

INDENTURE FOR MAKING A PASTORAL STAFF
FOR WILLIAM CURTEYS, ABBOT OF ST. EDMUND'S.

[READ JUNE 13, 1850.]

ALL original documents, which tend directly to throw light upon the arts or manufactures of the mediæval period, must be received with interest; those especially, and they are of rare occurrence, of the nature of inventories, agreements and specifications for works to be performed. They are not merely valuable as establishing the precise terms connected with ancient industrial operations, or the history of the arts, but they frequently supply curious statistical information in regard to the prices of commodities, and the countries or localities whence these were supplied, thus contributing to illustrate the establishment of commerce in former times; they give also authentic evidence as to the rate of wages, and various particulars deserving of attention. It is probable that a careful investigation of the parish chest and old books of account, might in the majority of cases, supply much, in this manner, useful either to the architectural antiquary and local historian, or available even for purposes of more general information. Wills and testamentary documents partake of the same character, combined with features of interest not presented by the evidences to which allusion has been made; namely, in their intimate connexion with personal matters and domestic life, as well as family history. It will amply suffice to cite the intelligent researches of the Hon. Secretary of the West Suffolk Institute, to show how much that is curious and interesting may be elicited from ancient wills, in reviving from oblivion the faded picture of the manners, the habitual feelings, the piety and patriotism of our forefathers.

The following document is not without value as a rarity of its kind; few evidences, relating to the mediæval workers in metals and their operations, having been transmitted to our times: but we have abundant evidence that the goldsmiths of England, from the early age before the Norman invasion, when their precious productions were known and esteemed in distant countries, as the *opus*

Anglicanum,—the English work, were highly skilled in their craft. This enquiry, however, curious as it may be, is foreign to the present purpose. The only excuse for submitting to a meeting of the archæologists of West Suffolk such a documentary relic as the present, must be sought in the degree of local interest which it may possess, in connexion with that noble institution, the Abbey of St. Edmund, now brought to such sad ruin and decay, and towards the preservation of whose remaining vestiges the influence of the West Suffolk Institute has so materially contributed. The precious object, the insignia of monastic state, to which the following indenture relates, was the pastoral staff of the abbot of that wealthy and powerful monastery, in the times of its greatest prosperity. The minute description of this costly symbol of authority shews how great must have been the riches and resources of that stately foundation. Scarcely more than a century previous to its date, the abbey had been sacked and laid waste by the riotous townsmen of Bury, in the memorable onslaught of 1327, aided by the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, and headed by the alderman and chief burgesses. In this disgraceful tumult the losses of the abbot alone, in precious objects of sacred use, and household effects, provisions, goods or chattels, amounted to the sum of ten thousand pounds, besides five hundred pounds in money, with various bonds and securities. The entire award of damages to the monastery amounted to 140,000*l.* The abbey was again plundered, in 1381, of gold and valuables to a large amount. It was, perhaps, only fitting that the external shew and state displayed by those to whom the rule of these powerful and wealthy institutions was committed, should be in harmony with the dignity of their position. The Abbot of Bury, moreover, it will be remembered, was summoned to the great council of the nation, with prelates and secular peers, and not unfrequently had to entertain the sovereign within its walls. In 1433, Abbot Curteys, for whose use the magnificent crosier, here described, had been constructed (three years previously), had the honour of receiving Henry VI. as his guest from Christmas to St. George's Day. On the King's arrival, with a retinue extending full a mile, the magnates of Bury went forth to meet him upon New-

market Heath, with a cortège of 500 men, all arrayed in scarlet livery ; and the bishop of Norwich, with the abbot, in full pontificals, the latter bearing, very probably, the identical pastoral insignia, wrought by his directions, as detailed in this document, received the king with solemn ceremony. On another memorable occasion in the history of St. Edmund's Bury, at this period, it may be imagined that Abbot Curteys appeared, this same official staff upraised in his hand. This was when Henry, about to quit the abbey after Easter, appeared amongst the monks in full chapter, and, having been solemnly received and admitted into the fraternity of the house, was greeted by the abbot, according to custom, with the holy kiss ; whilst the Duke of Gloucester and a number of the nobles of the realm mingled with the monks in the chapter-house. A more striking exhibition of the pious veneration of the sovereign to the memory of the sainted king of the East Angles, and of his regard towards the brethren who watched around the shrine, cannot be imagined.

It may be well to state in what manner the curious little agreement between the abbot and the goldsmith of London had been preserved. It appears to have been customary in religious houses of great possessions and influential position, such as St. Edmund's Bury, to record with precision, in like manner as in episcopal registers, the acts and deeds, leases and agreements, matters secular and ecclesiastical, donations received, in short, all matters which concerned the interests of the monastery. Such a register of Bury has been preserved, and I am not aware that many similar evidences regarding monastic affairs are in existence. It comprises innumerable details of a most curious nature connected with the history of the monks of Bury, during the seventeen years that the house was ruled by Abbot Curteys. This collection, so precious for the archæologist of Suffolk, may now be consulted in the British Museum.

It has been conjectured, and not without probability, that the goldsmith of London selected by the abbot to fabricate his pastoral insignia, on his recent accession to the dignity, might have been a native of Suffolk, whose surname may indicate that his birthplace was on the shores of the Orwell,

which contributed so much to the prosperity of the town of Ipswich. The early companion or neighbour, perhaps, of Curteys, by whom on his accession to the most envied position of influence and authority that Suffolk could offer, he was remembered, and was commissioned to employ his skill, according to the conditions of the following indenture. The document is in the following terms :—

This indenture made between the lord William Curteys, abbot of St Edmund's, of the one part, and John Horwelle, goldsmith, of London, of the other part, witnesseth, that the said John shall make a pastoral staff for the said lord abbot, of the weight of 12lb. 9½oz., viz. 133½ oz. In the head of which staff he shall make on one side an image of the Assumption of the blessed Mary, and on the other the Salutation of the same; and in the circuit of the same part twelve tabernacles with twelve apostles in them; and in the crook of the said staff a tabernacle with an image of St. Edmund; as skilfully, and in the best manner and fashion as they can be made and completed. For the making of which staff, the silver and gilding, with three joints of the same staff, to be made skilfully, as aforesaid, provided that he fully complete all and singular the things aforesaid, before the feast of All Saints, next after the date of these presents, the said John shall receive 40*l.* To do and perform all and singular these things aforesaid, as is aforesaid, the same John binds himself in 40*l.* to the said abbot and his successors, by these presents. In witness of which thing the parties aforesaid have interchangeably set their seals to these indentures. Given at London, 17th of January, in the eighth year of the reign of King Henry VI. (A.D. 1430.)

The original, of which the foregoing is a free translation, is thus expressed:—

Convencio pro baculo pastorali faciendõ.

Hec indentura facta inter dominum Willellmum Curteys, Abbatem de Sancto Edmundo, ex parte una, et Johannem Horwelle, goldsmythe, civitatis London', ex parte altera, testatur, quod predictus Johannes faciet baculum pastorem prefato domino Abbati, ponderis xij lib. ix unc. et j quart', videlicet, vj^{xx} xij unc. et j quart'. In cujus baculi summitate ex uno latere faciet ymaginem Assumpcionis beate Marie, et in alio latere Salutacionem ejusdem, et in circumferencia ejusdem partis xij tabernacula cum xij apostolis in eisdem; et in recurvacione dicti baculi tabernaculum cum ymagine Sancti Edmundi; ita artificialiter meliorique modo et forma quibus fieri poterint et impleri. Pro cujus baculi factura, argento, et deauracione, cum tribus juncturis ejusdem baculi artificialiter, ut premititur, faciendis, dumtamen citra festum omnium sanctorum, proximum post datam presencium, omnia et singula predicta plene perfecerit, idem Johannes recipiet xl. lib. ad que omnia et singula premissa, ut premititur, faciendã et implendã idem Johannes in xl. lib. dicto Abbati et successoribus suis se obligat per presentes. In cujus rei testimonium

hiis indenturis partes predictæ sigilla sua alternatim apposuerunt. Datum London' xvij die mensis Januarii, anno regni Regis Henrici VI. post conquestum octavo. (A.D. 1430.)

It remains to say a few words in regard to the work to be performed by John Horwelle. Very few original crosiers of the fifteenth century, and of English workmanship, have been preserved. The intrinsic value of the metal was an inducement to convert them to other uses, and they were amongst the superstitious vestiges of the old faith in these islands, condemned by Edward VI., to be for ever clean abolished and done away. Examples, however, have escaped the sweeping abolition, and they are exquisite specimens of artistic taste and skill. The beautiful crosier of William of Wykeham, bequeathed by him in 1403 to New College, Oxford, and still there preserved, seems almost the prototype which Abbot Curteys had in view, when these indentures were drawn up. A fine plate of this precious relic may be seen in "Carter's Examples of Sculpture and Painting." On the head, or the massive part of the staff, answering to the *pomellum* of the crosiers of an earlier age, appear elegant tabernacles of shrine work, with figures of apostles, whilst within the crook, "*in recurvacione*," appeared a figure kneeling, and probably an image of the blessed Virgin (now lost), the object of Wykeham's special veneration, as appears by several effigies of that prelate elsewhere. The crosier of Bishop Fox, preserved at Corpus Christi college, Oxford, is another exquisite example of the elaborate beauty of workmanship displayed in ornaments of this nature. It is not clear whether the "*junctionæ*" described in the indenture were silver mountings, by means of which the several portions of the staff itself or handle, possibly formed of wood, were united together; or whether these joints were three separate tubes of metal, skilfully, ("*artificialiter*") connected, as appears to be the case with the crosiers of William of Wykeham and Bishop Fox.

For the whole work, silver and gilding included, John Horwelle was to receive only 40*l.*, a sum which may be stated as equivalent to 250*l.* in present times. The intrinsic value of the silver to be employed in the work was, at that period, about 22*l.*, leaving a large proportion for the remu-

neration of the workman, and the outlay for gilding, which probably was considerable.

I will only add that John Horwelle was apparently an artificer of no small skill and note in the times of Henry VI. There can be little doubt that he was the same person who held the appointment of Engraver to the Mint, from the 10th to the 19th year of that reign, his surname being written in the mint accounts,—Orewell*. If the conjecture above stated that he was a native of Suffolk be admissible, the subject of the foregoing remarks may, it is hoped, not appear inappropriate, however dry in antiquarian detail, to be brought before a meeting of the archæologists of that county.

ALBERT WAY.

WILL OF JONE HERYNG†.—1419.

[COMMUNICATED BY MR. SAMUEL TYMMS, MARCH 14, 1850.]

I Jone heryng, in good mende, j beqwethe my sowle to almyty god and to owr lady Seynte Marie and to alle the seynts of heuene, my body to be beryed in the chercheyrd of Seynt Edm' aform the brasene dore‡. Also I be qwethe to the sexteyn of Seynt Edm' xxs. for tythys foryetyn, and alle defawtys that I haue don ayens holy cherche. Also I beqwethe the parysch prest of Seynt Jamys, ijs. Also seynte Marie prest§ of the same cherche xijd. Also the heye clerk of Seynt Jamys iijjd. and too iche of the othyr too ij d. Also I beqwethe Isabel my dowt' and Jonete her dowt' a gardyn and an hows th'too w^t the portenan's, also a peyr bedys of avmber langett' w^t a broch and a crucyfix of sylu', also an hol|| basyn and the beste flat basyn¶ and the beste lavowr, also an hangingy lavour, also my beste pot, also my beste possenet, also ij candelstykyk the beste of laton, also ij saltsalerys of laton, also a grene huche, also a plate and a peyr of tongys and a gret forke and a lytyl forke of eryn, also a fryng panne of laton, also a newe table w^t a peyr trestell' and a chayer, also ij longe formys and iij stolys and a forcer**, also a banker†† of blew and red and a noth' banker of yelw and red w^t alle the cusschowries and a docer‡‡. Also I be qwethe Alyson my dowt' xls. and

* Ruding, vol. i., p. 44.

† Regist. of Wills, Bury, Lib. Osbern, f. 155.

‡ This was one of the doors of St. James's church. John Havell, the elder, in 1512, directed a farthing each to be given to 40 poor persons, every day for 30 days, "at the braseyn dore, whan the messe of requiem ys seid."

§ The priest who officiated at the altar of St. Mary in the church of St. James.

|| Deep. Ang. Sax. *hol*, *cavus*.

¶ Fleet, or shallow.

** A casket. They were very curiously carved and painted; and so much coveted that within 50 years of the date of this will, their importation was forbidden by statute in 1463.

†† Covering of tapestry for a chair or bench.

‡‡ The term *docer* occurs in the "Awntyrs of Arthure," where a costly