XV.—*The Prebendal Stalls and Misericords in the Cathedral Church of Wells.*
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I PROPOSE in this paper to trace the history of the prebendal stalls in the church of Wells, their number and original arrangement in choir and chapter, and to describe the carved “misericords” still remaining in the stalls.

The eastern part of the church in the thirteenth century was separated from the nave by the choir screen or *pulpitum*, which, crossing nave and aisles, rested against the columns of the first bay westward of the central tower.

The stalls of the choir occupied the space under the open lantern of the tower for 47 feet from the screen to the eastern arch of the tower; the presbytery and sanctuary extended 67 feet further eastward to the high altar.

The number of the stalls was regulated by the number of the prebends founded in the church. That number, which had varied by gradual growth and loss during the century between the episcopate of Robert, 1136—1166, and the reconstruction of the church by bishop Jocelin, 1239, was completed when Dynre (Dinder), the last prebend, was instituted in 1268.^a

^a Prebends instituted by

Bishop Robert	20 — 2 lost.
Bishop Reginald	15 — 5 lost.
Bishop Savaric	3
Bishop Jocelin	15
Bishop William	1
Date uncertain	7

61 — 7 = 54.

Chapters in Early History of Wells, 17, 66, 119, 142.

Two official lists of the Wells prebends and dignitaries, made at the end of the thirteenth century, confirm the number and title of the prebends, viz. :

- (a) The return of ecclesiastical property in the first Edward's reign, called the *Taxation of Pope Nicholas the Fourth*, about 1291, in which the beneficial value of each prebend and dignity was estimated.
- (b) The order of distribution of the psalter among the prebends for daily recitation which accompanies the statutes of Dean Haselshaw in 1298.

The daily recitation of the whole psalter by the members of the chapter, according to the psalms assigned to their respective prebends, formed part of the *Consuetudines* introduced by the Norman bishops, who moulded the constitution of the English cathedral churches in the twelfth century.^a

The particular assignment of psalms to prebends must have varied according to the number of prebends, but the following arrangement at Wells, made at the end of the thirteenth century, was complete and final, and long prevailed.^b

This list is the fullest enumeration of the prebends, according to their titles, in the thirteenth century. The bishop, though not possessing a prebend, is here united with members of the chapter, and occupies his stall both in choir and in chapter-house.

Singulis diebus dicat DOMINUS EPISCOPUS hos psalmos cum confratribus et prebendis totum psalterium quolibet die ut patet inferius.

	Ps. i.	<i>Beatus vir qui.</i>	[bonus.]
	Ps. ii.	<i>Quare fremuerunt gentes.</i>	
	Ps. iii.	<i>Domine quid.</i>	
WEDMORE I.	Ps. iv.	<i>Cum invocarem.</i>	
		Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
CLYVA	Ps. viii.	<i>Domine Dominus noster</i>	
	Ps. ix.	<i>Confitebor tibi domine</i>	
	Ps. x.	<i>Ut quid.</i>	
SANCTUS DECUMANUS	Ps. xi.	<i>In Domino confidam.</i>	
		Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
CUMBA I.	Ps. xv.	<i>Domine quis habitabit.</i>	
		Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
CUMBA XII.	Ps. xviii.	<i>Diligam te domine.</i>	

^a H. Bradshaw.

^b There is a memorandum in the Chapter Acts 1623, September 17, "Psalmi in choro legendi assignati præbendariis post admissionem," which shows that the use had prevailed, but probably intermittently.

CUMTONA	Ps. xix.	<i>Cæli enarrant gloriam.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
IATTONA	Ps. xxii.	<i>Domine Deus meus respice.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	[Ps. 22, 23, 24 (in later hand).]
HASELBERGA	Ps. xxv.	<i>Ad te domine levavi.</i> Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
WANDESTRE	Ps. xxix. Ps. xxx. Ps. xxxi.	<i>Afferte Domine.</i> <i>Exultabo te.</i> <i>In te Domine speravi.</i>	
SCANDERFORDE	Ps. xxxii. Ps. xxxiii. Ps. xxxiv.	<i>Beati quorum.</i> <i>Exultate justi.</i> <i>Benedicam.</i>	[boni.]
WEDMORE II.	Ps. xxxv. Ps. xxxvi.	<i>Judica Domine.</i> <i>Dixit iniustus.</i>	
CUMBA II.	Ps. xxxvii. Ps. xxxviii.	<i>Noli æmulari.</i> <i>Domine ne in furore.</i>	
CUMBA III.	Ps. xxxix.	<i>Dixi custodiam.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	{ domine. }
CUMBA IV.	Ps. xlii.	<i>Quemadmodum.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
BOKLONDE	Ps. xlv.	<i>Eructavit cor meum.</i> Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
MYLVERTON I.	Ps. xlix.	<i>Audite hæc omnes gentes.</i> Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
HENGESTRYNGE	Ps. liii.	<i>Dixit insipiens.</i> Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
TYMBERSCOMBE	Ps. lvii.	<i>Miserere mei Deus miserere.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
AYSHULLE	Ps. lx.	<i>Deus repulisti nos.</i> Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
CUMBA V.	Ps. lxiv.	<i>Exaudi Deus orationem.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
ESTONA	Ps. lxvii. Ps. lxviii.	<i>Deus misereatur nostri</i> <i>Exurgat Deus et dissipentur.</i>	[dominus.]
ILTONA	Ps. lxix. Ps. lxx.	<i>Salvum me fac domine.</i> <i>Deus in adjutorium.</i>	
CUMBA XIII.	Ps. lxxi. Ps. lxxii.	<i>In te domine speravi.</i> <i>Deus judicium tuum.</i>	

DUNDEN	Ps. lxxiii.	<i>Quam bonus Israel Deus.</i>	
	Ps. lxxiv.	<i>Ut quid Deus repulisti.</i>	
CUMBA XIV.	Ps. lxxv.	<i>Confitebimur tibi.</i>	
	Ps. lxxvi.	<i>Notus in Judæa.</i>	[mundo.]
	Ps. lxxvii.	<i>Voce mea.</i>	
CUMBA VI.	Ps. lxxviii.	<i>Attendite popule.</i>	[juris sui.]
DULTICOTE	Ps. lxxix.	<i>Deus venerunt.</i>	[domine.]
	Ps. lxxx.	<i>Qui regis Israel.</i>	
TAUNTON	Ps. lxxxj.	<i>Exultate Deo.</i>	
	Ps. lxxxii.	<i>Deus stetit.</i>	
BRENT	Ps. lxxxiii.	<i>Deus quis similis.</i>	
		Cum duobus sequentibus psalmis.	
WYVELSCUMBA	Ps. lxxxvi.	<i>Inclina domine.</i>	
	Ps. lxxxvii.	<i>Fundamenta ejus.</i>	
	Ps. lxxxviii.	<i>Domine Deus salutis.</i>	
ILMYNISTRA	Ps. lxxxix.	<i>Misericordias Domini.</i>	
SUTTONA	Ps. xc.	<i>Domine refugium.</i>	
		Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
HOLECUMBA	Ps. xciv.	<i>Deus ultionum.</i>	
		Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
WEREMINSTER	Ps. xevii.	<i>Dominus regnavit.</i>	
		Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
CUMBA VII.	Ps. c.	<i>Jubilate Deo omnes.</i>	
		Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
CORY	Ps. ciii.	<i>Benedic i tantum.</i>	
WORMESTERR	Ps. civ.	<i>Benedic ii tantum.</i>	
WITLAKYNGTON	Ps. cv.	<i>Confitemini i tantum.</i>	
CUMBA XV.	Ps. cvi.	<i>Confitemini ii tantum.</i>	
MYLVERTON II.	Ps. cvii.	<i>Confitemini iii tantum.</i>	
WEDMORE III.	Ps. cviii.	<i>Paratum cor meum.</i>	
		Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
BERTON	Ps. cxi.	<i>Confitebor tibi domine.</i>	
		Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
CUMBA VIII.	Ps. cxvi.	<i>Dilexi quoniam.</i>	
		Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	
WEDMORE IV.	Ps. cxix.	<i>Beati immaculati in via.</i>	[boni.]
		Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	

CUDDEWORTHE	Ps. cxix.	<i>Bonitatem cum servo tuo.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus . (65—112.)	
CUMBA IX.	Ps. cxix.	<i>Iniquos odi.</i> <i>Mirabilia.</i> <i>Clamavi.</i> (113--160.)	
CUMBA X.	Ps. cxix.	<i>Principes persecuti.</i> Cum quinque psalmis sequentibus (161—176. Ps. cxx.—cxxiv.).	
WYTCYRCH	Ps. cxxv.	<i>Qui confidunt in domino.</i> Cum sex psalmis sequentibus.	
HARPETRE	Ps. cxxxii.	<i>Memento domine David.</i> Cum quatuor psalmis sequentibus.	
CUMBA XI.	Ps. cxxxvii.	<i>Super flumina Babil.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
WEDMORE V.	Ps. cxl.	<i>Eripe me Domine.</i> Cum tribus psalmis sequentibus.	[Ps. 140, 141, 142 (in later hand).]
DYNRE	Ps. cxliv.	<i>Benedictus Dominus Deus.</i> Cum duobus psalmis sequentibus.	
LUTTON	Ps. cxlvii.	<i>Laudate dominum Lauda</i> <i>Ierusal.</i> Ps. cxlviii. <i>Laudate dominum de celis.</i>	

Singulis diebus dicetur totum psalterium a predictis Prebendis pro fratribus et benefactoribus Wellensis ecclesiæ.

BYDSAM prebenda Sancti Andreæ.

Cujus vicarius est Magister Scholarum.

The Psalter was divided among the bishop and fifty-three prebends, and there was another prebend, that of Bydsam (Biddisham), to which no psalms were assigned, making the number of prebends at the time fifty-four. The prebend of Bydsam was instituted by bishop Robert to form a fabric fund for the church of St. Andrew, the saint himself was the titular prebendary, and the "master of the schools" held the place of his vicar in the church. Perhaps the two last psalms, 149-150, which are not assigned, were left as the portion of the Saint in the daily *Te Deum* of his church.

This prebend was soon swallowed up and became annexed to the decanal estate, and it does not appear in the lists of later years.

The psalms in this table are assigned to prebends only, and not to dignities, except so far as certain prebends were annexed to offices and dignities. For so at

this time the prebend of Wedmore Prima was attached to the office of the dean and the dean sat in the stall of Wedmore; the archdeacon of Wells held the stall of Huish and Brent, and the archdeacon of Taunton the stall of Milverton Prima. The stall of Clyve (Cleeve) was the prebendal stall of the abbot of Bec, in Normandy, admitted as a non-resident canon on condition of his appointment and payment of the stall wages of a vicar choral in the church. The abbots of Muchelney and Athelney held their prebendal stalls of Ilminster and Sutton on the same terms.

The table of prebends in the contemporary list drawn out a few years earlier under the *Taxation of Pope Nicolas IV.* in 1291, contains almost all the same prebends, with the exception of Holcombe, Shalford, Barton, and Warmynster. The dignities, thirteen in number, are also represented; the six above-mentioned dignities have their stalls annexed, and there are seven more, precentor, chancellor, treasurer, the archdeacon of Bath, subdean, succentor, provost of Wells, each with a stall.

In this table the money value only of the several prebends and dignities is estimated.

The number and titles of prebends contained in these two lists at the end of the thirteenth century remained the same through the next two centuries, and down to 1536.

In 1536, the twenty-sixth year of Henry VIII., the king's commissioners were appointed to make a survey, and to return a report upon all church property throughout the kingdom.

The report is contained in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1536.

A comparison of these tables of the titles and value of the prebends made at such different times as the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries presents remarkable uniformity of result.

In the returns of 1298 and 1536 it appears that there were fifty-four prebends and thirteen dignities, for whom stalls had to be provided. But six of the thirteen dignities had prebends annexed, so that the total number of stalls necessary may be reckoned as sixty-one.^a

It is difficult to calculate the relative number of the canons who were resident, and of those who were represented by vicars choral. Provision was made for the whole number of canons in choir and chapter-house, on the theory of the whole number being present at least at times; but data from the registers show how few in proportion were actually resident.

^a 54 + 13 = 67 — 6 = 61.

In 1206 the number of names who subscribed to the instrument of bishop Jocelin's election was 55.^a The following table supplies the number of residents, so far as can be gathered from the registers, in different years :

1259.	Six dignitaries and 12 canons =	.	.	18
1284.	After summons for election of a dean, 30 men-			
	tioned by name were absent.			
1327.	Six dignitaries present, in all .	.	.	16
1328.	Five dignitaries, 10 canons present	.	.	15
1343.	„ „	.	.	19
1392.	„ „	.	.	20
1393.	„ „	.	.	20
1401.	„ „	.	.	16
1408.	„ „	.	.	19
1409.	„ „	.	.	16

In sixteen years, between 1415 and 1547, sixteen and eleven were the highest and the lowest numbers.

In theory each canon who did not come into residence, or was incapable of taking his place, was bound to be represented in the church by a vicar choral. But this rule practically must have had considerable limitations.

Stipends or "stall wages" were due from every prebend (except two or three, as it appears^b), on a fixed scale proportionate to the value of the prebend, to the vicar choral. At the time of the *Valor* of 1536 there were thirty vicars choral in receipt of stall wages. By the charter of Elizabeth, 1592, the number of vicars choral was fixed; they were to be not more than twenty and not less than fourteen in number.

Probably the number of stalls provided in choir and chapter-house was regulated only by the number of dignities and prebends, for the vicars occupied the stalls of their absent masters, and there were seats provided for them in the lower row, sufficient for the number who would be usually in residence.

The history of the stalls follows upon this description of the prebends.

In the reconstruction of the church in the fourteenth century the chapter followed the number, order, and arrangement of the stalls in choir which had

^a Some of these names may be ecclesiastics or laymen, but not canons.

^b It appears from the *Valor* of 1536, that the prebends of Holcombe and Cory, at the date of that table, had no vicars, but paid towards the "ceroferarius" or taper-bearer, one of the boys who carried a taper in processions.

been ordained in the thirteenth century. It was necessary at that time to build new stalls because the old stalls of Jocelin's time were in a state of decay, and unsuitable to the new choir.

Great works were going on at Wells during the first half of the fourteenth century. The chapter-house had been finished in 1319; the central tower was being raised; the eastern Lady Chapel is described as "lately constructed" in 1326.

In November, 1325, there is a memorandum in the chapter register that bishop John of Drogheda had given one-half of the proceeds of his visitation to the "new work" of the church. In January, 1325-6, the bishop sent letters^a to each deanery of the diocese urging all rectors and clergy to stir up their people jointly and severally to aid "the new work," to the exclusion of all other claims, promising forty days indulgence *de injunctis*. Rolls of benefactors were to be sent in, that they "may have all benefit of the spiritual acts of the cathedral body." The great and new work which was now in hand was the extension of the church eastward to its present dimensions. The presbytery of the earlier church of the thirteenth century became the new choir, the presbytery and sanctuary were thrown out eastward, and the church was connected with the detached Lady Chapel by the arcading of the ambulatory or processional path behind the high altar. This work, begun by dean Godelee, was going on during the episcopate of bishop Ralph; and probably it had been completed, when in 1363 the bishop, Ralph, was buried before the steps of the choir and the high altar in the place of the founder or finisher of the church, just as Jocelin had been laid before the altar of the church of his time in 1242.

It was as a part of this great work, and in special preparation for the new choir, that new stalls were ordered to be made by successive chapter acts in 1325 and 1326.

On the vigil of St. Martin, 1325,^b it was ordained by the dean, John de Godelee, and the chapter, that whereas the stalls in choir were decayed and of bad style, *ruinosi et deformes*, each of the dignitaries and those in office should cause to be constructed their own stall at a cost of thirty *solidi* each.

But the work was great. The money did not come in speedily, and twelve years after, in 1337, dean Walter de London, in chapter, reviewed the unfinished state of the work. Though the resident canons who had borne the burden and heat of the day, *pondus diei et æstus*, had spent more than £1000, there still

^a Drogheda Register (Som. Record, f. 242).

^b R. i. f. 173.

remained a debt upon the church of £200. The dean complains that the non-resident canons (many of whom held the richer prebends) had contributed nothing, “ab omni contributione et subsidio pro defensione et restauratione facienda penitus abstinuerunt,” and he calls upon them to bear their part and to come forward, “ad honorem Dei et celeriolem exornationem ecclesiæ.^a

Then it was ordered that the £200 should be raised by the taxation of the prebends of all non-resident canons who had not contributed to the work.

The new prebendal stalls were now constructed, which remained in the church until the middle of the present century.

The arrangement of the stalls and the order in which dignitaries and canons took their places in the church are thus prescribed in the ordinal and statutes of the thirteenth century.^b

In the return stalls on the south side at the entrance of the choir, the dean occupied the first stall belonging to the prebend of Wedmore Prima.

Next to him on the right stood the archdeacon of Taunton, if he were a canon (*si fuerit canonicus*), in the stall of Milverton Prima, then the abbot of Bec in the stall of Clyva (Old Cleeve), then the sub-dean.

^a R. i. f. 200.

Item quia stalli in choro sunt ruinosi et deformes ordinatum fuit eodem die quod quilibet canonici qui sunt in dignitate et officio constanti sumptibus privatis faciant stallos suos et ad hoc si necessarium sit per decanum compellantur.

Item ordinatum fuit per decanum et capitulum in crastino circumcisionis Domini anno Domini 1325, in capitulo quod quilibet canonicus solvet pro stallo suo faciendo xxx solidos, videlicet medietatem in quindena purificationis sancte Marie proxima sequente et aliam medietatem in festo Sancte Michaelis proximo sequente.

Collectors were appointed to receive gifts and enforce payment by ecclesiastical censures. R. i. f. 174 in dors.

Johannes de Godelee decanus Ecclesie Wellensis et ejusdem loci capitulum discretis viris Roberto de Wamberg concanonico nostro et officiali de Mydelton clerico, salutem.

Cum nuper nobis in domo capitulari Ecclesie Wellensis predicte convenientibus ad honorem dei et decorem ipsius ecclesie propter debilitatem et vetustatem stallorum nunc in ipsa ecclesia existentium certam pecunie summam a singulis concanonice nostris certis temporibus solvendam pro novis stallis in eadem ecclesia faciendis unanimi nostro consensu concurrente ordinaverimus, vero pro hujus pecunie receptione ad presens intendere non valemus, ad colligendam et levandam hujusmodi pecuniam literamque acquietantie faciendam de soluto, et etiam de non solvendis censuris ecclesiasticis si necessarie fuerunt canonice compellendum, vobis et utrique vestrum et conjunctim et divisim vices nostras committimus cum coercionis canonice potestatis.

Datum in capitulo nostro nonas Januarii 1325.

^b “Ordinatio clericorum in choro et in capitulo,” Creyghton MS. in library of the Dean and Chapter of Wells, copied in Lambeth Library MS. 729, and printed in Reynolds’ *Wells Cathedral*.

In the return stalls, on the north side, first was the stall of the precentor, at the entrance of the choir, then stood the abbot of Muchelney in the stall of Ilmynster, then the succentor, and the provost of Combe.

The stall of the bishop was at the extreme east end of the choir on the south, next to him on the west was the archdeacon of Wells in the stall of Huish Brent, and the chancellor. Opposite on the northern side stood the archdeacon of Bath, the treasurer, and the abbot of Athelney in his stall of Long Sutton.

We do not find any fixed order for other stalls.

In the middle stalls on the north and south, in the upper row, stood the canons senior in order of installation or of age, the master of the schools in the stall of Bydsam (Biddisham), priest-vicars, and deacons admitted by dispensation (*ex dispensatione*). In the lower row of stalls were younger deacon canons, and deacons and sub-deacon vicars, and other clerks, perhaps chantry priests.

There were two forms for the boys. The boys on the foundation, *pueri canonici*, on the first form; others, probationers perhaps, on a lower form, according to age and size.

Such was the arrangement of the stalls in the choir, but a different arrangement was observed in the chapter-house.

According to the original idea of a chapter, the canons met in the chapter-house for their public and private business, as being the council chamber of the bishop, the parliament house of the diocese, the daily home of the chapter, *domus capitularis*. The bishop's stall was in the centre of the eastern facet of the octagonal hall, and the stalls of the leading members of the capitular and diocesan hierarchy were gathered round him in stalls in close proximity on either side.

On his right hand sat the dean, then the archdeacon of Wells, the chancellor of the church, the archdeacon of Taunton, the abbot of Bec, and the subdean.

On the left hand of the bishop were the stalls of the precentor, the treasurer, the archdeacon of Bath (if he were a canon), the abbot of Muchelney, the abbot of Athelney, and the succentor.

In the upper row of stalls in the octagon the canons sat in order, priests, deacons, and subdeacons, and possibly the priest-vicars, *ex dispensatione*, by tolerance, but without a voice in chapter. On the lower bench vicars who were deacons, and subdeacons and other clerks in minor orders. On the floor stood the boys, in their order on either side of the desk (*pulpitum*), which stood east of the central pillar, and before the bishop's stall.

Such was the provision made for the fit and orderly assembly, day by day, of the staff, and of the rank and file of the church in their chapter-house for public religious observances by the whole body, and for the transaction by dean and

chapter of their own business in privacy, with closed doors. The beautiful chapter-house was not, as now, a bare and empty hall for most days of the year, but it was the daily home and centre of the life of the community, where each member held communion and fellowship one with another and with their brethren departed. Every morning when the office of prime was over, at 9 a.m., and before the chapter mass in the church, the choir passed in orderly procession up the great ascent of stairs into the chapter-house.

The business of the day was preceded by an office, the Martyrology or commemoration of the faithful departed members of the body, the Psalm cxx. (*Levavi oculos*), or on special occasions the *De Profundis*, were said, and the lection of the season was read, all standing in their places. The obits or anniversaries of benefactors were announced from the *pulpitum* in front of the bishop's stall, and the appointed services for special days, and on Saturday for the week, which had been drawn up by precentor or succentor, were read out. Then followed the business transactions, hearing of complaints, making of inquiries, passing of sentences, correcting of faults before the whole body; then, when the vicars and choristers had left, the private conferences, the decrees and ordinances of the dean and chapter.^a

So the meeting day by day in the chapter-house formed part of the daily life of the cathedral body; all had their places and their several interests in this common home of the community, so stately and so beautiful, to which founders and architects and workmen of two generations had given their best, in order that the house of the business of the church should be a worthy appendage to the house of worship and the house of God.

In the sixteenth century we enter on the period of innovation upon the old constitution, and of the degradation of the fabric and of its interior arrangements.

The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of Henry VIII., in the year 1536, may be taken as one of the closing acts of the medieval period of the church establishment. It was a deliberate survey of the church property, and of the money value of its offices and benefices, made by the king on the very eve of the violent alienation of a great portion of that property and the breaking-up, for good or evil, of the old order.

^a 1506, Nov. 3. "The Book of the Statutes' and the book called 'the Blak register' to be 'chained on the great chest in the chapter-house. Each canon to have a key. Precentor to make chains and keys for each canon 'ex sumptibus ecclesie.'" Reynolds' *Wells Cathedral*, App. iii. from *Liber Ruber*, p. 217.

1507, May 13. "The ordinance of the chantry of bishop Bekinton of blessed memory was read in the chapter-house." Reynolds, i. 225.

Assessment was soon followed by spoliation; the church of Wells suffered in its turn at the hands of spoilers.

In the next year, 1537, Thomas Crumwell, the “vice-gerent” and “lord privy seal,” was elected dean of Wells at the recommendation of the king. During the three eventful years in which he was dean, the complete spoliation of the monasteries was carried out to the bitter end under his administration. The trial or judicial murder of Richard Whiting, abbot of Glastonbury, in the palace at Wells, in November, 1539, was one of the last acts of the tragedy. It preceded Crumwell’s own fall and execution by eight months, on July 28th, 1540.

During those three years Crumwell had not time to do much at Wells, but he had called for returns of the statutes and of the property of the church. An inventory of the jewels and valuables of the church was ordered to be prepared, and a revision and reform of the statutes had been purposed by him. On his fall, and on Henry’s death, another band of spoilers gathered round the boy-king Edward, and the houses and lands of bishop and chapter were the next objects of their greed. As in the case of the monasteries, forced or selfish surrenders preceded plunder.

In 1540 Fitzwilliam succeeded Crumwell as dean, the last dean ever elected by the chapter of Wells after licence from the bishop. In 1547, the first year of Edward VI., Fitzwilliam surrendered the dean’s estates and house to the Crown, and house and manors were made over to the protector Somerset. A new dean-ship was “re-created” by Act of Parliament, and a new dean was appointed by the Crown, Goodman by name, but shorn of his former estates and of his goodly house, and scantily endowed out of “parcels” of the archdeaconry of Wells and the estates of the suppressed provostship of Wells, and of the succentorship.

The archdeacon of Wells at that time was the notable Polydore Vergil, an Italian from Urbino, naturalised in England, the last collector of Peter’s pence in England, the first foreign writer of a connected history of England.^a He, too, had surrendered the archdeaconry in 1547, its estate and house, at the price of a life interest in the profits, rents, and commodities of the archdeaconry, and he was allowed by the favour of Henry a peaceful retirement to Urbino, free of pains, penalties, and forfeiture, where he lived until 1555-6.

In 1548, July 12, the bishop, William Barlow, surrendered for a price twelve

^a Polydore Vergil’s *English History* has been edited by Sir H. Ellis, for the Camden Society, 1846. He defends him as “an historian beyond his age both in his power of discrimination and in his acquirements.” See *Archaeologia*, li. 107, for his other writings.

manors of the bishopric,^a and in 1550 the palace was made over to the Protector, Somerset.

The dean's house was granted to the bishop, and Somerset entered on the possession of the palace for his little day, until his execution on the scaffold in 1552. Another occupant, Sir John Gates, vice-chamberlain of the court, had succeeded Somerset at the palace, also to have a short-lived tenure, and to meet with a like end on the scaffold. On Mary's accession the palace once more reverted to the bishop, and later on, in Elizabeth's time, the deanery was restored to the dean, William Turner.

At the close of the century the charter of Elizabeth, of November 25, 1592, to the dean and chapter of Wells, attempted to give settlement after the late upheaval and changes of property by confirming all existing dignities and prebends in their temporalities. At that time five of the former dignities had been suppressed; there had disappeared from their stalls in choir and chapter, the abbots of the suppressed houses at Cleeve, Muchelney, and Athelney, the provost of Wells, and the succentor. The prebends of Wedmore Prima, and Biddisham, the estates of the provost, viz. the fifteen Combes, and of the succentor, had been absorbed in the deanship, and the dean henceforth sat in the stall of Currie, annexed to the dignity instead of Wedmore. The staff of the church now consisted of forty-nine prebendaries, of whom seven held office as dignitaries, and the dean, now no longer the elect of the canons, but appointed by the crown.

By a new arrangement the eight dignitaries and three canons, eleven in number altogether, who were then actually in residence, were constituted the executive and governing body of the whole chapter during their life, under the title of canons residentiary; the number was to be limited to eight on their decease, and the dean and canons residentiary, a council of eight, were henceforth to form the governing chapter, under the title of "the dean and chapter."

At the same time, the vicars choral, who during the period of unsettlement had been moving for independence, and seeking "to incorporate themselves into a particular bodie, and to sever themselves from the bodie of the dean and chapter," also received a royal charter which confirmed them in their separate endowments and temporalities, and provided for the due continuance of stall wages from prebends "according to custom." The number of the vicars, who

^a "Indenture between the bishop and the High and Mighty Prince Edward, Duke of Somerset, July 12, 2 Edward VI., 1548, confirmed by the chapter, January 10, 1548-9." Ledger E. f. 21.

had been thirty in 1536, was now reduced to twenty as the greatest number, fourteen as the least.^a

Among these, the vicars of the abbots of the suppressed houses of Cleeve, Muchelney, and Athelney still held their places in choir, and continued to receive stall wages.^b

In the troubles of the seventeenth century the church of Wells was brought under the harrows of Puritan tyranny. The choir was closed, the chapter-house put up for sale at the price of £160; all services were forbidden, except the "prophesying" of Cornelius Burges, who ruled from the deanery as minister of "the late cathedral." But if the choir was disused it does not appear that the stalls were destroyed.

When the Restoration came, Dean Creyghton, in 1664, could put out an appeal to the holders of the fifty prebendal stalls to join in the repair of their separate stalls at their own expense.

An act of the Dean and Chapter, dated 6 July, 1664, recites that "the cathedral church brought to ruin in the late civil troubles had been restored by the resident canons almost from its foundations, at an expense far beyond the means of the chapter, and now they desire and ordain that the non-residentiary canons who have not contributed (*ne quadrantem quidem*) towards the repairs of the fabric should at least restore and beautify their own stalls at their own expense, for the glory and honour of the church, for their own comfort and dignity, for an example to posterity." A list of prebendaries holding the fifty stalls follows, with marginal notes in a later hand marking a few donations of £2 2s., each in answer to the appeal. Residentiary chapters have in late times been called hard names, "a selfish oligarchy," "*ignavum pecus*," "*fruges consumere nati*." At least the residentiaries at Wells in 1664, as in 1337, were not unmindful of the duties and responsibilities of their heritage. They could honestly say they had borne the burden and heat of the day, and could fairly appeal to their non-resident brethren to take their share in the recovery of their church.

Some visible records still exist of the liberal expenditure of the dean and canons of the Restoration time. The glass in the west window of the church and the

^a In later times the number was allowed to drop to eleven, until 1875, when the number was increased to fourteen.

^b To this day the two senior vicars receive from the Dean and Chapter stall wages on the stalls of Cleeve, which was the stall of the abbot of Norman Bec, and of Sutton, formerly the stall of the abbot of Athelney, King Alfred's foundation. The impropiator of the stall of Ilminster appears to have disregarded his obligation. In 1592 that payment had been in arrears for twenty-five years, and the debt to the vicar amounted, at £4 a year, to £104.

great brazen lectern were the gifts of dean Creyghton, afterwards bishop, 1670. A new organ was given by him, which was in use for near 200 years, and the hangings^a to cover the bareness of the east-end wall, still to be seen in old prints of the church. He bore his part also in the restoration and furnishing of the library by the gift of £300 and many valuable books. Dr. Busby, the treasurer at this time, better known as the great head master of Westminster school, was also the giver of more than £300 in money towards the bookcases and present furniture of the library, besides many valuable books, which, he says, he contributed as a self-imposed fine for his non-residence during his duties at Westminster. To him also the church owes the large silver-gilt alms-dish in which the offerings at the altar are received in present use.^b

Scarcely twenty years had passed after the restoration of the church when the mob of Monmouth's rustic followers invaded and damaged the church. A record is preserved in the chapter accounts of 1 July, 1685, of this storm which swept over the town and the church for a few days. On that day, Chancellor Holt, one of the chapter, contemporary with the Restoration, held the quarterly chapter meeting alone in the chapter-house with the notary, while the mob were in possession of the church and town. He sorrowfully protests against the desecration of the church by the rebellious fanatics, who, that very morning (*manu hodierno*), were in the act of destroying the furniture, breaking up the organ, and had made the house of God the stabling for their horses. Then he adjourns the chapter and all affairs until that day four weeks, "between the hours of 9 and

^a Arras hangings for the choir, which Leland saw in 1540, had been given by archdeacon Polydore Vergil, "with his armes in the clothes hanging over the Stalles in the Quier: and the words *Hæc Polydori sunt munera Vergilii*."

^b In justice to the men of that time laymen as well as the canons these extracts from the fabric rolls of the years of Restoration, 1663—1665, will show their forwardness in the work.

No. 10. "Compotus magistri Thome Holt custodis fabrice" 1663—1664.

Pro Organo Domino Episcopo vendito. £50.

Among the "Dona et perquisita":

De dono Johannis Coventry Balnei militis ad organum. £20.

De dono Willelmi Portman militis et Baronetti ad organum. £20.

De Francisco Pawlet Armigero pro Decoratione unius stalli in dicta ecclesia. 02 · 02 · 00.

De Johanne Hall Armigero pro decoratione unius stalli in dicta ecclesia. 02 · 02 · 00.

De Doctore Byam prebendario de Compton Dondon pro decoratione stalli ejus in dicta Ecclesia. 02 · 02 · 00.

Similar sums were also paid by 5 other prebendaries.

Among the necessary expenses:

Thome Wilcox pro le old organ. 002 · 10 · 00.

12 a.m.," hoping that within that time the wickedness of the rebellion will be crushed.

Nor was that hope disappointed. The next words of the chapter acts record that within six days, on July 6th, the rout at Westonzoyland in Sedgmoor had put an end to the rebellion, and an outburst of thankfulness follows :

“Deus, Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.”

We have traced the history of the prebendal stalls, their order and arrangement from the fourteenth century through the changes and mischances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During that time, as afterwards through the calm, if not torpor, of cathedral life, the order and arrangement in the ground plan of the choir remained the same until the last generation.

What was the form and fashion of the material fabric of the stalls as they stood up in their ranks, the fit and stately furniture of each side of the choir?

We have no picture or visible record of what they were like in their first and unmutated condition. The stalls in the church of Winchester are said to be almost contemporary work of the date of 1290, and of one generation earlier than our stalls of 1325.

If our stalls matched the excellent work at Winchester, the rich and elaborate carving of lofty canopied stalls of black oak, then we have indeed cause for sorrowful indignation at the degradation which they suffered in the seventeenth century, when rude hands with axes and hammers broke down the carved wood of the canopies, to plant upon the truncated stalls the flooring of galleries and pews.

For, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when all the services of the church were concentrated in the choir, the nave cut off by the heavy stone screen, and the congregation gathered round the pulpit to hear rather than to worship,

Roberto Taunton ad Organum diversis temporibus prout patet per separales acquietancias.
217 · 00 · 00.

Johanni Campian pro decoracione chori prout patet per separales acquietancias suas
106 · 00 · 00.

Johanni Lewes pro Cancellis ad altare prout per acquietancias patet. 023 · 04 · 05.

Roberti Hill et Tristano Towse pro pulvinis et cooperimentis pluteorum Canonicorum in Choro Ecclesie. 014 · 05 · 06.

No. 11. “Computus magistri Thome Holt custodis Fabrice” 1664—1665.

De magistro Willelmo Bisse prebendary de Henstridge pro decoracione stalli in Choro Ecclesie. 02 · 02 · 00.

Solut’ Roberti Baily pro emendacione horologii. 01 · 15 · 00.

„ Roberto Taunton ad Organum. 07 · 00 · 00.

„ flagellatori canum. 00 · 10 · 00.

seats were erected in all vacant spaces in the confined space with little regard to ecclesiastical order or architectural beauty. Carpenters made rude havoc of carved work and delicate tracery.

Fig. 1. Fragment of a Bench-end from the choir-stalls in the cathedral church of Wells. ($\frac{1}{4}$ linear.)

The minutes of chapter acts between 1590 and 1690 enable us to trace the gradual invasion and occupation of the choir by seats and boxes, and the revolution which had taken place in the ordering of church services. When seats were ordered to be made in the choir "for the master and burgesses of the city," "for the bishop's, dean's, and canons' wives," "for all persons of quality," the area in the floor of the church was not sufficient for each to have their proper

amount of space with due distinction and separation. Consequently new seats must be erected over the stalls in the galleries for the families of "quality."

"Wives and daughters of gentlemen or clergymen in y^e liberty, and not foreigners," are to sit in the stalls.

In 1681 a seat is provided for the dean's lady (Bathurst is dean in bishop Ken's episcopate) "in the grates," that is probably the pew within the iron railing of bishop Beckington's chantry chapel on the south side of the presbytery, and for great ladies, Mrs. Baylie at one time, Mrs. Poulet at another when bishop Kidder was bishop, "in the gallery over the bishop's seat." So in these times the canopies of the old stalls were ruthlessly truncated in order that a gallery might be built upon them on either side of the choir, with a frontage of panelled and painted wood-work, and approached by stairs behind from the aisles. The lower row of seats below the prebendal stalls was divided into enclosed pews, except where the vicars-choral and the choristers stood.

Henceforth for several generations on the south side of the presbytery a curtained pew occupied the interior of bishop Beckington's chantry chapel, enclosed within "the grates" of fifteenth-century ironwork, and the stone canopy work over the chantry altar of old time which the bishop had consecrated at his grave, now covered the privileged seats of the ladies of the chapter;^a but it was reserved for the restorers of this nineteenth century to thrust aside that historic monument, unique in the church as a specimen of combined richness of carving and colouring, in order to obtain a few more feet for the "free seats" which now crowd the presbytery. Other privileged persons sat in pews on the northern side of the presbytery. At that time the monument of bishop Still was raised on the south side of the altar in the place of the sedilia. Bishop Berkeley's monument more ambitiously took the north side of the sanctuary. The hangings with which bishop Creighton had covered the bare face of the eastern wall remained there in the memory of those still living.

Such was the condition of the choir as it is described in engravings and pictures of the last century, until the modern reconstruction of the choir and presbytery between the years 1848 and 1854. Mutilated as were the oaken stalls and reft of their canopies, the old seats of the prebends still remained each in their place, with their misericords underneath, the slender dividing shafts between

^a Extracts from Chapter Minutes illustrate the differences, political as well as social, in these ordering of seats :

In 1590, April 1. Seats in y^e Quire to be made for y^e Canons wives and proper to them, and none other.

1595. "The new seats in the Quire to be removed."

In 1618, Oct. 15, there is a notice in the Corporation records, "that the seats which are to be

each supporting the carved hoods of each stall, all being the workmanship of the men of dean Godelee and Bishop Ralph.

This was the appearance of the stall work on the north and south sides of the choir, as seen and drawn in 1848, before the destruction took place.

Some fragments of the panel work of the upper galleries are preserved in the chapter library.

But in the middle years of this century a reconstruction of the choir was made, with a zeal not according to later knowledge, and innovations both in the ancient order and in the material and designs of the stalls, were introduced.

On the next page is a copy of the ground plan and arrangement of the stalls in choir, as made in dean Jenkyns's handwriting in 1846, corresponding with the old order as it had come down from the fourteenth century.

In the changes made in 1848, the wooden stall-work was removed altogether, both the upper galleries and the old and mutilated stalls; the stalls were thrown back between the columns in order to give more width to the choir and to display the columns to their bases. Stalls of stone, with elaborately carved canopies of excellent workmanship, were built into the structure, but, beautiful as they are, some will feel the loss of wood as the more appropriate material for the furniture of the building, and of the oaken stalls of early design and historic interest. The seats of the prebendal stalls were preserved, but they were removed from their place in the upper row and were transferred to the lower row, and adapted by rude hands to places for which they were not originally constructed.

The loss is not only artistic but practical. The continuous line of the stalls has been broken. There are now only forty stalls instead of fifty. Ten prebends are without stalls, or, by a clumsy and inconvenient arrangement, the same stall is assigned to two prebends, and the prebendaries are left to dispute on the priority

built in the Quier of St. Andrew's Church for the use of the Masters wives shall be made at the charge of the Committee."

1619. "It is ordered and concluded (also by the Corporation) that the Clerks of St. Andrew shall have xiii s. xiii d. yearly paid unto them by the Receiver in respect of their attendance upon the Mayor and Masters in providing their seates cleane, and formes for the other xxiii, and to provide the Magistrates seates in the saide church." This is met by a minute of Chapter.

1624, 19 Nov. "No seats in the Cathedral to be altered without y^e leave of the Dean and Chapter."

In 1633, 18 Sept. "New Seats erected over y^e Stalls for y^e Bishop's, dean's, and canons wives."

1635, 1 April. "The seats in y^e Nave of the Church removed by my Lord of Cantb^y order," Laud's measure to "quench prophesyings." The Puritan retort follows in 1640, "the doors of y^e 2 galleries in the Quire to be nailed up," as if in preparation for closing the Quire, and setting up again preaching in the nave.

ORDER OF STALLS IN CHOIR, 1846.

Comba prima	Wiveliscombe	Scanderford al's Shalford	Compton episcopi	Archidiacon. Taunton Yatton	Decanus Curry	Entrance to Choir	Precentor	Subdecanus Sanct. Decumanus	Haselbere	Warminster al's Luxfield	Henstridge	Comba sexta
Huish et Brent												Ilton
Milverton prima												White Lackington
Buckland Dinham												Cudworth
Ashill												Whitchurch
Comba tertia												Comba secunda
Comba quinta												Compton Dundon
Easton in Gordano												Comba decima
Comba nona												Comba duodecima
East Harptre												Dultingcott al's Tinghurst
Tymberscombe												Barton St. David
Taunton												Comba octava
Comba quarta												Comba dec. 3 ^{ia}
Comba undecima												Comba dec. 5 ^{ta}
Wanstrow												Milverton secunda
Wedmore secunda												Wedmore tertia
Comba septima												Litton
Comba decima quarta												Wedmore quinta
Cancellarius Warminster												Thesaurius Dinder
Archidiacon. Wellen.												Archidiacon. Bathon. Holcombe
Wedmore quarta												

CHOIR.

Ordinatio Clericorum in Choro.

of their claims, or to follow the famous precedent, which Mr. Freeman was never tired of quoting, of the two archbishops claiming the same stall, when Roger of York sat himself down in the lap of Richard of Canterbury, and was furiously ejected by the men of Canterbury.^a

Fig. 2. Stall Canopies and Panelling of the upper galleries formerly in the choir of Wells cathedral church.
From a drawing by Mr. F. Dollman made in 1848.

No attempt at re-arrangement of the stalls in the chapter-house was made in the changes of 1848. Brass plates, with the name of the several dignities and prebends, were put up on the stalls by Dean Plumptre in 1883, but the same order was followed by him which he found existing in the choir. As has been shown in this paper, another order ought to be followed in the arrangement of the stalls in chapter-house.

^a Freeman, *Cathedral Church of Wells*, p. 189.

If nothing can now be done to remedy the change of order in choir, at least the tablets on the stalls in chapter-house may be re-arranged, and the Psalms belonging to each prebend might also be recorded over each stall. This addition would add to the ornament and dignity and interest of each prebendal stall; it would be a help to the remembrance of the spiritual brotherhood existing among the members of the chapter, and it would be a constant mark of the continuity in the history of the chapter from the time of the earliest statutes and the days of bishop Robert to the present.

It is a matter of no small satisfaction that, while the beautiful stall-work of the choir has perished out of the cathedral church, so many of the seats have been preserved, containing excellent and varied carved work in the misericords on their under sides. Their obscurity during later centuries of disuse has preserved them from injury, and in some cases they are as fresh as when struck off by the hands of the carvers. Their present obscurity is a reason for more special description in our account of the prebendal stalls. Sixty-four seats remain, of which fifty belonged to the prebendal stalls in the upper row; all have been deposed from their original and proper position in the upper row, where seats of new woodwork have been inserted between the stonework of the stalls, and the misericords are now only to be found under the seats of the second and third rows; ten are all that remain of a larger number, probably thirty, which were ranged in the lower row, for younger vicars and boys on the foundation; four misericords belonging to stalls suppressed by the later innovations of 1848 are exhibited as specimens in the library of the Chapter.

If Wells has to deplore the loss of such canopied stall work as Winchester can boast, the misericords, which alone remain to us, rival and even exceed in richness and variety of design and depth of carving those on the seats of Winchester.

Twenty-two are carvings of the forms of men, women, angels; natural or grotesque.

Forty-two are carvings of birds and beasts; natural, conventional, monstrous, or grotesque.

The seats having been torn from their original position and forced in some cases by rude cutting into spaces in the lower tier of seats which do not belong to them, there is no authority for any fancy or theory as to the appropriateness of the carving to any particular stall of prebend. The clue is now lost of their original arrangement. An account of their present position would only be interesting as a guide to those who wished to examine them on the spot.

They were taken by the photographer in the following order, and are so numbered:

- 1—15. Seats on the south side, 1st row, beginning with the return seats.
15—29. Do. do. 2nd row.
29—44. Seats on the north side, 1st row.
44—60. Do. do. 2nd row.
61—64. Seats detached, and at present in the Chapter library.

The following is a general description of the subjects of the carvings, for which I am indebted to Mr. W. H. St. John Hope :

No. 1, a goat (broken); 2, a griffin fighting with a lion (?); 3, a man in hood and drawers riding with his face to the tail on a barebacked horse; 4, a hawk preying on a rabbit; 5, a mermaid (unfinished) (Plate XVIII.); 6, two popinjays in a fruit tree; 7, an ape carrying a basket of fruit on his back (broken) (Plate XIX.); 8, a double-bodied monster; 9, a dog-headed griffin; 10, two goats butting (unfinished); 11, a monkey holding an owl (unfinished); 12, two dragons interlocked and biting each other's tail; 13, an ewe suckling a lamb (unfinished); 14, a wyvern and a horse fighting; 15, a mermaid suckling a lion; 16, a man holding a cup ? (broken) sitting on the ground and disputing with another man holding a pouch (Plate XVI.); 17, a cat preying on a mouse (unfinished); 18, a monster with bat's wings (Plate XVIII.); 19, a griffin devouring a lamb (Plate XVIII.); 20, a puppy biting a cat (unfinished); 21, a man in a contorted position upholding the seat; 22, a serious-looking dog; 23, a cat playing a fiddle; 24, a man seated on the ground and thrusting a dagger through the head of a dragon with feathered wings; 25, bust of a bishop in amice, chasuble, and mitre (unfinished); 26, a peacock in his pride; 27, a fox preaching to four geese, one of which has fallen asleep (broken); 28, a cock crowing (Plate XIX.); 29, a lion dormant; 30, a dragon with expanded wings, asleep; 31, a man with his left eye closed, wearing a cloak and squatting on the ground with his hands on his knees; 32, a fox running off with a goose in his mouth; 33, head of a man with donkey's ears; 34, two monsters with male and female human heads, caressing (unfinished); 35, a man on his back upholding the seat with his right hand and right foot; 36, a lion with the ears of an ass; 37, a hawk scratching its head; 38, a sleeping cat (unfinished); 39, a woman with dishevelled hair and agonised expression crouching on the ground with the right hand on her shoulder, the other extended; 40, a dragon with hairy belly biting his back; 41, two ducks addorsed, one with his beak open; 42, two dragons fighting (unfinished); 43, a bat's head (unfinished) (Plate XVII.); 44, head of a man with bushy hair and beard, with a lion's leg growing out of each side; 45, a man in tunic and hood lying on his side and clasping his hands; 46, a man in a girded tunic, with his head downwards, upholding the seat with his back and left hand; 47, head of a lady with hair in a caul on each side, covered with a veil confined by an ornate fillet (Plate XVII.);

48, a gentle-looking lion ; 49, a bat displayed (Plate XVII.) ; 50, head of an angel with amice round neck and expanded wings ; 51, a lion ; 52, two doves about to drink from a ewer standing in a basin (unfinished) ; 53, a squirrel with a collar round his neck trying to escape from a monkey who holds him by a cord ; 54, a wood pigeon feeding ; 55, a man riding on a lion, to whose buttocks he is applying a whip ; 56, a boar and a cat with cloven feet walking in opposite directions ; 57, an eagle displayed (unfinished) ; 58, head and shoulders of a man who upholds the seat with his hands ; 59, a rabbit regardant ; 60, a two-legged beast regarding its tail, which is formed of three oak leaves on one stem ; 61, a man in hood and loose tunic kneeling on the ground and thrusting a spear down the throat of a dragon (Plate XVI.) ; 62, a boy in gown with long wavy hair, lying on his side and drawing a thorn out of his left foot (of coarse late seventeenth century work) ; 63, a dove or pigeon feeding her young (Plate XIX.) ; 64, a sorrowful-looking king sitting crosslegged on a cushion between two rampant griffins, who are secured by straps buckled round their necks (Plate XVI.).

In every case the subject is flanked by two bosses of leafwork, which are carved with extraordinary skill and with great truthfulness to nature. They represent the oak, the maple, the vine, the marsh-mallow, the wild rose, the ivy, the beech, and other well-known trees and plants, but in a few cases the foliage is purely conventional and even of thirteenth century type.

Such are the subjects of the carving under the seats of the old stalls, the so-called "misericords," because when turned up they were designed to give some rest or indulgence (*misericordia*) from the standing or kneeling posture to the weary at the long offices.

Sole survivals in the church of the woodwork furniture of the fourteenth century are these seats, for which each canon, in Dean Godelee's time, if he did not carve his own seat, contributed thirty *solidi*, or in Dean Creighton's time probably forty-two shillings. When no longer used they have been preserved by their obscurity in times of pillage, and they remain as memorials of those early times, and of another phase of religious life, when long offices by night, and at early hours, and throughout the day, and watchings oft, and fixed times of duty and discipline were the understood conditions to all who entered "religion," as well in secular as in monastic foundations..

The carvings, which vie with those at Winchester, combine with the early and almost Romanesque capitals in the nave, and the solemn sculptures and imagery on the west front, to complete a continuous series of medieval sculpture peculiar to the church of Wells, in their mixture of grim humour and playfulness with loving study of simple and natural objects.