

**INJUNCTIONS MADE AND ISSUED TO THE ABBESS
AND CONVENT OF THE MONASTERY OF ROMSEY
AFTER HIS VISITATION BY WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM,
A.D. 1387.**

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THE history of Romsey Abbey has been very thoroughly investigated and admirably compiled by the Rev. H. G. D. Liveing in his *Records of Romsey Abbey*, published in 1906. An important part of the information from which that history was gleaned comes from the records of the various Visitations or Inspections of the monastery, made by the successive Bishops of Winchester whose duty it was to watch over the religious foundations in their diocese and endeavour, not always very successfully, to persuade them to maintain the high religious standard expected of them under their foundation. Romsey as a Benedictine Abbey was bound by the strict Rule of St. Benedict.

We have the records, more and less detailed, of ten of these Visitations to Romsey and the Injunctions subsequently issued by the Visitors.

Of these, that of Bishop William of Wykeham, though of great importance and well known to workers on the subject of mediæval nunneries, happens never to have been fully translated and published. For some reason, though a photograph of the first page appears in his book, it was not available to Mr. Liveing at the time he was writing it.*

It is contained in a manuscript book in the library of New College, Oxford, the college founded by William of Wykeham. It has now, by the kindness of the College and the courtesy of its Librarian, Sir John Myres, become available and they have allowed it to be photographed and published. The volume in which it is contained consists of about 100 pages written on both sides and must have been a sort of office copy of various Injunctions and other documents issued by the Bishop. The folios dealing with the Romsey Injunctions are numbered 84v.-89v. Others in the collection deal with a dispute between the Bishop and St. Cross, Injunctions to Winchester Cathedral, and that which follows the Romsey one is addressed to the Master and Brothers of the Hospital of St. Thomas the Martyr, Southwark, the institution from which is descended the present great London Hospital of St. Thomas.

At the time of these Injunctions, issued from his London palace in Southwark, William, though still taking an important part in national affairs, no longer held political office and was deeply engaged in carrying out his great scheme of Educational Foundations. New College, Oxford, was completed and opened on April 14th, 1386, and the foundation-stone of Winchester College had

* Liveing, p. 172.

been laid on March 26th, 1387, only a few months before the Romsey Visitation.

Though addressed to the Abbess and Convent of Romsey, the Injunctions were really a sort of "round robin" to the three Nunneries of the Diocese, Romsey, St. Mary's, Winchester, and Wherewell, and perhaps on this account were framed in fairly general terms applicable collectively; though the omission of some clauses and the addition of others as applying to Wherewell drew attention to the special points he had noticed at the different places.

The various "Items" do not bring to light any very heinous faults or special scandals. The detailed evidence obtained, the so-called "Comperta" and "Detecta," is not given. The abuses and faults against which the Injunctions are directed were largely failure to maintain the system and standard of the Rule to which they were dedicated and against certain fashions and practices which had grown up among the members of the communities.

The same faults are met with in Visitation after Visitation, century by century, in the long succession of records; and it becomes evident that the power and influence of the Visitors to effect reform must have been slight or at any rate very ephemeral. The threats of consequences and punishment to fall upon "contraveners" of the rules and observances are definite and serious enough, but it is doubtful if the good bishops had the power or the will to enforce them very seriously. There is no record that the severe penalty of the Greater Excommunication which is mentioned so often was ever applied to any of the Romsey nuns, though it is certain from other Injunctions that some of them deserved it.

It may not have been customary for the Visitor to give praise or encouragement, but it is rather sad to find that this is entirely absent from all the Romsey Visitations. One cannot help feeling that William, at any rate, had no great sympathy with his "*Filiae dilectae in Christo*" and one cannot forget what he said in his Statutes for Winchester College:—

"In my time I have diligently inspected divers approved traditions of ancient Fathers and Rules of Saints and manifold professors of such traditions and rules, but I am sorry to say nowhere have I found such rules, ordinances and statutes observed now as of old, according to the Founders' intentions."

The Abbess of Romsey at the time of Wykeham's visitation was Isabella de Camoys. She was daughter of Ralph de Camoys, Governor of Windsor. Her mother was the daughter of Hugh le Despenser, Earl of Winchester. She was Abbess from 1352-1396.

I have to thank my friend Canon A. W. Goodman for his help and advice in the translation of these Injunctions.

The abstracts of the 'Items' in small print are written in the margin in a different hand.

Injunctions made and issued to the Abbess and Convent of the Monastery of Romsey after his Visitation by William of Wykeham, A.D. 1387.

From MS. in the Library of New College, Oxford.

(Folio 84v.) William by divine permission, Bishop of Winchester, to his beloved daughters in Christ, the Abbess and Convent of the Monastery of Romsey, of the Order of St. Benedict, of our diocese, Salutation, Grace and Benediction. The Lamb, the bridegroom of virgins, triumpher of the eternal kingdom, has gathered to himself in spiritual union his brides, who take with them oil with their lamps, and promising them eternal glory, has invited them to the celestial wedding. He, truly, the crown of virgins and the lover of chastity, has appointed us, whom in the exercise of his judgement, he has deemed worthy to select for the summit of episcopal dignity, to be the pastor of all his flock. And the eternal pastor in his anxious pastoral care has committed to us the tending of this flock, and it certainly behoves us the more vigilantly to preserve them from the bites of wolves, in that we shall have to render strict account for them in the Last Judgement. Thinking over these things then, with inward meditation, lest the supreme pastor exact their blood at our hands, we determined to visit you and your three monasteries in turn. And while we were engaged in the duty of our visitation we found some things there which by the application of suitable management it behoves us and is expedient for us to reform for the better. And concerning these we have caused certain matters to be committed to the present writing which we transmit to you by this document, fortified by the authority of our seal, to be observed among you in future to the praise and glory of the glorious King of virgins, so that embracing them with well-disposed minds and implementing the spirit of humility more devoutly after the manner of the prudent virgins who with trimmed lamps entered to the wedding with their Lord, their heavenly bridegroom, the Immaculate Lamb, you may be deemed worthy with hundred-fold fruit, to be united in eternal happiness.

SERVICES TO BE CELEBRATED WITHOUT TUMULT OR EXTRAVAGANCE.

First, since the authority of the above-mentioned King lays down, "that the kingdom of God is to be sought first," we command you one and all, in virtue of holy obedience and under penalty of sentence of Greater Excommunication, to be firmly enjoined, that the "Canonical Hours" be distinctly said, both by day and night, by the whole convent in the choir at the proper times and with due devotion; and that your Masses also be celebrated at proper times and hours with moderate pauses, without any disorder or extravagance.

THAT NO ONE LEAVE OR ABSENT THEMSELVES FROM THE SAME.

Nor is it permissible for any of the convent who according to the regular observances are bound to attend them, to absent themselves from the Hours and Masses nor to leave the choir for any reason after they have started before the completion of the same; unless they be properly excused by real infirmity or by some useful or necessary occupation or by other reasonable cause, approved by the Abbess if present, otherwise by the Prioress or the Subprioress. In which case we direct the consciences of them all before the Most High. But let those who do the contrary, without any exception of persons, undergo the regular discipline at the next Chapter to be held. And in addition if after the third offence she have not amended in this matter, for every occasion in which she shall have contravened after a legitimate impediment has ceased, we lay down that she shall be punished by fasting every Friday on bread and ale and vegetables.

re OBSERVING SILENCE.

Item: Since the Rule of St. Benedict lays down that silence is to be strictly observed in Choir, Cloister, Refectory and Dormitory by professors of that order, we command, firmly enjoying on one and all of the nuns, that this silence is to be observed by you at all times in all these four places according to your rule ; and that those who contravene shall submit without any remission to the regular discipline, to be punished with more severe penalties according to the decision of the convent, if excess or frequency of (folio 85.) delinquency demands this, to which we specially direct the consciences of the officers.

NOT TO GO OUT TO OUTSIDE SHOPS OR OTHER PRIVATE ROOMS OUTSIDE THE PRECINCTS.

Item. Following as is fitting the Constitutions of Dominus Ottobon, of good memory, formerly legate of the Holy See in England, published in this case under the subscribed penalties, we strictly forbid you to go to any outside shops, or any private rooms beyond the precincts of the cloisters or to other places in the town anywhere outside your monastery, except those whose duty requires it ; unless debility or other necessary cause arises and the consent of the Abbess or Prioress has been given ; or to have private converse with any suspect persons, or with any men, Religious or Secular, unless you desire to confess ; or to eat with them outside your monastery without the special leave of your Abbess or Prioress, such leave to be always carefully controlled so that by reason of it there be no valid reason for suspicion of anything sinister. We wish those who contravene this after the notification of this document has been made to them, to fast one day on bread and ale for each offence.

TWO-THIRDS OF ALL TO DINE IN REFECTIONARY EVERY DAY BOTH SENIORS AND JUNIORS.

Item. We lay down that the Constitutions of Dominus Ottobon, the foresaid legate, in which it is stipulated that at least two-thirds of the convent shall remain for meals in refectory, shall be observed with you ; and for the due carrying out of the same we determine that, since professors of like religion ought to be in conformity and because among you there ought to be no exception of persons, we decide that all nuns, seniors and juniors alike, indifferently shall dine in refectory, except those who have been properly excused by infirmity or who at the discretion of the Abbess or the Prioress have been directed to dine elsewhere ; in which case it shall be arranged without exception that refecton outside the refectory be for those who are known to be most in need of it. And a nun through whom in this matter the contrary may be presumed, shall be dealt with sharply and in the regular discipline. And for the faithful carrying out of these things we strictly order the Abbess, the Prioress, the Sub-prioress and the rest of the officers of the convent in the exercise of their consciences to enquire diligently into these matters and to cause these statutes to be observed strictly.

NO MEN, RELIGIOUS OR SECULAR, OR OTHER WOMEN TO THE INFIRMARY.

Further we strictly forbid the access of men, religious or secular, or of any secular women other than their domestic servants to the infirmary or to the rooms of the nuns, except for necessary cause and with the special leave of the Abbess and not then unless they are persons so related to the nuns themselves by consanguinity or affinity that nothing sinister can properly be suspected of the nuns. And whoever, contrary to our inhibition, shall presume to receive anyone into their rooms, publicly or secretly, for each offence, we lay down that she shall fast every Friday on bread and water. And if it be that they are not willing to abstain from the forbidden articles, then a daily portion from the kitchen ration shall be withdrawn from them until in the judgement of the Abbess they have corrected themselves.

NO NUNS TO BE ABSENT FROM REGULAR MEALS.

In addition to this, since among other vices to be avoided, it is recognised that excess of food and drink has increasingly infected religious persons, in accordance with adherence to the above mentioned constitutions, we strictly forbid any nun to presume absent herself from the places and hours laid down in your regular observances for eating and drinking, unless for legitimate cause she has been absent from the monastery, away from the town or by special leave from the Abbess.

ALL TO PROCEED TOGETHER IN SILENCE TO DORMITORY AFTER COMPLINE.

And when Compline is finished all shall (folio 85v.) proceed together at once to the dormitory in silence, each nun to her allotted bed. There shall be no returning to their own or one another's rooms without the Abbess' special leave for eating or drinking, or for any other cause unless perchance necessity demands it. And those who contravene we wish to undergo the regular discipline for each delinquency at the next Chapter meeting. And we command further that every habitual delinquent shall fast on bread and water on the following Friday. But from this we except generally infirm nuns and those who have been on duty or in the presence of the Lady Abbess.

NO SECULAR WOMEN IN DORMITORY AT NIGHT.

Expressly forbidding, under pain of Greater Excommunication, any nun to permit any secular woman to spend the night with her in the dormitory, from which, by this document we forbid a access to all secular persons with the exception of women servants.

re OBEDIENCE.

Item. Because obedience is better than sacrifice and also because the Lawgiver lays down that we should obey those in authority, we command you one and all, the nuns of this convent, in virtue of holy obedience and under penalty of sentence of Maj : Excom : by firm injunction, that following the Rule of St. Benedict to which you are strictly bound, you study to obey more promptly the Abbess and the others placed in Authority over you in those things which belong to the Order and Regular Observance, and other lawful orders as the above-mentioned Rule teaches you, in devout humility and humble devotion. And those of you who disobey the Abbess or others placed over you, of whatever rank or condition they may be, in these matters shall we lay down be punished without any remission according to the manner and quality of the fault.

NO PROCESSIONS OUTSIDE THE PRECINCTS.

Item. Because it is expedient that the female sex, less strong to resist the wiles of the ancient enemy, shall be secured by effective remedy, imitating the Constitutions of the said legate and of Lord John Peckham, of good memory, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury, published on this subject, as they apply, we strictly forbid you, on the occasion of public processions taking place outside the precincts of your monastery, to go out under the pretext of any custom, in any circumstance whatever, but when solemn processions of this kind are going to take place, you shall carry out the same solemnly within the precincts. Moreover we forbid any nun under penalty of Exc : Maj : to presume to stay with her friends or any other persons whatever out of the monastery beyond three complete days, for the sake of recreation, or for any need or occasion beyond six days after an illness has ceased, without the special leave of ourselves or our successor.

re ALMS.

Item. We command you one and all by strict injunction that you cause the alms accustomed to be made in your monastery from times of antiquity to which you are bound by ancient ordinance for the souls of founders and other benefactors, to be duly distributed according to your means, about which we order you to maintain your consciences before the Most High as you wish to escape divine vengeance ; forbidding you besides to presume to give to others that miche* or bread from your allowance which bread each nun of the house is bound by ancient ordinance to give every week in alms to the poor sisters of your hospital under penalty of Exc : Maj : of which if you contravene you may be deservedly afraid.

re SHORTAGE OF NUNS.

Item. We warn you peremptorily, Lady Abbess, and command you, in virtue of obedience strictly to be enjoined, to effectually procure that the number of nuns in your monastery, established in ancient days, which is now considerably diminished, be increased according to the means of the said monastery, with the cessation of all fraud. Otherwise we shall proceed against you as by law we legitimately can, with canonical penalties.

re NUNS MAKING WILLS.

Item. Since the making of wills is completely forbidden among religious persons, we forbid you one and all that any nun, under pretext of pretended piety or custom, shall presume to make a corrupt will (folio 86.), by word or in writing, concerning goods of which she has had or perchance will have in the future the personal use, by permission of the Abbess alone ; since she cannot have anything of her own, nor have free disposal of goods, as property of this kind exists for the use of, and expressly reverts to, the regular institution, and all rests in the possession of your monastery to be disposed of as may be suitable according to the decision of the Abbess, under penalty of Exc : Maj : Nor may the Abbess grant any licence to nuns in this matter, as from these things grave scandals are known to arise.

re ASSIGNMENT OF ROOMS.

Besides, let not nuns presume to lay claim to the rooms and pupils already allotted to them or to be allotted to them in future, or call them their own by reason of the allotment which ought to be regarded rather as voluntary than reward for merit, since it is lawful for the Abbess in the first instance to allot the said rooms and the pupils to others according to merit or demerit as may seem more expedient in considered fairness. Moreover we forbid that rooms or pupils be allotted to any nuns by partisanship or any personal favour, nor to any except to those whose mature age and gravity of manners render them suitable to whom the allotment shall be (have been) made at the discretion of the Abbess, setting aside all favour ; in which case we ordain that the Abbess must strictly follow her conscience. And we order that nuns who with daring temerity have resisted these premises or shall do so in future, unless, after warning, they make amends in the matter, in addition to the regular discipline which we lay down shall be sternly inflicted on them, by reason of the gravity of their offence shall be handed over to prison custody until they deserve to obtain a more complete pardon from us.

NUNS NOT TO RECEIVE LETTERS.

Item. We forbid you one and all to write or cause to be written any letter or to send the writing to anyone outside whether religious or secular, whatever his condition may be, without the special permission of the Abbess, or to dare

* a small loaf.

NOR. TO REVEAL SECRETS.

to reveal by letter, messenger or signs the secrets of your Chapter or its [] to any outside person, under penalty of Exce : Maj : which we intend to fulminate canonically against contraveners.

AGAINST SUPERFLUOUS ORNAMENTS, VEILS, ETC.

Item. Following the steps of the Holy Fathers, we forbid you who are dedicated to divine service and are moreover professed, to wear in public veils or robes of silk, pins of gold or silver, or silken belts ornamented with gold or silver ; and only a consecrated nun may wear a ring and must be content with one ring only. And if any shall presume to contravene this our prohibition and being warned do not make amends she shall undergo the regular discipline, to which matter we direct the consciences of the officers of the convent.

re INSTRUCTION OF JUNIORS.

Item. We lay down and command you, firmly enjoining it in virtue of obedience, that four, or at least three, of the more discrete nuns of the monastery, sufficiently instructed in the Rule of St. Benedict and in the regular observances, knowing them, and approved by the Abbess and the Prioress, be chosen who shall diligently instruct and inform the junior nuns in the Rule and Observances aforesaid ; and these nuns, thus chosen as said, are bound to undertake the duty of instruction under penalty of deprivation of a portion of the ration which is due to them, until they are willing to take on this duty, and none-the-less if they have refused the duty, for their contempt, they shall also submit to the regular discipline. Moreover in order that they may know the rule and the observances the nuns may, if need be, be compelled canonically by the Abbess by subtraction of portions due to them for vesture and pittance

re CARE OF NUNS WHEN INFIRM.

Item. We order that sick nuns during their sickness shall be provided (folio 86v.) with food and drink suitable to their sickness and with medicines and other necessities according to the character of their infirmity and the means of the monastery, as has ever been the custom from ancient times ; and if the portion allotted to these nuns for carrying this out does not suffice, then according to ancient usage we lay down that it shall be implemented out of the general goods of the monastery.

re TIME OF PROFESSION.

Item. Following the Constitutions of the Holy Fathers as is suitable, we command you, Lady Abbess, in virtue of obedience firmly enjoining, that after they have completed the twelfth year of their age and a year of probation has elapsed, as long as there is no canonical objection, strictly to compel your noviciates to profess immediately, unless the novice has left your monastery within the month. Otherwise if you have been negligent or remiss in this matter we decree that you and the nun who in this case has expressly refused to profess shall fast every Wednesday and Friday on bread and water, and until she has made the said profession, and the Abbess shall withdraw from her a daily portion from the kitchen ration due to her of whatever it may consist, nor shall any office or ministry be entrusted to any nun before she has made her profession.

NOT TO SELL CORRODIES.

Item. We strictly forbid you, Lady Abbess, to sell or grant a vacant corrody or pension to any person either for a term of life or for any period, unless urgent need demands it, and the consent of the Diocesan agrees, under penalty of

suspension from your office. And if you have contravened in this matter you will know that this will happen to you *ipso facto* if you have not revoked that which you presumed to do. When concessions and sales of this kind exist, which are a species of alienation, we have known them to produce very great damage to religious houses.

SUITABLE ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD.

Item. We command you, Lady Abbess, and each of your officers, in virtue of holy obedience by firm injunction, that you cause the nuns of the convent to be served with bread and drink and other food suitable and proper as respect for Religion demands and in accordance with the ancient laudable custom of your house and its means. Otherwise we shall proceed against you legitimately, as by right we may and as justice demands.

AGAINST PROPRIETY AND ENQUIRY INTO IT.

Item. Since we are instructed by the Apostle to abstain not only from evil but from every kind of evil, and the evil of "Propriety" is rightly to be detested among Religious persons, we expressly interdict the sin of Propriety or anything of the kind, under penalty of anathema, strictly forbidding any of you to possess as private property anything which may have been held "subdomino" or by propriety.

WHAT IS TRULY PROPRIETY.

But that it may be more fully known what you may hold as private property, following the Rule of St. Benedict we declare and call all that "private" or "propriety" which you have given or received without the orders of your Abbess or retained without her permission; decreeing that any nuns in such cases exceeding what are truly private possessions and committing the crime of "propriety," according to the Rule of St. Benedict and the regulations instituted by the other Holy Fathers, are to be sharply punished as is suitable. You also, Lady Abbess, we strictly enjoin and command that after having on two separate occasions, *i.e.* on their first arrival at the house and at the Chapter of Quadragesima, diligently and carefully inquired concerning "propriety" of this kind in the manner aforesaid, you shall sharply punish those whom you find guilty in these premises, according to the above rule and regular institutions (folio 87.), to which we direct your conscience before the supreme judge, according to the strict judgement of God. And moreover, if in these premises you are negligent or remiss, we wish you to incur the penalty of deprivation of your administration until you have diligently carried out the premises, and this, *ipso facto*, as is more fully contained in the constitutions of Lord Otton.

re CARRYING OUT OF CHANTRIES.

Item. Because certain perpetual chantries, ordained in ancient times to be celebrated daily by different suitable chaplains in your monastery, for which you received many donations, have, as is asserted, been for a long time and still are, withdrawn, contrary to the pious intention and ordinance of the founders, and to the grave danger of your souls, we therefore command you, in virtue of holy obedience, and under penalty of sentence of Excommunication: to see that these chantries are duly observed and carried out according to the form of their institution and ordinance by suitable Chaplains, in a manner suitable to the same if the revenues and provision originally assigned for them is sufficient today. Otherwise, in proportion as their revenues and provisions suffice at present for all the others, their responsibilities having been duly met, that you cause them to be served in proportion to their fruits, all guile and fraud whatsoever being eliminated.

re EATING MEAT IN REFECTORY.

Item. Since the eating of flesh by nuns of the Order of St. Benedict is completely forbidden in Refectory, we, as befits followers of the Saint's Rule as well as the constitutions of the said Lord Legate issued on the subject, strictly forbid the eating of flesh in the Refectory under penalty of Exc : Maj : against contraveners of which we intend to fulminate canonically ; unless you have canonical dispensation from the Holy See.

re ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS TO CONVENT.

Item. We command you, Lady Abbess, by firm injunction, that every year in future, in the presence of the whole Convent, a financial statement of your monastery be fully set out ; also that the nuns holding offices of administration, in the presence of the Convent or some of them elected for the purpose, render a proper and full account of their administration, complete copies of which we wish to remain in the hands of the Convent. And if you do not carry out these premises or cause them to be carried out, then you will know that *ipso facto* you are suspended.

re CONSULTING CONVENT IN DIFFICULT BUSINESS.

We forbid you also, Lady Abbess, under penalty of removal from office, in any important business, to act henceforward on your own responsibility without consulting your convent, and lay down that you may only carry out such business with the advice and consent of your convent or of the saner part of the same. Otherwise, we decree that business done in that way shall be of no effect and we determine that you shall be punished canonically for such excess of rashness.

re CORRECTION IN CHAPTER.

Item. We command you, Lady Abbess, the Prioress, the Subprioress and other officers of the convent, in virtue of holy obedience by firm injunction, in making correction of crimes and excesses of your sisters when they threaten, to approach the Chapter more often ; also that you study to punish the crimes and excesses of individual nuns and these persons as is proper and correct according to your regular observances without any exception of person, to which matters we strictly direct your consciences before God. Against you or any of you on account of negligence in that matter we shall be able to proceed to canonical penalties according to the law.

NUNS NOT TO BECOME GODMOTHERS.

In addition to this we forbid you one and all, by the tenor of this document to presume to become the godmother of any boy without obtaining our leave for this, since from these relationships religious houses are known often to have been threatened with expenses. And we lay down that contraveners besides other regular discipline shall be punished by fasting on bread and water every Friday during the month next following.

re CONFESSORS.

We moreover strictly forbid you one and all under penalty of sentence (folio 87v.) of Exc : Maj : to presume to make your confessions to any confessors other than those hitherto appointed by us or to be appointed in the future, without legitimate reason to be approved by your Abbess, unless perchance dispensation has been legitimately given to you or any one of you in this matter by us or by our superior.

re PROCEDURE AGAINST THE INCONTINENT.

Those who contravene shall undergo the regular discipline. Further, in order that the punishment of one may be the source of fear to many, and that the easiness of sin may not contribute an incentive to delinquency, we order you, Lady Abbess (and all the officers of the convent) under penalty of Maj : Exc : that when a nun or a maid of your monastery has been publicly accused of incontinence or any other crime, unless she has canonically purged herself in your presence, you shall study to punish and correct her according to the Rule of St. Benedict without any exception, canonically controlling contradictors and rebels if there are any. Otherwise if you have been negligent or remiss in these premises we shall in that case proceed against you as contumacious and rebels, inflicting the legitimate canonical penalties.

THAT NOTHING BE GIVEN FOR ENTRY AS NUNS.

Item. Since in our visitations it was discovered, established and made clear that considerable sums of money have been received by the Abbess and convent on account of the reception of some persons as nuns of your monastery by prior agreement and an entrance pact, not without the stain of the sin of simony ; and if it has been so, to the danger of your souls. We therefore strictly forbid you singly and collectively under penalty of Exc : Maj : under pretext of some custom which might rather be counted as bribery, to exact anything by yourselves, or in your name, for the reception of any persons to your monastery as nuns, by agreement or pact. But by this we do not intend to forbid that that which has been voluntarily offered by friends of the nuns may be freely received for the use of the monastery after being duly accounted for.

re NOISE BY SECULARS.

Item. Because the secular women servants of the nuns have too frequent access to the refectory at the time when the convent is dining therein, and to the cloister while the convent is occupying it or the chapter house, for contemplation, reading or for prayer, making a noise and perpetrating other evils there, which consort not with the honesty of religion, and because these secular women by their chattering, gossiping and various other extravagances which they often keep up till midnight, interfere with the convent's being able to duly carry out its regular observances, we command you therefore, one and all, in virtue of obedience and under sentence of Exc : Maj : by firm injunction at no time to permit these things or any others which do not agree with regular observance, to be carried on by the servants or any others ; or for the servants to perform the service in the refectory as hitherto ; and that any of your servants or other secular who contravenes shall be expelled from the monastery ; forbidding you, besides, under penalty of Exc : Maj : to admit among you any servants disgraced by crime as perniciaries, but that you retain servants of this kind already somehow admitted, since from them grave scandals may fall upon you and your monastery with an appearance of truth.

re REPAIRS OF HOUSES.

Item. Because in the houses and buildings both within your monastery and in the manors belonging to it, particularly in the church and the houses of the infirmary and the rooms needed by the nuns, there are many serious and notable defects needing material repairs, from which dilapidation has fallen upon the condition of the church itself and of the manors and much inconvenience has resulted, we command you therefore, Lady Abbess, in virtue of obedience by firm injunction (folio 88.) to have these defects, one and all, duly repaired without inconvenient delay, according to your strength, out of the common funds of your monastery ; commanding besides that two trustworthy and discrete men, to be nominated each year by the convent, be employed

who at the expense of your monastery will twice a year personally visit all the manors belonging to your monastery to examine fully the state of the manors both as regards the buildings and the stock, living and dead, and about the things which they find they shall make a faithful report in writing to the convent, that in this way the state of the manors may not escape the memory of the convent, all of which things we wish to be faithfully carried out and we lay down that an oath in admission of the same by you shall be exacted and received.

Item. Because we learn that evidently some nuns of your monastery bring birds, rabbits, dogs and other playthings with them to church by which they prolong the canonical hours and impede themselves and the other nuns who are chanting the hours, often to the grave peril of their souls ; we therefore strictly forbid you one and all in virtue of obedience, to presume to bring birds, dogs, rabbits or other playthings and things which provoke unseemliness to church with you ; and any nun who contravenes after a third warning shall fast every Friday on bread and water for each offence, notwithstanding the fact that she will be receiving a discipline publicly in the Chapter house on the same day.

Item. Because the great traffic and concourse of secular people of either sex through your cloister goes on, from which many difficulties have arisen, and the quietness and honesty of religion of the nuns have been greatly interfered with, we strictly order you by injunction, that since according to the Rule of St. Benedict, your converse ought to be separated from seculars, in order that your actions be conformable with your name and that dangers to your souls which may very likely arise from concourse of this kind may be more cautiously avoided, we command that you at no time permit traffic and concourse of secular persons to take place through the said cloisters, lest your devotion and honesty of religion be impeded, under penalty of Exc : Maj : which we intend to fulminate against contraveners ; expressly forbidding that the doors which lead to the outside or specially those of your church between the nave of the church and the choir of the same, shall be opened by the convent before the beginning of the Hour of Prime nor after Vespers said in the choir, nor at meal time also, unless they are opened for some necessary or useful cause : and that the guardianship of the doors be not entrusted to any nun who is not commended by mature age and gravity of manners. And the sacristan who holds the office responsible in these matters, if she has been negligent or remiss in these premises shall, we lay down, for the first offence fast on the following Friday on bread, vegetables and ale, and for the second offence on bread and water only. And if she has been convicted on this score for a third time, know that she will incur the penalty of suspension from her office and be punished with other heavier penalties for so great negligence and disobedience ; and when she has been deposed let another be speedily chosen in her place. We lay down, besides, that the door of the dormitory be closed and locked immediately after, when Complines is over, the convent has, according to directions, entered it, and that the cloister be duly guarded during the night under penalty noted above.

Item. Because we learn that it is permitted by ancient laudable custom of your monastery that when sisters leave or die, the parents and relatives of the nuns if debilitated or poor may be by favour admitted as sisters of the hospital (folio 88v.) in preference to others, that nevertheless other women, wealthy and sufficiently powerful, rejecting and passing over the nuns' relations, for price given and by a money transaction, are to-day being admitted as sisters contrary to the laudable custom above mentioned. We order you therefore, Lady Abbess, in virtue of obedience, by firm injunction, to admit as sisters of the hospital the poor and debilitated relations of the nuns of the monastery, if there are any, free and without charge and expel the other extraneous sisters of whom mention has been made without delay, not allowing them or others to be admitted to your alms as sisters of the hospital at a price or by a money transaction. Commanding too, that the bread issued in alms to the poor sisters,

which is now much too poor in quality, be improved in future, that the bread be sufficient and eatable and that your sisters may not be compelled to complain deservedly in this respect, so that you may escape canonical reproof.

Item. Because the alms devoted to the poor are lessened by the hunting and other dogs living within the precincts of your monastery, and because the church and cloister and other places set apart for divine and other offices are being, contrary to propriety, much fouled, and because divine service is often interfered with by the inordinate noise of the same, in virtue of obedience firmly to be enjoined, we command you, Lady Abbess, to remove these or any other dogs altogether, and not allow them to be kept at any time within the precincts of the monastery by means of which the premises may become discommoded in any way in the future.

Item. We command you all in virtue of obedience by firm injunction that your common seal be kept securely under seven or at least five locks and keys, of which one shall be in the possession of the Abbess and the rest in that of the older and more mature nuns to be nominated by the convent; expressly forbidding that anything shall be sealed by the said common seal unless the consent has been given to it by the whole or the greater and saner part of the same, and also that a document to be sealed shall be first read to the convent in the common understandable and vulgar tongue. And contraveners will know that they have *ipso facto* incurred the penalty of suspension for a year, other penalties notwithstanding.

Item. Since by the constitutions of the Holy Fathers juniors have to assume their rule of living from their prelates and these same prelates ought to obtain abundance of witness about their conversation, we command you, Lady Abbess, in virtue of obedience strictly to be laid down, to change your chaplain nun every year according to the constitutions published on this point, in order that the nuns who are with you in that office may thus by exercise of laudable doctrine be better able to become proficient in religion and that you may be able to call on them promptly as witness of innocence if, which we hope will not be so, any crime or scandal is brought up by the envy of anyone.

Item. In order that these premises may one and all be more fully known to you all we command you, Lady Abbess, in virtue of holy obedience, firmly enjoined, that you cause these our injunctions just as they are recited above to be one and all inscribed in a suitable book in legible writing without undue delay and that they be one and all read completely in the presence of the whole convent every year; And that no nun may be able to excuse herself in this (folio 89.) matter we lay down and command that a suitable instructress be deputed to instruct and inform you and the nuns duly in these premises, as well as to explain to you and to them the sense and meaning of them as is suitable, and enjoining you one and all to keep and also observe all these our injunctions and decrees as they pertain to you and any of you and concern you individually, separately or you collectively; under the ecclesiastical penalties and censures above mentioned and the other canonical penalties against contraveners, which as contumacy of delinquents exacts will be inflicted canonically by us in the future. But that the power of correcting, changing, interpreting and declaring the premises and of adding to, withdrawing, increasing, suspending the penalties and of taking action about discoveries in our visitation and of correcting crimes and excesses found in the same and of punishing canonically according as there be need and may seem to us expedient, will be specially reserved to us. In testimony of all which we have caused our seal to be attached.

Given in our Manor of Southwark xxvth day of September, A.D. 1387, and of our consecration the 20th year.

AND UNDER THE FORESAID FORM WAS WRITTEN TO THE ABBESS AND CONVENT OF THE MONASTERY OF WHEREWELL OF THE SAME ORDER.

AS FAR AS THE CLAUSE "THAT NO MONEY MAY BE RECEIVED BY AGREEMENT FOR THE RECEPTION OF ANYONE AS NUN": WHERE IN PLACE OF THAT CLAUSE AND THE OTHERS FOLLOWING RECORDED ABOVE, DOWN TO THE FINAL CONCLUSION WHICH BEGINS —*Item.* THAT ALL THE PREMISES . . . ETC, THESE SPECIAL INJUNCTIONS WHICH FOLLOW HAVE BEEN WRITTEN CONCERNING THE "DETECTA AND COMPERTA" DISCOVERED AT THE VISITATION OF THE HOUSE, WHICH FINAL CLAUSE OR CONCLUSION WAS WRITTEN TO THE ABBESS AND CONVENT OF THE MONASTERY OF WHEREWELL ABOVE MENTIONED.

Item. Because your books to be used for the divine offices are broken, badly bound, full of mistakes and completely unfit for use, we command you, Lady Abbess, the Sacristan and the other officers who are concerned, in virtue of obedience, firmly to be enjoined, without delay to have these books which need repair duly re-made and repaired, causing an inventory to be made of all these books, one copy of which we desire to remain in the possession of the Abbess and another in that of the Convent.

Item. Because the Hour of Prime, held in the Choir, and the Mass of the Blessed Mary, in the Chapel of the same, which is close to the Choir, are often said and sung at one and the same time, on account of the confusion of voices and sound, which arise from the position of the music on both sides, a great discord is caused in the ears of the hearers and various other inconveniences are brought about; we command you in virtue of obedience, firmly to be enjoined, never to presume to start Primes in the choir in future before the end of the Mass of St. Mary, before the said Mass has been finished properly. That the hour of Primes and the rest of the hours and Masses of the day, as is fit, can be said and celebrated at the hours and times which are suitable, due and customary.

Item. Because whereas by ancient custom each nun, every Friday from the Feast of St. Michael to the end of the Nativity of Our Lord, should receive three herrings as part of her sustenance, now the nuns do not receive these (folio 89v.) herrings on these days, but instead of them each receives for herself three pence only, in lieu of the foresaid distribution, for the whole period and for all the days, with which sum or receipt the convent is far from being content; therefore we command you, Lady Abbess, your officers and officials whom this concerns in virtue of obedience firmly to be enjoined, to see that the above herrings and extra dainties sufficient for the kitchen of the convent, as well as any other receipts which make up the share of the convent's ration by ancient custom are distributed. Unless perchance by the common consent of the whole convent or the greater part thereof the diet for the use of the convent shall have been changed to other kinds, in which case we desire that the change so made shall reasonably satisfy the convent: Commanding also that the brass vessels and other utensils for the furniture of the convent's kitchen be bought as often as needed and duly repaired at the common expense, and we lay down that the food for the convent shall be prepared in the kitchen and not as hitherto separately in the rooms.

Item. Because in our visitation it was reported to us and discovered that you, Lady Abbess, have kept back and are still keeping back from your present convent certain distributions and pittances both in money and goods and in other things which certain faithful Christians ordained to be distributed annually to your convent, and for which they acquired temporal and spiritual possessions while they lived and assigned and left them to the same; we therefore command you, in virtue of obedience by firm injunction, that you cause one and all of these distributions and pittances, of whatever they consist, to be distributed according to the pious intentions of whatever persons rightly and legitimately ordained them, as long as the returns and revenue assigned for the distributions and pittances suffice after all other commitments are duly maintained.

Item. Because the various books or rolls, commonly called "Customaries," containing those things which in former times were wont to be conferred on the convent for its daily sustenance, at present in your possession, have many discrepancies with one another, from which many differences often arise in the convent; wishing therefore as far as we can to cut short these differences, we command you, Lady Abbess, in virtue of obedience firmly to be enjoined, that with the counsel and consent of all your convent or of at least the greater and saner part of the same with good advice and mature and diligent deliberation, manipulation being forbidden, to have your book or "Customarium" made in which may be expressly contained, clearly and specifically, all the shares and distributions which were wont and ought to be paid or distributed to the convent both for its daily sustenance as also for the pittances of the same and any other receipts in whatever they may consist. Of this book or "Customaries" to be thus made anew, one counterpart copy shall remain in the possession of the Lady Abbess and the other also counterpart in that of the convent, by which let it be remembered that henceforth, we decree, all shares and distributions shall be distributed and paid.

And let it be noted that in the same manner and form injunctions were made and handed and delivered to the Abbess and convent of the monastery of the blessed Mary of Winton as those made for the Abbess and convent of the monastery of Romsey, names of places and persons changed as required.