and of his warlike exertions is recorded, and a notice of Ralph Selby's interment is repeated from Camden. But Widmore's contribution to our investigation is much greater than is implied by his index; for he has copied from the

held in the light of the facts given about them in the present volume leads to the conclusion that the date of this investigation is c. 1393.

<sup>1</sup> Article *Simon Langham*, *Church Quart. Rev.*, July 1908, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester University Press, 1914.

<sup>3</sup> MSS. of Corpus Christi Coll., Camb., no. 197.

<sup>4</sup> For similar acknowledgments cf. J. A. Robinson, *Flete*, p. vii; R. B. Backham, *Nave of Westminster*, p. 4.



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archives and elsewhere certain documents which contain quite a number of names. Thus the notarial instrument<sup>1</sup> which records the demission of his abbatial authority by George Norwyche on 24 Nov. 1467 makes us acquainted with Prior Millyng and twelve of his fellow-monks; and the official account of John Islip's election 27 Oct. 1500<sup>2</sup> includes the most complete list hitherto printed,—the Prior (Islip himself) and forty-three monks, of whom sixteen are described as holding various conventual offices. Though only thirty-three years separate these two events, there are no names common to the two lists, for those who stood up against the misdeeds of Abbot Norwyche were naturally the older men of the community. Thus the most that we derive even from Widmore would be about sixty names from first to last.

Stanley's want of interest in our subject has already been noted, but to complete our survey of the authorities we may indicate the Dean Stanley. information to be derived from him. Though he had original authorities ready to his hand, and could have used the knowledge of Mr Burt, the investigator of the Muniments in his day, he dismisses the question by saying that the names of the monks "are still more obscure<sup>3</sup>" than those of the Abbots. He gives the four whose sepulture is mentioned by Camden, including the misnamed "Humphrey Roberts" and Ralph Selby, whom he calls "John Selby," and whom he ascribes to the sixteenth century, whereas he died in 1420; and he adds Vertue, elsewhere dismissed (p. 342) as "an old monk<sup>4</sup>," who had been laid in the West Cloister "just before the Dissolution." Stanley goes on to mention five chroniclers, Sulcard, John de Redyng, John Flete, Richard Circestr' and "the so-called Matthew of Westminster." He relates the story of John Canterbury's vast physique, and then adds "two, in whose case we catch a glimpse into the motives which brought them hither." The first of these is "Owen, third son of Owen Tudor, and uncle of Henry VII," who "lies in the Chapel of St Blaize." It is, of course, possible that this Owen Tudor entered our house and took another Christian name and another surname. Stanley repeats the statement on two other occasions<sup>5</sup>, but neither an Owen nor a Tudor is to be found among our monks of that or any other date. If Stanley had consulted Camden (*Reges, &c.*), he would have seen that the son of Owen Tudor who found a home in our house and was buried, near Abbot Litlington, "in capella Sancti Blasii qua intratur ad Vestiarium," was called Edward, and under the head of Edward Bridgewater [q.v.], who entered the Convent in 1465-6 and said his first Mass three years later, I have indicated the reasons for conjecturing that this man may be Edward Tudor. Dean Stanley's other refugee monk was

<sup>1</sup> Widmore, Appendix VII, p. 191 ff. = *Mun.* 5456.

<sup>2</sup> Widmore, Additional Instruments III, p. 234 ff. = *Mun.* 5444.

<sup>3</sup> *Memorials*, p. 394.

<sup>4</sup> William Vertue said his first Mass in 1514-5, and may have been 46 at the Dissolution. His death is not recorded in the rolls, but he was alive in 1535.

<sup>5</sup> *Memorials*, pp. 170 n.: 412.

a man of his own name, Sir John Stanley, natural son of James Stanley, Bishop of Ely. It can be shown that on 25 Jun. 1528 he executed before the ecclesiastical authorities a deed of separation "a mensa et thoro" from his wife, Margaret, with a view to ending his days as a religious in our Convent,—"ob religionis introitum." But we had no entrants between 1525-6 and 1530-1. So the Dean's story, if not discredited, is not proven<sup>1</sup>.

So far, Stanley has added nothing to our *data* except inaccuracies; but his appendices make some slight amends, for he derived several names from the Muniments where the latter happened to suit his purposes. First, the depositions about Henry VI's choice of a burying-place<sup>2</sup> involve the record of three monks not hitherto mentioned, John Ramsey, William Milton, and [William] Barnell. Secondly, in his desire to see "in the close of the fifteenth century...the conventual artists<sup>3</sup> hard at work in beautifying the various Chapels" (p. 455), he appeals to "a Cartulary of Westminster in the possession of Sir Charles G. Young, Garter King at Arms<sup>4</sup>." Dean Robinson has discussed the nature of this document<sup>5</sup>, and for our present purpose it may stand; but it must be compared with the corresponding entry in *Liber Niger Quaternus* (f. 92). It contains the name of fifteen monks, of whom two (Richard Circestr' and John Redyng, the chronicler) were already known. All of them can be traced in our compotus-rolls and elsewhere, so that the list, when it was first printed, represented a clear gain of thirteen names. What it fails to do is to illustrate Stanley's statement about the activity of the "conventual artists" at "the close of the fifteenth century." "Then," he says, "was added the Apocalyptic series round the walls of the Chapter House," the authority for which is the statement in the Chartulary that "Frater Johannes Northampton fieri fecit...picturam Apocalipsis...in Capitulo nondum completo." But John Northampton [q.v.] entered the Convent in 1372 and survived no nearer to "the close of the fifteenth century" than the year 1404. It is doubtful if John de Sutton [q.v.], who is credited with "a picture of the dedication of the Abbey" and with others "over the tomb of Sebert," ever saw even the fourteenth century, and not a monk on the list in question lived after the year 1433, except Edmund (wrongly printed "Edwardus") Kirton, who died in 1466. This loose treatment of facts<sup>6</sup> does not in the least detract from the picturesqueness of Stanley's method; it

<sup>1</sup> For John Stanley's will and the deed of separation see *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. xxv, pp. 72 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Memorials*, pp. 600-8. *Mun.* 6389\*\*.

<sup>3</sup> The document which Stanley quotes does not justify this phrase; it mostly states that the Brethren paid a certain sum to have the work carried out by unspecified artists who were probably not of the Convent; e.g. "idem Prior [R. de Merston] fieri fecit altare sancti Blasii cum pertinentiis pro c. marcis."

<sup>4</sup> *Memorials* (3rd ed.), Appendix, p. 640 (omitted from later editions).

<sup>5</sup> *Manuscripts of Westminster Abbey*, pp. 101 f.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. even in his 3rd edition, p. 395, n. 1, Stanley still assigned John Canterbury's appearance in armour to 1286 instead of 1386.



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only illustrates the need of some accurate information about the men themselves.

Now all this time trustworthy information about the names, the standing, and the conventual careers of the Westminster Benedictines has been within our reach,—at all events for the period (to speak roughly) between 1300 and the Dissolution; that is to say, from the time when the system arose by which an obedientiary drew up the compotus-roll of his office in the autumn, had it engrossed by a scrivener on parchment, and placed it so carefully on one side, that it is there to this day, with over 6000 others, not a few of which are duplicates.

This custom can be plainly detected towards the close of the thirteenth century. Thus the earliest compotus preserved at Canterbury is dated 1260, at Norwich 1272, at Durham and Worcester 1278, at Ely 1291<sup>1</sup>, and at Westminster either 1291 or 1281. The Canterbury date falls within the period of Abbot Ware's *Consuetudinary*, which, however, does not appear to concern itself with the duty of obedientiaries to render an annual account of their stewardship. On the other hand, the *Consuetudinary* of St Augustine's, Canterbury, which is based upon Ware's<sup>2</sup>, regards the custom as so long established that it has had time to get out of hand; for in the *Reformaciuncula* made in his second year by Abbot Nicholas Thorn there is mention of the fact that a harmful delay was shown by the various wardens in rendering their accounts, which were being handed in to the conventual treasury at odd times<sup>3</sup>. The Abbot then proceeds to ordain that all the wardens were to be ready with their yearly statements immediately after St James' Day (25 Jul.), but certain other obedientiaries such as the Infirmarer and the Precentor were allowed till St Peter ad Vincula (1 Aug.). The subsequent reference to "rotulos maneriorum nostrorum vel ecclesiarum, reddituales cartas, vel scripta" shows that already the accounts were delivered in manuscript, and that there was a penalty for their improper removal. In spite, however, of Abbot Ware's indifference to the custom, it is hard to suppose that it did not prevail in some form during his period. How to account for the disappearance of the rolls is another matter; possibly the great fire<sup>4</sup> of 1298 is responsible to some extent; at any rate, our only rotuli<sup>5</sup> before that date are one which appears to be the Cellarer's of 1281-2, and one which is certainly the Chamberlain's of 1291-2, whilst we still possess the Infirmarer's roll of 1297-8, which happens to be of the greatest possible value for our present purpose.

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Wilson, *Early Compotus Rolls of the Priory of Worcester*, 1908, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Sir E. M. Thompson, *Customary*, II, p. ix. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* I, 34.

<sup>4</sup> My friend the Dean of Norwich tells me that a fire in his Priory in August, 1272, similarly explains the lack of Norwich rolls from before that date.

<sup>5</sup> *Mun.* 18829; 18717.

For it was one of the Infirmarer's duties, laid down for him in the time of Richard de Crokesley<sup>1</sup>, to see that sick brethren were provided with what they needed for their bodily sustenance "tam in pitanciis cotidianis quam in quibuscunque rebus necessariis."

The Infirmarer.

This pitancia or allowance consisted, in part, of a ferculum or mess of meat or fish, according to the day<sup>2</sup>. For the purposes of the conventual accountancy a meat-day was usually represented by three-pence and a fish-day by two-pence. It thus became natural to record each case and the cost of maintenance of each. Abbot Ware gives the ceremonial side of a monk's illness. He sees him making acknowledgment in Chapter that he is not feeling well. He hears him ask for indulgence and sympathy in the quaint formula: "Per licenciam vestram et per licenciam conventus accepturus sum medicinam." But the Infirmarer, having the revenues of two churches, Battersea and Wandsworth, to account for, must be more prosaic. If Brother So-and-so stays out of choir in the sick-room for three meat-days and three fish-days, a charge of 9*d.* + 6*d.*, or 1*s.* 3*d.*, will fall upon the funds of the Infirmary<sup>3</sup>; and in order that there may be no difficulties with the auditor, it is necessary that the name of each patient should be entered with the exact duration of his sickness.

Now it happens that our first Infirmary rotulus gives us no fewer than forty-nine names. Of course, the order of the names is no indication of the status of each in the convent; for sickness is no respecter of persons; while some of the names occur more than once and some occur many times during the year. Fortunately we are able to get help here from an official document preserved by the State. In the Kalendar of State Papers under date 10 Oct. 1303 there is an abstract of the letters patent in which the King called for an investigation into the facts about the great robbery of Crown jewels from the royal Treasury within the Abbey. The document includes a list of the Abbot and forty-eight monks<sup>4</sup>, and this list, being more formal than one of Infirmary casualties, may be expected to have regard to precedence and seniority, though it is to be noted that Alexander de Persore, the chief culprit, comes next to Walter de Wenlok, the Abbot. But in spite of William de Huntyndon, the Prior, not being in his proper place, we may fairly assume that the forty-eight names stand in some orderly sequence. Now thirty-three out of the forty-nine names in the compotus of the 1297-8 Infirmarer appear again in the list of

The Jewel Robbery.

<sup>1</sup> *Customary*, II, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 235: "habebit cotidie ..unum ferculum grossum carnis aut eciam piscis, juxta quod diei convenit."

<sup>3</sup> The mode of entry is illustrated in the record of Abbot Islip; p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> The list also appears in Rymer, *Foed.*, and in Dugdale, *Monast.*, I, 312. For J. Burt's account of the facts see G. G. Scott, *Gleanings*, pp. 282-90. The most recent study of the incident is Professor T. F. Tout's *A Mediaeval Burglary* in the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Oct. 1915 (printed separately).