

IN the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it became greatly the fashion in England to found chantries. Nearly all the mediaeval towns shared in this custom, and Bridgwater formed no exception to the rule. The immediate purpose of the founder was that he should receive the special prayers of the Church for his soul, the souls of his family and ancestors, and generally speaking for the souls of all Christian people. In order to secure these benefits he would provide the maintenance for a priest, or for two priests, who should continue their good offices for him after death, and if the chantry were endowed *in perpetuum* it was intended that these religious intercessions should continue to be offered. When the chantry priest died, the heir or representatives of the founder would appoint some priest as successor, and so the prayers would be perpetuated. This idea of establishing religious foundations for the special purpose of securing the constant prayers of those who were to minister thereat was not the original ideal at all. If a man, say in the eleventh century, built and endowed a church, he would naturally expect to have the good offices of its ministers, and this would not be denied him. But this was implied rather than expressed ; it was the pious and general feeling of the time. The foundation deeds of earlier churches and institutions, indeed, mostly stated that the founder had established them for some such purposes, but they were general rather than particular. The chantry founder, on the contrary, intended that the chantry priest for whom he made provision should regard it as his first and supreme duty to pray for the souls of the founder and the founder's kith and kin. Thus a strong element of individualism crept in : a method of securing special spiritual privileges as a consequence of certain endowments supplied.

Other ideas were mixed with these; notably the desire not to be forgotten on earth after this life was over. This feeling was intensely strong; it lasted for many centuries in England. For this purpose, amongst others, obits, anniversaries and trentalls were established. An obit was a religious service held every year to commemorate the founder's death, when alms were distributed and petitions were offered up for the soul of the deceased person. It partook of the nature of a private service, usually taking place at a side altar, or at the special altar of the chantry itself. An obit might last for a term of years, or, as the wills sometimes stated, for ever. Anniversaries were magnified obits, more

sumptuous in their surroundings, more public in their character, and more costly. They, too, were yearly commemorations of the founder's death, and it was permissible to celebrate them at the high altar of the church. Trentalls were thirty Masses for the deceased, one Mass to be said every day for thirty days consecutively.

These chantry services were secured not only by wealthy individuals, they were frequently supplied at the instigation of the great town guilds or fraternities. Some of these guilds were purely religious, others were not. But they all provided that Masses and prayers for the souls of deceased brethren should be said after their death, and the attendance of members of the guild at the funeral was encouraged. Thus the poor had their chance as well as the rich ; hence the great popularity of these guilds. Some of the Bridgwater guilds had their own chaplain, whose duty it was specially to carry out these duties. These varying plans and purposes may serve to account for the fact that two thousand chantries were founded in England between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries.*

Connected with the chantries were lights, lamps and oratories. An oratory was usually a small domestic chapel attached to (or within) a manor-house or castle (specially, though not always, when the house was far away from the parish church). They were for the use of the family and household, the rights of the parish priest being always carefully preserved. Lights were usually placed before the image of some saint (either a picture or a carving in wood or stone) in order to honour the saints, and generally as a pious act. Lamps were more permanent and more important than lights, and frequently had small endowments to maintain them. Chedzoy had a light in the parish church, maintained by lands and tenements *In the tenure of sondery persones*, of the annual value of 6s. 2d. ; North Petherton had the same ; Stokegurcy had a light and obit maintained at the annual cost of 10s. 2d. ; and Lilstock Chapel possessed lights maintained by cattle given, value 13s. 4d. East Quantockshead and Kilve both were provided with lights, and Goathurst with an endowment for an obit.

Bridgwater possessed three endowed chantries within the parish church, that of St. George, of the Holy Trinity, and of St. Mary. St. George's Chantry was fairly well endowed. Its rental (according to Edward's VI's Commission of 1548) coming from

twenty-seven items of property — land, houses, work-shops, burgages, and other property in Bridgwater and Chilton — amounted in the gross to £1. 4s. 8d. From this gross value three deductions had to be made, thus : Rent resolute to the king as of the monastery of Athelney, per annum, 4s. ; to a certain Mr. Michell, per annum, 4d. ; paid to the bailif of the borough of Bridgwater, 17s. 10d. Thus the net annual value came to £6. 2s. 6d.

Holy Trinity Chantry had even more possessions. Forty-four items of property yielded a gross annual rent of £10. 18s. 7d. ; net £9. 14s. 8d. St. Mary's Chantry yielded a net rental of £5. 0s. 8d. Allowing for the change in the value of money, St. George's Chantry had an income of about ; £122 ; Holy Trinity of ; £195 ; and St. Mary's of ; £160. 10s. This is reckoning the shilling of that day as being equal in value to £1 of our money. The three chantries together thus possessed an endowment of about ;£477, which, be it remembered, came from the free gifts of churchpeople. There never was any sort of compulsion about founding a chantry. The stipends of the then chantry priests would amount (in our money) on an average to £159 each per annum, which cannot be put down as a very exorbitant sum. They were secular priests (not professed, as monks), and there is evidence to show that they were popular men. It was their duty to minister at the altars in their respective chantries, and to observe all obits, anniversaries and other religious services appertaining to the founder's scheme, or to any subsequent benefaction. As well as the three chantries, the Commission takes account of *an annual rent given as well to the use and observance of an anniversary held in the parish church there, as to the use and maintenance of a light there perpetually burning*. For the maintenance of these the mayor, bailiff and burgesses of Bridgwater aforesaid render annually from the profits and revenues of "*certain their lands lying in Stower Estover in the county of Dorset in the tenure of Thomas Bolston,* per ann. xiii shillings.*"**

St. Mary's Chantry came to be founded by a Bridgwater lady in a really romantic way. There was living in the town, in the fourteenth century, a family named Parewastel, whose name is fortunately preserved in the documents. A member of this family, named Isolda, went out to the Holy Land upon a pilgrimage. Such pilgrimages were not unusual — as, for instance, to St. James of Compostella,***in Spain ; to St. Thomas'

shrine at Canterbury ; or to Our Lady of Walsingham. Few, however, went to the Holy Land ; it was too great a journey. But Isolda went, and for three years "she daily visited the Lord's sepulchre, and other holy places of the Holy Land." Alas I a sore trial overtook her there. She was "stripped, and placed head downwards on a rack, and beaten ; then, half dead, she miraculously escaped from the Saracens." Happily, she at length got safely back home, and then she petitioned the Pope to be allowed to build a chapel at Bridgwater in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and for her soul's health, and for those of her ancestors ; and to endow it with a yearly rent of 36 florins. *She therefore prays for licence to found and endow the same, and to reserve the right of patronage to herself and her heirs* Urban V, who was then at Avignon, returned answer, *Put up an altar in the church of the parish in which you wished to build and found the chapel*. Isolda at once set about founding her chantry, and presently completed it. Later she urged yet another request, viz. that relaxation of a year and forty days of enjoined penance should be granted to such penitents as should visit the altar of the chantry of St. Mary at the time of the feasts ordered by the Chancery. This petition was also granted. The incident casts an interesting side-light upon mediaeval life. One wonders if the fair Isolda had been crossed in love, or what it was that sent her out to Jerusalem, the land of the dreadful infidel and Saracen? Her secret is safe now, and the chantry she so loved to found passed out of existence three hundred and fifty years ago.****

Two Bridgwater documents exist which refer to the Parewastels. One, dated 1321, is a grant by Nicholas Prymeson to John Parewastel and Isota (Isolda), his sister, of two parts of a third part of a burgage in Horlokestrete, between the tenement of the master of St. John's Hospital, on the south, and that of John de Cloteworthi, on the north. The other is a grant by Isolda to Robert Croyl of the same property. The date is torn off: it is some time in the reign of Edward III. Her plea to Rome was favourably answered in 1366, and so the grant she made to Robert Croyl may have been part of her financial arrangements for her new chantry. Isolda probably sleeps beneath the pavement of St. Mary's Chantry, very likely under the very place where the altar once stood.

Chantry priests were not necessarily obliged to assist the parish priest in his work ; this depended entirely upon the terms of

their appointment. Frequently they did so, becoming an addition (in large town churches) to the parochial staff; sometimes they helped in out-lying districts. But their own special duties implied constant services, which might not be omitted. The following document well illustrates the position and duties of a chantry priest, and the great care which is evident in its construction shows how thoroughly the entire system was planned out.

To all the sons of the Holy Mother Church to whom the present letters shall come, John Sydenham and Walter Holmour, Seneschals of the Merchant Guild of the town of Bridgewater and the commonalty of the same town, in the diocese of Bath and Wells, greeting in the Lord everlasting. Know all of you that, by the special licence of our most illustrious prince and lord the lord Richard the second by the grace of God King of England, to us granted in this behalf, the statute of mortmain notwithstanding, we John and Walter, Seneschals, and the commonalty abovesaid do give, grant, and by this our present charter confirm to Sir Robert Northovere, chaplain of the chantry of the Blessed Mary in the parish church of Bridgewater aforesaid, who now is, and to the successors of the said Sir Robert Northovere, chaplain in the chantry aforesaid, in aid of their maintenance for ever, and to perform and celebrate services or divine offices, and to sustain the other charges below-written in the aforesaid parish church every year for ever — 10 messuages, 5 acres of land, 3 acres of meadow, and 40 solidates of yearly rent, with their appurtenances, in Bridgewater. To have and to hold to himself Sir Robert Northovere, chaplain of the chantry aforesaid, who now is, and to his successors chaplains of the said chantry in aid of their maintenance for ever, to perform and celebrate offices or divine services in the aforesaid parish church, and to maintain the other charges, as is abovesaid, for ever. Rendering therefor yearly to the chief lords of that fee the services therefor due and accustomed. And we John and Walter, Seneschals, and the commonalty abovesaid, our heirs and successors, are bound to warrant, acquit, and defend the aforesaid 10 messuages, 5 acres of land, 3 acres of meadow, and 40 solidates of yearly rent with the appurtenances in Bridgewater aforesaid to the same Sir Robert Northovere, chaplain, and his successors chaplains of the said chantry against all men under the manner and form aforesaid for ever. Reserving to us the Seneschals and to our successors for ever the faculty of presenting a fit chaplain confirmed in the holy order of priesthood to the said chantry as often as and when it shall be void for a chaplain. And the charges which the

chaplain of the said chantry who for the time shall be ought to sustain and support, and the offices which he ought to celebrate or perform, whereof mention is made above, are these. — Namely, that the chaplain of the said chantry whosoever, who for the time shall be, ought to reside therein continually, and unless he shall be hindered by infirmity of body, as frequently as he is able, saving his honour and due devotion, to celebrate the solemnities of masses, and to be present in his surplice in the choir of the said parish church daily at all canonical hours together with his clerk fitting therefor, whom the same chaplain shall provide for this at his own costs and expenses only and entirely. And therefor the same chaplain shall have and also occupy the place on the north side of the same choir next the entry of the same choir, that is to say, where the deacon of the church aforesaid formerly used to stand. And the same chaplain shall be obedient and reverend to the vicar of the said church according to what becomes his state and office. And the same chaplain shall also provide one lamp day and night for ever continually burning in the aforesaid choir, (and) thirteen tapers burning in the choir aforesaid to be renewed yearly on the vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Mary. And the tapers aforesaid shall weigh, as often as they shall be so renewed, thirty-three pounds of wax.

Item : — two torches to be lighted up and to burn every day at the elevation of the Corpus Christi in saying the mass of the Blessed Mary in the aforesaid choir, of the weight of sixteen pounds, to be renewed on the vigil aforesaid every year.

Item : — two tapers burning at the daily mass of the Blessed Mary.

Item: — one wax candle burning every night whilst the antiphons are sung before the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the church aforesaid.

Item: — one attendant to watch and regulate the clock, unless he shall be willing to watch and regulate it himself; and he shall provide and maintain all the lesser or little things necessary, brass and iron, pertaining to mending and maintaining the said clock at his own costs and expenses alone and wholly. And the said chaplain shall reside where the chaplains of the said chantry in former times were wont to reside: namely in the house next the vicarage house, on the west side. And because one moiety of the wax carried down with the bodies of the dead into the parish church aforesaid and placed upon such bodies at the obsequies and on the day of their burial with small candles by an ancient laudable custom heretofore observed, from a time and by a time of the contrary whereof the memory of man is not, pertained to the vicar of the aforesaid church,

and the other moiety, all small candles altogether excepted, to the chaplain of the aforesaid chantry by the disposition of us and of our ancestors parishioners of the aforesaid parish church, — we give and grant the said moiety of the wax, small candles altogether excepted, which of old pertained to the chaplain of the aforesaid chantry, as is aforesaid, to the chaplain of the said chantry who for the time shall be and to the said chantry, by the tenour of these presents, for ever, in aid of the support of the charges aforesaid.

In witness of all and singular which things we have caused our common seal to be set to these.

Dated at Bridgwater the fourth day of the month of May in the year of our Lord 1393, and in the 16th year of the reign of King Richard the second after the conquest.

In the Bridgwater documents the names of various chaplains to the chantries are scattered up and down, showing that they mixed freely in the life of the people. In the middle of the fifteenth century Thomas Hardyng, William Mersshewyll, William Gary, John Grenow (*canonicus regularis*) Richard Smith, Richard Jarscomb, John Spenser, priests, were all familiar names in the town. In 1463 Thos. Burgeys was chaplain of the Fraternity of the Holy Trinity. Their names might be largely multiplied, but it is scarcely necessary. To St. Mary's Chantry, from 1406 to 1464, the chantry priests were appointed by the two seneschals of the Merchants' Guild of Bridgwater, whose names appear as patrons. From 1484 and onwards the patrons were the mayor, two bailiffs, and other burgesses of the town. The regular chantry priests held their office for life; the *capellani annuellarii*, of course, were chosen from time to time. Some of the chaplains were promoted to the rectory of Chilton Trinity, then entirely separate from Bridgwater. At Chilton there were parish devotions to St. Mary and St. Katherine. In 1414 Johanna Fote left to the wardens of the goods of the light of the Blessed Trinity her best brass pot, *that her soul may be had in everlasting remembrance by the brethren and sisters of the said Guild*. To the same wardens she leaves as much linen thread as will make an altar-cloth for the altar of the Holy Trinity, and some property for the maintenance of a chaplain there. There were also wardens of the light of the chantry of St. Mary, and the lights of Holy Cross. *

There is an interesting document of Edward I's reign, written in Latin, which throws some light upon the Bridgwater guilds. It makes known —

*unto all the faithful in Christ to whom these present letters shall come, that all the burgesses and the commonalty of the Burgh of Brugewater, for the promotion of love and charity, and the repression of strife and rancour, have ordained that they will choose yearly two Seneschals of their Guild, and one Bailiff, to attend on them; such Seneschals to have power to punish those offending against these ordinances. If any one among them shall maliciously impute to another a charge of theft, forgery, neifty [“nativitatis,” the being a born bondman], murder, adultery, or excommunication, and be convicted thereof before the Seneschals aforesaid, he shall be amerced and bound to the commonalty in the sum of 12 pence, and make satisfaction to the other, at the award of his peers. No one shall implead another without the burgh, under pain of amercement. If any one shall be summoned by the bailiff to appear before the Seneschals, and neglect to do so, he is to be amerced. Those opposing execution or distress, made by the bailiff by order of the Seneschals, are to be amerced and bound to the commonalty in 40 pence, besides making due amends by award of their peers. No one in the burgh is to buy flesh or fried fish before the third hour [9 a.m.] for the purpose of regrating [retailing], under pain of becoming bound to the commonalty in the price of the flesh or fish so bought or sold. If any one is elected to the office of Seneschal of St. Mary's, or of the Holy Cross in the Church of the said burgh, or to the wardenship of the bridge of the said burgh, he shall render account for the moneys arising therefrom to the said Seneschals, whenever summoned so to do. Any person refusing any one of those offices, if elected thereto, is to be bound to the commonalty in the sum of 6s. 8d. All penalties and amercements are to be duly levied by the bailiff. The Seneschals are to render account for all moneys received by them, each year, upon the morrow of the Circumcision of our Lord.***

Thus were intertwined, in mediaeval days, the sacred and secular interests of life.

A few miles from Bridgwater, between Cannington and Stogursey — situate within the borders of Cannington parish — stand today the ruins of a little chantry, which possess a most real interest for all lovers of ancient times. This is Idstock, Edstock, or Ichestoke. The manor of Idstock, in the time of King Edward the Confessor, was held by one Ulf. A certain John held it at the time of Domesday Book, of Roger de Curcelle. It passed to the Bonvilles, and thence to the Duke of Suffolk. At the adjoining manor of Bere lived Sir William Paulet, who in 1416 founded at Idstock, *in a new chapel there erected (on the north side of an old one to the*

honour of the Virgin Mary), a chantry, to be served by one priest. The purpose of the chantry was the usual one, *for the health of his own soul, and the souls of his ancestors and successors* ; and it was duly endowed with lands. Probably the original chapel, officially called a free chapel, was so named by reason of its having been built on what was then royal demesne. The names of thirteen successive chaplains of this remote chapel of Idstock have been preserved ; Thomas Spreth, the first, in 1427, and Thomas Shakyll, who was the last, appointed in 1524.

How strangely calm and peaceful were the lives and the duties of the chaplains of Idstock ! They ministered to the handful of country folk living around, and to the occupants of Bere manor. Day by day would the prayers be said for the souls of the founder and his family ; day by day, in the tiny chantry whose walls still stand on the north side of the older chapel, would the chaplains kneel and intercede for their little flock. They lived far from the busy haunts of men, out of the main line of roads ; a veritable hermitage.

The ruins of Idstock chapel are very humble, and they are sadly dilapidated, yet they possess an intense fascination for us. In the north wall still remains a beautiful little Early English window, but it will soon fall down. The walls are crumbling to decay ; the pillars lie around ; the building is roofless, and huge tendrils of ivy twine in fantastic shapes about the stones. It is almost hidden away in a wood. It bursts suddenly upon the traveller like an enchanted ruin ; one expects to hear music and the ringing of the bell. Thomas Shakyll lived here twenty-four years, and was expelled — when chantries were dissolved — in 1548. He was then fifty years of age, and was a devoted churchman. Glastonbury Abbey, the glory of Somerset, had just fallen, and poor Thomas, out of his tiny savings, left something to build up the ruined walls. Now Glastonbury and Idstock — the great abbey and the tiny chapel — are sisters in ruin and in desolation. Yet thousands of people from all parts of the world visit the gorgeous ruins of Glastonbury: no one comes to peep at little Idstock. Few people know where it is, and Thomas Shakyll's lonely chantry has almost passed out of the ken of men.*

An entry in the church registers of Stockland parish, not far from Idstock, shows the confusion that arose after the Reformation, when so many chapels and

chantries had been destroyed. It is a baptismal entry. 1621. *Lancelot : ye son of Nicholas Burnard of Edstock Chapel in ye parish of.... Baptized Oct. 28.*" Even the name of the parish in which Idstock Chapel was situated had come, in eighty years' time, to be a matter of doubt, and so the place is left blank in the entry.** Yet in spite of all, the old sanctuary has not entirely lost its influence. An inhabitant of Bere relates the finding of the dead body of a poor little child, some sixty years ago. What was to be done with it? They remembered Idstock Chapel, standing, albeit in ruins, hard by. So the little waif was laid to rest in the ground close to the old chapel walls, under the shadow of Thomas Shakyll's much-loved chantry, which had then stood desolate for three hundred years. ***

It was in the first year of King Edward VI, 1547, that the final Act was passed which dissolved the chantries, and which gave their possessions to the Crown. Henry VIII had previously secured the passing of a similar statute, but that, characteristically enough, made its basis the consideration of property rather than of religious representation. That was Henry VIII's way. Public opinion, however, had advanced a little, and it was felt necessary to give some colour of a reason — considering what enormous sums of money had already passed from the Church to the King and his agents — for putting an end to the chantry system.

Consydering," the Act recites, "*that a greate parte of superstition and errors in Christian Religion hath byn brought into the myndes and estimacon by reasone of the ignorance of their trewe and perfect salvacon throughe the deathe of Jesus Christ, and by devising and phantasinge vayne opynions of Purgatorye and Masses satisfactorye to be done for them which be departed, the which doctrine and vayne opinion by nothing more is mayntayned and upholden then by the abuse of Trentalles, Chauntries and other provisions for the contynuanche of the saide blindness and ignorance; ... it is now ordeyned and enacted that all manner of Colleges, Free Chapelles and Chauntries, having been within five yeres next before the firste day of this present parliament**** which were not in actuall and reall possession of the late King....shall, immediately after the feast of Easter next cominge, be adjudged and deemed and allso be in the verie actuall and reall possession and seisin of the King our Sovereigne Lord and his heirs and successors.*

Promises were held out in the Act that the proceeds were to be devoted to the founding of grammar schools, *and other godly purposes,*

excellent enough in their way. But these promises were very rarely redeemed. The property, vested nominally in the King, suffered frantic leakage. Lands were administered by certain receivers, and a vast number of private grantees became much the richer. Subtle individuals — they abounded at this period — pressed their claims, and not in vain. Some educational foundations were indeed made, but the bulk of the property — which in the case of land was not infrequently charged with periodic sums for the relief of the poor — was absorbed in other ways, entirely alien to the original purpose of the monks.

The plate and ornaments were not of very great value. St. George's Chantry at Bridgwater yielded one silver chalice weighing seven ounces. The chantry was served by *John Saunders, clerke, of the age of 50 yeres, of honest conversacion, incumbent there*. The chantry of *oure lady within the same paryshe churche* possessed a chalice of eight ounces, and the priest was *John Tollor of thage of 40 yeres incumbent ther*. Trinity chantry had one chalice weighing eight ounces, and was served by *John Jugker clerke of the age of 63 yeres, competently lerned incumbent ther*. An interesting note follows. *The Vicarage ther is of the yerely value of ;£12. 6s. 8d.*" (about £246 of present money) *wherof Thomas Strete, clerke, is now incumbent, and findeth one priest under hym to mynister, and helpe to serve the cure ther, which priest celebrateth every sonday at a Chapell annexed called Horsey distant a myle from the paryshe churche. The parsonage is inappropriate, and is in the kinges majesties handes. Partakers of the lordes holy sooper ther eleven hundred persones*. Taking into account that in those days all persons of age (say over fourteen years) were obliged to communicate, it is estimated that the total population of Bridgwater then would be about 1900 persons.*

Horsey Chapel, mentioned above was a very ancient building, probably of the thirteenth century, and was served by the vicars of Bridgwater. It perished soon after the Reformation, and was entirely lost sight of. Three years ago, however, its site was discovered, just out of Horsey Lane, on the Bath Road. Its foundations were laid bare, and were carefully sketched and measured, as on the accompanying plan.** Horsey was said (by tradition) to be the mother church of Chilton, and again Idstock and Huntstile are both in Chilton parish. Chilton being now united to Bridgwater, the entire group,

Chilton, Idstock, and Huntstile, have all fallen within the jurisdiction of the vicar of Bridgwater.

On the whole the chantry priests were well liked, and they enjoyed constant intercourse with the people, who frequently made them the channels for conveying alms to the poor. There is no doubt that the poor suffered for a time by their disappearance from English life. It was far more to their loss that the chantries and town guilds were swept away, than the suppression of the great abbeys. In Edward VI's reign, after all the old religious and social systems had been so ruthlessly abandoned, and nothing whatever had been devised by the State to take the place of these charities, there was great poverty in England. So much might have been done with all the proceeds ; so many excellent schemes might have been set on foot and endowed. Unhappily it was mostly frittered away, or went towards the great enrichment of noble families, and families not noble. *Edward was not so rapacious as his father*, writes Mr. Archbold, *and he was but little kinder. From the chantries (of Somerset) he secured a revenue of £900 a year, while £25 would cover the total annual value of all his Somerset educational foundations***

The chantry priests of St. Mary's were pensioned off with the sum of £5 each per annum, which, if the pensions had only been regularly paid, was as much as could have been expected. Thomas Shakyll received the same sum. But the after-story of many good men who were presumably granted pensions by Henry VIII and Edward VI is a very sad one, and will not bear close inspection. Too frequently the word of promise was kept unto their ear, yet broken to their hope.

For the rest, it was eventually inevitable that a system which paid men who should be employed mainly in saying so many Masses for the dead, must pass away. It was the prostitution of a noble ideal. In effect — had it not been for the guilds, who numbered many poor amongst their members — it permitted or tended to permit the wealthy to acquire, ex hypothesis greater spiritual privileges than others, and to acquire them vicariously. But just as men frequently are better than their creeds, so the chantry priests were better than their system. They became excellent neighbours, kindly men, always about the town, and helpful persons generally. Public opinion was largely with them, seeing that they could not be bundled out, as the Friars were, with nothing in their pockets. At least they got something with

which to start life afresh, and they ceased from their work, at that fateful Easter-tide, 1548, with the goodwill of many and many a household.

When the Bridgwater chantries were suppressed, and the spoils were being gathered in, the Commissioners' Report says *the inhabitantes ther make their most humble petition to have a free grammer scole erected ther*. Their humble petition was ignored, or conveniently forgotten. It was not until 1561 that a grammar school was established in the town, two reigns later, by Her Most Gracious Majesty Elizabeth, the reforming Queen.



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* Dr. Cutt's *Parish Priests and their People*, p. 442.

p2

*The Balston family is now settled in Kent. Mr. R. J. Balston was High Sheriff of Kent a few years ago. [The family achieved fame from the C18 onwards as pioneering papermakers at Maidstone, Kent. William Balston was manager of Whatman's mill and later took over the firm. Alfred H. Shorter, *Paper Making in the British Isles*, 1971, *passim*. TW]

**Somerset Record Society, Vol. II, p. 237.

*** Thomas de Stanton, clerk, going a pilgrimage to Santiago, nominates Thomas de Heppeworth and John de Briggewater, clerk, his attorneys in England for one year. Oct 7th, 1331. (Bridgwater documents.) Gilbert Russel (A.S. 1317) leaves to the man who shall make a pilgrimage for him to St. James of Compostella, and to Rochemadour, 40 shillings. *Historical MSS. Commission*, 1872, p. 315.

**** *Papal Registers*, 1342-1419.

p4

* *Bridgwater documents*.

** *Bridgwater documents*. See *His. Com.*, p. 316.

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*I carefully measured the ruins in 1904. The length of the chapel, from the east chancel wall to the west end of the nave, is about 45 ft. The chancel is 12 ft. wide ; the nave 16 ft. The chantry is a separate adjunct to the chapel on its north side, like a tiny transept Its dimensions are 15 ft. by 9 ft. The Early English window in the chapel is 4 ft. 6 in. high by 11½ in. wide. One column from the ruin is now placed in Bridgwater Church.

**I am indebted for this note to the Rev. Charles W. Whistler, vicar of Stockland, who

kindly sent me the extract from the registers.

***This story was given to me, at first hand, in 1904.

****The first day of Parliament was November 4th, 1547.

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*See introduction to Vol. II of the Somerset Record Society, where the subject is considered, p. xviii. At Taunton there were 3000 communicants, corresponding to an estimated population of 5000 people. This is only an estimate, but it is the nearest result obtainable.

**The foundation walls of Horsey Chapel were discovered and laid bare by my friend and colleague the Rev. W. M. K. Warren, who, with the aid of some of his friends, undertook the work of excavation and carried it to a successful issue

*** *Somerset Religious Houses*, p. 292.

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