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KINGS' BRIEFS:

THEIR PURPOSES AND HISTORY.

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[*Read before the Royal Historical Society.*]

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I.—DEFINITION AND PURPOSES.

KINGS' Briefs, under a variety of designations—as Kings' Letters, Orders in Council, Patents of Alms, Letters Patent, Fire Briefs, Church Briefs, Charity Briefs, Commissions, Royal

Letters, &c., &c.—have played an important part in the social history of this country, and yet our national historians have been remarkably silent concerning them ; as indeed they have been upon many other matters of great social interest. It seems hardly necessary to say that the term “ Brief ” has several significations. In its more common acceptation it is a short writing or epitome, as an abridgment of a law case, made out for instruction to counsel, or indeed any short statement of facts. But there are “ Apostolical Briefs,” being letters or written messages of the Pope, addressed to princes or magistrates, respecting matters of public concern.\* It is not to these exclusively that we must look for light in the present instance. The word was, in early times, written “ Breve,” and Cowell, in his Law Dictionary, says, “ Any writ or precept from the King was called *Breve*; which we still retain in the name of *Brief*, the King’s Letters Patent to poor sufferers, for Collection.” The general title of “ King’s Briefs ” used in England, is traceable to the fact that these documents, under whatever designation adopted, or for whatever purpose designed, were in later times issued under the direct authority of the sovereign ; at first under his personal authority, but later under the authority of the Council, through the Lord Chancellor. But it will be made clear that the Church exercised the right of issuing them, not only prior to, but apparently coeval with the sovereign at one period.

The purposes for which the briefs, of which I now propose to treat, were issued, vary considerably ; yet it may be taken for granted that the design was usually one of a charitable character, but not always so. Great calamities, either to communities or individuals, probably first gave rise to their use. By their aid the losses of the few could be relieved or mitigated by the contributions of the many. I will here

\* Those Papal briefs are written short without preface or preamble, and on paper, which distinguishes them from “ Bulls,” which are written on parchment. Again, “ Briefs ” are sealed with red wax and the seal of the fisherman, or St. Peter in a boat and always in the presence of the Pope.—*Vincent*.

classify the more general of their uses, which will become developed as we proceed :

- A. *Great Calamities*, as (1) Fires ; (2) Floods ; (3) Earthquakes ; (4) Hailstorms ; (5) Irruptions of the Sea ; (6) Shipwrecks ; (7) Landslips ; (8) Plague Visitations ; (9) Restoring bridges washed away and building new ones.
- B. *Religious or Benevolent Purposes*, as (1) Building or restoring churches ; (2) Founding or sustaining Hospitals ; (3) Helping the poor and afflicted ; (4) Redeeming persons sold into captivity ; (5) Relieving communities suffering persecution for conscience' sake ; (6) Relieving persons robbed either land or by pirates at sea.
- C. *National Projects*. (1) Founding a Royal fishery ; (2) To repair damages resulting from civil war ; (3) To relieve soldiers wounded in the wars.

## II.—MODE OF ISSUING BRIEFS.

The machinery by which a brief was obtained, where the occasion was not one of such an obvious character as to put the sovereign or his council in voluntary motion, appears to have been, in early times, through the interest of some nobleman or person of distinction attached to the court of the sovereign. In later times (17th century) by certificate of Quarter Sessions ; or, when in the city of London, by the mayor and aldermen (*see 1712*). I do not think it by any means follows that a petition for a brief was assented to as of course ; but no doubt the result was much influenced by the rank and position of those who certified on the merits of the case.

A Patent of Alms was another form of brief intended to be used personally, and without the organized machinery used in the case of ordinary briefs.

The direct object of the brief was always the same, viz., to obtain contributions from the charitable throughout the kingdom towards mitigating the severity of calamities happening to places or persons ; or for raising money for purposes likely

to invoke general sympathy. Hence the brief set forth, in more or less detail, the circumstances which had called it forth, and dilated upon the urgency of the case.

Briefs which were not purely personal—as granting a right to solicit alms by personal appeal—were usually addressed to the clergy and churchwardens of the parishes, hamlets, and townships of the kingdom. They were directed to be read *in extenso* from the pulpit during the service, and at its close the clerk stood at the door with the money-box, exclaiming, “Please remember the Brief.” At a later period this was often followed by a house-to-house collection made by the churchwardens and beadles of the parish. The fund, so called, was placed in the custody of the churchwardens, to be forwarded as the brief might direct. It ultimately became the practice to hand over the money to the chancellor of the diocese on the periodical visitations of the bishops. The sum actually collected was usually endorsed on the back of the document (this was, at a later period, required to be done in words, not figures) which was returned therewith, and in many cases it was ridiculously small; not unfrequently “nil.” The briefs being returned along with the money collected upon them, had the effect of taking them out of circulation, and hence they are in some degree scarce; for in bulk they were either destroyed as useless, or allowed to rot and moulder away. The officiating clergymen, in many cases, made entries of the amounts collected, as also of the purposes of collection, in the parish registers, and but for these our information would be very much more limited than it now is.

PARISH REGISTERS, 1535.—This reference to *Parish Registers* as a source of information requires to be qualified by reference to another fact, which is, that these Registers were not kept at all until 1535 (27 Henry VIII.), when Thomas Cromwell (Lord Essex) issued a mandate to the clergy of England directing them to record the deaths which occurred in their respective parishes—the dread of the Plague, and a desire of the Court to be kept acquainted with the location and extent of its ravages, being perhaps the moving cause of

this order. But it was long after this before they became at all general. I shall have to make many references to them later on.

It still remains to state that many briefs were issued which neither had, nor were designed to have, such a general circulation as is here spoken of. These were Charitable Briefs issued for purely local purposes, which will be indicated as we proceed.

### III.—NATIONS OF ANTIQUITY.

I have taken some pains in view of ascertaining if any of the Nations of Antiquity had any system in force analogous to that of Collections on Briefs. The practice of meeting great calamities, such as drought, fires, floods, &c., by a general contribution of the people, dates back to a very early period. The first traces are to be found in the early communes of Assyria, nearly 3,000 years ago ; but the practice unquestionably prevailed much earlier. In these early communes judges, priests, and magistrates were appointed for each town and district, with power to levy contributions from each member of the commune, to provide a fund against sudden calamities. In the case of fire more especially, but of other events generally, if the judges were satisfied that it was accidental, they empowered the magistrates to assess the members of the commune either in kind or money ; and in the event of any member being unable through poverty to meet his share of the contribution the deficiency was made up from the common fund. The practice is to be traced in operation in Rome in the first century of the Christian era, for does not Martial, in his Epigrams (Book iii. 52), exclaim :

“ *Empta domus fuerat tibi, Tongiliane, ducenis ;  
Abstulit hanc nimium casus in Urbe frequens.  
Collata est decies. Rogo, non potes ipse videri  
Incendisse tuam, Tongiliane, domum ?* ”

which may be done into English thus : “ You bought, friend Tongilianus, a house at a heavy price ; but it fell down, as too often happens at Rome. It was rebuilt at five times the

original cost. I ask you, Tongilianus, whether anyone would not naturally think that you had set fire to it yourself?"

Twelve hundred years later we trace the custom as prevailing in Northern Europe. By Article XI. of the Law—*Cora*, or *Keure*, as it is termed—promulgated by Thomas, Count of Flanders, and Johanna his Countess, in 1240, there is recited the following community of liability, known as the custom of *Furnes*: "In quacunq[ue] villa combustio facta fuerit occulte, tota villa statim solvat damnum per illos quos eligent coratores; quod si malefactor sciri poterit, bannietur perpetuo, et solvetur damnum de bonis ejus; residuum vero cedat comiti. Qui vero de nachbrant acclamatus fuerit, per quinque coratores purgare se poterit; alioquin suspendetur, omnia bona sua erunt in gratia comitis, restituto prius damno illi qui damnum habuit: si prius tamen querimoniam fecit," which may be rendered as follows: "In whatever house a fire shall have been secretly made, *the whole place instantly makes good the damage through those whom the guardians select*; but if the malefactor can be found out, he is banished for ever, and the damage is made good out of his property; the residue indeed he yields up to the court. Truly he who can exculpate himself from the accusation will be commended by those guardians; but until he can do so he is suspended. All his goods will be in the pleasure of the court; the damage being first restored to him who has the injury; if, however, he has first made complaint, *i.e.* given due notice."

In China to-day a modification of the same principle exists, while in Russia a like practice prevails in many of the eastern towns; as to villages, the lord or lords of the soil usually bear the burden. How the practice became changed into the wider appeals made by briefs is too large a question to enter upon now. The system of charitable benevolence inculcated by the Church of Rome may afford some solution.

## IV.—EARLY BRIEFS IN ENGLAND.

1206. The earliest traces of the issuing of briefs I have been able to meet with in this country, are in connection with the *Redemption of Christian Captives*, taken or sold into slavery—about which there is a great history to be unfolded some day. I shall have to refer to it as we advance. King John issued the Proclamation following somewhere about 1206. "John the King, to all, &c., greeting: Know that we have taken into our protection the messengers of the House of St. Thomas of Acon; and we pray you that when they come to petition you for alms for the redemption of the captives of the land of Jerusalem, that you receive them kindly, and charitably assist them out of your goods. We further forbid any one to impede them or do them any injury." This clearly indicates the granting of a Patent of Alms, which was the form of brief probably most in use at this early period.—("Remembrancia," pp. 51, 52, note.)

1247. The earliest Church Briefs, *i.e.*, issued under the authority of the Church, which I have met with in English records, is one under date 1247. It was a brief from William Bishop of Sabina, in the fourth year of Pope Innocent IV. (A.D. 1247), soliciting the alms of the faithful in favour of the *Hospital* of St. John the Evangelist, at *Cambridge*, which was unable, from want of means, to take in all the sick poor resorting thereto. In return for their alms, all givers were to have forty days remission from penance (*vide* First Report Hist. MSS. Com., p. 74).

This brief, although issued for the benefit of an institution located in England, and although circulated in England, was circulated abroad. It may have been from the fact that the English monarch (Henry III.) had refused to grant one for the purpose; or more likely it was one intended to be of limited operation only, addressed for instance to the particular Order to which the hospital belonged.

1303. This year a grant was made to the Prior of the Church of Holy Trinity (Dublin) of a power to collect alms



for repairing the Church aforesaid. This was probably followed by a "Patent of Alms;" for under date 14th May, same year (31 Edw. I.), a licence was granted to the Prior and Canons of the Holy Trinity to send brother Henry de Cork, one of their canons, throughout the kingdom to collect alms for repairing their Church and Priory.

1337. In the records of the Borough of Southampton there occurs, under this date, the following entries: "Chancellor's clerks for briefs, 20s." "Sealing seven briefs, 3s. 6d." (or 6d. each); but the purposes of the briefs are not stated (Roger's "History of Agriculture and Prices," vol. ii., p. 613).

15th century, 1403-26. During this century frequent applications appear to have been made to the Lord Chancellor—who then usually held high rank in the Church, in addition to being the highest officer of the Crown—for Patents of Alms in respect of bodily injury, or loss of property, or captivity, resulting from service in the wars of the period. The first petition of this class met with is one addressed to the "very reverend father in God and most gracious lord the Chancellor of England," and states that the suppliant was "wounded in the right breast in the wars of the most noble prince, your father, that is to say, in his expedition into Spain." This indication points to Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Lincoln, and afterwards of Winchester, who held the Great Seal on three several occasions between the years 1403 and 1426—the expedition being evidently that undertaken by his father, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, in prosecution of his claim to the crown of Castile. The document asks the grant of a Patent of Alms to last for one year, and is written in the Norman French of the period.

A similar petition of Johan Sayer, of the County of Kent, "un lige homme de notre seigneur le Roy," sets forth that whilst the said Johan was engaged in the wars of the "most puissant prince, the King's grandfather," in which he was mischievously and cruelly maimed, his houses were suddenly burnt, together with all his goods and chattels, so that "il ne suit autre remedie sinon de aler el pays mendisant": for

which purpose he prays the Letters Patent of our Lord the King, "*priante as bons gentz du pays de lour almoigne dont vivre.*"

Another was by "Johanne," the wife of Henry Goderych, begging for a "protection dalmoigne" under the King's seal, to enable her to collect the alms of good Christians towards the ransom of her husband, who had been taken prisoner on the seas by the French, and conveyed to Boulogne, his ransom being fixed at £20. And similar petitions in aid of their ransom were preferred by William Robynson de Rothebury, wounded and taken prisoner by the Scotch, by whom his ransom was fixed at ten marks; and by John Man, taken prisoner by the French, in a "crayere" sailing to Honfleur, and imprisoned in the Castle of Crotoy, his ransom being fixed at ten livres. The latter prays for a "protection dalmoigne, directe sibien as gentz spirituelxs comme tempo-relxz," which Mr. R. S. Bird, F.S.A.,\* considers, from the special mention of the clergy, approximates more nearly than some of the preceding to the modern briefs.

The following petition from an "old soldier" residing in *Plymouth* is remarkable alike for the quaintness of its spelling and the earnestness of its prayer.

"*Unto oure highe and mooste reverent fader in God and graciouse lord Archbishop of Cawnturbury and Chaunceller of Engeland.*

"Bisechith mekely youre poure orator and perpetuell bedeman Richard Harrolde dwellynge in Plummouthe that it wolde please unto youre graciouse lordshipp to knowen how that youre saide bisechere is ifalle into grete poverte, standynge in grete age, and he may not helpe hymselfe, for as moche as he hathe ispende his tyme in ye Kynge's werres by yende see, there beyng in prison of longe tyme duryng, to his grete undoyng for evermore withoute ye helpe and ye socoure of good mennes almes; Wherefore please it unto youre full reverent faderhod and graciouse lordshipp *that ye wolde fowchesaffe atte the reverens of God and of his dereworth passion to have compassion and pitee over hym for ye pite that Criste*

\* From whose article in vol. iii. of the *Antiquary* I quote mainly in this section of my paper.

*hadde over Mary Mawdeleyne* graciously to grawnte to youre saide bisechere your lettre of pardon under youre graciouse seale, as he evere more desyreth effectually to pray for yow graciouse lorde, and for alle youre full noble worthy annsetres, atte the reverens of God and in werke of charitee."

The importance with which these Concessions, or Patents of Alms, were regarded by those who obtained them is forcibly illustrated by the following petition from one who had been robbed of his, together with other goods and chattels, by his "hiredman."

*"To the Right Reverent Fader in God my worthy and gracious lorde The Archbishop of Caunterbury, Chaunceller of Englande.*

"Besecheth mekly pore bedman Thomas Glasebroke of the Towne of Westmynster in the countee of Midd. that hath been in the werrys in Fraunce with Kynge Henry the Fyfthe, that God assoille his sowl, and also with oure Souverain lorde that now ys, of longe tyme duryng in the grounde of Fraunce, and ther he hath ben taken prisoner and ofte tymes distrussed, and there strykyn thorough the hede with a quarell wherby he ys empeired and *hindred of his hiringe*, and the quarell hede left in the nekke bone ; and so was brought by John of Bury and other Gentilmen to Stalworth and so by the Grace of God he gatte oute the quarell hede oute of hys nek-bone or ellys he hadde ben dede ; and sitthe afterward stryken thorough the lefte arme with a spere bitune the elbowe and the shulder ; and Maister Thomas of Conynghapelane heled up the wounde, but yet he ys mayhemed for ever ; and the seid Thomas hath solde his londs and his goodes and yet they suffise not to paie his dettes ne his finaunces, but he have helpe of you and Cristen people ; And wheras ye of youre high and good grace graunted to the seid Thomas a *Commission for to gedir almons*, the same commission *was stolyn from hym by Richard Helyer his hiredman*, and other goodes. The (which) Richard ys now arrested by the diligent laboure of the seide Thomas and emprisoned in Maydeston, Wherefore like it to youre holy faderhode and gracious lordeshippe to send downe to your Steward of Maydeston charginge and comaundinge hym that the seid Richard be kepte stille in prison unto the tyme that he hath contented and agreed the seid Thomas or taking away of his Commission and other goodes, *whiche takynge away of his seid Commission ys perissinge and destruccion*

*of hym and his wyfe, For, and he hadde hadde ys Commission it wolde by his diligent laboure have brought hym an hys wyf oute of dette and danger ; And youre seid pore besecher and bedman shal pray for you while he levith."*

1423. This year (1 Henry VI.) a brief was issued for the repair—almost for the preservation it would seem—of that fine monument of Gothic architecture, *Salisbury Cathedral*, which has some peculiar features. It is too long to quote entire, but its substance was as follows : " The stone belfry, standing almost in the centre of the Cathedral (*campanile petrosum stans quasi in medio ecclesie cathedralis Sarum*), of the foundation and patronage of the kings of England, was in such danger of ruin that if not speedily repaired it would fall and destroy the whole church, and do other mischief and damage. The revenues for repairing both the church and the steeple were only a small annual income, appropriated to that purpose by the late Bishop (Metford), and nothing more, from the first foundation of the church to the present time. The members of the church had applied to the King for leave to augment the said income by donation of lands and tenements. The King granted to the Dean and Chapter leave to take and hold the same, with the advowsons of churches to the amount of £50 per annum, as well for the purposes of repairs as for anniversaries commemorating the donors, or any other uses appointed by the donors, *notwithstanding the statute of mortmain*" (*vide* Rymer's "Fœdera," x. 267).

1538-44. The following, from a palsied clergyman, is supposed to have been presented between these years (Henry VIII.) and is more after the manner of petitions for modern briefs.

*"To the right honorable Sir Thomas Audley, Knight of the noble order of the Garter, Lord Chauncellour of England, Denyse Fyll Clerk wysseth the grace of Almighty God.*

"The same self Denyse, being a poor simple creture and your faithfull oratour, most humbly besecheth your Lordship forasmuch as he is extremely taken and vexed with the palsy that he can scarcely or never a whytt speake, so that he is not able to celebrate

nor say mass nor hath not, neyther is lyke to have, any substance or goods wherewith he shall be able to fynde remedy agaynst povertie, that it may now please your Lordshyp to give and graunt unto hym a lycense under the kyngs brode seall to ask and gether the charitable almesse and gyftes of the kyngs liege people within his graces dominion of this his realme of Ynglond and Wales duryng the naturall lyfe of the said Denyse, beseching your honourable Lordshyp that in the same newe lycense it may be conteyned and mensioned in exprest words that the curates and other ecclesiasticall persones be commaunded by the forme thereof *sub pena contempt* to exorte their parisshe to tendre and regard the Kyngs Majesties lycense. And to move them to devocion, *And that of the churchwardens may go with your said oratour to help hym, and also to aske and take for your said oratour every man and womans devocion that be dysposed to gyve anything*, which said clauses were not thus expressed in myne olde lycense, and therefore the curate and churchwardens wold say nor do anythyng for hym, but suffre hym according to the tenour of the same. In tendre consideration whereof the same Denyse humbly beseceth your Lordshyp to pardon his boldness at this tyme for that he troubleth your Lordshyp agayn. And to be so good Lord unto hym as to graunt him his said request, And he shall dayly pray for the good increase and mayntenaunce of your honorable astate."

1547-53. The following document is recorded with the "Privy Seals *temp* Edward VI.," and therefore dates from 1547-53, and as it bears the Royal Sign Manual appears to have been used as a warrant for making out the patent applied for. It gives an insight into the mode of procuring ransom by those who had fought against "the enemyes of God, the Turke," and had been captured. The prisoner on leaving hostages was allowed to go forth and collect his own ransom.

"*R.E. To the right high and mighty Prince the King of England and Fraunce.*

"Piteously sheweth unto your good and gracioux highness Dimitrius de Oryson, Knyght of Constantynoble and late Treasurer unto the Emperour of Grece, that where as your said suppliaunt for the mayntenynce of Christen faith hath been taken two tymes by the enemyes of God, the Turke, that is to say, the first time at

Constantynoble and the seconde tyme at Negrepoint, and is raun-  
 somed by the said enemyes at the some of MCCCC Dukats, and for  
 suretie of payment of the same hath left his wyf and his V. sonnes in  
 plegge with the said enemyes, And it is so gracioux lord that your  
 saide, suppliant is not of pour to quietowte his said wyf and childrein,  
 to hym grete hevynesse, without the help almes relief and socour  
 of Christen people. Please it therfore your gracioux highness the  
 premisses to consider & in wey of almes and pitee to graunt unto  
 your said suppliant and to his felowe your gracious lettres patents  
 in due form to them to be made and to endure the space of a yere  
 that they beforce of your said lettres may goo in this your Realme  
 and receyve the alms of your subjects in the same toward the  
 quytynowte of his saide wyf and childrein. And this at the reverence  
 of God and in wey of pitee, And your said suppliant and his said  
 wyf and childrein shall pray to God for the preservacion of your  
 most noble and roial astate."

1562. This year a commission or Patent of Alms was  
 granted for collecting of Honey and other things within the  
 province of the Archbishop of Dublin for the use of St.  
 Patrick's Church.

#### V.—RIGHTS OF THE CITY OF LONDON ASSERTED.

1582. This year something of a conflict between the City  
 of London and the Church appears to have arisen regarding  
 the practice of collecting upon briefs within the City. This is  
 set forth in a letter from the Lord Mayor to the Lords of the  
 Council (dated 7th April) wherein he acknowledges their letters  
 touching the relief of Lucas Argentine, and informs them that  
 the Bishop of the See of London had never interest to give  
 license to take order for any collections in the city ; but the  
 permission and ordering thereof and the execution of Her  
 Majesty's [Elizabeth's] commandments therein, had always  
 pertained to the authorities of the City as a matter of govern-  
 ance. *This right and ancient usage* the City trusted would be  
*continued to them.* In November last Argentine had made an  
 application, not recommended by Her Majesty, praying to be  
 allowed to beg for his relief upon certain days, and five pounds

had been given to him. The collections made at Easter had been for many years devoted for the relief of Her Majesty's natural subjects captives in Turkey and Barbary—of whom many had been redeemed and openly showed—to the great comfort of the English people, and there still remained many to redeem. If the contributors should learn the collection was to be made for this stranger it would be less at this time, and hindered from time to come. *The Lord Mayor recommended that the collections for the release of English captives should be extended into other cities and ports of the realm.* The points of practice proclaimed in this letter throw light upon events which followed (*vide* "Remembrancia," p. 53).

1584. This year (reign of Elizabeth) a petition was presented to the Lord Chancellor and others of the Privy Council, by one John Jackson, or Chapman, of Ipswich, which after setting forth that in consequence of great loss by robbery and otherwise, the suppliant was unable to pay his creditors, who, "such is their uncharitable and uncontionable mynds," refuse to take yearly payments (instalments) according to his ability, and "having no regard to his hindrance, nor his charge of wife and six small children," sought daily to arrest him; beseeches them to intervene between him and his said creditors, and also to grant to him "the collection of well-disposed people their charity in Ipswich and in the county of Sussex [? Suffolk], and Essex, towards the payment of his debts." This petition, if granted—of which I find no record—was surely a new way of paying old debts!—(*Antiquary*, iii., p. 169.)

1586. This year a brief was issued under the authority of an English bishop, viz., John (Aylmer) Bishop of London, for collections for relief of the bearer, Thomas Butter, of Colchester, Gunpowder maker, "who being at his work for the making of gunpowder, by sudden misfortune was pitifully burnt, and spoyled of his eyes and armes, apparent yet to behold." This is of the class known as "Charitable Briefs" (*vide* "Cat. of Broad-sides of the Society of Antiquaries," London).

1592. It is stated in Lyson's "Environs of London," on the

authority of the Burleigh papers, that in 1592 there was an office for granting protection to poor people who should go about to collect alms, and that the office at that date was held by Matthew Stuart. The statement requires confirmation (*vide* i., p. 252).

1621. The following remarkable circumstances are narrated regarding a brief issued in England this year, for the alleged purpose of redeeming "thirteen religious," and to repair an ancient chapel on Mount Golgotha, where our Saviour had suffered, which was built by St. Helen, a British princess. Regarding the brief itself, we trace its existence in various parish registers, &c. In an abstract of Lithgow's "Travels" (vol. xlv., p. 424) there occurs the following, evidently relating to it, and determining it to have been an impudent fraud.

"On Thursday they visited the place where (it is said) the cross grew on which Christ suffered, being 'reserved' by the Greeks, who have a convent built over it. And here our author relates a story of a knavish Greek who came to London to beg a support for the repairs of the decayed monastery; and being entertained and recommended by Gundamore, the Spanish Ambassador, a contribution was granted all over England. But Lithgow meeting this counterfeit rascal in Whitehall, and several courtiers desiring him to try whether this Greek had ever been at Jerusalem, &c., he asked where the convent stood. He replied, 'in Jerusalem, and upon Mount Moriah,' which is false, it being three English miles from the city. Our traveller also posed him further about the situation of Jerusalem, the size of its cloisters, its church, the number of friars, &c., none of which questions he could answer, but stood quivering for fear and shame, having never been in Asia, nor those parts. Whereupon, stealing out of the court, he was no more seen abroad, for he had got at court and in the kingdom above £1,200 sterling" (*vide Gentleman's Magazine*, lix., pp. 524, 525).

## VI.—BRIEFS IN THE FORM OF LETTERS PATENT.

1625. It was probably during the reign of Charles I. that the sole prerogative of authorizing the issuing of briefs was assumed by the Crown. The granting of letters patent had



been converted by the Stuarts into a prolific source of Crown revenue. In 1625 (1st Car. I.) under date Oxford, August 11, there were issued letters patent authorizing the issuing of briefs for a general collection to be made for the relief of the poor and distressed people in London and Westminster (*vide* "Collection of Proclamations, Car. I., No. 23").

In November of this same year (1625) under date November 11, the Lord Mayor (Allen Cotton) and Aldermen of London, addressed a letter to the council. The great mortality, although it had taken many poor people away, yet had made more poverty by decay of tradesmen. The want and misery were still very great. For their further relief and in satisfaction of £1,000 already disbursed by their lordships' appointment, it is entreated that *the money collected upon briefs may be paid over to the City* (*vide* State Papers. Domestic. Car. I., vol. x., No. 12).

The brief was probably issued, but of this no evidence is available. The request to have the money collected paid over to the City may or may not have a bearing upon the practice which afterwards prevailed of paying moneys collected upon briefs to the Chamberlain of the City of London (see Appendix, No. 2).

1625-6. A new feature is associated with the granting of briefs at this period, and this is the issuing of certificates by Quarter Sessions in support of their claims. Thus amongst the Domestic State Papers of Car. I. (vol. xxxvi., p. 35) it is seen that there were granted between 30th October, 1625, and 22nd September, 1626, no less than eighteen briefs, almost the whole of them upon such certificates from Quarter Sessions. The purposes being, eight for losses by fire; six for repairing of churches; two for losses by sea; one for repairing a wharf and sea breaches at Polperrowe in Cornwall, and one for losses by pirates at sea. Each of these were local or limited briefs for collections to be made in specified counties, varying from two to twenty-one.

In 1626 (May 28) there was a letter from Sir Francis Goodwin, Winchenden (Bucks), to Sec. Conway. Some

briefs had lately been dispersed in those parts by Lawrence Shelter and James Skelton, for the relief of Gregory, Archdeacon of Jerusalem. These papers being suspected to be forgeries, he had detained the parties, and sent up the Privy Seal for examination (*vide* S. P. Dom. Car. I., vol. xxvii., No. 78).

We shall hear a good deal more as we proceed about forgeries and other abuses of King's briefs (see 1633, &c.).

Later in the same year (apparently) a question of another kind arose. There is in the Record Office a minute of a petition that the question of the validity of a grant of the exclusive printing of briefs and other papers printed on one side of the paper, made by the late King to the Sieur de Boislorée, but contested by the Stationers' Company, might be left to determination by law ; also minute of request of the Sieur de Boislorée for a passport and free conveyance for himself and family into France (*vide* S. P. Dom. Car. I. vol. xlv., Nos. 64 and 65).

1627. Early this year (January 23, 1626, old style), there is a record of safe conduct for Contarini Paleologus, a Greek, with liberty of collection at the churches for redeeming his wife, children, and kinsfolks from the servitude of the Turks (*vide* Docquets, Conway Papers, Jan., 1626).

## VII.—FIRST PRINTED BRIEF—THE PLAGUE.

1630. In this year we meet with the first printed brief recorded. It is dated 26 June (6 Car. I.) and is addressed "To all and singular Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans, and their officials, Parsons, Vicars, Curates, and to all spiritual persons, and also to all Justices of Peace, Mayors, Sheriffs, Bayliffes, Constables, Churchwardens, and Head Boroughs ; and to all Officers of Cities, Boroughs and Towns Corporations, and to all other our Officers, Ministers and subjects whatsoever they be." After reciting that the king had been given to understand both by the humble petition of the inhabitants of the town of *Cambridge*, and by the special recommendation of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the

Bishops of London, Winchester and Lincoln, that by means of "a greivous visitation in this time of the great contagion of the plague," the distressed inhabitants of the said town were left in great necessity and decay, the University having broken up and left their colleges, so that the great number of poor people, who, whilst the scholars continued there, received great relief from them, were now like to famish; and the tradesmen in consequence of their occupation being almost of necessity foreborne were reduced to great want "so that the whole number now receiving relief and maintenance are over 2,800 persons, the charge whereof amounts to £150 per week at least, which charge the University and town are no ways able to disburse, there being left only seven score persons who are able to contribute."

And it is further stated that, taking these things into his princely consideration, and the archbishop and the three bishops above referred to, having certified under their hands the great necessity that the inhabitants of the said town should be speedily relieved, and that they find no better means of doing so than "by the printing and issuing forth of briefs for the collection of the Benevolence of Charitable people within their several Dioceses," His Majesty doth order "that a collection be made of the charitable donations and liberalities of all our loving subjects within the several dioceses of Canterburie, London, Winchester and Lincoln, and in all places within the aforesaid dioceses in manner and form following that is to say":—

(1). All and singular Parsons, Vicars, and Curates of the several churches and chapels, within the dioceses above mentioned, are with all possible speed to publish and recommend this collection to the charity of all well-disposed persons within their churches and precincts, "with an especial exhortation to the people for the better stirring up of their liberal and extraordinary contributions in so good and charitable a deed."

(2) The Chancellors of the said dioceses, together with two or more Justices of the Peace (to be nominated by the

said archbishop and bishops), were to take care of the furthering of the said collection, and "to appoint the constables and other officers to assist the churchwardens and side-men to collect this charitable relief, either in the several churches or from house to house in every parish and precinct, as the minister and churchwardens shall consider to be most behoofull."

(3). The sums so gathered were to be by the minister and churchwardens endorsed on the back of the brief, "in words at length and not in figures," such sums to be delivered to the said Justices of the Peace or Chancellors, together with such brief; to be by them forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor and Mayor of Cambridge.

(4). In the cities of London and Westminster men were to be appointed in like manner to assist the churchwardens in making the said collection.

(5). The brief to endure for one whole year from the date thereof. (*Antiquary* iii., p. 219.)

#### VIII.—FORGED OR COUNTERFEIT BRIEFS.

1633. That such wide facilities for raising money should lead to some abuses, was almost to be expected. The shape the thing took about this period was the issuing of a *fictitious brief*, of which the following is a copy. I have already given an account of a brief fraudulently issued in 1621 :—

"Hoult, Feb. 22, 1632-3.—The summe and contents of a Testimoniall or passe shewed by one Savell the bearer thereof under the several handes and seales of Thomas Lord Viscount Wentworthe, Lord Deputy of Ireland and President of the North, James Lord Sanker, Thomas Lord Thockenbridge, Sir William Ellis, Sir Thos. Tillsley, with the Lord Bishop of London, and Sir Julius Cæsar, Maister of the Rowles, certifyinge in the said Testimoniall as the said bearer affirmed, to the effect followinge, vizt: :—"Forasmuch as the bearers hereof, James Savell and five of his sonnes, dwellinge in the Towne and Burrowe of Cockermouth, in the County of Cumberland, which hath been heretofore a Towne of greate cloathing, and thereby maynteyned a greate multytude of poore people. But nowe

is exceedingly decayed by reason of a lamentable fyre which did fall from the firmament, and lighted upon a gunpowder house, wherein were diverse barrells and greate store of gunpowder, the which fyre happened upon the 25 day of March, 1632, and in the space of three houres burnt down and consumed 105 dwellinge houses, with the outhouses thereto adjoyneinge, besides the losse of the lives of 37 men, women, and children, with foure other women lyinge in childbed, whoe with their younge infantes newly borne were all burnt to ashes, and 100 other people lamed. The losses did amount to 3000 li. or more.—Witnessed by mee, JOHN BROWNE, Curat of the Hoult ” (*vide* S. P. Dom. Car. I., vol. ii., 32).

This act of cupidity, by whomever devised and executed, led to the issuing of a Royal Proclamation under date 21st March, 1633, setting forth that the Lords of the Privy Council had been informed “that his Majesty’s loving subjects in sundry places of this kingdome have been much wronged and abused by forged and counterfeited Certificates and Warrants, or Licences for Collections, made in the names of Persons of Quality and others, his Majesties Ministers and Servants,” upon which public collections had been made, as well in churches as otherwise, “to the abuse of the Charitie of his Majesties good subjects and discouraging the forwardnesse of such as are well disposed to help such as have had great dammage and losses both by Shipwracke and Pirates at Sea, and by Fire and other Casualties at Land;” his highness did therefore by this Proclamation forbid any such collection to be made by any person on any pretence whatsoever without a warrant or licence under the Great Seal (*vide* Coll. Proclamations, Car. I., No. 162).

1638. Briefs, as we have already seen, had become very general, and probably no great calamity such as fire, or flood, happened without recourse to their aid on behalf of the sufferers, and a considerable revenue must have accrued to the Crown, or to some persons holding office under the Crown for fees on Patents. There is evidence of their frequency in several directions. Thus in a petition presented to Charles I. in 1638, regarding a proposed scheme of Fire Insurance for

the City of London and its suburbs, there is reference made to the injury resulting to persons whose houses were burned ; "whereupon," say the petitioners, "*divers briefs are granted*, which by this means [adoption of Fire Insurance] would be prevented"—so far as concerned Fire briefs, the most numerous of all. But I am not sure that this constituted a very effective argument.

#### IX.—BRIEFS DURING THE COMMONWEALTH.

1653. We now reach another stage in the history of briefs. The Stuarts have passed away, and the Protectorate (of Oliver Cromwell) is ruling in their stead. Abuses were in process of rectification, and the powers of State were to be executed with exactitude. In the first year of this change of Government the occasion for a brief arose in the occurring of the great fire at *Marlborough* (Wilts) then one of the most important manufacturing [woollen cloth] towns in the kingdom, on 28th April, 1653. The Council of State was sitting at Whitehall ; the circumstances were brought forward and considered. The resulting brief is in a different form from any which had preceded it, and is styled an Order in Council. It is said that Cromwell himself contributed £2,000, but I suspect that £200 is more likely to have been the sum. The language is entirely characteristic of the period ; and as all the proceedings are set down with minuteness we give them entire :—

"Whereas the Council hath been informed, as well by petition of the mayor and inhabitants of Marlborough, in the County of Wilts, as by a certificate under the hands of several justices of the peace of the said county, that upon Thursday, the 28th April, 1653, the Lord, whose judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out, in His overruling providence disposing, a fearful and most violent fire broke out almost at the lower end of the said town, which in the space of three or four hours burnt and destroyed all the considerable parts and body thereof, with one of the churches and the market house, to the number of 224 houses, the value whereof and goods consumed is estimated at threescore and ten pounds at the least, to

the utter undoing of the greater part of the said inhabitants, they not having anything for their future livelihood, and withal to supply the urgent necessities of their languishing families. The sense of this weighing deeply and seriously on the hearts of the Council, with tenderest bowels commiserating the much to be lamented condition of the said distressed inhabitants, they have thought themselves bound both in conscience and duty, as suffering and sympathizing with them in their great affliction, to recommend the same to the charity and benevolence of well-disposed persons, and upon this extraordinary occasion to appoint, as they do hereby, a collection to be made in the Cities of London and Westminster, and in all other cities, counties, boroughs, towns, corporations, and other principal places within England and Wales, as well within the liberties as without, and within the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for the relief of the said inhabitants and for re-edifying of the said town, which is exceedingly necessary and of great importance for commerce and trade; not doubting but that a business of this nature (so Christian and of such concernment to so many ruined and desolate families) will find ready acceptance with all those who have anything of bowels of compassion in them; and that they will be easily provoked to such a cheerful and liberal contribution as shall be answerable to so great a loss. And it is hereby recommended to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of London that order may be given for a collection to be made throughout the said City and liberties thereof in such a manner as may be most effectual for the promoting of this work, and testify an affectionate resentment of the mi-eries of those who are in a perishing condition. And it is also recommended to the sheriff and justices of the peace of each county of England and Wales, to justices of the peace for the City of Westminster, and to mayors, bailiffs, chief governors, and officers of all cities, boroughs, towns, corporations, and other privileged places, to take care that these presents be dispersed through their respective jurisdictions whatsoever, as well within liberties as without; and to give their best assistance that this collection be made therein in such manner as may most tend to the promoting and advancement of this work. And whereas for the better managing this work in all parts of the nation for the best advantage of the said town and distressed inhabitants thereof, and that the contributions which may be raised shall

be rightly disposed of and impartially distributed amongst those who have been great sufferers in this calamity, the Council have appointed Alderman Andrews, Alderman Tichbourn, Alderman Ireton [and 27 others all named], to be a committee to sit at Sadler's Hall, in the said City of London, to take particular care for the carrying on of this business; wherefore the persons to whom it is recommended by these presents to take care of this collection in their several jurisdictions are from time to time to correspond with the said committee, and to manage that business in such manner as the said committee shall on all occasions advise and signify unto them.

"18th May, 1653. Ordered by the Council of State that these presents be printed and published."

We may learn much concerning the reformed system of working briefs then in force by reference to the operations of the Committee appointed in this case, of which I here give the substance:—

"31st May, 1653. By the committee appointed for managing and ordering the collections for Marlborough, sitting at Sadler's Hall, London, *Ordered*,—That a sufficient number of orders of the Council of State be sent to the high sheriff of every county in England and Wales; and that the high sheriff in every county, upon the receipt of the aforesaid orders, shall forthwith send or cause to be sent a convenient number of them unto the chief constables of each hundred, wapentake, or division within the counties, according to the parishes or chapels in their particular hundred or division. *And the said constables are desired and hereby required to send one of the said orders to the minister or churchwarden of each parish or chapel within their said hundred; and the ministers in their respective parishes are hereby desired and appointed upon the next Lord's Day after they have received the same, to give notice of the sad and distressed condition of the inhabitants of the town of Marlborough, with the greatness of their loss, the better to prepare them for a collection on the Lord's Day following; at which time, the congregation being assembled together, the ministers are hereby further desired and appointed to publish the order from the council, exhorting and stirring up to a liberal contribution towards this charitable work.* And the churchwardens of the several parishes in the country, with two other honest active men nominated by the minister and



themselves, are hereby desired to gather the benevolence of well-disposed persons, or to take the subscriptions of the several inhabitants in the place where they are met together, and in the week following to go from house to house collecting it; or to manage it in such other way and manner as according to their discretion may be judged most effectually conducive to the promoting of so considerable a work. *And in case it so fall out that any parish, being destitute of a minister, shall be without public assemblies, then the constables and churchwardens of the said parish are to go from house to house to gather and receive the charity of the inhabitants.*

There are many other directions regarding the mode of procedure, as that the amount collected should be registered in the books of the respective parishes, "and also set down in words at length on the back of the said order, and subscribed with their names, and returned together with the order." The moneys to be paid to the receiver-general of the several counties. These latter to "make return of the said sums of money, together with the orders, unto Mr. John Strange and Mr. Robert Barret, at the 'Rose and Pomegranate,' in Friday Street, in London, who are appointed treasurers, and authorized for the receiving and paying forth the same, according to the orders and directions of the committee." "It is also further ordered that the money which shall be collected in the City of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark, the late lines of communication, and the weekly bills of mortality be brought in by the persons appointed for the collecting it unto the treasurers aforesaid, whose receipt under their hands or either of them shall be a discharge of such collectors."

Of the amount raised by this brief I find no record.

#### X.—SYSTEM GETTING PLAYED OUT IN LONDON.

1661. The next fact in the history of briefs we obtain from that acute observer, Pepys, who in his Diary, under date 30th June, 1661, says:—" (Lord's Day) To church, *where we observe the trade of briefs is come now up to so constant a course every Sunday that we resolve to give no more to them.*" The editor of 3rd Ed., 1848 (Lord Braybrooke), says hereon:—

"It appears from an old MS. account-book of the collections in the Church of St. Olave, Fleet Street, beginning 1642, still extant, that the money gathered on the 30th June, 1661, 'for several inhabitants of the parish of St. Dunstan in the West towards their losse by fire' amounted to 'xxs. viiid.' Pepys might well complain of the trade in briefs, as similar contributions had been levied 14 weeks successively, previous to the one in question, in St. Olave's Church" (vol. i., p. 248).

1663. That remarkable character, Roger L'Estrange, after more than twenty years spent in the Royal cause (near six of them in gaols, and almost four under sentence of death in Newgate), had interest sufficient to obtain this year—1663—an appointment to a new created office, under the title of "Surveyor of the Imprimery and Printing Presses," together with the sole licensing of all printed books and papers; and the sole privilege of writing, printing, and publishing (*inter alia*) all *Briefs for Collections*, Playbills, Quacksalver's Bills, Custom and Excise Bills, Post Office Bills, Creditor's Bills, and Tickets, in England and Wales; with power to search for and seize unlicensed and treasonable, schismatical and scandalous books and papers (*vide* Bagford's *Collections in Harl. MSS.*, 5,900, vol. ii., "Fifty Years' Recollections," p. 139).

#### XI.—BRIEFS IN THE COUNTRY.

1666. A brief was issued for the benefit of the sufferers by the Great Fire of London in 1666; but I have never seen a copy. In the parish register of the Parish of Stockport (Cheshire) is an entry of £4 9s. 11d. collected on the brief there.

Regarding the frequency with which briefs were issued after the Restoration, I have taken some pains to become informed. For this purpose it was desirable to look to records in the country rather than to London, the churches of which were within easy reach of special appeals. A case in point is found. The Rev. Thomas Walker, M.A., was vicar of Clent (a village formerly in Staffordshire, now in Worcestershire) from 1663 to 1719. He kept an autograph book wherein he

recorded the collections he made upon briefs in his parish church. A correspondent in *N. and Q.* [5th s. iv., pp. 447 and 481] has made the contents of that book available. Its first entries are in 1672, although that was the fourth year of his incumbency. This seems to point to the fact of briefs becoming at this period so general as to demand some special record. It will be seen that the purposes of the collections were very various, but mostly for fires. I propose to attach these records in the form of an *appendix* (No. 1) to this paper—preserving the trite language of the original. Reference will show that there were five of such collections in that parish in 1762—four in respect of fires; one *for Redemption of enslaved Christians in Turkey*. In 1673, seven, all for fires in various parts of the kingdom; 1674, three for fires; 1675, three—one for fire, two for *rebuilding churches*; 1676, five—four for fires, one for church rebuilding; 1677, one for fire; 1678, four—three for fires, *one towards rebuilding St. Paul's, London*; 1679, two for fires; 1680, three—two for fires, one for enslaved Christians in “Algiers, Sally, &c.”; 1681, two—one for repair of the Parish Church, St. Albans, the other *for relief of persecuted French Protestants*; 1682, seven—six for fires, one for *poor Protestant Churches in Lesser Poland*; 1683, four for fires; 1684, six—four for fires, *one in respect of great landslip carrying away part of the Town of Runswick, North Riding of Yorks*, one for rebuilding Edgbaston Church; 1685, six—four for fires, two for church building; 1686, six—four for fires, *one for flood in Cumberland*, one for rebuilding church spire; 1687, none; 1688, one, *relief of French Protestants*; 1689, one, *relief of Irish Protestants*; 1690, four—three for fires, one *for Protestants in Ireland*; 1691, seven for fires; 1692, seven—five for fires, one *for sufferers of Clopton, &c., near Norwich, by casualties of the sea*, one *for captives taken by Turkish Pirates in Algiers*; 1693, six for fires; 1694, two—one for fire, one for *French Protestants*; 1695, two for fires; 1696, the like; 1697, one for fire; same 1698; 1699, two—one for fire at Lancaster, one for French Protestants; 1700, two—one for fire, one for *redemption of English captives in slavery in Morocco*; 1701, six

—three for fires, one for repairing damage to Ely Cathedral, two for repairs of other churches ; 1702, five—three for fires, one for *repair of Chester Cathedral*, one for repair of Chepstow Church ; 1703, seven—four for fires, two for church rebuilding, one for “Orange Refugees” ; 1704, nine (the greatest number yet recorded in any one year)—eight for fires, one for Seamen’s Widows, “made so by a dreadfull storm and tempest (call’d an Hyrrecane)” ; 1705, seven—four for fires, three for church rebuilding or repairs. Here this interesting chronicle ends ; but others are available, as will be seen.

I may remark in reference to the collection for the redemption of English captives in 1700, that about this date there were Insurance Offices in London and in other European cities, wherein persons could insure for a ransom to be paid in case of their being taken into captivity. For details see *Insurance Cyclopædia*, article “Captivity.”

1682. On the 22nd November, a great conflagration occurred at Wapping, in the East of London, I suppose early in the day, for on the same day the following brief was issued :—

“At the Court at Whitehall, November the 22th, 1682. Present the King’s Most Excellent Majesty in Council. Whereas a Petition was this day presented to his Majesty in Council from several thousands of the poor distressed Sea-Men, Sea-Artificers, Labourers, and other late Inhabitants of Wapping and the Parts adjacent ; setting forth ; That the Poor Petitioners, by the Suddenness and Violence of the late Dreadful Fire which happened lately in Wapping were expell’d and forced out of Their Houses and Dwellings, and scarce had time enough to preserve Themselves and Their Families from perishing in the Flames. By Means whereof most of Them have lost All or the Greatest part of Their Goods, and are exposed to lie in the Streets, Church-Yards, and Fields ; And therefore Praying His Majesty, out of His wonted Clemency and Mercy, to Order that a Collection may be made for Their Relief. His Majesty in Council was thereupon Graciously pleased to Direct his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, the Right Reverend Father in God the Lord Bishop of London, and the Deans of Westminster and St. Pauls, to Recommend their Sad and Deplorable Condition to the

several Parishes of London, Westminster, and the Places Adjacent, to make a Charitable Collection for the Poor Petitioners ; And that They do give Directions, That the Money so Collected be paid unto Mr. Roger Hudson at the Sign of the Exchange and Grasshopper, in Lombard Street, to be Disposed of among the Petitioners by the Persons hereafter mentioned, as they shall think fit, who are hereby Appointed Trustees to that effect ; Namely, the Lord Mayor of London, the said Lord Bishop of London, the Sheriffs of London for the Time being, Sir Henry Johnson, Mr. Raynsford Waterhouse, Mr. Robert Hastings, Mr. William Wood, Mr. John Kent, Mr. Edward Alsoppe, Mr. Isaack Woodgreen, Captain Hugh Till, Captain Bendall, and Mr. Philip Gardner, and any Three or more of Them, whereof the Lord Mayor, or the Lord Bishop of London to be One, who are to take the Advice of the Ministers, Church-Wardens, and Overseers of the respective Parishes of the Poor Petitioners so Destroyed, in making the said Distribution. And it is Recommended to the Lord Mayor of London, to give all due Encouragement and Countenance to this Charitable Work. (Signed) Francis Gwyn. Printed by Samuel Roycroft, Printer to the Honourable City of London, 1682."

1685. At a Court at Whitehall held on 11th February, this year [some historians state 1684], present the King's most excellent Majesty [James II.], a humble petition of his Majesty's subjects within the kingdom of England and dominion of Wales, who have been sufferers by fire and otherwise, being this day read at the board, praying that his Majesty would be graciously pleased in his princely wisdom to direct some expedient whereby they may receive the benefit of the several letters patent granted to them by his late Majesty King Charles II. of ever-blessed memory, for the collection of *the charitable benevolence of well-disposed people towards the reparation of their losses*, his Majesty, out of his tender commiseration for the petitioner's condition, was pleased to order that all briefs granted by his said late Majesty for loss by fire, or otherwise, and not yet expired, or the collections made thereupon not completed, be read in the several parish churches where the same have not been already published, and the collections proceeded in, according to the

tenour of the several letters patent in that behalf. And of this his Majesty's pleasure all parsons, vicars, curates, churchwardens, overseers of the poor, and all others his Majesty's officers and ministers whom it may concern, are to take notice and govern themselves accordingly.

## XII.—NEW USES FOR BRIEFS.

1685. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. this year (1685) was followed by the precipitate flight from *France* of a very large number of Protestants—it is said by some historians of over half a million—who now had to find a home in other lands. They fled into all the Protestant countries of Europe. Many landed upon the south-east coast of England (it is recorded that 50,000 in all came to England), conveyed thither by trading vessels from the French ports. They were in destitute circumstances, and the sea voyage had added to their distressed condition. Their sufferings and distress deeply stirred the sympathies of the English people, by whom every effort was made to succour and help the poor exiles for conscience' sake. Pressure was put upon the king—James II.—himself at heart a Romanist. He issued, under the authority of an Order in Council, a brief on their behalf. It brought in one of the largest collections on record, the precise amount being £63,713 2s. 3d. Other means were also taken, and in all a fund of about £200,000 was raised. In the first year some 15,500 French were aided from this fund, and in the next year it is said no less than 27,000. Many of these refugees were silk-weavers and settled down in Spitalfields (East London) and resumed their occupation, to the great advantage of England, where their descendants still remain industrious and contented. Early in the following century another fund was raised and applied to the founding of the French Protestant Hospital, originally established in St. Luke's, but now removed to South Hackney, which constitutes one of the model charitable institutions of London (see 1709).

1698. This year there was enacted the 9 and 10 Wm. III.,

c. 25, *An Act for granting to H.M., his heirs and successors further duties upon Stamp Vellum, Parchment, and Paper.* There is the following special exemption in regard to briefs. "69. Provided always, That nothing in this Act contained shall extend to charge any *Letters Patent for collecting charitable Benevolence, commonly called Briefs*, with the Duty therein mentioned, or to make it necessary that such briefs should be doubly stamped ; anything herein contained to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding." By a later Act, however, briefs were required to be stamped, and it is seen to be quite an item in the charges attending such collections (see 1710).

### XIII.—"FARMING" BRIEFS.

The next phase in the history of our subject requiring to be noticed in detail is the introduction of the system of "Farming Briefs." It will, we suspect, account for a good deal of what has to follow. The precise date at which the practice was commenced we cannot determine. Its adoption was calculated to lead to imposition in two forms—first, in misrepresenting the facts by making out a stronger case than the truth would justify in order to elicit a wider sympathy and therefore a larger collection ; next the giving the real sufferers a minimum proportion of the benefit obtained from the brief. It might well be, when the old form of collecting upon briefs had become played out, as Pepys tells us pretty plainly it had been by 1661, in London at least, that the personal energy of the "farmers" of the enterprise could alone make them productive, and hence a person who gave up his rights for a very small consideration may have been the gainer ; but this system of trading upon charity was repugnant to all right feeling and was certain to end unpleasantly.

1701. The first evidence of the consequences of farming briefs which I meet with is in 1701, and seems to be a very strong case. It came up in the shape of a petition to the House of Commons taking the form of a printed case as follows :—

"The case of Margaret Mortimer, widow, and seventeen more sufferers by a dreadful fire which happened at Derby Court, Westminster, the 16th April, 1697, humbly submitted to the Honourable the House of Commons. No sooner was the fire over but one Mr. Pemberton (in whose empty house the fire began) was sued, by one Mr. Davis, at law for a house and goods the said Davis had burnt down, and the Court awarded that Pemberton should pay Davis £350. The next Sunday following Pemberton came to the sufferers and made his proposal, 'That if we would sign a release to him that we would not sue him for our losses, he would lay down the money to procure the King's letters patent to collect the charity of well-disposed persons throughout England for our relief.' *He told me he had skill in the business, and that he knew some men in the country that had got good estates by gathering charity, and that it would be a constant spring to us.* These insinuations prevailed with us to sign his release, which we all did. A meeting was appointed to consult what was to be done; and according to his direction a petition was drawn up to the Bench of Justices at the Quarter Sessions held at Westminster, which (after we had proved our losses) was granted; and the major part of the Bench of Justices signed our certificate for £3,035 loss, which certificate was thus expressed: 'We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, do certifie, that on the 16th of April, 1697, there was a loss by fire in Derby Court, Westminster, amounting to £3,035 as has been proved before us.' This general certificate not naming the number of persons together with their respective sums they lost, there were five persons put into the patent for £1,881 10s., and two of the real sufferers left out of the patent; four of the five persons are not yet known; the fifth was Pemberton himself for £400 loss, *though his houses were insured to their full value, if not much above the worth of them*, being insured, as I am informed, in two offices. Pemberton, after we had procured the Justices' certificate, lets the sufferers know nothing further of the matter, but names trustees, agrees with collectors, and takes their securities, which was a bond of £1,000, for the security of £3,035. When 8,000 briefs had been sent abroad signed by four honest gentlemen, whose names he had presumed to put in, together with five more that knew nothing of any such patent; he, having got four hands, adds a fifth name himself, then giveth notice to the sufferers that the patent was



out, and that if we pleased we might see it, and to excuse himself lays all the fault upon the Lord Chancellor, that his lordship put in the trustees and collectors, and took their securities. Then did I take the names of all the trustees, and I went to them severally to know of them when they met together to choose collectors and take their securities. They told me they never met, for Pemberton brought the papers to them to sign; three of the trustees knew nothing of any such patent, and two refused to sign the papers because they were not summoned to meet together, and four were prevailed with to sign some of the 8,000 papers to send abroad into the country. Then did I leave written summons at each trustee's house to meet at the Christian Coffee House in King Street, Westminster; and I prevailed with Dr. Oldys to give them a meeting, and to lay before them the fraud committed by Pemberton, and the great trust reposed in them.

"This meeting was the 5th of November, 1698. So I heard nothing further, and the date of the patent almost out, and not one penny paid to the sufferers. On the 3rd of May, 1699, I drew up a writing, that if the major part of the sufferers would join with me in an humble petition to my Lord Chancellor, I hoped his lordship would grant us some relief. There were thirteen persons out of eighteen real sufferers that joined in the petition to my Lord Chancellor. *At the first hearing his lordship declared before the whole court that there never was such an abuse put upon the Broad Seal*, and committed Pemberton to the prison of the Fleet till he considered of further punishment for him; but Pemberton found out friends to appease the Lord Chancellor's wrath, and in a short time after his lordship was dismissed the Seals, and the present Lord Keeper put in, to whom upon the 17th of April, 1701, we drew up an humble petition for a re-hearing of our whole cause, and in May following, his lordship made a very full order, thereby referring it to a *Master of Chancery to inspect and report all the particulars relating to the said matter*: and the said Master having made his report, by which it doth appear that Thomas Lewis, William Ranshaw, and Thomas Chamberlain, all living in Stafford Town, who have been common collectors for such purposes for above twenty years, have been guilty of counterfeiting briefs, and other great frauds; it appears there are fewer briefs by 1,500 sent up than by the trustee's accounts they had sent them, including and accounting the counterfeit briefs, and

others printed at Exeter, and the many indorsements on some briefs all in one handwriting, and above a thousand places according to the account of parishes in England, besides London and Middlesex, after all their bringing in, of which they have given no account whither anything collected or not. There were 114 briefs returned from Cumberland and Westmoreland, as many as there are parishes in those counties, returned two years and a half after that by the briefs themselves it appears they were read. The sufferers received not one penny before the patent had been out a quarter of a year, and then on complaint to the Lord Chancellor there was £120 paid to the trustees."

The Master's Report, included in the petition, furnishes the following additional details:—

"It has been admitted before me that there are more briefs yet standing out and not returned; but in what counties or places the briefs returned by them were laid has not been made out to me by the said collectors, nor can possibly be gathered by the briefs brought before me, which lie in small parcels containing briefs returned from different counties with a very great number of indorsements in the place of briefs which should have been returned, and by which indorsements the aforesaid number of briefs are made up. I further certify that it has been objected before me by the said Mrs. Mortimer, that besides the not returning the briefs in time according to the said collectors' bonds, there appears to be two other impressions of briefs amongst the briefs returned besides those delivered out by the trustees, and which were printed by Mr. Jones in the Savoy; some of which were printed at Exeter, and are so mentioned to be at the bottom of them; and others are with an impression imitating those printed by Mr. Jones in the Savoy, with his arms and name thereto, which were not printed by the said Mr. Jones, but by some other person; and that the major part of those last-mentioned briefs are amongst those which have been returned since the before-mentioned matters were referred to me; and that there are many briefs returned with the indorsements written all with one hand; and that some have many indorsements written on one brief, relating to divers parishes, all of one handwriting; and that above seven hundred briefs have been returned without any money collected on them, and many of them having no more than the words

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Nothing Collected indorsed on them; and that there are a few small narrow scripts of paper instead of briefs, signifying that nothing is collected in parishes named therein, without the hand of the minister or churchwardens to warrant them. As to which matters so objected, the solicitor for the country collectors took a copy, but making great delay in returning an answer, I inspected the said briefs with regard to the said objections, being about to make a report *ex parte* against the said collectors, and found that there were about 100 briefs imitating the said impression of Mr. Jones, and to two of them Mr. Jones's servants have made affidavits before me that the same were not of the said Mr. Jones's impression; and that about 100 briefs were printed at Exeter; and that the other objections appear to be true."

Finally the petition concludes:—

"This case being only the heads of the matter of fact, and it being an utter ruine to many of us, three persons being little better than starved to death already, and others in a starving condition still, I thought it my duty to lay our grievances before your Honours as the patriots of your countries and the helpers of the distressed; which I attempted to have done the last Session, but it was then too late to bring in a bill for the regulation of this matter."

This document, a copy of which is preserved in the British Museum Library, bears the following indorsement:—

"'The case of Mrs. Mortimer and the rest of the sufferers by Derby Court fire; humbly submitted to the consideration of the Honourable House of Commons.' No immediate result followed upon the narration of these abuses."

1704. This year a further statement was issued purporting to be made by Margaret Mortimer, widow, and great pains were taken to bring the matter before the King and Parliament: not so much on behalf of the widow, as in view of the creation of an office and patronage for some one. I give a few passages from this document which throw much light on the practices which had prevailed:—

"Whereas the common way of collecting charity upon letters patent hath been by undertaking collectors, which hath been sufficiently provid to be the utter ruin of all charity; 'tis humbly propos'd that a publick office be erected in London, and that the Lord Mayor and

Court of Aldermen be constituted commissioners for all patents, they being gentlemen not only of great integrity and honour, but of great understanding, for improving a stock when rais'd.

"When such an office is set up, all persons having losses by fire may repair to it for instructions, where records shall be kept of all concerns relating to that office. The first instruction given by the office is to send the sufferers to the Bench of Justices to have their losses certify'd; and that all persons' names, together with the respective sums they lost, be also certify'd, and the number of persons in each patent. When the certificate is obtained, it shall be brought back to the office; and the officer set apart for the purpose shall repair to the Clerk of the Briefs belonging to the Lord Keeper, or Lord Chancellor, or Commissioners of the Board Seal, for the letters patents. Then the Queen's printer is to have notice to send as many copies of the patents back to the office, as the proper officer shall bespeak.

"'Tis likewise humbly propos'd, That all collections upon letters patents from henceforth be gather'd by the Bishop's visitations, and that the allowances for collecting shall be out of the copies of the patent brought in; for instance, if twopence be allowed to the deputed trustee for his care in returning the mony to the office, a penny to the apparitor for laying the copies down, twopence to the archdeacon for taking the copies up, and twopence to the register for keeping exact accounts of the number of papers brought in, and what mony is indors'd; which accounts shall be forthwith given into the office where books shall be kept for that purpose. This is but sevenpence each paper, and these men have had thirteence each paper for their salary besides robbing the sufferers of most of the mony collect'd; not to exceed what they have had, there is sixpence each paper towards an office. By this computation these men have had five hundred pounds for collecting every parent (the country part only) *without any reckoning of the briefs from dissenters' meetings*. When the schedules of all sorts of meetings in each diocess are kept upon record in the office, I hope there can be no room for hiding anything; so that if the letters patents are issued out for a public collection of charity for the raising of a stock, the office may cause twenty thousand copies of the patent to be brought from the Queen's printer, and lodg'd in the office, where the officers of each diocess shall repair for such number as they know there are churches and chapels of the Church of Eng'land."

## XIV.—ACT FOR REGULATING BRIEFS.

1705. After the preceding narration no one will be surprised to find that in the following year (1705) Parliament took up the subject, and there was enacted the 4 Anne, c. 14—*An act for the better collecting charity money on Briefs by Letters Patent, and preventing abuses in relation to such charities.* This measure recites: "Whereas many inconveniences do arise, and frauds are committed in the common method of collecting charity money upon briefs by letters patent, to the great trouble of the objects of such charity, and to the great discouragement of well-disposed persons." For remedy whereof it was enacted that from 25th March, 1706, all copies of briefs for collecting charity money should be printed by the Queen's printers. Ministers of churches and chapels on some Sunday within two months after the receipt of copy of brief were to openly read the same *before the sermon*. The churchwardens are to endorse on the brief the amount collected, and remit the same with brief to the "undertaker" employed in the matter. All the returned briefs were to be deposited with the Registrar of the Court of Chancery. The Act further recited: "*And whereas there hath been an evil practice in farming and purchasing for a sum of money the charity money which should or might be collected on such briefs, to the very great hindrance and discouragement of almsgiving on such occasion.*" Such practices were now forbidden. The "undertakers" referred to in the preceding Act were men appointed for the working of the particular charity to which the brief related; and they were paid a commission on the proceeds. They were rendered liable to penalties if they failed to comply with the provisions of the Act.

I now give a copy of one of the earliest briefs issued under the provisions of this Act. It was occasioned by a fire at Iniskilling, on 2nd June, 1705, and is a far more formidable document than any fire brief previously issued.

1705. KING'S BRIEF.—Issued under the authority of the Act of 1705. [At the top the Royal Arms.] Then, “Loss by Fire at Iniskilling in Ireland, £8,166,” and as follows:—

“Anne, by the Grace of God, Queen of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. To all and singular Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans, and their Generals [? word defaced], Parsons, Vicars, Curates, and all other spiritual persons: And also to all Justices of the Peace, Mayors, Sheriffs, Bayliffs, Constables, Church-Wardens, Chappel-Wardens, Headboroughs, Collectors for the Poor, and their overseers: And also to all officers of Cities, Boroughs, and Towns Corporate: And to all others our officers, ministers, and subjects whatever they be, as well within Liberties as without, to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

“Whereas it hath been represented unto Us, as well upon the humble Petition of the poor distressed Inhabitants of the Corp<sup>n</sup> of Iniskilling in our kingdom of Ireland; as by the Representation of James Duke of Ormond, Our Lieutenant-General and General Governour of Ireland: That the s<sup>d</sup> poor Petitioners have, for these sixteen years last past, laboured under great Wants and Difficulties, occasioned by the many hardships they suffered by the late Wars of Ireland, and for their firm adherence to the Protestant interest, and especially to the Crown and Church of England as by Law establishit; and that when the s<sup>d</sup> Petitioners had in a great measure, by their labour and industry retrieved their losses, so that they were again in a plentiful way of living; It pleased God on the second day of June last past, by a most dreadful, sudden, and accidental Fire, to suffer almost their whole town to be laid in ashes; to the utter ruin of above One Hundred families, and loss of Eight thousand one hundred, sixty and six pounds in mony and goods; as by a schedule given in by the several sufferers, upon their respective oaths before our Justices of the Peace for the County of *Farmanagh*, in the s<sup>d</sup> Kingdom of Ireland appears.

“And therefore have humbly besought Us to grant unto them Our Gracious Letters Patents, License, and Protection, under Our Great Seal of England, to Empower them to ask, collect and receive, the seasonable alms and relief of all our loving subjects, throughout our Kingdom of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for their support under this their great calamity.

“Unto which their humble request We have graciously

condescended, as well with regard to the sad and deplorable condition to which so many poor Families are reduced by this sudden calamity; as from a remembrance of the Surprising and almost Unexampled Services which those of that Town lately performed in Support and Defence of the Protestant Religion and English Interest in Ireland, when small numbers of them in three several Actions defeated considerable bodies of regular Troops, whereby they proved highly instrumental in reducing that kingdom to its due subjection to the Crown of England.

“KNOW YE THEREFORE, That of our especial Grace and Princely compassion, We have given and granted, and by these our Letters Patents under our Great Seal of England, We do give and grant unto the s<sup>d</sup> distressed Inhabitants of Iniskilling, and to their Deputies or Agents, who shall be lawfully authorized on their behalf, full Power, License, and Authority to ask, gather, receive and take, according to the Rules in these Presents specified, the Alms and Charitable benevolence of all our Loving Subjects, not only Householders but also Servants, Strangers, and others, within all and every the Countries, Cities, Boroughs, Towns Corporate, Privileged-places, Parishes, Chappelries, Towns, Villages, Hamlets, and all other places whatsoever, throughout our Kingdom of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for the Relief and Support of the said poor Sufferers and their Families.

“AND We do in a particular manner recommend it to all and singular the Archbishops and Bishops of all the Provinces and Dioceses within our Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales, That they and every of them do give a particular direction and command to all the Parsons, Vicars, and Curates of all and every the parishes and other places, as well within Liberties as without, within their respective Dioceses for the advancement of this so pious and charitable a work.

“AND THEREFORE We will and require you and every of you, that at such time and times as the s<sup>d</sup> Deputies, Agents, or Bearers hereof, shall come and repair to any your Churches and Chappels and other places appointed for Religious worship, to ask and receive the Alms and Benevolence of our Loving Subjects, that ye quietly permit and suffer them to do so.

“AND ye the s<sup>d</sup> Parsons, Vicars, and Curates are upon the first Lord's Day then after (or second at furthest), without some good

reason to the contrary, deliberately and affectionately to publish and declare the tenour of the same unto our said Loving Subjects, and earnestly persuade, exhort, and stir them up to contribute freely and cheerfully towards the relief of the s<sup>d</sup> poor distressed sufferers.

“AND the s<sup>d</sup> Churchwardens together with the Minister or some of the substantial Inhabitants of the Parish accompanying them, are also hereby required to go from House to House upon the week-days next following, to ask and receive from the parishioners, as well Masters, Mistresses, and Servants, as others in their families, their Christian and Charitable contributions, and to take the names in writing of all such as shall contribute hereunto: And the sum and sums by them respectively given, and indorse the whole sum upon the s<sup>d</sup> printed briefs, in words at length, and subscribe the same with their proper hands, together with the name of the place where, and time when, collected; and to enter the same into the public Books of Account kept for each parish and Chappelry respectively. And the sum and sums collected, together with the s<sup>d</sup> printed briefs so indorsed, you are to deliver unto the s<sup>d</sup> Deputies and Agents, who are thereupon forthwith to pay all the s<sup>d</sup> mony and return the s<sup>d</sup> briefs unto the Chamber of the City of London.

“AND We hereby further require and command all Ministers and Teachers of separate Congregations and Assemblies, that they read this Brief in their respective Congregations, and Earnestly exhort their Hearers to extend their bowels of compassion to the said sufferers upon this extraordinary occasion; and that they do cause the Charity of their respective Congregations to be duly collected: And the sums collected to be indorsed on the Briefs, and signed by the s<sup>d</sup> Ministers and Teachers, with the time and place when and where the s<sup>d</sup> Collections were made. And that they do cause the sums so collected, together with the Printed Briefs to be returned to the Churchwardens of the respective parishes to which they belong: which said Churchwardens are hereby required to pay the s<sup>d</sup> sums, and deliver the s<sup>d</sup> Printed Briefs with the other collections of the Parish to the s<sup>d</sup> Deputies and Agents, as is herein before directed, to be returned with the other Collections into the Chamber of our City of London.

“AND We do hereby authorize and appoint The Most Reverend Father in God the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Archbishop of York, the Lord Archbishop of Dublin, Charles Earl of



Mountrath, the Rt. Hon. the Lord Viscount Lanesborough, the Rt. Hon. the Lord Viscount Mountjoy, Charles Lord Coote, the Rt. Rev. the Father in God, the Lord Bishop of London, the Lord Bishop of Lincoln, and the Lord Bishop of Clogher, Thomas Lord Coning by, the Hon. Wm. Moor, Esq., Sir Arthur Gole, and Sir Octavius Hume, Baronets, Sir Michael Cole, Knight, Major-General Gustavus Hamilton, Richard Rooth, Richard Rider, Edward Le Neve, John Buchnal, and John Cole, Esquires, the Rev. Doctor John Dane, Thomas Johnston, Gent., William Browne and Alexander Cairnes, merchants, and the Provost of the Inn of Iniskilling for the Time being, to be Commissioners and Trustees for the Execution of these our Letters Patents, and for the ordering, managing and disposing of the Charity ; with power to them, or any Five or more of them, to make and sign all necessary Orders for the due and regular Collection of this Brief, and for the issuing and paying the monys out of the Chamber, London. And we do hereby authorize and appoint the s<sup>d</sup> Lord Bishop of Clogher, Sir Gustavus Hume, Sir Michael Cole, and the Provost of the Town of Iniskilling for the Time being, or any two of them to oversee the rebuilding of the Town ; and to take care that the mony collected as aforesaid be applied to the best advantage for the use of the said Town, and Relief of the respective sufferers. In witness whereof, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patents, and to continue in force for one whole year, from Christmas next and no longer. Witness Our Self at Westminster the nineteenth day of December in the fourth year of Our Reign. God Save the Queen."

The document bears at its foot the names of "Fall and Pearson," with the imprint : "London : printed by Benjamin Molte, for the Patentees, being first Examined by the Grant under the Great Seal of England, 1705." I think it may be assumed that the "Patentees" referred to were Fall and Pearson.

1705. It will appear to many a strange anomaly that at the termination of a generation after the development of the practice of *Fire Insurance* in England, such a system of meeting the common casualty of fire should still be in force, and should receive the formal sanction of Parliament. It is one of the functions of history to clear up such anomalies. In this

instance, the task is not difficult. Although Fire Insurance had been probably practised by means of individual underwriters, or otherwise, from 1667—the year after the great fire of London—and by an organized company since 1680 or 1681, (in which latter year the Chamber of the City of London perfected a scheme of Fire Insurance, constituting a very remarkable chapter in the history of the Corporation), the practice had not at the date at which we have now arrived (1705) extended beyond the Bills of Mortality; nor did it exceed these narrow limits for another five years—or before 1710. Hence to the great mass of the population Fire Insurance was still an impossibility.

Early in this century a proposal was set on foot for raising a permanent fund out of which fire losses should be paid *without waiting the return of the briefs*, the fund for this purpose to be provided from collections made during the visitations of the Bishops. This we believe was not carried out.

It was probably somewhere about this time also (1705), that Dean Swift wrote his famous skit upon Bishop Burnett's History of his own Time, entitled, "Memoirs of P. P., Clerk to this Parish," wherein occurs the following:—"The next [chapter] contains an account of the briefs read in this church, and the sums collected upon each. For the reparation of 9 churches, collected at nine several times, 2s. and 7½d. For fifty families ruined by fire, 1s. ½d. For an inundation, a King Charles's groat, given by Lady Frances," &c.

#### XV.—FURTHER USES FOR BRIEFS.

1709. This year English charity was again invited in favour of Protestant refugees from France. The malevolence of French persecution having pursued the Protestants of the Palatine, they were stripped of their worldly goods and expatriated. Some 12,000 of these distressed people found their way to England. They arrived in the month of June in the neighbourhood of London, and were at first maintained by the benevolence of the Queen (Anne), afterwards by that of the

nobility, &c.; and finally there was collected for them on a *Brief* no less than £22,028. With this relief, 3,000 were sent to Ireland; 600 to North and South Carolina; 3,500 to New York, where they speedily settled down into the arts of industry (*vide* Hughson's "London").

1710-11. In the case of the brief for St. Mary's Church, *Colchester* (which had lain in ruins since the siege of 1648), issued 1710, the sum collected was £2,142 11s. 4d., of which, however, £546 19s. 10d. was absorbed in expenses as follows, stated under their separate heads:—

	£	s.	d.
<i>Charges of obtaining it from the Lord Chancellor.</i>			
Petition to Lord Chancellor ... ..	...	0	6 8
Fiat to his secretary ... ..	...	38	10 0
To his clerk ... ..	...	0	5 0
	£39	1	8
<i>Mr. Roberts, the Patentee, his fees</i> ... ..	...	28	3 2
To his clerk ... ..	...	0	5 0
Paper and printing the briefs ... ..	...	21	10 0
Examining the proof ... ..	...	0	5 0
<i>Signing the Brief</i> ... ..	...	10	15 0
Bishop's letter, paper and printing ... ..	...	8	11 0
Deputations for twenty-four collectors ... ..	...	1	16 0
Boxes, porters, and carriage to Stafford and back to London ... ..	...	2	5 0
Register and printer's porter ... ..	...	0	10 0
<i>Solicitor's charges</i> ... ..	...	15	7 6
Drawing and engrossing the bond ... ..	...	0	5 0
Stamping the brief ... ..	...	14	5 0
Registrar's servant ... ..	...	0	5 0
Letters in the whole ... ..	...	1	0 0
Mr. Timothy Cooke's charge for a book of account ... ..	...	4	6 0
	£148	10	4
<i>Charges for collecting—</i>			
To the collectors for collecting 10,671 briefs at 8d. a piece, and 245 in London at 1s. 6d. each ... ..	...	374	1 6

	£	s.	d.
Carrying the Bishop of London's circular letter ...	10	0	0
Charges of Tim. Cooke, one of the trustees and chief managers ... ..	14	8	0
Total (according to Mr. Cooke's computation)	£546	19	10
(Vide Morant's "History of Colchester," p. 108 n.) See 1809,			

1712. This year (30th January) there occurred a fire in the printing office of the famous Wm. Bowyer, in the precinct of White Fryars, from which we are enabled to learn with exactness the process attending the working of briefs at this period. The first step was a petition by the sufferers to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City setting forth the facts, but as these are repeated in the petition which they forwarded to the Lord Chancellor, I pass over that portion of the first petition. The prayer was for the Mayor, &c., to certify to the Lord Chancellor of the facts, "to the end that your petitioner may obtain her Majesty's most gracious Letters Patent by way of brief for a collection of the charity of her Majesty's loving subjects" for the relief of the petitioner. The Mayor and Aldermen accordingly—the fire it will be noted occurred within the city—petitioned the Lord Chancellor in form following:—

*"To the Right Hon. Simon Lord Harcourt, Baron of Stanton Harcourt, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.*

"May it please your Lordship,

"We whose names are hereunto subscribed, being the Mayor, Aldermen, and Justices of the Peace, of the City of London, and other inhabitants of the said City, do humbly certify your Lordship, that it hath been made appear to us, upon the humble petition of William Bowyer, of the precinct of White Fryars, within the City of London, printer, That on the 30th of January, in the year of our Lord 1712, there happened a dreadful and sudden fire in the night-time, by accident unknown, which, by reason of the suddenness and violence thereof, forced the said William Bowyer, with his wife and children, to fly for their lives out of their beds, with only such a small part of their common wearing apparel as could on the sudden be taken with them, though not sufficient to cover them; leaving

a gentleman of their family behind, who perished in the flames, and was burnt to ashes : and in a very short time the said fire not only burnt down to the ground the dwelling-house of the said William Bowyer, and demolished and damaged others next the same, amounting to the value of 802*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.* as appears by the oaths of George Quick and Edward Bayley, creditable and substantial workmen, but also totally consumed all the household goods, apparel, books of accompts, wares, stock-in-trade, printing-presses, types, and other the utensils of his profession, together with several hundred reams of paper bought and prepared for printing, and a great number of divers and sundry books and parts of books, printing and printed, to the value of 4,344*l.* 2*s.* 5*d.* or thereabouts, as appears upon the oath of the said sufferer ; so that the whole loss, upon a moderate computation, amounts to the sum of 5,146*l.* 18*s.* That the said poor sufferer, before this sad calamity, had acquired considerable substance, and lived in a creditable manner, but is now reduced to extreme want and poverty, and not able to support himself and family without the relief of her Majesty's loving subjects. We therefore recommend the premisses to your Lordship's charitable consideration, to the end your Lordship will be pleased to grant unto the said poor sufferer her Majesty's most gracious letters patent, licence, and protection, under the great seal of Great Britain, for a collection of charity, for the relief of the said poor sufferer and his family, as to your Lordship shall seem meet. Given under our hands, this 6th day of March, 1713."

A brief was accordingly granted, the clear produce of which was £1,514 13*s.* 4½*d.*—the expenses unfortunately not being stated (*vide* "Literary Anecdotes," i. 58).

1720. *Inundation.* In 1720 there was great damage sustained in the County Palatine of Lancaster by an irruption of the Sea, under circumstances fully set out in the following brief, which was issued for the benefit of the sufferers :—

"George, by the Grace of God, &c. : Whereas it hath been represented unto us, as well upon the humble petition of Edmund Ball, Oliver Rymer, Lawrence Abraham, &c., on the behalf of themselves and about four hundred other inhabitants, Farmers, and Rack-Tenants, within the parishes and townships of North-Meols, Heskethcum-Becconsals, Tarleton, Martin-Mear, Pilling, Lytham, Warton,

and Westby-cum-Plumton, Cokerham, and Ince Blundell, in our County Palatine of Lancaster; as also by several certificates under the hands and seals of our Trusty and Well-beloved Robert Mawdesly, Samuel Crook, John Owen, &c., Esquires, our Justices of the Peace for the said County Palatine of Lancaster, made at their several General Quarter Sessions of the Peace held at Lancaster, Wigan, Preston, and Ormskirk, on the 10th, 12th, and 16th days of January, and also on the 24th day of April, in the seventh year of our Reign, that upon Sunday and Monday, the 18th and 19th days of December, then last past, there happened a prodigious storm of wind, which (falling out at the change of the moon, and the very height of spring tide) occasioned such an extraordinary overflow and inundation of the sea that it broke down and washed away the Sea-bank, Ramparts, and other Fences, and made a great Irruption along the sea-coast, and overflowed above 6,600 acres of land, utterly destroying and washing away all the Wheat, Rye, Clover, Grass, Salt-works, Corn, Hay, Barns, Outhouses, of the petitioners thereon, together with great number of Horses, Cows, Oxen and other Cattle, which were drowned thereby: That the said Flood washed away above 157 dwelling-houses, and so much damaged above 200 more that they will not be habitable without great charge and expense; and that most of the Petitioners lost all their household goods, wearing apparel, and everything necessary for their subsistence, many persons being drowned, and the rest, by divine providence, narrowly escaping with their lives, some with great difficulty preserving themselves by swimming on the pieces of timber torn off by the s<sup>d</sup> storm from their houses; and others remaining a long time in the water till taken out by the assistance of their neighbours, and are, by this s<sup>d</sup> calamity, without habitations for themselves, having nothing to depend upon but their charitable neighbours for their lodging and subsistence.

“That the truth of these premises hath been made appear to our said Justices in their several open Sessions of the Peace, not only upon the oaths of the s<sup>d</sup> poor sufferers and several neighbouring gentlemen, but also upon the oaths of divers able and experienced workmen, who were severally examined in open Court, and made a careful estimate of the Petitioners' losses in the premises aforesaid; and the same, upon a just and reasonable computation, amounts to the sum of £10,227 and upwards. By which sad calamity the said poor Petitioners and their families are reduced to the extremest

degree of poverty, and must inevitably perish unless relieved by the assistance of our loving subjects."

## XVI.—MORE ABUSES AND DISCONTENT.

1787. This year there was commenced in the *Gentleman's Magazine* one of those elaborate discussions for which its pages became so famous, and which makes it still a valuable medium of reference to the historian. I propose to review the discussion and select illustrative passages. The opener says :—

"The reading of briefs (or indeed any parish business) in the Church savours something of profaneness. The collections made there *are in general very small*. And the distress of the indigent would be at least as amply relieved if the Government would permit the briefs to be advertised gratis in the Gazette. This I am sure of, that many would *read* them, who very seldom now attend to *hear them read*" (vol. lvii., p. 309).

The next correspondent says :—

"I could tell you an instance where the officiating minister, not the rector or vicar, refuses to read briefs, as unfit to be read in Churches, and leaves them to the Clerk, who, to his credit, reads them very well. Strange inconsistency in a high churchman! as if anything *relative to the Church* was improper to be read in it. But so unguardedly do bigots reason" (lviii., p. 512).

A third correspondent grows more emphatic, and says :—

"The abuse which I have at present to lay before you is that of Church Briefs, which are most of them obtained by the greatest perjury, and consequently contain the grossest falsehoods, which became more shocking when read in the face of a congregation, and in the presence, the more immediate presence of Almighty God."

"That this is not empty declamation the following accounts will evince :—A man in an inland county, some years ago, found a person or persons hardy enough to swear that he had sustained a loss of £392 and upwards by fire, though his loss did not exceed £20, and he had collected more than £10 amongst his neighbours.

He was told by one of the Brief-gatherers *that the general practice in estimating losses was, if any part of a house be burnt, to include the whole house, and all the furniture in the valuation.* Another instance may be quoted from the same county, where the damage was estimated at more than £2,000, but the clergy in general know better than to be *driven* from house to house whenever a paltry fellow of a brief collector chooses to send them.

"The estimates for churches are equally shameful. The clergy are made to declare that a church which may be rebuilt for £200 or £300 requires £1,000. Upon which account it would be a laudable practice entirely to discourage every donation to a brief, till these evils are removed.

"The remedy is simple and easy. Let three or four magistrates be requested to visit the places where the fires or inundations happen, and where the churches are to be rebuilt; let them advert to every circumstance, and make ample allowance for the temporary inconvenience, which an inhabitant of any house, or the occupier of any premises, may have sustained, and let them resolve to admit no allegations of workmen to pass without such a view. This I conceive may be done without any Act of Parliament, but if an Act be necessary, why should it not pass? I also think that the proctors of the respective districts might be allowed a certain poundage, and being obliged to attend the visitations [of the Bishops] on other accounts, would collect the money more cheaply than the present people, who, going for that single purpose, must expect to be better rewarded" (lviii., p. 576).

A London Curate takes up the question in the following clear-headed manner:—

"I . . . endeavour to read the briefs which pass under my notice as I ought, and to press the contribution as earnestly as I can. But indeed, sir, the mode of collecting by a brief, is so very objectionable that I am almost ashamed of saying all that might be said, when, in conjunction with the Churchwardens, I am making the collection. Briefs are surely *farmed*, or why do I find the names of *three* gentlemen in all briefs, who it seems advance money upon their probable produce, certainly not without a *decent* premium? In short, sir, the fact is, that only one-third of the whole sum collected passes into the hands of the trustees, the remainder is consumed in official fees



paid for the application of the Great Seal, or cleaves to the fingers of the brief-broker. I wish to have the matter reformed, and have a project or two for that purpose which I will mention.

“1. Let the Commissioner for managing Queen Anne’s Bounty be appointed Commissioner for granting of Briefs, *without fees*, and be the receiver-general of the first-fruits, receive directly into his hands, and remit to the Trustees named in the briefs, the respective contributions, deducting 10s. per cent. as a compensation for his trouble, or any other moderate sum.

“2. Let churches be put on a footing with county bridges, and repaired by a county rate. The parish wherein any church so repaired shall stand, to raise a reasonable sum by the way of *annuity* in easement of the county rate, the proportion to be settled by the grand jury of the county.

“3. Let benefactions for repairing or rebuilding churches be solicited in the provincial newspapers, as they are for hospitals and other objects of the public charity” (lviii., p. 609).

Yet another Clergyman writes (*inter alia*): “Several of the Churchwardens at these midland visitations inform the officers whose care it is to issue them out, they need not give them any, for they only bestow the carriage to their respective parishes, and let them be dormant till the next visitation, without any ways and means being taken to answer the good intent and purpose.”

It was pointed out in this controversy that while the Crown derived “such great emoluments at the passing of every brief” opposition was almost useless. But the expression of opinion now elicited had unquestionably considerable weight in the downfall of the system.

Another correspondent, holding an official position said: “I am employed in distributing the briefs to the different villages, &c., in the peculiar jurisdiction of Banbury, and from 60 to 70 briefs for rebuilding of churches returned to me the last visitation, signed by the respective members and churchwardens, there had been collected in the whole but 20½d, the fact was but one brief of the whole had collected anything” (lviii., p. 905).

1788. The following brief for repair of a Church was issued in 1788, and is a good specimen of its class in point of brevity:

"Mar. 1, 1788. Whereas it hath been represented unto us, that the abbey or parochial church of St. Paul in Malmsbury, is a very beautiful, large, and ancient fabrick, being built about 1,100 years since, and covers 60 perches of ground, and is adorned in various parts of it with curious work of different orders; that the church, at the dissolution of monasteries, in order to preserve so venerable a structure, was purchased by the aldermen of the said borough, and notwithstanding the parishioners have, from time to time, expended several large sums of money in support of the said fabrick, yet the same is now become very ruinous through length of time, particularly the south walls are greatly decayed and bulged, and several of the arches, together with the roof, are become very rotten, and in great danger of falling into the church; the north walls are also shattered with many cracks and flaws, and not without danger even in the foundation, and several pinnacles are already fallen in; that the parishioners have, by a former collection by virtue of his Majesty's letters patent, collected the sum of 470*l.* 15*s.* 11*d.*, which sum is vested in the three *per cent.* Consolidated Annuities, until they have authority to collect a further sum for the repair of the said church; which, by the oath of James Darley, an able and experienced architect, who has viewed the church, and estimated the charge of taking down a part and repairing the same, will amount to 2,441*l.* 4*s.*, exclusive of the foresaid sum and the old materials.—A brief to collect from house to house. Trustees: Sir James Tilney Long, Bart., Thomas Estcourt Creswell, Charles Wesley Coxe, Thomas Estcourt, Esq., Rev. Thomas Pollock, LL.D., Edm. Wilkins, Esq., high-steward, the aldermen and capital burgesses, the minister and churchwardens for the time being, William Stevenson and William Hilditch, gents. Feb. 26, 28 Geo. III."

This brief produced the sum of £470 15*s.* 11*d.*; but that being insufficient for the purpose, a further brief was issued later in the year.

1791. Horace Walpole, writing to Miss Berry, under date 26th May, 1791, regarding an application which had been made to him to subscribe to a monument for Dr. Johnson (who had offended Walpole), says: "I would not deign to write an

answer, but sent down word by my footman, *as I would have done to parish officers with a brief, that I would not subscribe.*"

1796. A correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1796, stated that the circulation of briefs in Wales was "confined by authority to the three counties of *Flint, Denbigh, and Radnor*" (lxvi., p.38). This statement must be received subject to further inquiry. Collections for fires occurring in other parts of Wales (which certainly is a different thing) were made (*vide* Appendix No. 1, 1683, collection for a fire in Carmarthen).

#### XVII.—REGULATIONS FOR BRIEFS.

1804. The following circular and regulations concerning briefs were issued this year, by John Nares, "Secretary of Briefs to the Lord Chancellor," under date, 1st March :—

*"Circular.—To the Minister and Churchwardens of the Parish of ————* Gentlemen,—Many complaints having been made by persons who have been under the necessity of applying for briefs, I have endeavoured to ascertain the cause of the delay, and also the reason the collections are so small ; and find that it is owing to the neglect of some of the churchwardens in returning the briefs, and the omission of some Clergymen either to read them or frequently to read them all at once. I have examined the Undertaker's accounts, and can safely assure you they are kept in the most regular manner. I have therefore the Lord Chancellor's directions to express his wish that the following Requisitions may be strictly complied with.

---

*"Regulations.—*Churchwardens or Chapelwardens, Teachers and Preachers of every separate Congregation, or persons who have taught or preached among Quakers, shall, immediately after receiving briefs from the Undertaker, endorse the time of receiving, and set their names. Then the Churchwardens or Chapelwardens shall forthwith deliver them to the Minister. And the Ministers, on receipt, shall endorse the time and set their names. Then the Ministers (and Teachers respectively) in two months after receipt shall, on some Sunday immediately before Sermon, openly read, or cause them to be read to the Congregation. Then the Churchwardens and Chapelwardens (and Teachers and others to whom they were delivered) shall

collect the money that shall be freely given, either in the assembly, or by going from house to house as the briefs require.

"Next, the sum collected, the place where, and time when, shall be endorsed, fairly written in words at length, according to the form to be printed on the back of each brief, and signed by the Minister and Churchwardens, or by the Teacher and two Elders, or two other substantial persons of such separate Congregation.

"Afterwards, on request of the Undertaker (or other person by him lawfully authorized), the Churchwardens and Teachers shall deliver to him the briefs so endorsed, and the money thereon collected.

"Every Minister, Curate, Teacher, Preacher, Churchwarden, Chapelwarden, and Quaker refusing or neglecting to do anything above required, shall forfeit £20, to be recovered by Action of Debt, Bill, Plaint, or Information.

"And in every Parish or Chapelry and separate Congregation a Register shall be kept by the Minister or Teacher of all monies collected by virtue of such briefs therein; also inserting the occasion of the brief, and the time when collected; to which all persons, at all times, may resort without fee.—1st March, 1804."

1809. In the case of a brief for the Parish Church of Ravenstonedale, in Westmoreland, issued apparently about this date, the statement of charges were as follows, being an obvious modification upon those of a century previous:—

	£	s.	d.
Taking the Certificate ... ..	0	7	6
Seal and Signing ... ..	19	14	2
Letters Patent ... ..	21	18	2
Printing and Paper ... ..	16	0	0
Teller and Porter ... ..	0	5	0
Stamping ... ..	13	12	6
Copy of Brief ... ..	0	5	0
Porterage to and from Stamper's ... ..	0	5	0
Matt for Packing ... ..	0	4	0
Porterage to Waggons ... ..	0	4	0
Carriage to Undertaker ... ..	1	11	6
Postage of Letters and Certificate ... ..	0	4	8
Clerk's Fees ... ..	2	2	0
Total of Patent Charges ... ..	£76	3	6

			£	s.	d.
Salary for 9,986 Briefs, at 6d.	...	...	...	249	13 0
Additional Salary for London	...	...	...	5	0 0
Total Charges	...	...	£	330	16 6
Collected on 9,986 Briefs...	...	£614	12	9	
Deduct charges...	...	...	330	16	6
Clear Collection	...		£	283	16 3
Collections	...	...	9,986		
Blanks	...	...	503		

Total number of Briefs 10,489

*Vide Gentleman's Magazine*, lxxix., p. 1,123.

1804. In conformity with recommendation of the Secretary of the Lord Chancellor (in 1804) that a "Register of Briefs" should be kept in every parish, a Mr. Solomon drew up a most comprehensive plan, embodying the following details:—

1. No. of briefs sent.
2. Occasion of each brief.
3. Charge of each (*i.e.*, loss involved in case which gave rise to it).
4. Date.
5. Time when received by Churchwardens.
6. Time when received by minister.
7. Sunday in which brief was publicly read in church.
8. Amount of money collected on each brief.
9. Time or times when collected.
10. Time and place of payment thereof, and of returning the brief by the churchwardens into the hands of ——. Observations, &c.

Had such a book been kept at an earlier period its details would have been of great historic value.

1814. It had become a very common practice to issue a succession of briefs for the same object, thus in the case of Adderly Church (Salop) no less than five, if not six, were issued. In other cases the same. A correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1814 (page 633), stated that he had found the average amount produced by each issue in such

cases had been (for the whole kingdom) a trifle above £190. In some cases (as witness the Dagenham Church, Essex, brief) the subsequent issues had brought the parties concerned in debt to the undertakers.

At the Michaelmas Sessions in Staffordshire, 1816, the chairman (George Chetwynd, Esq.) gave the result of an inquiry he had instituted concerning briefs as follows :—

“The Letters Patent which are issued by the Lord Chancellor, upon a Certificate from the Quarter Sessions, had, he said, ever since 1799, been delivered to John Stevenson Salt, Esq. (of the firm of Messrs. Stevenson and Salt, Lombard-street), who is now *exclusively employed* as undertaker for the purpose of Disposing Copies of the Briefs, and of receiving the Collections, but that it is fully competent for any person who obtains a brief, to appoint his own undertaker, Mr. Salt having no office or permanent appointment.

“Upon receipt of the Letters Patent, Mr. Salt, as undertaker, provides printed Copies (10,800 of Church Briefs, or 11,500 of Fire Briefs), which Copies are delivered by his Agents, at the Archdeacon's Visitations, to the Churchwardens of the several parishes, &c., and at the ensuing Visitations they are returned to the persons by whom issued, with the sums collected thereon.

“A General Statement of each account is afterwards made up, with as little delay as possible, and information of the sums collected is given to the Trustees appointed in each Brief, and the whole may be drawn for immediately.

“The Charges upon a Church Brief are generally as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Fiat ... ..	10	5	6
Patent ... ..	22	11	6
Paper and Printing ... ..	22	10	0
Stamping ... ..	13	10	0
Canvas, postage, carriage, &c. ... ..	15	3	0
	<hr/>		
	£84	0	0

“Undertaker's salary 5*l.* for each Church Brief returned, but charged only 4*l.*; within the Bills of Mortality double.

“The Charges upon Fire Briefs amount to 86*l.*, and the undertakers' salary 8*l.* each.

"The undertaker is responsible for every Agent and Collector throughout the kingdom; and the sum received as salary is by no means adequate to the trouble, risk, and responsibility attending the business.

"To the foregoing explicit statement the Chairman added that the productiveness of briefs is less than might be expected, partly by reason of the imperfect provisions of the Act of 4th Queen Anne, c. 14, and the frequent negligence of Churchwardens, but chiefly by the prevailing idea that briefs are farmed. In no instance, he was fully convinced, had a brief ever been farmed, either by Mr. Salt, or to Mr. Salt's knowledge."

This is one of the most clear and satisfactory statements concerning the practice of briefs ever issued, but it seems that in view of the public excitement which had been aroused in the question the practice had been modified and reformed. The point concerning the "farming of briefs" shows a considerable variation in practice. The charges given, as will be seen, were only those incident to the Patent—the first stage.

#### XVIII.—BRIEFS DYING OUT.

1819. I have still something more to say on the general question of briefs. Their uses had unquestionably departed except in the single instance of collections for building or repairing churches. But even here the newspaper press had usurped their functions. Appeals could be made in the shape of advertisement at much less cost than that involved in putting the machinery of a collection by brief in motion. The expenses of this were very considerable, amounting to about £80 for "Expenses of Patent" and £150 for collectors' salary, and hence frequently the greater part of the collection was swallowed up, and in some instances even an adverse balance produced. From a Parliamentary return issued in 1819 it appeared that £424 was collected for a casualty at Windiford Brook, but the sufferers only benefited to the extent of £106. Upon a brief for Carlisle (dated 1818) £197 was collected, but the net proceeds amounted to £12 only. In another case £24 was all that was left out of £210.

While on a brief for repairing Wrockwardine Church (1818) the net produce was but *five shillings!* (*Antiquary*, iv., p. 34).

About twelve briefs per annum were issued during the first quarter of the present century.

The number of briefs printed and issued varied with the nature of the case which called it forth. A settled practice had been deduced from experience. Hence for *Fire Briefs* 11,500 were printed, while for Church Briefs but 10,800. The difference was probably the number of Dissenting places of worship: Fire Briefs would be sent to these, but Church Briefs of course not.

I have not heretofore made reference specially to "Walking Briefs"—these were such as were carried from door to door. The famous Alderman Wood, during the debate on the introduction of a Bill for the abolition of briefs (1828), gave a lively account of the manner in which people were teased out of their money by churchwardens, attended by gorgeous beadles and other parochial officers (*vide* Hansard).

#### XIX.—DISCONTINUED BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT.

1828. The practice of issuing briefs for Churches, &c., lingered on until finally the action of Parliament was invoked in 1828, and there was enacted 9 Geo. IV., c. 42,—*An Act to abolish Church Briefs, and to provide for the better collection and application of voluntary contributions for the purpose of enlarging and building Churches and Chapels*. This preamble recites the Act of 1705, and says: "It is expedient to repeal the said Act, and to provide for the better collection and application of voluntary contributions for enlarging, building, rebuilding and repairing Churches and Chapels in England and Wales." It recites the foundation of the Church Building Society in 1818, and of the good it had accomplished; and then gives it a legal incorporation. It next repeals the Act of Anne, "except as to such briefs issued before the passing of this Act as are now in progress, with respect to which the Act should remain in force." Power was reserved (sec. x.) to H.M. to issue Royal Letters to the Archbishops



of Canterbury and York, for aiding the building, &c., of Churches, the funds to be applied by the said Society. Then follow these sections :—

“ XIII.—And whereas there is a certain sum of money remaining in the hands of John Stevenson Salt, Esq., *the Undertaker of Briefs*, arising from balances of monies collected upon briefs which have not been wanted or required for the purposes for which the same were collected. Be it therefore enacted, That such sum shall be transferred to the said Society, and that upon such transfer being made, the said John S. Salt shall be released and discharged from all claims and demands in respect of such sum or any part thereof.

“ XIV.—And whereas George Humphrys is seized to himself, his heirs and assigns, of the office of *Clerk of the Briefs*, for the lives of himself and of Josiah Humphrys, his son, by virtue of certain Letters Patent [when granted I do not discover] and the profits of the said office will be extinguished by the repeal of the said Act of Queen Anne, and compensation should therefore be granted to the said George Humphrys for the loss of such profits. Be it therefore enacted, That the said Society shall, out of the sum so to be transferred to them as aforesaid, grant such compensation to the said George Humphrys, for his interest under the said Letters Patent, as shall be a full equivalent for the Loss of the net profits of the said office, such net profits to be calculated upon an average of the last seven years.

“ XV.—And whereas there is a large number of briefs now in possession of the said John S. Salt, which have been returned to him after the collections made thereon. Be it therefore enacted, That it shall be lawful for any one of H.M.’s principal Secretaries of State to make such order as he think fit, respecting the manner of disposing of the said briefs.”

It is seen that in this Act special reference is made to and provision substituted for the old system of “ Church Briefs.” An incident is associated herewith. It seems to have been a sort of traditional understanding that collections in church, except for the poor of the parish, were not exactly legal, unless made under Royal authority, or by force of a statute. Accordingly the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, founded 1698, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, established 1701, were respectively and especially

empowered by Royal Charter to collect money for their several objects. The Act of 1828 conferred special powers upon the Church Building Society, the sovereign being constituted the patron. For many years previously an informal brief called a Royal Letter was issued triennially on behalf of that Society, as also for some other objects. The practice was continued after the passing of the Act abolishing other forms of collecting briefs. The last brief issued through the medium of the Church Building Society was in 1851 (*vide* Prosser, in *Antiquary*, iv., p. 35).

## XX.—FUNERAL BRIEFS.

I have heretofore said nothing concerning "Funeral Briefs," but I have reason to believe that they have prevailed for a very considerable period. In the early Guilds there was frequently a collection amongst the brethren in the case of a deceased member, but this was rather as a matter of right and custom, than as a matter of charity. If a form of brief were employed, it would circulate in a very limited area, not going beyond the brotherhood of the Guild. There are still existing numbers of so-called Friendly Societies, bearing the designation of "Funeral Briefs." They are very much localized in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. The Fourth Report of the Commissioners on Friendly Societies (1874) says :—

"At Saltaire (near Leeds) there is a Funeral Brief of 3,000 members, conducted as follows :—'No children under seven are admitted. The benefits are £4 at the death of a child, £5 for an adult. Levies are made when they are wanted, 1d. from each child, 2d. from each adult in the club. There are about a dozen levies a year on an average. No funds are kept in hand, and no balance-sheet is printed. There are 16 collectors, who get, one way and another, about 2s. 6d. each, for each collection'" (p. clviii.). The date of formation is not stated.

In 1855 there was founded the Louth (Lincolnshire) and neighbourhood Primitive Methodist *Funeral Brief* Friendly Society. In 1875, this consisted of 398 members, with £9

in hand. The system is unsound, because uncertain, and there is no justification in its continuance. There is no real association in practice with the old system of briefs, and the name is, therefore, delusive.

# XXI.—BRIEFS COLLECTED UPON IN DISSENTING PLACES OF WORSHIP.

We have already seen that at the beginning such briefs as were not given in cases of private charity, were addressed to parish Churches and Chapelries of the Established Church. At a later period, however, Dissenting Chapels were also included, as seen by direct testimony in the case quoted under date 1704 (see 1704, near end of case).

This change was probably introduced at a later date, when a system of "Farming Briefs" came into practice. I propose to place on record a few facts on this question: they will be useful for future reference.

In the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the *Society of Friends* held at *Exeter* in 1729, it is recorded:—"Two briefs for building or re-building two steeple-houses [churches] being offer'd to this meeting, they are returned with 'nothing collected' writ upon them."

In the "Brief-book" of the old dissenting congregation at *Framlingham*, Suffolk, in the custody of the minister, is contained regular entries of collections from early in the last century "to recent times" (*vide N. and Q.*, 5th s., iv., p. 334).

In the Key Street [near Hope Street] Chapel, *Liverpool*, the collections on briefs were entered in the Baptism-book, now in the custody of the Registrar-General, Somerset House.

In the records of the Nonconformist Chapel, *Pudsey* (near Leeds), are contained the following entries, 1762 to 1774:—

					s.	d.
1762,	6 June.—Collected for breves	...	...	...	10	0
	5 shillings to go for repairs of our own place.					
1763,	6 June.—Collected for breves	...	...	...	11	0
	6 shillings out of it for repairs of our own place.					

	s.	d.
1764, 6 May.—Collected for breves ... ..	12	0
7 shillings for repairs of our own place.		
1765, 7 August.—Collected for breves ... ..	8	0
1766, 23 May.—Collected for breves ... ..	8	0
1767, 23 May.—Collected for breves ... ..	10	6
Left for repairs of our own place, 4s. 8d.		
1768, 18 July.—Collected for breves ... ..	10	2
Left for our place, 6s.		
1769, 28 May.—Collected for breves ... ..	11	2½
Paid for breves, 4s. 11d. ; left for repairs of chapel, 6s. 3½d.		
1772, 7 June.—Collected for breves ... ..	10	2
Left out for repairs of our Chapel, 5s. 2d.		

It would appear as if the briefs were accumulated during the year, and then read on a given day. On what authority the deductions were made I know not.

## XXII.—BRIEFS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

I have not heretofore said much concerning the practice of foreign countries in this matter of briefs, because I have been enabled to learn very little thereon. I have said that it was the usage of the Papal Court to issue briefs on special occasions ; but as to what constituted a proper occasion I have no means of determining. I have a few notes concerning some of the GERMAN States. In the Grand Duchy of *Frankfort*, in 1807, a system of State Fire Insurance was inaugurated, *and all collections by way of charity for those whose houses were burned were henceforward prohibited by law.* This implies that the practice of briefs had prevailed. There is another confirmatory circumstance as recently as 1879. A little village in *Nassau* was burned, and the unfortunate inhabitants petitioned the authorities for permission to take up a house-collection through the State, which, however, was refused, for the reason that “no more begging collections for damages by Hail or Fire could be permitted in the future, owing to the many excellent Insurance Companies, and the ease with which insurance indemnifying all damages could be effected.”

## XXIII.—CONCLUSION.

I hope it may be found that this subject of briefs is one worthy of being considered by the Fellows of the Royal Historical Society. I am not aware that it has found a previous exponent—certainly not in this, and I believe in no other learned Society. Briefs are occasionally referred to in antiquarian and other publications. That I have not here treated the subject exhaustively, I am prepared to admit. The points most to be regarded are two :—1. Are the facts adduced authentic? On this there can be no doubt, for I give my authorities. 2. Does the subject fall properly within the range of historical inquiry? Here again the answer seems clear. The wonder may be that the materials have lain hidden so long. I have still a mass of elucidatory details on hand, and propose to arrange these in the form of a chronological appendix (No. 3) for the use of historians and future inquirers on the same lines generally.

## APPENDIX No. 1.

(See pp. 25-27.)

Collections upon Briefs at Clent (Staffordshire)  
from 1672 to 1705.

1672. Bulkington.—Ap. 28. Coll. upo' a Br. for a fire at Bulk. in Warwicksh. 3s. 0*d*.

Rousle'ch.—June 16. Coll. for a fire at R. in Wortsh. 2s. 6*d*.

London.—July 1. Coll. for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> Shugar-house, scituate in Coleharbour, in y<sup>e</sup> parish of great Allhollowes. 2 5 0*b*.

Hinstock.—March 16. Coll. for a fire at H. in Shropsh. 2 0.

Enslaved Christia's.—Mem. Octob. 23, 70. Coll. upo' a Br. for y<sup>e</sup> Redemption of Christ<sup>s</sup> out of Turkish slavery. 1*l*. 2s. 4*d*.

1673. ffordingbridg'.—May 12. Coll. for a fire in ff. in y<sup>e</sup> Cou'ty of Southha'pton. 11 6.

Wilcats-heath.—June 15. Coll. for a fire at W. in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of Wisterton in Cheshire. 2 10 0*b*.

Russel Streete.—Aug. 24. Coll. for a fire in R. in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of S. Martyn in y<sup>e</sup> ffields in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Middlesex. 4 9.

S<sup>t</sup> Kathe'n in London.—Sept. 21. Coll. for a fire in K. nigh y<sup>e</sup> Tower. 3 4 0*b*

Knarsbrough.—Nov. 2. Coll. for a fire in K. in y<sup>e</sup> West-riding of Yorke-shire. 1 11.

Blackhalf.—Dec. 21. Coll. for a fire at B. in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of Wolverha'pton. 1 8.

S<sup>t</sup> Margretts at Cliffe.—Feb. 1. Coll. for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> Par. of S. M. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Kent. 2 5.

1674. Nether-Wallop.—July 5. Coll. for a fire in Neth. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Southha'pton. 3 1.

Ireland.—July 27. Coll. for a f. in Dimigall in I. 3 6 0*b*.

Redborn.—Dec. 13. Coll. for a fire at R. w<sup>th</sup>in y<sup>e</sup> liberty of S Albans, in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Hertford. 2 8 0*b*.

1675. Watton.—May 9. Coll. for a f. at W. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Norfolk. 3 2 9<sup>a</sup>.

Bene'den.—May 23. Coll. upo' a Br. for y<sup>e</sup> Rebuilding of a Church at B. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Kent. 2s. 5*d*.

Newent.—Octob. 17. Coll. upo' a Br. for y<sup>e</sup> Rebuilding of y<sup>e</sup> Parish church at Newent in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Gloucester. 2 11.

1676. Oswestree.—June 4. Coll. for y<sup>e</sup> Rebuilding of y<sup>e</sup> Parish Church of Oswestree in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Salop y<sup>e</sup> sum' of 3 2 q<sup>r</sup>.

Northha'pton.—Coll. An'o 1676 for a fire in Northha'pton w<sup>ch</sup> in less than y<sup>e</sup> space of 6 houres burnt to y<sup>e</sup> grou'd y<sup>e</sup> dwelling houses of above seven hu'dred families, &c., y<sup>e</sup> loss amou'ting to y<sup>e</sup> sum' of one hu'dred fifty two thousand & eight pou'ds and upwards. 1 13 9 ob.

Bucks.—Octob. 15. Coll. for a fire at Eaton near Winsor in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Bucks. 3 7.

Towcester.—Feb. 4. Coll. for a fire Towc. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Northha'pton. 3 3 ob.

Cottenham.—Feb. 25. Coll. for a fire at Cottenha' in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Cambridge. 3 4 ob.

1677. Southwark in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Surry.—Coll. for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> Borough of Southwark (viz. y<sup>e</sup> Parishes of St. Saviours & St. Thomas). 12 11.

1678. Pattingha'.—June 30. Coll. for a fire at Pattingha' in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Staff<sup>r</sup>. 4 6 ob.

Wem.—Coll. for a fire at Wem, in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Salop. 3 2.

St. Pauls.—Coll. for y<sup>e</sup> Rebuildinge of S. Pauls Church (London). 17. 7s. 5d.

Uffington.—Coll. March 9 for a fire at Uffington in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Lincoln. 2 9 q<sup>r</sup>.

1679. Lurgishall.—Coll. March 30 for a fire at Lurgishall in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Wilts. 3 10 ob.

Weedon Beck.—Coll. Sep. 14 for a fire at Weedon Beck in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Northha'pt. 2 10.

1680. Enslaved christians in Algiers, Sally, &c.—Mem. Aug. 9, 1680. Coll. upo' a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> Redemption of Christians (taken by y<sup>e</sup> Turkish Pyrates) out of Turkish Slavery. 17. 8s. od.

Duxford—Collected for a fire at Duxford in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Cambridge. 4 4 q<sup>r</sup>.

East Dearha'.—Coll. for a fire at East Dearham in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Norfolk. 3 5.

1681. St. Albans.—Coll. tow y<sup>e</sup> Repair of y<sup>e</sup> greate Parish Church of S. Alban's in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Hertford. 4 9.

french Protesta'ts.—Coll. upo' a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> Reliefe of p'secuted french Protestants y<sup>t</sup> fled into this Kingd. 1 5 10.

1682. Caister.—Coll. July 16 upon a Briefe for a fire at Caister in y<sup>e</sup> Parts of Lindsey in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Lincoln. 04 06 *ob*.

Poland.—Coll. Aug. 6 upo' a Briefe tow<sup>s</sup> y<sup>e</sup> reliefe of y<sup>e</sup> poore Protestant Churches in the Lesser Poland. 04 03 *ob*.

Hansworth.—Coll. for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of Hansworth in y<sup>e</sup> west riding of Yorke. 02 10.

Colompto'.—Collect. for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> Town of Colomp. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Deyon. 03 08.

Ensha'.—Coll. nov. 26 for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> town of Ensham in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Oxford. 03 01.

London.—Coll. for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> Dyers Hall in Thames Streete in London. 03 08 *ob*.

Presteigne.—Coll. Feb. 11 for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> Town of Prest. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Radnor. 03 4.

1683. New Windsor.—Collect. March 25 for a fire in New Winds. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Berks. 05 01 *q<sup>a</sup>*.

Stoke.—And Coll. for a fire in Stoke by Clare in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Suffolk. 2 8 *ob. q<sup>a</sup>*.

Newmarket.—Coll. for a fire at Newmarket in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Suffolck. 10 3 *ob*.

Llanu'bdufery.—Coll. for a fire at Llanu'bdufery in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Carmarthen, March 2. 03 08.

1684. Chan'ell Row.—Coll. May 18 for a fire in Chan'ell Row in y<sup>e</sup> parish of S. Marg'rets Westm. 05 00 *ob*.

Runswick.—Collect. Aug. 3 upo' a Brief for y<sup>e</sup> inhabitants of Runswick in y<sup>e</sup> North Riding of y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of York w<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Town standing w<sup>in</sup> a Bay on y<sup>e</sup> side of a greate Hill w<sup>ch</sup> opening about y<sup>e</sup> middle y<sup>e</sup> town did slip down from it. 03 07.

Wapping.—Collect. for a fire at Wapping in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of White Chappell and Parish of Stepney in y<sup>e</sup> county of Middlesex. 14 09 *ob*.

Saresden.—Coll. for a fire at Saresden in y cou'ty of Oxon. 04 00 *ob. q<sup>a</sup>*.

Alrewas.—Coll. Jan. 25 for a fire at Alrewas in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Stafford. 05 00.

Edgbaston Church.—Coll. for y<sup>e</sup> rebuilding of Edgbaston Church in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Warw. 03 00.

1685. Cawston.—Coll. March 29 for a fire at Cawst. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Norfolk. 04 00 *ob q<sup>a</sup>*.

Ely S. Marys.—Coll. May 17 for a fire at Ely S<sup>t</sup> Marys w<sup>in</sup> y<sup>e</sup> city of Ely w<sup>in</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Isle of Ely. 06 01 *ob*.



S<sup>t</sup> Bridgets in Ches<sup>r</sup>.—Collect. July 26 tow y<sup>e</sup> repara'on of y<sup>e</sup> Church of S<sup>t</sup> Bridgets in Chester. 03 08.

The Church of Portsmouth.—Collect. Aug. 9 tow<sup>s</sup> y<sup>e</sup> repara'on of y<sup>e</sup> Parish Church of Portsmouth in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of South-hampton. 4 2.

Market-Deeping.—Coll. Sept. 27 for a fire at Market Deeping in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Lync. 3 6.

Staverton.—Coll. Nov. 22 for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> town of Staverton in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Northha'pton. 3s. 2d. *ob*.

1686. Henford.—Coll. July 18 for a fire at Henford y<sup>e</sup> sum' of 04s. 00.

Cumberland.—Coll. Aug. 29 for losses by y<sup>e</sup> overflow of a River called Kirkstanton Water in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Cumberland. 03 05 *ob*.

Eynsbury.—Coll. Oct. 3 tow<sup>s</sup> y<sup>e</sup> rebuilding of y<sup>e</sup> Steeple and repaying of the church of Eynsbury in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Huntingdon. 03 0 *ob*.

Meriton.—Coll. Octob. 24 for a fire in Meriton in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Salop. 03 04.

Sicklinghall.—Coll. Nov. 21 for a fire in Sicklinghall in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Yorkshire. 04 02.

White Chapell & Stepny.—Coll. Dec. 20 for a fire in white Chapell and Stepney in Com' Middlx. 011 09 *ob*.

1688. ffrench Protesta'ts.—Collect. by venture of a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> Reliefe of ffrench Protestants the sum' of 02 01 03.

1689. Irish Protestants.—Collect. by venture of a Briefe for the Reliefe of Irish Protestants the sum' of 02 12 07.

1690. Protesta'ts of Ireland.—Collect. by venture of a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> reliefe of Irish Protestants the sum' of 01 10 10 *ob*.

Bungay.—Collected upon a Briefe for a fire at Bungay in Com' Suffolck the sum' of 0 13 10 *ob*.

New Alresford.—Coll. upo' a Briefe for a fire at New Alresford in Hampshire. 0 8 7.

St. Ives.—Collect. upon a Briefe for a fire at S. Ives in Hunting-tonshire. 0 8 5.

1691. East Smithfield.—Collect. upon a Briefe for a fire at East Smithfield in Middlesex. 04 01.

S. George in Southwarke.—Coll. by venture of a Briefe for a fire in the Parish of S. George in y<sup>e</sup> Borough of Southwark in y<sup>e</sup> County of Surrey. 11 0.

Bps. Lavinton.—Collect. upon a Briefe for a fire at Bps. Lavinton in Wiltsh. 4 6.

Stafford.—Collect. Aug. 23 by venture of a Briefe for a fire at Stafford. 3s. 7*d*.

Morpeth.—Coll. Dec. 6 for loss by fire at Morpeth in Northu'ber. 4 7.

Teingmouth & Shaldon.—Coll. in y<sup>t</sup> month for loss by fire in Teingmouth & Shaldon in Com' Devon'. 9 0.

Thirske.—Coll. ffeb<sup>r</sup> 28 for loss by fire at Thirske in the North Riding of y<sup>e</sup> Cou'ty of York. 2 7.

1692. Clopton, &c.—Coll. for the sufferers of Clopton, &c., de Norwich by casualties at sea. 8 2.

Bealt.—Coll. June 12 for loss by fire at Bealt [Builth] in Com' Brecon. 4 8.

Oswestrey.—Coll. July 24 for loss by fire at Oswes. in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Salop. 4 10.

Ledbury.—Coll. Sept. 18 for loss by fire at Ledbu. in Com' Hereford. 3 10.

Captives.—Collect. upo' a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> Redemption of Captives taken by y<sup>e</sup> Turkish Pirates of Algiers, &c. 19 0.

Elsworth.—Coll. Dec. 25 for loss by fire at Elsw. in Com' Cambri'. 6 4.

Havant.—Collect. March 12 for loss by fire at Havant in South-a'pto'shire. 6 0 *ob*.

1693. Hedon.—Collect. May 7 for a fire at Hedon in Yorkshire. 3 6.

Nantwell.—Coll. June 25 for a fire at Nantwell in Radnorshire. 3 10.

Churchill.—Coll. Octobr. 29 for a fire at Churchill in Oxfordshire 4 01.

Lambeth Parish.—Coll. y<sup>e</sup> same year for a fire near the Sawmill Yard in Lambeth Parish. 4 1 *ob*.

Chagford.—Coll. for a fire at Chagford in the cou'ty of Devon. 7 01.

Wooller.—Coll. Janu. 28 for a fire at Wooller in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Northumberland. 5 2 *q*

1694. Yalding.—Coll. May 13 for a fire at Yalding in Com' Kent. 4 4 *q<sup>a</sup>*

ffrench Protes'ts.—Coll. againe upon anoth<sup>r</sup> Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> reliefe of

some ffrench Protestants y<sup>t</sup> upon a p<sup>r</sup>secu<sup>n</sup> fled into this kingd.  
o 19 *ob*.

1695. Yorke.—Coll. for a fire in y<sup>e</sup> city of Yorke. 13 10.

Warwick.—Coll. from house to house in April for a fire at Warwick. 2 18 9.

1696. Gillingham.—Coll. April 26 for a fire at Gillingham in Dorsetsh. o 4 o.

Wreckardine.—Coll. May 24 for a fire at Wreckardine in y<sup>e</sup> cou<sup>n</sup>ty of Salop. o 3 5 *ob*.

1697. Wolverha'pton.—Collected from house to house for a fire at Wolverhampton. o 19 6.

1698. Soham.—Collected March 27 upon a Briefe for a fire at Soham in Cambridgeshire. o 3 6.

1699. ffrench Protestants.—Collected upon a Briefe for ffrench Protestants from house to house. 1 11 o6.

Lancaster.—Aug. 27 Collected upon a Briefe for a fire at Lancaster. o 3 2.

1700. Redempt.—Collected upon a Briefe for the Redemption of Engl. Captives (who are in slavery at Machanes under y<sup>e</sup> Emperour of ffez and Moroccoe) y<sup>e</sup> sum' of 12 o.

Bermondsey.—Collect. upo' a Briefe for a fire near y<sup>e</sup> River of Thames in y<sup>e</sup> parish of S. Mary Magd. Bermondsey. 10 6.

1701. Eli Cath.—Coll. for y<sup>e</sup> repairing of y<sup>e</sup> damage of Eli Cathedral March 30. 3 6 *ob*.

Cruckmeal.—May 4 Collected upon a Briefe for a fire at Cruckmeal in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of Pontsbury in y<sup>e</sup> cou<sup>n</sup>ty of Salop. 4 o1.

Beccles.—Collect. upon a Briefe for a fire at Beccles in com' Suffolk. 5 2 *ob*.

Bromly Church.—Coll. Sep. 28 upon a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> repair of Bromly Church in Staffordsh. 5 6.

Broughton.—Collect. Jan. 19 for a fire at B. in Northa'ptonsh. 5 o *ob*.

Rye Church.—Coll. ffebr. 22 for y<sup>e</sup> Repairs of R. Chu. in y<sup>e</sup> cou<sup>n</sup>ty of Sussex. 3 11.

1702. Lem'ster.—Coll. upon a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> burning of Leminster Church in y<sup>e</sup> cou<sup>n</sup>ty of Hereford. 11s. 4d.

Longdon.—Coll. May 31 upo' a Briefe for a fire at Longdon in Com' Staff. 3 2 *ob*.

Chepstow Church.—Coll. upon a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> repara'on of Chepstow Church in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Monmouth. 6 8 *ob*.

Hornsea.—Coll. upon a Briefe for a fire at Hornsea in Yorksh. 2 9.

Chester Cathedral.—Collected tow<sup>s</sup> y<sup>e</sup> rep'a'on of Chester Cathedral. 6 0.

1703. Monkes Kerby.—Collected upon a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> Rebuilding of Monkes Kerby Church and Steeple in Com' Warwick. 4 10.

S. Gyles in Shrewsb.—Coll. upon a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> rebuilding of S. Gyles Church in Shrewsbury. 4 6.

ffaringdon in Berks.—Coll. Oct. 17 upo' a Briefe for a fire at ffaringdon in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Berks. 3 3 *ob*.

Spittle ffields in Middlesex.—Collect. Nov. 14 upo' a Briefe for a fire at Spittlefields in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Middlesex. 3 3 *q<sup>a</sup>*.

Wrottesley in Com' Staff.—Coll. Dec. 5 for loss by fire at Wrottesley in Com' Staff. 3 4 *ob. q<sup>a</sup>*.

ffordingbridge in Com' South.—Collect. Janu. 16 upo' a Briefe for loss by fire at ffordingbridge in Com' Southhampton. 3 4.

Ora'ge Refugees.—Collect. upon a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> Orange Refugees. 20 0.

1704. Tuxford Com' Nottingh.—Coll. March 26 for loss by fire at Tuxford in Com' Nottingh. 3 0.

Greate Q. Street in Com' Middlesex.—Coll. May 7 for loss by fire in greate Queens Streete in y parish of S<sup>t</sup> Giles in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Middlesex. 3 1.

Stockton in Com' Sa.—Coll. May 21 for loss by fire at Stockton in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Salop. 3 2.

Wapping.—Coll. Aug. 6 for loss by fire at Wapping in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Middlesex. 4 3 *ob*.

Greate Massingha'.—Coll. Sep. 10 for loss by fire at greate Massingham in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Norfolk. 3 6.

Longdon.—Coll. Dec. 17 for loss by fire at Longdon in Pontesbury parish in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Salop. 4 0.

Hyrrecane.—Coll. Janu. 14 upon a Briefe for Seamens widows ; made so by a dreadfull storm and tempest (call'd an Hyrrecane) w<sup>ch</sup> happ'n'd Nov. 26 and 27, 1703 ; I say coll. the sum' of 6 0.

South molton.—Coll. ffebr. 18 upon a Briefe for loss by fire at South molton in Com' Devon. 2 9 *ob*.

Stony Stratford.—Coll. March 11 for loss by fire at Stony Stratford in Com' Bucks. 3 1 *ob*.

1705. Church Minshall.—Coll. Apr. 22 tow<sup>s</sup> the defraying the Charge of rebuilding y<sup>e</sup> parish church of Church Minshall in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Chester. 3 2.

All S<sup>ts</sup> in Oxon.—Coll. Aug. 5 upon a Briefe for y<sup>e</sup> rebuilding of All Saints Church in Oxford. 2 8.

Kirton.—Coll. Sept. 2 upon a Briefe for a fire at Kirton in Lindsey in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Lincoln. 2 10.

Rolleston.—Coll. Sep. 23 upo' a Br. for a fire at Rolleston in Com. Staff. 2 6.

Beverley.—Coll. Nov. 11 upo' a Bri. for y<sup>e</sup> Repair of Beverley Church in the cou'ty of York. 2 8.

S. Saviours.—Coll. Dec. upo' a Bri. for a fire in the p'ish of S. Saviours in Southwark in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Surry. 2 6.

Bradmore.—Coll. Janu. 27 upo' a Briefe for a fire at Bradmore in y<sup>e</sup> cou'ty of Nottingham. 3 2.

*Vide Notes and Queries*, 5th s., iv., pp. 447, 481.

## APPENDIX No. 2.

(See p. 13 of preceding Paper.)

CORPORATION OF LONDON RECORDS.—Briefs which had been collected upon at the following dates and for purposes stated are now preserved with the Records of the Corporation of London. These are the originals with the amounts collected endorsed thereon; and orders upon the funds collected.

1671-2-4. *Redemption of Captives in Algiers, &c.* Orders upon the Chamberlain, signed by the Commissioners, Lords Albemarle, Anglesea, Craven, Lauderdale, Carlisle, Newport, Holles and others, for payment to various persons for the Redemption of Captives in Algiers, Salley, &c.

1676. For the relief of sufferers by fire in Southwark.

1681. For the relief of Protestants in Lesser Poland—one vol.

1687-8. *French Protestant Refugees*. Briefs issued by the King for collections to be made for the Relief of the French Protestant Refugees. With statements of amounts collected and signatures of the ministers and churchwardens of the various parishes, 20th January, 1687-8. The like in 1694 and 1698.

1689-90. For relief of poor Irish Protestants.

1690. For relief of sufferers by fire in Southwark.

1691. *Captives in Algiers*. Briefs for collections to be made for the Relief of the Captives in Algiers, Salley, and other places in Barbary, and on the coast of Africa. With endorsements of amounts collected and signatures of ministers and churchwardens.

1696. For the relief of sufferers by fire in Wapping.

1699. *The Vaudois*. Briefs for collections in aid of the distressed Vaudois, 12th March, 1699.

1700. *Fire in Bermondsey*. Briefs for collections for relief of sufferers by, with statements of amounts collected, signatures of ministers and churchwardens of the various parishes, 28th May, 1700.

*Poor Slaves in Machanes* under the power of the Emperor of Fez and Morocco. Briefs for collections, with signatures, &c. May 26, 1700.

*Poor Slaves in Machanes*, under the power of the Emperor of Fez and Morocco. Letters from the Lord Bishop of London and the Lord Mayor to the clergy of the different parishes for further collections on the above behalf, the amount raised being insufficient to complete the Redemptions; with further letters from the King to the Lord Mayor and the Bishop of London thereon. Signatures, &c., Nov. 24, 1701.

*Fire at Beccles, Suffolk*. Briefs for collections in aid of the distress. Signatures, &c., June 8, 1700.

1703. For relief of widows and orphans of seamen who perished in storms this year.

1703-12. For relief of Refugees of Principality of Orange.

1704. For sufferers by fire at St. John's, Wapping.

1706. *Fire at Iniskilling*. — Briefs for the collections for the relief of the sufferers. Signatures, &c., Dec. 19, 1705. It is a copy of the brief used on this occasion that I give in the text.

1709. *Poor Distressed Palatines*. Briefs for the relief, subsistence, and settlement of the. Signatures, &c.

1709-11. For relief of poor Palatines. One vol.

1716. For relief of sufferers by fire at Limehouse.

I believe it will be found that these briefs came into possession of the Corporation from the fact of some of its principal officers from time to time being appointed receivers of the money collected under them. For instance, it will be seen in reference to some of them that the money was returnable to Mr. Wagstaff, who was the Town Clerk. In the brief for fire at Iniskilling (1705) the monies and the briefs were actually returnable to the "Chamber of London."

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### APPENDIX No. 3,

#### GIVING CHRONOLOGICAL DETAILS AND REFERENCES NOT EMBODIED IN THE TEXT.

1558. "The Registers of *Blundeston* (Suffolk) commence . . . . They contain several notices of monies collected by Brief in aid of sufferers by fire in distant parts of England. Among others, 'to a loss by fire at y<sup>e</sup> head of y<sup>e</sup> Cannon-gate at Edinburgh, in North Britain, Jan. 13, 1708, 1s. 6d.' . . ."—Suckling's "*Suffolk*" (1846, vol. i., p. 320).

1580. In the Parish Register of *Ecclesfield* (S. Yorks), this year, there is an entry: "For y<sup>e</sup> bookes of y<sup>e</sup> earthquake xiiijd."

1609. Church—*Arthuret*, Cumberland. Built "by the help of a 'charity brief;' having before been a mean, low, ruinous building, and often destroyed by the Scots," according to Nicolson and Burn's "*History of Westmorland and Cumberland*" (1777), vol. ii., p. 472.

1628. St. Mary's, *Maldon* (Essex), tower became ruinous and fell, destroying part of the church. Brief granted by Car. I. Given *in extenso*, Wright's "*History of Essex*," ii., pp. 647-8

1634. *Bere Regis* (Dorset). "An order of sessions passed, that this town, lately consumed by fire, should receive 50*l.* out of the county stock; and a petition for a brief was ordered, the loss being 7,000*l.*"—Hutchins' "*History, &c., of Dorset*," 1774, vol. i., p. 43.

1641. Dec. 27. *Farnborough*, Kent. By a brief of this date (17 Car. I.) it appears that the inhabitants were forced to take down and

rebuild their church in consequence of a violent storm of wind, on 26 Dec. 1639.—Hasted's "History of Kent" (1778), vol. i., p. 115.

1642. In the Constable's account of his expenditure in the parish of *Ecclesfield* (Yorks), at this date there is an item, "Given to a poore widdow woman of Lembrech, who had sustayned 900<sup>l</sup> loss by fire."

1647. The "High Town," Bridgnorth (Salop), was burned by the Royalists during the siege of the Castle; loss £90,000. A petition was sent to Parliament, and a brief was granted by way of relief under Letters Patent, which however did not produce much; but at the Restoration a Proclamation was issued by the King, which brought means to complete the rebuilding.—*Vide* information from Hubert Smith, Esq., Town Clerk.

1653. The Parish Registers of Toddington (Beds), commenced this year to record the details of briefs collected upon in the church there, and the practice was continued down to 1810. The number of briefs recorded being 106. This, however, gives but one brief in each 1½ year—and therefore conveys no correct idea of the frequency with which briefs were sent out.

1657. There was published—*A Book of the Names of all Parishes, Market Places, Towns, Villages, Hamlets, and smaller places in England and Wales, a work very necessary for Travellers, Strangers, Gatherers of Breefs, &c., &c.*

1660-2. The Registers of the Parish of *Cheadle* (Cheshire) contain many entries of collections on briefs during these three years.—*Vide* Earwaker's "East Cheshire" (1877), i., p. 235. Amongst these is one in favour of 100 Protestant Churches in the Dukedom of Lithunia.

In the Register of Charles' Church, *Plymouth*, are a number of entries made of collections on briefs at this date. *Vide* "Western Antiquary," vol. i. (1881).

1660-5. At the end of vol. ii. of the Registers of the Parish of *Northenden* (Cheshire) will be found a number of entries of collections on briefs.—*Vide* Earwaker's "East Cheshire," i., p. 304.

1660-84. At the end of vol. i. of the Registers of *Taxal* (Cheshire) are some pages of entries of collections on briefs during these years.—*Vide* Earwaker's "East Cheshire," ii., p. 548.

1661. This year Charles II. granted a patent for a brief in support



of the scheme of the *Royal Fishery* Company for Great Britain and Ireland.—*Vide* Macpherson's "History of Commerce," ii., p. 503.

1661-5. The Registers of *Disley* (Cheshire) contain entries regarding Church Briefs at this date.—*Vide* Earwaker's "East Cheshire" (1880), ii., p. 100.

1665-6. The Parish Registers of *Stockport* (Cheshire) contain entries of collections on briefs during these years.—*Vide* Earwaker's "East Cheshire," i., p. 409.

1666. *Weymouth and Melcomb-Regis* (Dorset).—In this year "was a brief for both towns, which seems to have been granted to repair the damages sustained during the rebellion. In 1695, another; but whether on occasion of fire, or for repairing the harbour, is uncertain."—Hutchins's "History, &c., of Dorset," 1774, vol. i., p. 403.

1667. The Registers of the Parish of St. Nicholas, *Durham*, contain entries of collections upon briefs from 1667 to 1694. They are twenty-one in all—being less than one per annum.

1668. Parish Registers of *Clent* (Worcestershire) recorded briefs from this date to 1705, inclusive, numbering in all 136, giving an average of four per annum.

1676-1707. In the Churchwardens' accounts of the Parish of *Prestbury* (Cheshire) is contained a great number of entries of sums collected on briefs for various purposes.—*Vide* Earwaker's "East Cheshire," ii., pp. 228-9.

1676-1719. The Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire published *Extracts from the Registers of Ormskirk Church*, under the editorship of James Dixon, Esq. Amongst these is a list of briefs extending from the year 1676 to 1719, inclusive, and embracing 150 separate collections.

1682-96. In the book of Parish accounts for the Parish of *Ecclesfield* (S. Yorks) there are entries of lists of briefs collected upon between these dates.—*Vide* "History of Ecclesfield," 1862, p. 228.

1688. *Bungay* (Suffolk).—A brief to collect money in church, as well as from door to door, in aid of the sufferers from the fire of March 1, in this town, was granted on June 7, 1688, the first year of the reign of William and Mary. The original brief was engrossed on parchment.—*Vide* Suckling's "Suffolk," i., p. 127.

1690. A brief was issued for *Teignmouth* (Devon) in respect of

losse by y<sup>e</sup> French landing, firing and plundering y<sup>e</sup> Toune, 26 July. Y<sup>e</sup> loss ii000*l*. [*£*2,000].

The Registers of Springthorpe Church (Lincolnshire) give an account of briefs from August 13, 1690, to May 14, 1704, being 69 in all, or an average of 5 per each year.

1693. The Register of burials (vol. iii.) of the parish of *Northen-den* (Cheshire) contains an entry under date 8th February this year, "A strange woman, a traveller, that had a briefe."—*Vide* Earwaker's "East Cheshire," i., p. 305.

1694. *Warwick* (England), September 8. More than half the town destroyed, and the castle greatly damaged. A national collection was made by means of briefs, under which *£*110,000 was raised. Queen Anne gave *£*1,000.

1705. The Registers of the Parish of Cowley (near Oxford) contain a very full record of briefs received and collected upon from this date down to 1737 inclusive.—*Vide N. and Q.*, 6th s., ii., pp. 187–9.

1707. There was printed *Proposals tender'd for an addition to the late Act of Parliament for collecting charity on briefs by Letters Patents*, by Margaret Mortimer, Widow. 4to (see paper 1701).

1709. "The tower of St. Mary's Church in *Cardigan*, with five large bells, chimes and clock therein, fell down 11th August, 1705. In 1709 a brief under the Great Seal was granted for rebuilding it, but no more than *£*400 was received for that purpose from the undertaker.—*Vide* inscription in Cardigan Church.

1711. All Saints' Chapel, *Cockermouth*, was built this year, "for the expense whereof a Charity Brief was obtained."—*Vide* Nicolson and Burn's "History of Westmorland and Cumberland" (1777), ii., p. 67.

1712. In Staveley's "History of Churches," 2nd edit., pp. 99–101, there is a reference to the Reign of Briefs.

1715. *Woodham Ferrers* (Essex). In 1703 the whole tower of St. Mary's Church fell down, but was rebuilt by a brief in 1715.—Knight's "Essex," i., p. 134.

1718. *St. Helen's* (Isle of Wight). "The old church was situated at the extremity of the parish, so near the sea, that the waves dashed away a great part of the churchyard, and even endangered the building itself; the inhabitants, therefore, obtained a brief for the erection of a new church, which was accordingly built," &c., and consecrated in 1719.—Warner's "Hampshire," 1795, vol. i., sec. 2, p. 188.

1731. *Blandford-Forum* (Dorset). June 4. The whole of this town, with the exception of 26 houses, destroyed; buildings mostly thatched. The loss, *after deducting all insurances*, was found to amount to £84,348. Towards meeting this, "King's Briefs" were issued, under which about one-third of the loss was recouped after paying the expenses of collection.

1752. *Shellow Bowells* (Essex). "The church dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, which had become ruinous, was re-edified in 1752 by a brief, and the assistance of the neighbouring gentry," &c.—Wright's "History of Essex," vol. ii., 1835, p. 281.

1759. A collection was made in this county for carrying on and completing the building of Portland Island Church (Dorset), "but it produced little."—Hutchins's "History of Dorset," i., p. 598.

1771. The Chapel of *Bosley* (Cheshire), being in a dangerous condition, was granted a limited brief for counties of Chester, Lancaster, Stafford, and Derby

1779. The Church of *Chart Sutton* (Kent) was burned down. "A brief has been lately granted under the Great Seal, to be collected throughout the county from house to house, and a liberal contribution has been made by the neighbouring gentry and clergy, to enable the parishioners to rebuild it, and a considerable progress has already been made in the structure."—Hasted's "History of Kent," ii., p. 407.

1786. *Windle* (Cheshire). Presentment to Justices at Knutsford, that Chapel ruinous, &c. In 1788, brief for collection of money granted.—In 1815, another brief.—See Brit. Mus. Briefs, B. xxviii. 5, and B. lvi. 1.

1804. Under date March 1, Mr. Nares, "Secretary of Briefs" to the Lord Chancellor, issued a circular of directions to the clergy, one of which was that each brief should be read *separately*. Attention was again drawn to it in 1810.

The *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, for September and November, 1804, gave many details concerning the charges on briefs. Also in June, 1808.

1815. Brief was issued "for the relief of the families of the brave men killed, and of the wounded sufferers of the British Army at the Battle of Waterloo." A very large sum was collected.