



Photograph of an almoner's official seal
attached to a receipt for £100, dated 10th June,
1297. (E 101/369/21)

The position and duties of the king's almoner
1255-1327

by

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A thesis submitted for the M.A. Degree in the
University of London, 1949

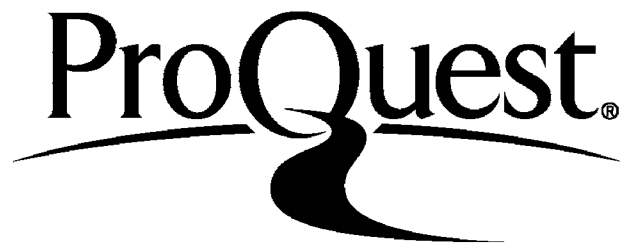
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List of Abbreviations of Titles of Books and MSS.
used throughout.

B.M.	British Museum
<u>C.Cl.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Close Rolls.</u>
<u>C.Lib.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Liberate Rolls.</u>
<u>C.P.L.</u>	<u>Calendar of Papal Letters.</u>
<u>C.P.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Patent Rolls.</u>
Chan.Misc.	Public Record Office. Chancery Miscellanea.
C.Y.S.	Canterbury and York Society.
<u>D.N.B.</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
E 101	Public Record Office. Exchequer K.R. Accounts.
<u>G.E.C. Peerage</u>	<u>The Complete Peerage of England Scotland Ireland Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant Extinct and Dormant.</u> ed. Vicary Gibbs.
<u>Lib.Quot.</u>	<u>Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobe. Society of Antiquaries 1787.</u>
Lib.Soc.Ant.	Library of the Society of Antiquaries.
<u>Poor Relief.</u>	H. Johnstone "Poor Relief in the Royal Households of Thirteenth Century England" <u>Speculum</u> IV, 150.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
<u>Reg. Pal.Dun.</u>	<u>Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense. Rolls Series.</u>
T.F.Tout <u>Chapters</u>	T.F.Tout, <u>Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England.</u>
<u>V.C.H.</u>	<u>Victoria County History</u>

Note on transcription from manuscript.

Throughout the thesis in quotation from manuscript, and in the appendices the spelling of the original has been preserved and abbreviations have been extended.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The abundance of surviving wardrobe documents of the reigns of Henry III, Edward I and Edward II is a temptation to further enquiry into the organisation of the various household offices and the careers of their chief officials. Among these the almonry and almoner, while not of sufficient importance in general administration to secure detailed consideration from Professor Tout in his Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England have an interest all their own and well merit further study.

By the teaching of the church, almsgiving was to the king, as to all other men, a religious duty of the highest importance. As Professor Johnstone has pointed out¹, the magnate of the thirteenth century accepted unquestioningly the idea that because he had property he must make the relief of poverty a charge upon it, and for the king above all others charity was obligation expected of him by the church and by his

1. Poor Relief p.150

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subjects. Professor Johnstone quotes a speech, put into the mouth of Henry III by Roger of Wendover, ranking charity with the barest necessities of life; "All the revenues of my treasury are barely sufficient for my food, clothes and my accustomed alms"¹. and such evidence as we possess of the scope of Henry's almsgiving gives no reason to suppose that Wendover has misrepresented the case.

In such circumstances it is not surprising that the king's charity required the services of a special officer whose activities can first be traced at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the material becomes available. The office was however, already of long standing. By this time there were two almoners; a household almoner who did the ordinary routine work of the office². and a hereditary grand almoner who exercised his functions only at coronations.³ The latter is mentioned for the

1. Poor Relief p.150.

2. This official was mentioned for the first time in 1205. (Misae Roll. E101/349/2)

3. The King's Sergeants and Officers of State. J.H. Round, p.327 and L.G.W.Legg. English Coronation Records, p. lxxiv and lxxv.

first time at the coronation of Queen Eleanor in 1236, and I have not been able to trace the earlier history of the office. It seems reasonable to suppose that in this case as in so many others in the royal household,^{1.} the original office had, in process of time become ceremonial and hereditary, performed only on rare state occasions by persons of the highest rank, while others, originally simply the almoner's deputies came to be the regular and professional holders of the office and performed its everyday work.

From the reign of John a succession of household almoners can be traced in the records of the wardrobe and the chancery. During John's reign and the greater part of that of Henry III these officers were always Templars, but in 1255 the last of the Templar almoners was succeeded by a secular clerk and

1. A similar process had occurred in the case of the stewardship and other sergeancies. The descendants of the original holders became too important for the menial duties implied in their designations and the actual daily duties were performed by others. Mr. J. H. Round says "The hereditary holder of a household office delegated to a deputy with the same title the discharge of his functions, which he himself assumed more and more rarely till at last he officiated only at the great solemnity of a coronation." (The King's Sergeants and Officers of State, p.7.)

from this time forward during the period here under review, which ends in 1327, the position was consistently filled by a secular clerk or by a friar. The year 1255 has therefore been chosen as the starting point of this enquiry.

The almoner's position was one of peculiar interest; he stood as it were midway between the king's chapel and the king's public business, at once a chaplain¹ and the head of a household department which received its supplies from and had to render account to the keeper of the wardrobe. This dual position was partly due to the inclusion in his ordinary work of duties which would not now be described as eleemosinary and partly to the fact that the almoner, like other household officials might occasionally be called upon to apply himself to tasks outside his normal

1. Some holders of the office between 1255 and 1327 were already chaplains before they became almoners whilst others became chaplains only in consequence of their promotion to the position of almoner. Bernard of Kirkby who became almoner in 1310 was a chaplain of Edward II in October, 1307. (Memorials of Beverley Minster, The Chapter Act Book ed. A. F. Leach, Surtees Society p.211)

sphere of action. Foremost among his duties were all activities in connection with the relief of the poor,^{1.} but the almsgiving included gifts to religious orders,^{2.} offerings to shrines and at mass,^{3.} payments made to scholars at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge^{4.} and gifts to sick persons seeking the royal touch.^{5.}

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1. This subject to the end of the reign of Edward I has been dealt with in Professor H. Johnstone's article in Speculum, IV, 149 - 160.
 2. Payments for food were regularly made to religious houses in the towns through which the king passed, and more rarely money was given for the building or repair of churches. In 1283-4 over £600 was given for building purposes to the Abbeys of Vale Royal and Meynam (Poor Relief, p.151 n.3.)
 3. Usually, but not invariably in churches passed on the king's travels or in the towns in which he stayed. In 1297 2ls. in money, six pieces of cloth of gold, three silver gilt dishes and a gold clasp were sent to three churches in Gascony. (B.M. Add. MS. 7965, f.6v)
 4. Henry, a student at Oxford received an allowance of a shilling a week in 1284. (Poor Relief, p.151, n.4.) and in 1320-21 £19.0.9. was paid for the commons of Simon of Bagshot, keeper of the scholars at Cambridge and thirty scholars under his charge. (B.M. Add. MS 9951, f.3.)
 5. This subject has been treated by M. Marc Bloch. Les Rois Thaumaturges, pp.97-98, 102-3.

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In addition to these duties however, the medieval conception of elemosina included a variety of matters having less obvious connection with charity. The funeral expenses of members of the royal household and others¹ were sometimes considered as alms; so were sums paid in compensation for damage done by the king's household or the king's army². and more surprisingly still, such occasional payments as that of the salary of a clerk copying letters³. or of messengers carrying letters for the king⁴.

Of the almoner's performance of duties outside his immediate sphere we have less definite and less abundant knowledge. But it is perfectly clear that work, unconnected with almsgiving, on various occasions

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1. On 21 June, 1323 £4. 1. 8 was paid to the almoner for the burial of "Griffin, son of Griffin Thloyt, knight" in the Dominican chapel at Newcastle-on Tyne. (B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f. 221)
 2. In 1322 The Prioress of the Abbey of Gysnes, an alien priory in Northumberland received £5 as recompense for land laid waste by Welsh infantry advancing on Scotland (B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f. 21)
 3. Poor Relief, p. 151.
 4. Lambert Fleming and Henry Chipre received £1 out of the alms for carrying the king's letters on 11th July, 1325. (E. 101/376/7, f. 4)

fell to his lot. Henry of Blunsdon, one of Edward I's almoners was often entrusted with the purchase of horses for the use of the king and other members of the royal family.^{1.} Edward II occasionally used his almoners as messengers^{2.} but instances of such outside activities are infrequent. The nature of the almoner's work probably made it expedient that he should generally be at hand in the court in its journeyings. During the reign of Edward I, when the king's charity reached great heights of generosity and systematisation, this was especially so, as scarcely a day passed when the almoner had not to see to the provision of a meal for several hundred poor. Under Edward II almsgiving was greatly reduced in volume, so that the almoner must have found the special duties of his office

1. In 1305 he bought a black horse for 18 marks and delivered it to Robert Pikard, the sumpter, to be used for drawing the king's litter to Staines. (E 101/368/6 m.sewn in at end).

2. Bernard of Kirkby in 1312 conveyed the seal for the vacancy of the bishopric of Durham to the king. (C.Cl.R, 1313-18, p.143). And in 1323 Friar Richard of Blyton, locum tenens of the king's almoner was sent to Carlisle with a message to Andrew of Harclay, Earl of Carlisle. (B.M.Stowe MS.553, f. 28v.)

less onerous and it may be significant that all our evidence of the employment of almoners as messengers should belong to this reign.^{1.}

As dispenser of the royal charity the almoner was in a close and intimate relation with the king and in a position to win his confidence and favour. Some of the almoners of the period were important figures in the royal household. For example Henry of Blunsdon, almoner for more than twenty years was one of his four executors.^{2.} It is a striking fact that he felt sufficiently secure of the royal favour to lend money to Edward of Carnarvon at a time of crisis when the prince was in utter disgrace and had been expelled from his father's presence.^{3.}

During the reigns of Henry III and Edward I and especially in the latter half of Edward I's reign the almoner's financial responsibilities were very heavy;

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1. See above p. 7 n. 1
 2. The others were Walter Langton, friar Luke of Woodford and John of Cottingham (Tout, Chapters, II 48, n. 2.)
 3. H. Johnstone, Letters of Edward, Prince of Wales, 1304-5, Roxburghe Club, pp. 32 & xliii

Prison of Wales, first as a clerk

in 1289-90,^{1.} 1296-97^{2.} and 1299-1300^{3.} he had to render account for more than £1,000 in each year, and totals almost as large were reached in other years.^{4.} With the accession of Edward II, however there occurred a remarkable decrease in the amount of the king's charity and a corresponding decline in the importance of his almoners. In this reign the alms never, in any year for which we have particulars exceeded the sum of £459.10.2½., reached in 1319-20.^{5.} Moreover, the almoners were, with one exception, men of slight importance.^{6.} The exception, John of Leek, Archbishop of Dublin from May, 1311 had been a member of Edward's household as

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1. Wardrobe book, 1289-90. Chan. Misc. 4/4
 2. Wardrobe book. 1296-7 B.M. Add. MS. 7965.
 3. Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobe. Soc. Ant. 1787.
 4. e.g. £898.17.8. in 1284-5 (Chan. Misc. 4/2) and £902.15.7¼. in 1305-06 (E101/369/11)
 5. Wardrobe book, B.M. Add. MS. 17362.
 6. More important than any of the almoners proper was friar Richard of Blyton, locum tenens of the almoner for a few months in 1323 who was English provincial of his order and a famous preacher.

Prince of Wales, first as a clerk¹. and later as almoner². and benefited from Edward's attachment to all the servants of his early years.

Edward II's apparent niggardliness was probably due to his own poverty. Edward I's finances had never recovered from the strain of his wars in Wales, Scotland and France, and he left to his son a heavy load of debt and an income hopelessly inadequate to his needs. Some reduction in expenditure was therefore probably imperative. It is worthy of note that the contrast between Edward II's almsgiving and that of his father is chiefly noticeable in regard to the provision of meals for the poor.

Edward I's expenditure for this purpose varied in the latter part of his reign between £300 and £600 a year; his son's as far as can be ascertained never exceeded £10 a year.³ The fact that Edward II chose

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1. E 101/360/17
 2. E 101/369/11 f.32
 3. At the standard rate of provision of 1½d. for each meal this means that Edward I was providing 78,000 to 156,000 meals each year and Edward II, 1,600.

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to reduce so considerably this particular form of expenditure gives cause to speculate whether it was beginning to be realised that the lavish and indiscriminate charity of the previous reign tended to increase the evil it was designed to cure by helping to create a mendicant class¹. Whether this was so or not the drastic restriction of the king's charity cannot have had a beneficial effect upon the fate of Edward II. Considerable discontent must have resulted among both the genuinely needy and the merely idle who may have become a menace to the lives and properties of the king's subjects.

The materials for the study of the almoner and his work at this period are to be found chiefly among

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1. This was certainly realised by 1349 when it was thus expressed in the Statute of Labourers; "Because that many valiant beggars, as long as they may live of begging, do refuse to labour, giving themselves to Idleness and Vice, and sometime to Theft and other Abominations; none upon the said pain of imprisonment shall, under the colour of pity or alms, give any thing to such, which may labour or presume to favour them towards their desires so that thereby they may be compelled to labour for their necessary living." Statutes of the Realm, 1101-1377 p.308.

the wardrobe and household accounts, preserved in the Public Record Office, British Museum, the Library of the Society of Antiquaries¹. and elsewhere. There is a strong probability that other documents referring to the king's almsgiving are in scattered and private possession, for the office had not at this time a fixed repository for its records and they did not pass en bloc into government possession.

Among the documents most useful for our purpose may first be named the wardrobe books, the complete statements of account, drawn up for presentation to the exchequer and kept in duplicate by the keeper and controller of the wardrobe. These, in addition to giving a detailed account of expenditure on almsgiving under the heading of "Alms" contain much information as to the staff and equipment of the almonry under the

1. The controller's book for 1299-1300 is in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries and was published in 1787 as Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobe. In the Library of the Society of Antiquaries are also wardrobe books for 1316-17 and 1317-18.

heading of "Necessaries" and of allowances made to the household for shoes and clothing¹. We have also some of the actual rolls of alms, from which the heading in the wardrobe books was drawn up and which were kept, perhaps by the almonry clerks, for the purpose of account within the wardrobe. The journals of the wardrobe, "kept by the cofferer or his clerk, giving sums received and expended during the day and the balance in hand each evening"². include among other expenses varying amounts given in alms. During the last five years of Edward II's reign some information as to the king's almsgiving is to be obtained from the accounts of the king's chamber. This had increased rapidly in importance during the struggles between Edward II and his barons, especially for the more private and personal expenditure of

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1. The earliest extant book of this type covers the year 1284-5. (Chan.Misc.4/2).
 2. J. H. Johnson "The System of Account in the Wardrobe of Edward II" Trans: R.Hist.S. (1929) Series 4 XII, 76.

the king, and was beginning to stand in the same relation to the wardrobe as that had originally occupied towards the exchequer, as being smaller, more flexible in its methods and more private than the more dignified department.

The most interesting and most fruitful of these sources are the rolls of alms. Of these there are seven for the reign of Edward I, but none, unfortunately for the reigns of Henry III or Edward II. The seven existing rolls cover the whole or part of the years 1276-7, 1283-4, 1288-9, 1293, 1299-1300, 1300-01 and 1301-02¹. A full description of these rolls is given in Chapter III on the organisation of the almsgiving.

Wardrobe books in which the heading relating to almsgiving is preserved have survived for fourteen years of the reigns of Edward I and II; seven for each reign. They cover the years 1284-5, 1289-90, 1296-7, 1299-1300, 1300-1, 1303-4, 1305-6, 1312, 3, 1315-6, 1316-7, 1317-8, 1319-20, 1320-1

1. E 101/350/23, 351/15, 352/18, 353/16, 357/29, 359/15 and 361/21.

and 1322-3¹.

The two earliest of this series are of a slightly different type from the rest and, by

1. Of these seven books are preserved in the British Museum;
 1296-7 B.M. AddMS.7965
 1299-1300 B.M. Add.MS.35291 (The controller's duplicate of this book is in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries and was published in 1787 as Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobe).

1300-1 B.M. Add.MS.7966A.

1303-4 B.M. Add.MS.8835.

1319-20 B.M. Add.MS.17362.

1320-1 B.M. Add.MS 9951

1322-3. B.M. Stowe MS.553 (This covers more than a single year)

The Library of the Society of Antiquaries contains, in addition to the controller's book for 1299-1300 two others;

1316-7. Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120.

1317-8. Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.121

The remaining five are in the Public Record Office;

1284-5 Chan.Misc. 4/2

1289-90 Chan.Misc. 4/4

1305-6 E101/369/11

1312-3 E101/375/8

1315-6 E101/376/7

comparison with the later books are incomplete. They resemble the others in the kind of expenditure recorded and in the classification of their material, but are less carefully kept and are wanting in many of the headings contained in the others, perhaps because of mutilation.¹ The heading of alms in each is undivided, instead of being classified as in the later books into money spent on the feeding of the poor and other

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1. The book for 1284-5 bears on f.1. the Title "Hospicium de anno tertiodecimo", ff. 3-4v^o contain entries relating to falconry and hunting, ff.8-15 prests, chiefly on the wages of the household and ff.16-28 almsgiving. There are no headings of receipts, necessaries, messengers, or others characteristic of the later type of wardrobe book. The book for 1289-90 has no title, ff.3-8v^o are headed Hospicium; ff.9-36v^o contain wages; ff.37-46v^o, almsgiving and ff.47-61v^o, payments to falconers and huntsmen. A still less complete controller's duplicate of this book exists (Chan.Misc. 4/5) containing only 16 ff.

second section.

Six fairly complete journals of the wardrobe survive for this period, five for the reign of Edward I and one for the reign of

expenditure, although the almoner's expenses for meals to the poor are entered in weekly paragraphs. The account appears to be complete, but it is never summed.

In the five books of the later part of Edward I's reign the alms are clearly divided into two parts, the feeding of the poor, described as given by Henry, the almoner and oblations, casual almsgiving by the wayside, donations to religious orders and other benefactions described as given by the wardrobe. Each is summed separately and the combined total is entered at the end of the whole as given by Henry, the almoner and the wardrobe. In the wardrobe books of Edward II's reign this distinction disappears and the total of the almsgiving is much reduced. It is in fact confined almost entirely to those items which in Edward I's reign had composed its second section.

Six fairly complete journals of the wardrobe survive for this period, five for the reign of Edward I and one for the reign

of Edward II.¹. The entries are arranged in two columns, one showing receipts and the other expenditure, balanced each day. The expenditure is unclassified, and the almsgiving is scattered among the expenses of the household. The journal for 1278, the earliest extant, seems to contain a complete record of the almsgiving for that year, but the later journals show only a proportion of the payments which must have been made to the almoner in the periods which they cover. This seems to suggest a change in the methods by which the almoner was supplied and its implications are discussed in Chapter II.

1. The years covered by the journals are:-
 - 1278, Jan.-Nov. Chan.Misc. 4/1
 - 1301, March - July E.101/359/5
 - 1299-1300, E.101/361/15
 - 1303-6 B.M. Add.MS 35292
 - 1306-7 Nov.-July, E101/370/16.
 - 1310-11 E.101/374/7 and E101/373/30
 Smaller fragments also survive for other years.

The chamber accounts of the last years of Edward II's reign¹ bear some resemblance in content to these later journals. They are written in French and record the smaller and more private daily expenses of the king, and the almsgiving entered here consists mainly of small sums given by the wayside.²

Further information is to be found in many other species of wardrobe account, especially as to the way in which the almoner received his supplies, and the personnel and equipment of the

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1. Chamber accounts from 1314 onwards survive, but they are only copious from 1322-27. The accounts of the clerk of the chamber for 1322-26 are enrolled on the Pipe Roll of 19 Edward II and from 1322-5 the accounts of the controllers of the chamber are also preserved in the P.R.O.
 - 1322-3. Account book of Thomas of Cusefleet, E.101/379/7
 - 1323-4. Account book of William of Colby, E.101/379/17.
 - 1324-5. Account book of John of Thingden, E.101/380/4.
 2. Professor Tout said "The formal and traditional alms figured as a regular head of wardrobe expenses, while alms given as a result of the king's personal impulse made a modest demand on the resources of the Chamber" (Chapters II, 357). This remains true even after the rise in importance of the Chamber.

almonry. Mention may be made in this connection of the Books of unde respondebit, containing lists of classified imprests or advances entered under the name of the officer responsible for them. Rolls or books of praestita provide unclassified lists of the advances made to members of the household on the expenses incurred in their duties and on wages and allowances for robes and shoes. Lists of expenses for the latter purpose also exist separately, as also do other small rolls of issues of various stores. Occasional help may also be obtained from the rolls of daily household expenses which record without particulars the sums spent each day by the household departments, and show the allowance of 4s. a day for alms whenever the king travelled.

During the greater part of this period the chancery enrolments supply information only about the careers of the almoners, but in the reign of Henry III details of the almsgiving are also recorded on the Close and Liberate Rolls, as the almoner received part, at least, of his supplies at this time directly from the exchequer by letters close or by writs of liberate, or from officials accounting to the exchequer who were similarly authorised to

provide him with goods. The Close Rolls are printed in full until 1268 and the Liberate Rolls are calendared to 1256. The remaining enrolments of both kinds for the reign of Henry III have been consulted in manuscript.

The material falls naturally into three main sections; the nature of the almoner's duties, both according to contemporary opinion and as they appear in practice from the accounts; the organisation of the almonry and its work which may be considered in two parts, the staff and equipment of the office and the methods of distribution of alms; and the receipt of supplies and account of expenditure. The final section will consist of the personal history of the almoners of this period with some consideration of the almoner's standing as a household official.

The treatment of the subject would be incomplete without some account of the office of hereditary almoner and its holders, but in this respect little can be added to what has already been said by

Dr. J. H. Round^{1.} and Mr. L. G. Wickham Legg.^{2.}

1. The King's Sergeants and Officers of State,
pp.326-8
2. English Coronation Records, pp.lxxiv, lxxv.

CHAPTER II

The Almoner's Work.

The wardrobe and household accounts yield a certain amount of information concerning the almoner, as on all other aspects of the king's court and personal surroundings, but in this as in other connections they have certain disadvantages. Owing to the circumstances of their preservation they are discontinuous and sometimes fragmentary; they are, by their nature, limited to financial matters, and they deal with practice to the exclusion of theory. Before gathering together the evidence they afford, therefore, it is desirable first to discover as far as possible what was the nature of the almoner's work according to contemporary opinion. In this connection we are fortunate in having two sources of information, the Commentarius Juris Anglicani, known as Fleta because it was written in the Fleet prison, and the household ordinance of 1323.

Fleta is generally considered to have been written about 1290¹, so that the theories here set forth are probably those current in Edward I's reign, but it is unlikely that they would have become entirely out of date before 1327. Although this treatise is largely based on Bracton,² the section on the royal household is the author's own work and is unique among the law books of the time. The intimate knowledge of the workings of the court which the writer of Fleta displays has led to the conjecture that he may have been a royal official imprisoned in the Fleet for his defalcations.³

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1. Only Sir Edward Coke (see Reports, Part X, p.XV) seems ever to have questioned this, although the date at which the treatise was written has not been fixed beyond doubt. Coke suggested that it was written in the time of Edward II or III but the passages he adduces in support of this are inconclusive. For authorities in support of the earlier date see article on Fleta by F.W. Maitland in D.N.B., T.F.Tout, Chapters II, 66-7 and W.S. Holdsworth, History of English Law, II, 321.
 2. W.S. Holdsworth, History of English Law, II, 322
 3. Ibid. p.321

What then are "Fleta's" views as to the office of the almoner? The relevant section may be quoted in full.^{1.}

"De Officio Elemosinarii

Officium autem Elemosinarii est, fragmenta diligenter colligere, et ea distribuere singulis diebus egenis; aegrotos et leprosos, incarceratos, pauperesque viduas, et alios egenos vagosque in prisona commorantes charitative visitare. Item equos relictos, robas, pecuniam et alia ad elemosinam largiter recipere et fideliter distribuere; debet etiam Regem super Elemosynae largitione crebris summationibus stimulare et praecipue diebus sanctorum, et rogare ne robas suas quae magni sunt precii Histrionibus, Blanditoribus, Adulatoribus, Accusatoribus vel Menestrallis sed ad Elemosynae suae incrementum jubeat largiri.^{2.}"

It may be noted that this summary of the almoner's duty is peculiarly valuable because it emphasises the personal side of his relationship with the king and illustrates certain duties, such as collecting and distributing the scraps and reminding

1. Fleta, Commentarius Juris Anglicani, Ed. J. SeBen, 1647, p. 81

2. If we had not other evidence that Fleta was written in Edward I's time this warning might seem more appropriate to the tastes of Edward II as traditionally represented.

the king of his obligations, which could not be deduced from the accounts.

We possess the text of three Household Ordinances issued between 1272 and 1327 but they are less useful for our purpose than might be anticipated. The first, which was drawn up in 1279, contains no reference to the almoner. The remaining two, which seem to be supplementary to one another, were printed by Professor Tout in an appendix to The Place of Edward II in English History¹. from two MSS. in the British Museum.² They both contain information about the almoner but that of 1323 alone refers to his duties. This Ordinance gives a list of some of the king's eleemosinary obligations, the last item of which runs as follows.

"Item dauncien custume lalmoner le roi recieura en la garderobe a chescune des avant quater festez XXVs. pur la poudre de CC. poudres en lonour des ditz festez."³ The form "poudres" which occurs in

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1. Appendix I, pp.267-318.
 2. Add.MS. 32,097, f.46d.-70. Cotton MS. Tiberius, E.VIII, f.54d.-74d.
 3. T.F.Tout, The Place of Edward II in English History, p.318.

1.
 both MSS. is untranslatable. As however in the wardrobe accounts of Edward II's reign 25s. is the sum consistently set apart for the feeding of 200 poor on each of the four great feasts, namely, Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and All Saints, it may be suggested that the writers of these late copies^{2.} misread their original, which probably wrote "pouvres", so that the passage should be translated thus:-

"Also of ancient custom the almoner of the king shall receive in the wardrobe on each of the aforesaid four feasts, 25s. for the food of 200 poor in honour of the said feasts."

This is the only item in which the almoner is mentioned, although we know from other sources that some of the oblations in this list were in practice sometimes given through the almoner. In conjunction with the fact that Fleta assigns to the almoner only duties connected with the relief of the poor, it is

1. As I have found after personal verification.
 2. On their date and origin see Tout, op.cit.

interesting to notice that the Ordinance makes him specifically responsible for this item alone. It seems that contemporary opinion was inclined to limit the almoner's sphere of activity to charity in the narrowest sense of the word. This point will however be dealt with more fully when we consider the information to be gathered from the wardrobe accounts.

The period under consideration is one of very great interest from the point of view of the king's almsgiving, including as it does the whole or part of the reigns of three kings so dissimilar in character and tastes as Henry III, Edward I and Edward II. The variations in the amount and scope of so personal an activity as almsgiving present an interesting commentary not only upon their characters but also upon their circumstances. Comparison is however rendered difficult because the changes in administrative procedure during the period oblige us to seek information from different sources at different times. From 1256 to 1272 our knowledge is

is based chiefly on the Close and Liberate Rolls, as the surviving wardrobe accounts are few and incomplete and, with one exception do not refer to almsgiving. From 1272 onwards, however, these enrolments cease to contain the record of ordinary eleemosinary expenditure, so that for Edward I's reign we must depend upon the wardrobe accounts, especially the alms rolls and the completed wardrobe books. There are no surviving alms rolls for Edward II's reign, in which our chief sources of information are the wardrobe books, till, in the last few years of the reign we are able also to utilise the accounts of the king's chamber¹. It seems therefore more convenient to consider first and separately the last sixteen years of Henry III's reign, since as we have seen the sources for this period are almost entirely different from those for the two succeeding reigns.

1. These accounts, however, do not contain a complete statement of the king's almsgiving. (v. supra p. 19.)

Our information as to the extent and organisation of Henry III's almsgiving in the last sixteen years of his reign is very scanty and incomplete and it is difficult to build up any clear picture of the duties of the king's almoner during this period. In addition to occasional entries in the Close and Liberate Rolls of the time one document, containing references to the king's charity is preserved among the wardrobe and household accounts. This is a roll of household expenditure recording payments for wax and in pascendo fratres from October, 1259 to October, 1260¹. There is nothing in the document itself to indicate that this expenditure was made under the direction of the almoner, but, since we have definite evidence that earlier in this reign, as also in that of Edward I it was the almoner's duty to see to the provision of meals

1. E.101/349/27.

1. This roll (E.101/349/27) is discussed by Professor Johnstone. Ibid. p.155.
2. Professor Johnstone quotes a letter, written from France in 1242 which states that the king was accustomed to feed 500 poor daily and orders the king's almoner to see that 300 of these are fed in England each day until the king's return. (Ibid., p.155).

for the poor, it seems reasonable to conclude that he was also responsible for the distributions of food to friars and others, recorded on this roll. If this be so he must have been kept very busy, for during the whole year no day passed on which fewer than 100 friars were fed and this total was frequently exceeded. 400 were fed in celebration of Christmas on 24, 25 and 26 December and numbers varying usually between 200 and 350 on other festivals but the most remarkable total was that reached on 12 Oct., 1260 when 5,016 friars were fed.^{1.} Of the customary feeding of the poor by which, earlier in the reign the king fed 500 poor daily,^{2.} we have no evidence in this period. There is, however, no reason to suppose that it had ceased. Later rolls of daily expenses do not record expenditure on the feeding of the poor, and it is possible that detailed

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1. This roll (E 101/349/27) is discussed by Professor Johnstone. Poor Relief p.155.
 2. Professor Johnstone quotes a letter, written from France in 1242 which states that the king was accustomed to feed 500 poor daily and orders the king's almoner to see that 350 of these are fed in England each day until the king's return. (Ibid. p.155).

accounts of almsgiving such as that for 1276-7 were already being drawn up, although they have failed to survive. It is also possible that the accounts may have fallen into arrears and may never have been made up. Professor Johnstone has suggested reasons for supposing the roll of daily expenses for 1259-60 was not made up till after 1269¹. We have, however, proof of the occasional purchase of food especially for use as alms. On 4 July, 1267 for instance, 15 marks were ordered to be paid to Thomas of Wymondham for three lasts of herrings which he had bought in London at the order of the almoner².

The enrolments provide more copious information about the almoner's responsibility for other aspects of the relief of the poor. At Christmas, Easter and

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1. Tuesday, 12 October, 1260 is described in the roll as the vigil of St. Edward. "As 13 October was the feast of the translation, made in 1269, it may be that the roll was not written up till after that date. (Poor Relief p.155.)
 2. Liberate Roll P.R.O.C.62. no.43, m.5. In 1261 the almoner paid out £20 for bread distributed to the poor in honour of St. Edward on 20 June. (ibid. no.37, m.3)

Whitsun he received tunics and shoes for distribution to the poor, usually 150 of each from the king and queen, and 21 from the royal children¹. Besides such general distributions of clothing the almoner had occasionally to provide clothes of specified cut and material for persons mentioned by name. In 1258 a robe, with a russet cape and a trimming of lambswool on the supertunic and cape was delivered to the almoner to be given to Emma of Breuse² and in 1259 russet cloth for a tunic, supertunic and tabard was given to him for a poor Clerk, called Henry of Woburn³.

So far as our evidence goes the duties of the king's almoner at this time were limited almost entirely to the feeding and clothing of the poor.

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1. Poor Relief, p.156-7. There are numerous instances of such gifts on the Close and Liberate Rolls. (e.g. Gifts of tunics:- Close Rolls, 1256-9, pp.13, 45, 51, 172, 203-4, 216, 352 and 374 and gifts of shoes:- Liberate Roll, P.R.O.C. 62 no.33,ms. 7, 8 & 12)
 2. Close Rolls, 1256-9, p.184.
 3. Ibid, p.380

The only oblations recorded on the Close Roll were given by others and there is no record of any other type of almsgiving. In 1256, however, when Katherine, the king's youngest daughter died the almoner had to arrange her funeral.^{1.} In this and the two succeeding reigns the almoner was occasionally responsible for the obsequies of persons who were buried at the royal expense, although it was never one of his regular duties.

With the beginning of the reign of Edward I the rolls of alms and the wardrobe account books offer a more complete and more detailed picture of the almoner's duties than it is possible to obtain in Henry III's reign.^{2.}

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1. A writ of Liberate, dated 16 May, 1257 ordered the payment of £51.12.4. to the almoner for this purpose. (Liberate Roll, P.R.O.C.62 no.33,m.6.)
 2. Professor Johstone reminds us that we cannot wholly rely upon the correctness or completeness of the entries in these books as "after 1290 the responsibilities of the king and the wardrobe increased so enormously that both payments and presentation of accounts to the exchequer got into arrears. The latest wardrobe accounts of Edward I were not passed till the days of his grandson". T.F.Tout, (Chapters II, 126-130) discusses this, and says of the great book of 484 pages for 1305-6 that it could "hardly have satisfied the most perfunctory auditor" (Poor Relief, p. 158, n.2.)

The most important of the almoner's duties in this reign was the organisation of the royal provision of meals for the poor, which was entirely in his hands¹. From a survey merely of the sums expended on the feeding of the poor in those years of his reign for which complete particulars are available, it is apparent at once that this must have entailed a great and, as the reign went on, an increasing weight of responsibility for the almoner. The total cost of meals provided for the poor in 1276-7 was £81.16.3½, a comparatively modest sum which nevertheless represents a provision of 13,519 meals during the year². By 1283-4, the next year for which we have record, the total was £214.19.10³; more than double that of 1276-7 and in 1289-90 it was £457.6.2⁴. In 1296-7 the expenditure on the feeding of the poor reached

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1. In the wardrobe books of the later years of the reign, the Elemosina Titulus is divided into two sections, the first containing the expenditure on the feeding of the poor and described as "paid by Henry the Almoner" and the second containing - miscellaneous charitable payments, described as "paid by the Wardrobe".
 2. E.101./350/23
 3. E.101./351/15
 4. Chan.Misc.4/4

£693.15.2 $\frac{1}{2}$,^{1.} the greatest height of the reign, but in Edward I's last years, when the treasury had been depleted by the expenses of his great campaigns in Wales and Scotland the total shrank again to £306.0.10. in 1303-4^{2.} and £343.2.10. in 1305-6.^{3.}

Professor Johnstone has analysed the poor relief of this reign, particularly with reference to the three years, 1299-1300, 1300-1, and 1301-2 for which there are consecutive Alms Rolls, but a few details may be added in amplification, while summarising her conclusions. Meals provided for the poor were of two kinds, those given per preceptum regis and those given de antiqua custuma. The amount of the king's customary obligation

1. B.M.Add. MS.7965.

2. B.M.Add. MS.8835.

3. E.101/369/11. The following table shows the amount spent on the feeding of the poor in every year for which particulars are available.

Year	£.	s.	d.
1276-7	81.	16.	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
1283-4	214.	19.	10.
1284-5	279.	6.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
1288-9	392.	7.	1.
1289-90	457.	6.	2.
1296-7	693.	15.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
1299-1300	655.	3.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
1300-1	627.	5.	3.
1301-2	687.	5.	9.
1303-4	306.	0.	10.
1305-6	343.	2.	10.

did not become fixed until fairly late in the reign. In the records of Edward 1's early years it is possible to trace the gradual growth of a custom by which, from 1283 at the latest 666 poor were fed each week by the almoner at the king's charge¹. In 1276-7 23 meals were given each day. 10 for the apostles and 13 for St. James, while 30 more were fed each week². This benefaction to 13 each day continued in the same form throughout the reign, and the daily meal to 10 poor people, discontinued in 1284-5 again figures in the accounts from 1288-9 onwards. The feeding of 30 during the week seems, however, to have been absorbed into other obligations. In 1283-4 23 were fed every day, 40 on Sunday in honour of the Trinity, 15 on Saturday in honour of the Virgin, and a total of 150 spread over Monday, Tuesday and Friday³. In 1284-5 changes were made in the middle of the year. Throughout the year 23 each day, 40 on Sunday and 15 on Saturday were fed, but from 28th February onwards 250 poor were

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1. E.101/353/6 Alms Roll, 1293
 2. E.101/350/23.
 3. E.101/351/15

fed during Monday, Tuesday and Friday instead of 150, and from 25th February to the end of the year, 140 were fed every Saturday so that the almoner had to organise a fixed provision of 606 meals each week.¹ In 1289-90 the number fed de custuma was still 606 each week, 23 daily, 40 on Sunday, 15 on Saturday, 250 in the three days, Monday, Tuesday and Friday and 140 on Saturday.² By 1293 the final total of 666 meals each week had been reached, an additional 60 being fed on Saturday in honour of St. John the Evangelist.³ The cost of these meals de custuma was always 1½d. per head and the weekly cost was therefore £1.3.10½ in 1276-7, rising gradually to £4. 3. 3. in 1293 and thenceforward.

There remains the almsgiving done at the king's personal command which in some years considerably exceeded that done de custuma. The

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1. Chan. Misc. 4/2 ff.16-29.
 2. Chan. Misc. 4/4
 3. E.101/353/6

number of meals provided in this way varied greatly from year to year and must therefore have been more difficult to organise than the fixed customary benefactions. At the greater festivals of the church the almoner was probably prepared by previous experience for orders to feed large additional numbers of poor, but at other seasons no guidance could be obtained from the practice even of the year before, and the question of stores must have presented some difficulty. The almsgiving done at the king's personal command has been analysed by Professor Johnstone.¹ Penitence, which in John's reign had been frequently responsible for the king's charity is very little in evidence in Edward I's reign. This, Professor Johnstone attributes to a change in the interpretation of the doctrine of penance. The teaching of the Mendicant Orders, full of God's abundant graciousness, had as it were shifted the balance, and the element of satisfaction, gauged by the priest through the clavis scientiae sank into the background behind the element of contrition.²

1. Poor Relief, p.159
 2. Ibid.

There were, however, occasions on which Edward fed the poor to atone for not having entered his chapel or for having failed to hear mass,¹ and these occasions "naturally became more frequent as the king's age increased and his health declined" so that in 1305-6 2220 meals were given in expiation of 19 occasions on which the king had not entered his chapel.² Family anniversaries were also a cause of Edward's benefactions. Henry III was commemorated by a meal to 100 poor in 1277³ and to 140 in 1300,⁴ 1301⁵ and 1302.⁶ On the day of the birth of his son, Edward in 1284 £9 was distributed to the poor at Carnarvon, while his fourteenth and seventeenth birthdays were celebrated by meals to 1400 and 1700 persons

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1. I can add one, but only one instance of atonement for a lapse due to the distractions of sport parallel to instances familiar in the reign of King John. On Monday, 18 October, 1278 100 poor were fed because the king flew his falcons. (Chan.Misc. 4/1 f. 39v.)
 2. Poor Relief p.159. In 1299-1300 300 poor were fed in expiation of 3 such absences. Lib.Quot.p.18
 3. E.101/350/23. m.2.
 4. Lib.Quot. p.24
 5. B.M.Add.MS 7966 A f.22
 6. E.101/361/21 m.1d.

respectively.^{1.} "The great bulk of Edward's benefactions, however, were connected with the commemoration of saints or the celebration of the church's seasons".^{2.} In every year for which we have record Christmas, Easter and Whitsun were celebrated by the provision per preceptum regis of meals for large numbers of poor. Such numbers were not fixed, but varied in proportion to the normal expenditure of the year. Thus, in 1284 only 250 meals were given in honour of Easter,^{3.} in 1302, 1,000^{4.} and in 1306, 300^{5.} in honour of the same feast.^{6.} In addition to the meal de custuma

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1. Poor Relief, p.159
 2. Ibid
 3. Alms Roll, 1283-84, E 101/351/15. m.2.
 4. Alms Roll, 1301-02, E 101/361/21. m.1.
 5. Wardrobe book, 1305-06, E 101/369/11. f.25
 6. These years have been chosen as representing; *at the*
 1283-4 - the years 1272-93 when almsgiving totals were generally small, 1301-2 - the years 1296-1302 when almsgiving was more extensive than at any other time in the reign and the years 1302-7 when the totals show a marked decline. (See below, p. 45).
 The total sums spent by the almoner, and the sums spent on feeding the poor at Easter in these years were as follows:
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|--------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1283-4 | -----£214.19.10 | -----£1. 8. 9. |
| 1301-2 | -----£687. 5. 9 | -----£6. 5. 0. |
| 1305-6 | -----£343. 2.10 | -----£1.17. 6. |

to 15 poor every Saturday, the Virgin was usually honoured at her feasts of the Conception, the Purification, the Annunciation, the Assumption and the Nativity. In 1283-4 140 were fed at the Conception, the Purification, and the Annunciation and 50 on the octaves of the Assumption and Nativity.¹

In 1301-2 1300 were fed for the Conception, Purification Annunciation and Assumption and 1,000 for the Nativity of the Virgin.² In 1305-6 140 meals were given in honour of the Conception, Annunciation and Nativity.³

Many lesser festivals of the church were also signalised by the provision of meals for the poor. The more important anniversaries were so celebrated every year, but the others varied, and some were, as far as I have been able to find, honoured only once in the whole reign.⁴

On the whole the numbers fed were small in the early part of the reign, much larger during the last

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1. £3.3.0. and £2.4.0. were distributed to the poor on the days of the Assumption and Nativity respectively. (E.101/351/15, ms.3 and 4)
 2. Poor Relief. p.159-160 E.101/361/21
 3. E.101/369/11, ff.24, 25, 26.
 4. In 1283-84 for instance, 30 poor were fed on St. Sulpicius' day, but I have not found any record of the provision of meals on this day in any other year. (E101/351/15, m.1.)

years of the thirteenth century, becoming smaller again in the last years of the reign. In 1283-4, when 97 Saints' days were commemorated in this way, the largest number fed at a single festival was 400 for St. Edward on 17 March¹. On 30 November 350 were fed for St. Andrew,² 300 for St. Mathias on 25 February,³ 250 for St. Thomas the Archbishop on 29 December⁴ and for the Decollation of St. John the Baptist on 28 August,⁵ and 200 for St. Mark on 25 April,⁶ for the Nativity of St. John the Baptist on 24 June,⁷ for St. Kenelm on 17 July⁸ and for St. Martin on 11 November.⁹ On 40 days 100 were fed and on 31 occasions only 30 were given a meal per preceptum regis. During the years 1296-1302, when the numbers fed at each time were large the festivals so honoured were also more numerous. In 1299-1300 for instance,

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1. E.101/351/15 m.2.
 2. Ibid. m.1
 3. Ibid. m.2.
 4. Ibid. m.1.
 5. Ibid. m.4.
 6. Ibid. m.2.
 7. Ibid. m.3.
 8. Ibid. m.3.
 9. Ibid. m.4.

114 Saints were commemorated by the provision of meals for the poor. On 13 occasions 1,000 poor were fed, on 25 days 700 and only once were less than 100 fed, 30 for the Four Crowned Martyrs¹. In 1305-06 only 74 Saints' days were celebrated in this way and the number fed was always 140, except for a meal given to 100 for the Invention of the Holy Cross,² 40 for St. Etheldreda³ and 200 for SS. Alban and Amphibalus on 17 June.⁴ The whole total of meals given per preceptum regis was, in 1283-84 17,169; in 1299-1300, 60,380⁵ and in 1305-06, 17,280⁶. In addition 15,392 meals were

1. Lib. Quot. pp. 16-24.

2. E.101/369/11, f.25.

3. Ibid, f.25v.

4. Ibid, f.25v. This was not the festival of either St. Alban or St. Amphibalus and the reason for the meal seems to be that the king was at the time staying in St. Albans. Saints were occasionally commemorated on days other than their own feasts, 200 poor were fed for St. James the Apostle on 22 September, 1306 and in January, 1284 when the king was staying in York, a meal to 100 persons was given for St. William of York. (E.101/369/11, f.26v; E.101/351/15, m.1)

5. Poor Relief, p.159

6. Two years previously in 1303-04 the total number of poor fed was still smaller. 15,177 were fed per preceptum regis in this year and 34,632 de custodia, a total of 49,809 meals altogether. (B.M. Add. MS. 8835)

given de custuma in 1283-84 and 34,632 in 1299-1300 and in 1305-06. Altogether the almoner had to arrange the provision of 32,561 meals in 1283-4, 95,012 in 1299-1300 and 52,452 in 1305-06. His work decreased materially between 1300 and 1305, when, although the king's customary benefactions remained stationary the number of poor fed in the course of the year was less by 42,560 than in 1299-1300.

The marked decline in the provision of meals per preceptum regis is especially interesting in view of the developments of the following reign, when this part of the almoner's work became almost a sinecure. The earliest extant wardrobe book of Edward II's reign, that of 1312-13¹ makes a change immediately apparent. In this book the heading of Alms occupies only two and a half pages compared with the eight or nine customary in Edward I's wardrobe books. It is not subdivided as in Edward I's time and it contains only a single record of a meal given to the poor, when

1. E 101/375/8.

the almoner provided food for 34 friars and 300 others at Pontoise at Whitsun.^{1.} Most of the later wardrobe books of the reign, however, show larger totals of expenditure for this purpose, and from 1317-18^{2.} onwards record at least a regular provision of 200 meals at each of the four great feasts as laid down in the Household Ordinance of 1323.^{3.} In 1317-8 and 1320-1 for instance, the almoner spent £5. 0. 0. in each year on feeding 200 poor at each of the four feasts, All Saints, Christmas, Easter and Whitsun.^{4.} In 1319-20^{5.} he had to provide meals for 200 at each of the four feasts, 50 on Holy

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1. E IOI/375/8
 2. An incomplete wardrobe book running from 8 July, 1315 to 30 January, 1316 shows an expenditure of £4.7.6. on feeding the poor, 300 on St. Brice's day, the birthday of the king's eldest son, 200 for Christmas and 300 for Epiphany. (E IOI/376/7, ff. 4-5v.) In 1316-17 the almoner received £1.11.2. for feeding 250 poor on various Saints' days, particulars of which are not given. (Lib. Soc. Ant. MS. no.120, Wardrobe Account Book)
 3. Tout. Place of Edward II in English History, Appendix I, p.318 v. supra.
 4. Lib. Soc. Ant. MS. no.121.
 5. B.M. Add. MS. 9951.
 6. B.M. Add. MS. 17362.

Thursday and 166 in St. Leonard's Hospital at York during the King's visit to that city,^{1.} at a total cost of £6.14.3. The last surviving wardrobe book of the reign covers a period of more than one year. It runs from 1 May, 1322 to 19 October, 1323 and records an expenditure of £7.16.3. on meals for the poor.^{2.} For the year 1323-24 there exists a wardrobe book of a different type, described as a book of foreign expenses of the wardrobe.^{3.} In this year the almoner spent £5.18.9. on feeding the poor, £5.0.0.

1. This allowance was made at the unusually high rate of 2d. per person for the 166 fed at York. It is not clear whether these were regular inmates of the hospital or were gathered together specially for the occasion. (B.M. Add. MS.17362).
2. At Whitsun, All Saints and Christmas, 1322 200 poor were fed and 50 on the vigil of All Saints. In 1323 200 were fed at Easter and Whitsun 50 on Ash Wednesday an extra 50 at Christmas and Whitsun and 50 on the feast of St. Mary Magdalene. Thus during the regnal year 16 Edward II (8 July, 1322-7 July, 1323) £6.11.3. was spent on feeding the poor. (B.M. Stowe MS.553).
3. E ICI/379/19. It is similar in content to the wardrobe books but the expenditure is classified only by marginal notes and not in separate sections.

on meals to 200 at each of the four great feasts
 and £1.18.9. on meals for 50 on 1 March, and 100
 on 15 May by special command of the king. A roll
 of foreign expenses exists for the following year
 when the almoner fed 200 poor at each of the
 four great feasts^{1.} and 60 at Beaulieu on the
 24 April.^{2.}

From 1322 onwards the accounts of the king's
 chamber supply occasional evidence of the giving of
 alms, but they record the provision of meals for
 the poor only once, when the almoner distributed
 2d. each to 50 poor women for a repast on 5 December,
 1322.^{3.} The almsgiving recorded here is for the
 most part of a casual and personal kind, such for
 example as the gift of 3s. to the women of Lambeth
 "singing on the Thames" on 3 June, 1324.^{4.}

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1. E 101/381/4, ms.7, 9, 17 and 20.
 2. Ibid. m.18.
 3. E 101/379/7, f.2.
 4. E 101/380/4, f.4. There is also a roll of foreign
 expenses of the wardrobe for 1326 from 8 July to
 1 November, but this does not mention the feeding
 of the poor, perhaps because the period does not
 include any of the four great feasts, except
 for one entry of 3s. 9d. to feed 30 women of the
 special alms of the king. (E 101/383/6, m.3)

It is strange that the almsgiving of Edward II should have fallen so much below that of his father^{1.} in respect of poor relief, but there seems no reason to suppose that the totals we have for nine years of his reign^{2.} are incomplete or are not fairly representative of the whole. If there had been any almsgiving apart from that recorded in the wardrobe account books it seems impossible that it should have failed to leave a trace in the other surviving records of the reign and, so far as I have been able to ascertain it has not done so.^{3.} There is, moreover, the evidence of the household ordinance of 1323 which, while it lists in detail.

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1. So far as I have been able to ascertain the largest sum spent on feeding the poor in any one year of Edward II's reign was £6.14.3. in 1319-20 and the smallest sum spent for the same purpose in any year of his father's reign was £81.16.3½. in 1276-77.
 2. Wardrobe books of the type known as Liber Cotidianus exist for the whole or part of the years 1312-13, 1315-16, 1316-17, 1317-18, 1319-20 and 1322-23 and books of foreign expenses of the wardrobe for 1323-24 and 1324-25.
 3. I have examined for this purpose all the documents for this reign in the wardrobe and household section of the Exchequer K.R. Accounts, Various at the Public Record Office, the Patent and Close Rolls, the Liberate Rolls and Issue Rolls, the Memoranda Rolls and the Pipe Rolls and have failed to find any evidence of further expenditure on meals for the poor.

the oblations expected of the king records in respect of poor relief only the "ancien custume" by which 200 poor were to be fed at the four feasts "de tout Seints, de Nowell, et Pasque et de la Pentecost".^{1.}

As we have seen in considering the expenditure on feeding the poor in Edward I's reign, the ancient custom by which the king regarded himself as responsible for a certain minimum provision of meals was a personal and not a heritable obligation.^{2.} Henry III's customary provision of 500 meals each week^{3.} was not binding on Edward I who was at liberty to develop gradually his own de custuma responsibility of 666 meals per week and there was no reason why Edward II should continue his father's practice. As Edward was, from the time of his accession in grave financial difficulties, it is not surprising that he

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1. Tout, Place of Edward II in English History, Appendix I, p.318. Even this benefaction does not appear in the Wardrobe Books until 11 Edward II, (1317-18).
 2. "The custuma antiqua by which Edward says he was responsible for 666 poor each week cannot be traced in either of the two reigns immediately preceding". (Poor Relief p.161, n.2.)
 3. v. p. 36 n. 3. supra.

should have found it necessary to make some reduction in almsgiving. Edward I's resources had never recovered from the strain of his campaigns in Scotland and Wales and he left his son a load of debt and a hopelessly insufficient income.^{1.} His own almsgiving had suffered reduction in 1303-04 and, although in 1305-06 the whole total of the alms had once more increased, the expenditure on meals for the poor was only half as much as it had been in 1301-02. This is worthy of note in view of the fact that Edward II's eleemosinary economies were most apparent in regard to the feeding of the poor.

The reduction in this branch of the alms during this reign seems too marked and too consistent to be attributable to accident and it may be suggested that it was due in part, if not entirely to a realisation of the evils consequent upon an

1. Professor Tout says "Probably no medieval king left his finances in a more hopeless confusion than did the great Edward. Certainly none of them ever handed to his successor so heavy a task with such inadequate means to discharge it". (The Place of Edward II in English History, p.38)

later Statute of Labourers gave themselves to indiscriminate generosity such as Edward I had practised. It is hard to believe that in a sparsely populated country, at a court perpetually on the move there can have been a constant supply of not less than 666 genuinely needy candidates for the king's bounty each week and some of those who benefited by Edward's munificence were probably idle vagabonds who preferred to live by begging and who found it to their advantage to follow the court from place to place.¹ If this were so Edward II's action in cutting off supplies was salutary and likely to be beneficial in the long run, but it must have caused great hardship at the time, both to those unfortunates who could not, and the undeserving who would not work. Of the latter class, many probably, in the words of the

1. Professor Johnstone has suggested that the numbers may have been made up partly of country folk who, although not in real need were unable to "resist the chance of securing a free meal and gaping at the great. Again a number of hangers-on may have thought it worth while to follow the court about, although they must have known they could not be sure of a distribution on every day of the week. Finally it is possible that the 10 and 13 who were daily pensioners were actual residents in the household". (Poor Relief, p.162)

later Statute of Labourers gave themselves to "Theft and other Abominations"¹. and, deprived of support by the king turned to preying on his subjects. The decline in almsgiving may therefore have had its effect in adding to the troubles of England under Edward II and was perhaps a contributory cause of his unpopularity.

Whatever its effects upon the king and his poorer subjects there can be no doubt that the reduction in the royal provision for the poor must have made a great difference to the almoner. In Edward I's time the work entailed in the feeding of the poor had comprised the major portion of the almoner's official duties and its drastic reduction, which was not compensated for by added responsibility in regard to any other part of the king's almsgiving, must have left him a more leisured and a considerably less important officer. In this connection it is undoubtedly significant that Edward II was accustomed to employ his almoner as a messenger on matters outside his official scope, sending him away from court for

1. Statutes of the Realm, I. 1101 - 1377 p.308.

days at a time, absences which the almost daily distributions of food in the previous reign would have rendered difficult and inconvenient.

Another department of the almsgiving for which the almoner was solely responsible in these two reigns was the payment of money given to sick persons touched by the king for their cure. This question has been dealt with by M. Bloch in Les Rois Thaumaturges.^{1.} M. Bloch found that during the reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III a small alms, fixed at a penny was given to the sick as part of the healing ceremony. The sums disbursed in this way were entered on the alms roll and in the wardrobe book week by week under Edward I and in blocks of several weeks or months at a time under Edward II. By this means it is possible to gauge the numbers of sick who sought the king's help.^{2.} M. Bloch found that Edward I touched

1. pp. 96-104.

2. Sums were occasionally given to persons described simply as "infirmis". M. Bloch included in his totals only those amounts definitely stated to have been paid to "infirmis benedictis" and the same practice has been followed here.

and £16 for 17 July to 30 Nov. 1316. In addition
 627 persons in 1276-77, 197 in 1283-84, 519 in 1288-89,
 1736 in 1289-90, 725 in 1296-97, 983 in 1299-1300
 and 1219 in 1303-04.^{1.} To each of these one penny
 was given in alms and it may readily be seen that
 the benefaction was not a heavy charge on the alms.²
 Only once in 1289-90 did the total expenditure amount
 to as much as £7 and once, in 1283-84 it fell to less
 than a pound. Usually it fluctuated between £2 and
 £4 a year. M. Bloch points out that when Edward
 was on foreign soil, engaged in war in Scotland or
 visiting France the number of sick blessed was very
 small, except in 1303-04 when the conquest of Scotland
 appeared to have been achieved and over 900 persons
 presented themselves for cure in the space of a
 few months.^{3.}

In the reign of Edward II M. Bloch found the
 evidence less abundant. He was able to obtain the
 complete total of sick blessed for only one year of
 the reign, 79 in 1320-21,^{3.} and partial numbers for
 two other years; 93 for 20 March to 7 July, 1320^{4.}

1. M. Bloch. Les Rois Thaumatourges, p.98.

2. Ibid. p.103.

3. Ibid. p.98. B.M. Add.MS.9951, f.3v^o.

4. M. Bloch, Les Rois Thaumatourges, p.98. B.M. Add.
 MS. 17362, ff.4. 50^o.

and 214 for 27 July to 30 Nov. 1316.^{1.} In addition to these the book of foreign expenses of the wardrobe for 1323-4^{2.} and the roll of 1324-5^{3.} contain entries of 79 and 35 sick blessed in these years. M. Bloch considers that the small total of 1320-1 following upon the unusually large number recorded for 1319-20 may be due to the waning popularity of the king, whose reputation was suffering from comparison with Thomas of Lancaster who, after his death in 1323 became almost a saint in the popular estimation.^{4.} In 1323 however Edward touched 101 persons in a little more than six months between 2 April and 19 October. Of these 65

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1. M. Bloch, Les Rois Thaumatourges, p.98. Lib. Soc. Ant. MS. no.120, f.19. M. Bloch did not see this wardrobe book and used an analysis of it printed in Archaeologia XXVI, 319-20 which is incomplete. The numbers given in the wardrobe book, which itself is incomplete are 298.
 2. E 101/379/19, ff.8v^o and 15.
 3. E 101/381/4 m.22. (membranes unnumbered).
 4. M. Bloch says "des 1320 la popularité d'Édouard pâlit devant l'astre, sans cesse grandissant de son rival. À un monarque sans prestige on ne demandait plus guère de guérisons. (Les Rois Thaumatourges, p.103.)

were blessed in the month of April alone and 36 between 8 July and 19 October. Even the largest numbers of sick blessed in one year by Edward II, however do not bear comparison with the numbers touched by his father. Here again the reign of Edward II brought a noticeable diminution in the almoner's work. Edward I's almoner had been accustomed to pay out for this purpose small sums, sometimes only a few pence, sometimes several shillings each week, but Edward II's almoner gave away perhaps a shilling or two on one day and then no more for several weeks, or even several months at a time.

One kind of almsgiving remained unaffected by the general decline. Edward I and Edward II alike

1. B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f. 22v^o. 5s. 5d. was paid to Brother Richard of Blyton, locum tenens of the king's almoner for 65 sick blessed during April, 11 at the exchequer at Westminster, 12 April, 28 at Langley, 24 April and 26 at Ockham, 28 April. Later in the year 3s. was paid to John of Denton, the king's almoner for 36 sick blessed between 8 July and 19 October. B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f. 118.

were accustomed to set aside 4s. for alms for each day on which they travelled from place to place. This sum does not appear on the household roll for 1259-60, and the custom of giving it seems to have been begun by Edward I. It had become fixed at 4s. by the end of his reign, although as late as 1300 it was still liable to variation.^{1.} In 1302-3, however a payment to the almoner is clearly stated to be for giving 4s. in alms on the daily stages of the king's journeys. The amount for the whole year, £36 for a hundred and eighty days was paid together.^{2.} This allowance appears regularly on the rolls of daily household expenses of the two reigns^{3.} and continues unaltered to the very end of Edward II's reign.^{4.} No clear indication of how it was to be spent is given, but the entries recording its payment in lump sums to almoner^{5.} suggest that it was distributed in

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1. In a fragment of a roll of daily expenses the allowance varies between 1s. and 9s. a day. E 101/358/28.
 2. E 101/364/13, f.29v^o.
 3. E 101/357/25 and E 101/380/8.
 4. E 101/382/1.
 5. B.M. Add MS.35, 293, f.27v^o.

casual charity on the road.^{1.}

The feeding of the poor, the distribution of pence to sick blessed by the king and the provision of alms while travelling were the only duties which were regularly discharged by the almoner only. The rest, sometimes the greater part of the king's almsgiving was done by a number of agents, including the almoner himself and there is no other category of almsgiving in which the almoner was supreme, no kind of benefaction which was always or even usually given through the almoner, nor was he even generally responsible for rendering account of such expenditure.^{2.} It is understandable that in Edward I's reign, when the almoner must have been kept busy in attending to the

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- 1. It is interesting that 4s. a day was still being given regularly in alms in the sixteenth century when it was the only constant charitable payment made (K. Anderson, "The Treatment of Vagrancy and the relief of the poor and destitute in the Tudor period, based upon the local records of London to 1552 and Hull to 1576" Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1933).
 - 2. In the reign of Edward I the subdivision of the heading of alms, dealing with this part of the almsgiving was, from 1296 onwards described as "paid by the wardrobe" in contrast to the feeding of the poor which was "paid by the almoner".

provision of meals for the poor, this should have constituted his chief responsibility, whilst the other work of the almsgiving was shared by others, and its account kept by the wardrobe clerks.^{1.} In Edward II's reign the almoner would scarcely have been overworked if he had been solely responsible for the whole of the king's almsgiving, but no change was made in the allocation of responsibility, and his loss of occupation in regard to the provision of meals for the poor did not result in any increase of his participation in giving other varieties of alms.

The almoner's work might include, in addition to that already discussed the giving of almost any of the different types of charitable donation which made up the rest of the king's almsgiving. Under both Edward I and Edward II he was frequently employed in

1. It may perhaps be suggested that the change from the undivided heading in the wardrobe books of 1284-5 and 1289-90 to the divided heading of the later wardrobe books represents a change of practice in the arrangement of the work as well as in the arrangement of the accounts. It is perhaps significant that the change occurred at the time when the expenditure on feeding the poor was reaching its greatest heights. (See above p34)

making the king's oblations, especially those at the shrines and relics which the king passed on his journeys, and was even occasionally sent to churches at a distance for this purpose,^{1.} although he was never, so far as our evidence goes, sent abroad with offerings. Oblations at masses attended by the king or his suite were also sometimes given by the almoner,^{2.} although less frequently, and in Edward I's reign the king's daily offering of a great penny in his own chapel was given through the almoner as well as through the other chaplains.^{3.} In the next reign, however, this was usually paid in blocks of several months or a year at a time to the chief chaplain.^{4.} The household ordinance of 1323

1. In 1306 the almoner was sent to Shaftesbury while the king was at Kingston near Wimborne in Dorset with an offering of 5s. to the shrine of St. Edward. (E 101/369/11. f.31).

2. On 22 June, 1306 the almoner offered 7s. at a mass at Battlesdon in honour of St. Alban. (Ibid. f.28)

3. £1. 6.10. was paid to the almoner for money offered by him and other chaplains for the great penny worth 7d. on 46 days between 20 November, 1306 and 19 November, 1307 (Ibid.f.30)

4. £10.12.11. was paid to the chief chaplain for this purpose for II Edward II on 20 February, 1318 (Lib.Soc.Ant.MS.121, f.4v).

mentions several other customary oblations expected of the king and given fairly regularly during this reign, but it makes no mention of the almoner in this connection and there is no record in any of the wardrobe books of this reign that he was ever responsible for their payment.

Gifts to religious communities which were a source of considerable expense in both reigns were seldom given by the almoner. The large sums given by Edward I for the building of churches and dwellings for monks and friars were always paid direct to some representative of the house concerned. Similarly the money given to feed the friars of the four great orders in general or provincial chapter was nearly always given through some member of the order for which it was intended, and was never paid by the almoner. Gifts for pittances to religious houses in the towns through

1. It was sometimes given through persons unconnected with the order concerned and not members of the household. In 1306 for instance the Carmelites in general chapter at Toulouse received £10.0.0. through Francis Rocheles, a merchant, receiving it in the presence of 2 brethren of the order. (E 101/369/11, f.28).

which the king passed were also most frequently given to a member of the house, or of the order to which it belonged, but this was not invariably so and in both reigns, but especially in that of Edward II the almoner was occasionally called upon to make such donations. Edward I's almoner gave money for food for one day to Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, Carmelites and Sack friars at Ghent in 1297^{1.} and 6s. 8d. to the nuns of Molesby in 1305^{2.} for food for one day when the king passed that way. In the next reign the almoner gave such gifts more frequently. In 1322 the almoner gave money for pittances to religious houses on nine occasions, including £7. 13. 0. to ten religious foundations in the city of York on 27 November.^{3.}

At this period funerals of members of the king's family or of his household, or even of persons having no apparent connection with the court, were often

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1. B.M. Add. MS. 7965 f. 10v^o.
 2. E. 101/369/11, f. 29.
 3. They were the Abbey of St. Mary, the Canons of St. Andrew, the monks of Holy Trinity, St. Leonard's Hospital, St. Nicholas' Hospital, the monks of St. Clement and the four great orders of Friars (B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f. 21 v^o).

charged to the alms and were sometimes paid for through the almoner. Henry III's almoner received payment in 1257 for the funeral of the king's youngest daughter¹. and the expenses of the funeral of Edmund, Earl of Cornwall were defrayed from the alms in 1299-1300. In Edward I's reign the name of the person through whom the cost of a funeral was paid is seldom mentioned and during the whole reign there is no evidence that the almoner had anything to do with the obsequies paid for out of the alms. Edward II's almoners, however, had often to make payments for this purpose, although on the whole they seem to have been responsible for the less important funerals, those which were more costly being paid for by some other official or by someone connected with the dead man.² Thus the almoner paid 13s. 4d. in 1314 for the burial of a woman and a sailor at Greenwich³ and 5s. in 1320 for those of two runners

1. Liberate Roll, no.33, m.6. v.supra p.³⁴9. n.l.
 2. The funeral expenses of Canan ap Madok in the Dominican church at York were paid to his brother Llewelyn (B.M. Stowe MS.553. f.21v^o)
 3. Book of Prests. E.101/373/26, f.40.

of the wardrobe, Robert of Crowland and Robert of Riburgh.^{1.} No details of the way in which these sums were spent are available and these were probably very simple funerals without the bell ringing,^{2.} the watchers about the corpse^{3.} and the processions^{4.} which dignified the statelier internments. In 1316, however the almoner was jointly responsible with the chief chaplain for the funeral of John le Ireys which cost £3. 19. 9., spent on wax for candles, clerks to sing psalms and watch about the corpse, oblations and a pittance to certain friars on the day of the burial.^{5.} In the following year

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1. B.M. Add MS.17362, f.3.v^o.
 2. The king's confessor received £21.4.8. in 1320 for money spent on bellringing, wax, cloth, oblations in gold, pittances for various orders of friars, a marble stone and other things for the burial of John of Knokyn in the Dominican church at London. (B.M. Add. MS.17362, f.4v^o)
 3. Thirteen widows received 1d. each for watching the corpse of John of Montacute in 1317 (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.121, f.3.)
 4. As at the funeral of Edmund, Earl of Cornwall. (Lib.Quot. p.32).
 5. Lib. Soc.Ant. MS.120, f.14. See Ant. MS. no. 120, f.14) In October this year he went to Durham carrying Turkey cloth to place on the body of the 1st Bishop of Durham. This time he was away for 8 days and received 5d. a day. 21.4.0. in all. (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120 f.31 & 32)

he received £1.14.11. for the obsequies of a knight at Ashwell for which he provided linen to make a shroud, a coffin and wax for lights.^{1.}

So far as can be ascertained from the surviving accounts, funerals cannot have taken up much of the almoner's time, except when they took place at a distance and involved long journeys. For the burial at Ashwell already referred to, he had to travel from Nottingham, a distance of about seventy miles, so that he was probably away from the court several days on this business as the king was travelling north at the time.^{2.} In the previous year he had journeyed

from York to Rolleston in Holderness in order to bury the body of John of Rolleston, one of the king's chaplains. For this he was absent four days, receiving twelve shillings for his expenses.^{3.}

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1. Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.121,f.3.
 2. For the burial of John le Ireys also the almoner and chief chaplain had to travel first to Camesale to fetch the body and then to Pontefract to bury it.(Lib.Soc.Ant.MS.no.120.f.14)
 3. In October this year he went to Durham carrying Turkey cloth to place on the body of the late bishop of Durham. This time he was away for 6 days and received 5s. a day. £1.4.0. in all. (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120 ff.37 & 25).

Such journeys, however do not seem to have been numerous and most of the funerals for which he was responsible would not require the expenditure of much time or energy.

The almoner's duties also included from time to time the distribution of money to the poor to celebrate a special occasion. At the beginning of Edward I's reign many of the festivals of the church as well as family anniversaries and other days^{1.} were celebrated in this way, but as time went on, it became customary to commemorate by this means only the most important domestic anniversaries or the receipt of good news.^{2.} Money for general distribution

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1. In 1283-4 general distributions were made on fourteen occasions; at the birth of Edward of Carnarvon on 25 April, on Ascension day, on 7 July and the following day for the Translation of St. Thomas, on the king's crossing of the water at Bardsey on 31 July, for the Assumption and the Nativity of the Virgin, on 29 September for St. Michael and 13 October for St. Edward, on the anniversary of Henry III's death, on All Saints and All Souls and on two other days for reasons unspecified. (E.101/351/15. ms. 2, 3, 4.)
 2. On 27 February 1323 £6.5.11. was distributed when the king received news of the capture of Andrew of Harclay, the rebellious Earl of Carlisle (B.M. Stowe MS.553, f.22).

was paid through the almoner more often under Edward I than under Edward II, but very often the name of the person responsible is not recorded, and sometimes even in this reign such distributions were made through other officials¹. The most lavish distribution of which we have record in this period took place before, and on the day of the burial of Edward I. In the first year of the next reign Edward I's almoner received advances, amounting to £560 for money given to the poor at this time². In Edward II's reign general distributions of money occurred more seldom

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1. In 1296-7 there were four general distributions, £5.15.0. given to the almoner for distribution at Christmas, £1.6.9. given to Robert of Cottingham for the soul of Queen Eleanor and £3.5.0. and £1.15.0. for the soul of Queen Eleanor and for Easter (B.M.Add.MS.7965 ff.6-10) It may, however, be noted in this connection that Blunsdon several times received large sums of money in farthings, a form of currency which suggests its use for this purpose and this may perhaps indicate that even when the almoner was not mentioned in this connection he was the agent for supply of the money (e.g. E.101/369/11 f.5)
 2. B.M. Add.MS.35093, f.9.

Money occur at least as frequently as other forms until the very last years of the reign, and the of charity and are normally made by the almoner. almoner was rarely responsible for them. In 1312-13 Payments to scholars at Oxford and Cambridge money distributions were made on two occasions and were occasionally made during the reigns of only once by the almoner. None of the later Edward I and Edward II, but never, apparently, wardrobe books of the reign records more than one through the almoner, although in Edward I's distribution and only one of these was given by reign such 2. payments sometimes appear on the rolls the almoner. From the end of 1323 to 1326 however, of alms. In Edward II's reign such payments when the almsgiving is recorded chiefly in the occur in only five of the surviving wardrobe books, chamber accounts a change appears; distributions of between 1315 and 1321. None of these was made

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1. The almoner and John of Ockham received £4.16.0. distributed for the soul of Edward I (E 101/375/8 f.3)
 2. A distribution of £9.19.11 was made by Robert of Wodehouse, Controller of the Wardrobe and Walter of Doddenham in 1315-16 (E 101/376/7 f.4v^o)
 2. A distribution of £117.18.11 for the soul of Edward I was made in 1315-16 by the hands of the chamberlains of the exchequer (B.M.Add.MS.I7362, f.5.) and a distribution of £174.1.10. for the same purpose in the next year was given "by many hands" (B.M.Add. MS 9951, f.2.v) The almoner distributed £2.17.10. for the soul of Queen Eleanor on 29 November, 1323 (E 101/379/19, f.3v^o)
 3. A continuous series except 101 1318-19).

money occur at least as frequently as other forms of charity and are normally made by the almoner¹.

Payments to scholars at Oxford and Cambridge were occasionally made during the reigns of Edward I and Edward II, but never, apparently, through the almoner, although in Edward I's reign such payments sometimes appear on the rolls of alms.² In Edward II's reign such payments occur in only five of the surviving wardrobe books, between 1315 and 1321.³ None of these was made

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1. In 1325 for instance the almoner received money for distribution three times £1 on 10 Aug., £1 on 7 Sept. and £5 on 25 November to distribute in honour of St. Katherine on her day. (Lib. Soc. Ant. MS.122 ff.19, 24, 40).
 2. In 1288-89 for example £3.0.0. was paid to Arnold and Bertrand de la Fyte, Gascons, going with their masters to Oxford. The allowance was reckoned as 6s. 8d. a week for nine weeks, and they were given an additional £1 for a stay of several days in London and for buying shoes and other necessaries. (E.101/352/18 m.6).
 3. A continuous series except for 1318-19).

MS.122, f.5r. In Jan. 1317 two Carmelite friars received £1 each for their keep as scholars of the University of Oxford at Stamford. They came from Gascony. (Lib. Soc. Ant. MS.122 f.18r). I have found no record of similar provision for scholars later in the reign.

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by the almoner.^{1.}

Of the rest of the almsgiving recorded in the headings of alms in the wardrobe books payments to the

1. This was a large item of expenditure in these years. In 1315-16 Scholars were being maintained at Oxford in the name of Edward, the king's son, and a payment for their commons was made from the king's alms (E.101/376/7. f.5v^o). From 1316-20 an increasing number of scholars was provided for at Cambridge by the king. In 1316-17, John of Bagshot received £20.17.10 for his own commons and those of 10 boys of the king's chapel for 6 months. (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120, f.19). In the next year the numbers increased from 14 to 25 and Bagshot received £44.8.8. for commons from 9 July to 18 May (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.121. f.4v^o) In 1319-20 numbers rose to over 30 and the sum allowed was £98.1.0. in 14 months. (B.M.Add MS.18362.f.5v^o) In 1320 commons were allowed for Bagshot and 30 boys to the end of October, £10.0.9. being paid for the purpose. (B.M.Add MS. 9951, f.30^o) No further payment of this kind occurs during the year. The allowance was made at the rate of 3d. a day for Bagshot and 2d. for each scholar. Allowances are also made for their robes (e.g. Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120.f.19) and for a bed bought for two of them (Lib.Soc. Ant. MS.121.f.4v^o) and for journeys to the king's court (e.g. B.M. Add. MS.17362. f.5v^o) In Jan. 1317 two Carmelite friars received £1 each for their keep as scholars of the University of Oxford at Stamford. They came from Gascony. (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120.f.16). I have found no record of similar provision for scholars later in the reign.

king's old servants^{1.} and soldiers, which especially in Edward II's reign were sometimes large items of expenditure,^{2.} were never paid by the almoner. The remaining miscellaneous and more casual charity, given

1. In 1315-16 and 1316-17 payments occur for the keep during his last illness of Friar John of Lenham, the king's confessor till 1315. In 1315. In 1315-16 a total of £15.13.4. was paid during the year (E.101/376/7 f.5v^o) and in 1316, £4 (Lib.Soc.Ant.MS.120 f.14.) for the months of July and August. Lenham must have died shortly afterwards, for the expenses of his funeral £3.2.0. were paid to Friar Richard of Bromfield (who had received the earlier payments) on 28 Feb. 1317 (Ibid. ff.19)
2. This is particularly noticeable in 1316-17. (Lib.Soc.Ant.MS.120 ff.13-19) when thirty three soldiers, most of them from the garrison of Berwick were given sums varying from 2s. to 6s. 8d. Some of these received more than one gift in the course of the year, for their keep while they waited to be sent to hold a corrody at a religious house and for their expenses in going there. Eleven of them were sent to religious houses during the year and three of these to more than one house at different times. In addition 5s. was given to a sick bowman by the almoner's clerk (Ibid. f.14). Altogether £8.17.0. was spent for this purpose during the year

for some special purpose or to persons who, for some reason, excited the king's pity, were usually given direct to the recipient, and only occasionally through the almoner. There survive, however a few examples of his employment in this way, showing that such work might fall within his sphere. An instance of this occurs in an account book of the King's chamber in 1325-6 when the almoner received £3. 0. 0. to give 6d. each to sixty pregnant poor women and 30s as an oblation to B.V.M. on behalf of the Lady Despenser "que Dieu la donast hastive deliveraunce de son enfant".

In none of the surviving headings of alms in the wardrobe books of these two reigns is there

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1. Such casual and personal charity was rarer in Edward I's reign and I have not found any instance of its being given by his almoner; but it was recorded on the alms roll, e.g. in 1289 3s. 8d. was given at Oleron to a poor woman whose husband had been killed by one of the king's followers, E 101/352/18 m.l.) and other payments of a similar kind occur elsewhere on this roll.
 2. Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.122 f.43.

any trace of the regular provision of clothing for the poor made by Henry III. The alms rolls of 1283-4 and 1288-9 and a journal for 1278 all record the purchase of cloth and shoes for distribution at Easter,^{1.} although the almoner does not seem to have bought or distributed them. Apart from these we have scattered entries in other kinds of account for both reigns, showing that the almoner did sometimes receive and pay for cloth to be given away as part of the king's charity. In 1304-5 for instance the almoner received thirty nine ells of "Candewykestret" cloth at 16d. an ell for distribution.^{2.} In the next reign on 4 April, 1325 the almoner distributed to

1. Chan. Misc. 4/1. f. 11. v^o, E 101/351/15 m. 2. and E 101/352/18 m. 3.

2. E 101/367/26. m. 2. According to the Drapers' Dictionary the drapers of London were, in the fourteenth century, gathered together in Candlewick (Cannon) Street. In his poem The London Lackpenny Lydgate says:-

"Then full I went by London Store
Throughout all Camdyke Street,
Drapers much cloth offered me anon!"

1. Four ells of cloth, a pair of shoes and a penny each were given to 50 poor. (E. 101/381/4, m. 17).
2. E. 101/379/14.

the poor two hundred ells of cloth in different colours and fifty pairs of shoes^{1.} and in April in the previous year a hundred and twenty ells had been delivered to him, presumably for a similar purpose.^{2.} As all these supplies of cloth were received at about Easter time, it seems possible that it was the regular practice to make gifts of clothing at this season, but the surviving evidence is insufficient for proof.

Such were the varied activities which comprised the work of the almoner at this time. His duties changed very little in kind during the whole period. With the exception of gifts to religious communities for building purposes, examples of all the activities described above can be drawn from the reigns of either Edward I or Edward II, and instances of the charities of Henry III can be traced in the two succeeding reigns. Despite the expansion of the almsgiving in the later years of Edward I's reign there was no change in its objects.

1. Four ells of cloth, a pair of shoes and a penny each were given to 50 poor. (E.101/381/4. m.17).
 2. E.101/379/14.

work The almoner's work clearly involved his travelling with the royal household on its incessant journeys^{1.} and it might be supposed that this would have led to his being engaged on duties outside his official responsibilities, just as the wardrobe clerks, presumably from the accident of their presence at a moment of need, were occasionally used for dispensing alms.^{2.} The almoner's employment in this way was, however, rare, and unlike his fellow household clerks, he took little or no part in the ordinary administrative

1. In the alms roll of 1288-9 it is possible to trace, from the places at which alms were given, the itinerary of the king from Pontoise on 20 Nov. 1288 (E.101/352/18, m.1) through France to Boulogne on 8 Aug, 1289 (Ibid. m.4) and Dover on 12 Aug (Ibid. m.4) and then in England to Wimborne on 13 Nov. 1289 (Ibid. m.6.).

2. e.g. on 2 April, 1306 a distribution of alms was made by John of Droxford and Henry, the Almoner. (E.101/369/11, f.32v^o) Droxford was a wardrobe clerk who rose to be keeper of the wardrobe from 1308-9 (T.F. Tout, The Place of Edward II in English History, p.355) and later became bishop of Wells (Ibid. p.202. n.1.)

work of the kingdom. His own duties were well defined and, before 1307, exacting and he was seldom given occupation outside his normal work.

I have found no evidence that Offham or Colchester ever performed duties unconnected with almsgiving during their tenure of office. Blunsdon, however, on several occasions bought horses for the king^{1.} and he was the agent for collecting a crusading tenth from the Abbey of Sherborne in 1306.^{2.} He was also occasionally entrusted with the delivery of money to other members of the household.^{3.}

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1. It is recorded in the margin of the roll of daily expenses for 1282-3 that he bought a horse called Rougemont for the use of the king's daughter, Eleanor. (E 101/351/28, m.4.) and towards the end of Edward I's life he bought a horse to draw the king's litter. (E 101/368/6 m. sewn in at end of account book).
 2. C.P.R. 1301-7, p.452. This, however probably illustrates one of the ways in which the almoner received supplies for his office as in a book of prests for 1305-6 there is an entry of £22 received from Sherborne Abbey as part of the arrears of the tenth by Henry the Almoner. (E 101/368/27 f.44)
 3. On 7 Feb. 1306 he paid £1 as a prest to another royal clerk. (E 101/368/27 f.47) and in an undated account of Edward I's reign he is recorded as paying £4. to the clerk of the pantry and £2. to the Clerk of the marshalsea. (E 101/356/9 m.1)

When the almsgiving declined under Edward II and the almoner must have had more leisure, he was more frequently employed on other business. Bernard of Kirkby carried to the king the seal for the vacancy of the bishopric of Durham in 1316.^{1.} This did not involve a long absence from the king's side as he was in the north at the time, and the journey is probably that for which Kirkby received expenses for five days from 18 October.^{2.} In the same month he received expenses for two other journeys; one from York to Rolleston in Holderness to bury the body of one of the king's chaplains and one from Newburgh to York

1. C.Cl.R. 1313-18, p.439.
 2. He was sent with letters to the prior and sub prior of Durham (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120 f.37)

where the king's chancery was, to obtain a licence for the Priory of Newburgh to appropriate a church.^{1.} The three journeys together occupied sixteen days.

Later in the reign he was sent to fetch the standard of St. John of Beverley to carry with the king to the Scots war.^{2.} He had performed a similar errand in 1306 before he became a king's chaplain,^{3.} and it was perhaps his earlier connection with Beverley^{4.} which suggested his employment in this way. Although none of his absences was of long duration and they are not very numerous, the fact that they were possible at all illustrates the changed conditions of the office.

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- 1. Lib.Soc.Ant. MS120 f137. This burial is not recorded in the alms and there is no mention of the expenses of the funeral.
 - 2. He received allowances for six days altogether at 2s. a day (B.M.Add. MS 17362 f.11).
 - 3. E.101/368/27.f.45v^o. He was not, at this time, in the royal service and received no allowance for travelling, but a prest on his expenses in the court.
 - 4. See below pp. 179-183.

His successors in the office were also, occasionally employed on other duties. Blyton carried messages for the king, and Denton is sometimes mentioned as the agent employed in making payments to officials for household business.

None of this additional work, however is very considerable, and it remains puzzling to account for the fact that the almoners of Edward II's reign, deprived of much of the work which had formerly belonged to the office were not required to perform other duties in an establishment where versatility was usual and tradition was not binding.

In conclusion a few generalisations may be made as to the nature of the almoner's work. He was at all times during this period, responsible for gifts in kind to the poor: for meals given by custom and by special command of the king and for the distribution of clothing and shoes. Money given to those touched for the king's evil was also his responsibility only. Otherwise none of the

varied almsgiving of the king was entirely in his hands. Gifts to religious communities, oblations, distributions of money made to mark special occasions, funerals and casual charity were all shared with other agents.

The amount of the king's work must have made a special library a necessity before the beginning of the period covered by this survey. Special buildings erected and not open to serve as almshouses at places at which the court was often in residence had been in existence from the early part of Henry III's reign and such places with the stores and equipment which they held must have necessitated the employment of a staff to look after them under the king. The office also, presumably, needed a horse for the transport of stores and portable equipment and a grove to

1. Almonry existed before 1250 at Northburgh, Westminster, and at Northburgh, Windsor. Northburgh was destroyed by fire in 1250.

CHAPTER III

The Organisation of the Almoner's Work.

- i. The Staff and Equipment of the Almonry and the Methods of Distributing Alms.
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The amount of the almoner's work must have made a special almonry staff a necessity before the beginning of the period covered by this survey. Special buildings erected and set apart to serve as almonries at places at which the court was often in residence had been in existence from the early part of Henry III's reign and such places with the stores and equipment which they imply must have necessitated the employment of a staff to look after them under the almoner. ^{1.} The office also, presumably, needed a horse for the transport of stores and portable equipment and a groom to

1. Almonries existed before 1255 at Marlborough, Westminster, Kempton, Winchester, Windsor, Nottingham and Havering (Poor Relief, p.163).

look after the horse. Nevertheless I have found no evidence of the existence of almonry staff earlier than 1282.¹ From this time forward there was always a yeoman (vallettus) attached to the almonry and a little later in the reign there was a clerk also.

The Household Ordinance of 1318 provided that the almonry staff should consist of a clerk, a yeoman and a groom to look after the hackney belonging to the office. This seems to have been the usual arrangement in Edward II's reign, although I have not been able to compile a complete list of those who held these positions during the reign.

The first almonry clerk I have been able to trace was John of Langley who received an allowance for robes in 1285-86.² He was employed on the

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1. This is probably due to the non-survival of records containing such evidence. In the later years of the reign of Edward I the almonry staff can be traced chiefly in lists of allowances for clothing in the wardrobe books, and none of these have survived for the period previous to 1282.
 2. E 101/351/26 m.1.

business of the almonry in 1300¹. but he is not described as an almonry clerk in this year and had perhaps ceased to hold the post, as Richard of Acton is called the almoner's clerk in a roll of prests belonging to the previous year, 1298-99.² From this year to the middle of the following reign I have not found any reference to an almonry clerk, but from 1299 to the end of Edward I's reign Ralph of Stamford, sometimes described as "of the almonry" seems to have taken a considerable share in the work of the office. His precise connection with the office is hard to determine. He is never called clerk or yeoman of the almonry and as a Ralph of Stamford was one of the king's chaplains at the time,³ it seems that this must be the same man. It may be suggested that as Blunsdon was growing old, Stamford took over some of his duties while remaining

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1. He was sent to offer a gold clasp, worth 5 marks in Chichester Cathedral in May, 1300. (Lib. Quot. pp. 97 and 333)
 2. E.101/356/1 m.2 and m.2d. It is, however possible that he was not an official member of the almonry staff, but was privately employed by Blunsdon.
 3. Lib. Quot. p. 314.

simply one of the king's chaplains. He attended to the feeding of the poor sometimes^{1.} received supplies^{2.} and looked after the equipment of the office.^{3.}

In 1315-6 and 1316-7 the post of almoner clerk was held by two Welshmen, Clement of Carnarvon^{4.} and Tudor the Welshman^{5.} and from 1319-20 John of Cornwall held it.^{6.} He was succeeded by John of St. Ives until 1323^{7.} and in 1325-6 John of Ixworth was clerk.^{8.}

The yeomen of the almonry are more easily traced than the clerks, as they received more regularly the allowances for robes and shoes. Richard of Morton in 1282-3^{9.} was the first. After him Benedict

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1. e.g. B.M. Add. MS. 35292, f.
 2. e.g. 17s. 6d. was paid through him to the almoner on 13 March, 1304 (Ibid. f.33)
 3. 12d. for the repair of a silver candelabrum was paid to him on 8 Jan., 1304 (Ibid. f.23v^o).
 4. E.101/377/7 f.4v^o.
 5. Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120, f.14
 6. B.M. Add. MS. 17362 ff.4 and 4v^o.
 7. He is first mentioned as clerk in the wardrobe book for 1320-21 (B.M. Add. MS. 9951 f.2v^o) and last in the wardrobe book for 1322-3 (B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f.106v^o)
 8. Rolls of foreign expenses of the wardrobe E.101/381/4 and E.101/382/6.
 9. In a roll of names of members of the household to whom winter shoes were issued (E.101/351/3 m.1.)

was yeoman from 1285-90^{1.} and Thomas Brown from
 1296-1306,^{2.} when Nicholas of Morton succeeded him.^{3.}
 In addition to these there were others, described
 as yeoman of the almoner, but these did not
 receive allowances for robes and were probably
 personal servants of the almoner, and not officially
 connected with the almonry.^{4.}

1. He is first called yeoman of the almonry in a list of allowances for robes in 1285-6 (E 101/351/26 m.2.) and last in a similar list in a wardrobe book for 1289-90. (Chan. Misc. 4/5. f.37v^o).
2. He is first mentioned in a list of allowances for shoes in the wardrobe book for 1296-7 (B.M. Add. MS.7965 f.41) and last in a list of allowances for robes in the wardrobe book for 1305-6 E 101/369/11, f.94v^o
3. He received 2s. 4d. for shoes in an account of Walter Reynolds for 35 Edward I (1306-7) (E 101/357/15, f.27)
4. They were Sampson from 1296 (E 101/358/27 m.3.) to 1306 (B.M. Add. MS. 35293 f.8v^o), Baldwin the Fleming, 1298-99 (E 101/356/8, m.3.), Richard of Acton, 1301. (E 101/354/5, no.2.f.10v^o) to 1306 (E 101/368/26, m.5.), Thomas of Coston, 1304-5 (E 101/364/13, f.30) and Richard of Bremsgrave 1305-6 (E 101/368/27 f.44) and E 101/368/6, f.6.)

In Edward II's reign Richard of Morton was yeoman of the almonry in 1315-6 and 1316-7,¹ followed in 1319-20 by John of St. Ives who appears to have been promoted to the post of clerk in the next year.² William of Foston³ succeeded him as yeoman from 1320-23 and Thomas of Scales in 1323⁴.

The clerks of the almonry seem to have performed at different times almost all the regular activities of almsgiving. John of Langley made several journeys to offer the king's oblations at shrines in different parts of the country. During 1296-7 he took offerings to Worcester, St. Michael's

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1. E.101/376/7, f.29v^o and Lib.Soc. Ant. MS.120, ff.63 and 114.
 2. B.M.Add. MS.17362, f.58. and see above p. . .
 3. He is first called yeoman of the almonry in a list of allowances for winter shoes (B.M.Add. MS. 9951, f.12) and last in a list of persons to whom the king was in debt in 1323 (B.M. Stowe MS.553, f.154)
 4. Ibid. f.38

Mount, Beverley, York, Durham, Canterbury and Winchester, and was away from the court for forty days in all.¹ In Edward II's reign they were sometimes responsible for the occasional expenditure on the feeding of the poor and for the payments to religious houses for pittances. John of Cornwall in 1319-20 received 25s. at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun for feeding 200 poor at each feast.² In the same year he gave money for pittances to the Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians at Canterbury³ and to the Franciscans at Reading⁴ and made similar gifts to friars in the following year.⁵ They might also be expected to have some share in obtaining supplies for the work of the office, but I have not found any evidence of this.⁶

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1. B.M.Add. MS.7965. f.250.
 2. B.M.Add. MS.17362. ff.3,4,4v^o.
 3. Ibid. f.5.
 4. Ibid. f.4v^o.
 5. He gave 16s. each to the Franciscans, Augustinians, Carmelites and Crutched Friars of London on 7 July, 1321 (B.M.Add.MS.9951, f.3.)
 6. A list of prests referring to 1298-9 mentions three sums of £4, £2, and £1 given in June, 1299 to Henry the Almoner by the hands of Richard of Acton (E 101/356/1 m.2d), but Acton was probably not a clerk of the office of the almonry (See above p.86, n.4)

On the whole the clerks do not seem to have done very much of the almonry work as it appears in the accounts and it may be suggested that the greater part of their work in Edward I's reign lay in drawing up the almoner's rolls for presentation to the wardrobe and in helping with the king's lavish provision of meals for the poor. If, however, it is true that formal accounts were presented by the almoner only during the second half of Edward I's reign,¹ these duties would have been required only during this limited period. It may be significant in this connection that no almonry clerk is traceable earlier than 1285² when the king's customary gifts of food to the poor first began to grow to heights not previously reached. It is possible that the expansion of this branch of the king's almsgiving rendered necessary the appointment of an almonry clerk.

1. See below Ch. III pt. II. p. 118

2. See above p. 223.

In Edward II's reign the clerk, like the almoner, must have been much less busy. He may still have kept accounts for the office, even if less formal ones, not intended for presentation for audit, or he may have made returns to the wardrobe of a diminished kind, which have disappeared. Almonry stores and equipment probably also occupied his time in arrangements for their safekeeping, repair and transport.^{1.}

The duties of the yeomen of the almonry in Edward I's time are impossible to ascertain from the existing evidence.^{2.} They do not seem to have included any financial responsibilities in connection with the almsgiving, and the yeoman appear in the accounts only as recipients of their allowances for shoes and robes. It may be surmised that they had to perform the rougher work of the office, the fetching and carrying and safekeeping of the almonry

1. See below pp. 96
 2. The men described as yeomen of the almoner frequently received sums of money to be paid to their master as for example £5 paid to Baldwin the Fleming for the almoner in 1299. (E.101/356/8 m.3.).

and its stores. Even in Edward II's reign when so much of the almonry business had come to an end, there was a certain amount of plate and other stores to be looked after. Money for the almoner may sometimes have been paid through the yeoman, but the only surviving instance of this is a payment for robes and wages and not for the alms.^{1.}

By the provisions of the Household Ordinance of 1318^{2.} the clerk and the yeoman of the almonry were both to eat in the hall and were both to have an outfit each year or an equivalent money payment; £1 for the clerk and 13s. 4d. for the yeoman. The yeoman was also to have 4s. 8d. for shoes like the yeoman of the other household offices. Neither was assigned wages, but the clerk was to have 3d a day in the roll of the marshalsea for the keep of the sumpter horse of the almonry.^{3.} The groom who looked after the

1. £1 was paid through Nicholas of Morton on 7 July, 1310. (E.101/374/7, f.1.)
 2. T.F.Tout The Place of Edward II in English History. Appendix II, p.279.
 3. This was to be paid, like the almoner's wages "tanque il soit auancez par le roi" Ibid.

horse was to feed himself from the alms, an arrangement which sounds more appropriate to the lavish days of Edward I than to those of Edward II. The terms of the ordinance seem to have represented the usual practice of the period in respect of the allowances for clothing except that the clerk's allowance for this purpose was apparently very irregularly paid.^{1.}

The most valuable part of the almonry equipment was the plate probably used in collection and distribution of food to the poor. Under Edward I the almonry had certainly one or probably more than one large silver dish^{2.} for holding or perhaps

1. John of Langley in 1296 had £1 for his robes. (B.M. Add.MS.7965 f.123v^o) John of St. Ives had £1 for his robes in 1323 (B.M.Stowe MS.553, f.106v^o). An order was made in 1325 for a furred gown "suitable to his estate" to be given to John of Ixworth. (E 101/381/11).

2. A list of plate of the time of Edward I contains a memorandum that a silver dish of the king's almonry had been left in the keeping of the wardrobe enclosed in a wicker basket, bound with iron (E 101/356/21)

(See above, Chap. II p. 11)
 1. B.M. Add. MS. 7965 f. 123v^o
 2. e.g. B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f. 106v^o and B.M. Add. MS. 7965, f. 123v^o

kept in wicker baskets¹, and in Edward II's reign it seems to have had quite a number of vessels of silver or silver gilt, enamelled and adorned with precious stones. A list of plate belonging to the almonry in 1319-20 includes a large silver dish with the arms of England engraved on the bottom, two silver jars, one jar with gilt shields, a water vessel of silver gilt, with enamelled shields, studded with large pearls, a silver vessel barred with gold, a silver gilt goblet with a chased foot, a silver gilt measure, with a shield on the bottom, bearing the arms of William Marshall, and a silver measure with a chased foot². Somewhat similar lists have survived for other years³, although none so exhaustive as this. The care of so much plate must have been a heavy responsibility for the almonry officials. The vessels were apparently

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1. According to Fleta the almoner had to collect the scraps to distribute in alms. (See above, Chap. II p. 25)
 2. B.M. Add. MS. 17362, f. 50v^o.
 3. e.g. B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f. 134v^o and B.M. Add. MS. 35, 181. f. 5v^o

kept in wicker baskets, bound with iron which were purchased by the almoner from time to time, but these would not have provided protection against a determined thief and other precautions were taken. The door of the almonry at Windsor was secured with an iron bar in 1320^{2.} and from the purchase of four keys by the almonry clerk in 1322^{3.} we may perhaps conclude that the almonry doors, in some places at least, were provided with locks. Despite the provision of baskets for the great alms dishes these occasionally suffered damage, whether from carelessness in their handling or from unavoidable wear and tear consequent upon the continual transport from place to place following the journeys of the

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1. He bought in 1316-17 a hamper of black wicker bound with iron to carry a great silver dish (Lib.Soc.Ant.MS.120, f.42) and in 1321 paid 10s. for a similar casket of hazel for one of the almonry dishes. (B.M. Add.MS.9951, f.5v^o).
 2. E.101/492/20.m.1. to be the dish mentioned in
 3. B.M. Stowe MS.553 f.28v^o. was worth nearly 28 more.
 2. B.M. Stowe MS.553, f.134v^o.
 3. Eight canvas sacks were delivered to the almonry on 7 July, 1323 (B.M. Add. MS.35,114, f.9v^o).
 4. In 1317 the almoner bought two new buckets for the office for 14s. (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120, f.19)

court. A great silver dish,^{1.} having the arms of England on the bottom, which ought to have had eight shields, engraved with coats of arms surrounding it was said in 1323 to have lost three of these shields.^{2.}

Of the existence of other almonry equipment there is little evidence. The almonry must have needed other possessions, less valuable receptacles for food, both for storage and for distribution and furnishings for buildings appropriated to the office, but the only items of equipment which can be traced in the accounts are canvas sacks^{3.} and wooden buckets, bound with iron^{4.} which were bought at intervals for the almonry.

For the transport of the plate and other baggage from place to place the almonry had,

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1. This does not appear to be the dish mentioned in the list of 1319-20 as it was worth nearly £8 more.
 2. B.M. Stowe MS 553, f.134v^o.
 3. Eight canvas sacks were delivered to the almonry on 7 July, 1323 (B.M. Add. MS.35,114,f.9v^o).
 4. In 1317 the almoner bought two new buckets for the office for 14d. (Lib.Soc.Ant. MS.120, f.19)

according to the Household Ordinance of 1318
 a hackney which was especially in charge of the
 clerk who received for its keep 3d. a day,
 the food was obtained and how it was 1.
 accounted for on the marshalsea roll. From
 scattered references to the purchase of new horses
 to replace those which died 2. it seems that the
 almonry always had a horse for its own use and
 as this horse was sometimes taken away from
 court by the clerk when he was sent on errands to do
 frequently gave 3.
 with the almsgiving, at least one more must at
 times have been needed for the normal business of the
 any 4.
 office. In 1319 however the almonry certainly had only
 this practice continued later. It is
 one horse, for the clerk had to hire a horse to carry
 that all through the period the food was
 the almonry vessels from Hathelsey to Tutbury at the
 all the allowances in the accounts of Edward I.
 death of the sumpter animal belonging to the office. 5.

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1. T.F.Tout, Place of Edward II in English History Appendix I, p.279.
 2. e.g. Henry of Blunsdon bought a horse during 1306. (B.M. Add.MS.37,655, f.6.) It is not however stated that the horse was for almonry use.
 3. John of Langley had the horse out of court for 40 days during 1296-7 (B.M.Add.MS.7965, f.250)
 4. Bernard of Kirkby received 14s.6d. for hackneys for the carriage of his office in 1315-6. (E 101/376/7, f.16v^o).
 5. B. M. Stowe MS.553.f.28v^o.

There remain the questions of how and where meals were given to the poor, in what form the food was obtained and how it was dealt with by the almoner and his staff. Unfortunately none of these questions is capable of any precise answer. There is no indication in the household accounts of where distributions of food took place, although during Henry III's reign, before 1255 the king frequently gave directions to feed the poor in the hall of one of his residences¹. In default of any evidence to the contrary it may be surmised that this practice continued later. It certainly appears that all through the period the food was cooked, as all the allowances in the accounts of Edward I and Edward II are calculated in terms of meals. This suggests that accommodation had to be provided for eating the meal and that the food was not simply distributed at the gates or at the kitchen door.

1. Professor Johnstone quotes instructions such as "Fill the great hall at Westminster", "feed as many poor as can get into the hall in the upper bailey at Windsor" (Poor Relief, p.156)

If food was distributed in the form of cooked meals the problem of cooking presents itself. It seems clear that the food must have been obtained from the royal kitchen already cooked, as the almonry had no utensils or equipment for cooking and no kitchen staff belonging to it. The purchase of iron bound buckets for the almonry appears to confirm this, as they could have been used for fetching the cooked food from the kitchen to the place of distribution.

Some of the food distributed to the poor probably consisted of scraps from the king's table, the collection of which Fleta expressly includes among the almoner's duties.¹ These were perhaps gathered in the silver dishes and vessels which the almonry possessed, and were presumably distributed in addition to the meals for which allowances were made in the accounts.

1. "Officium autem Eleemosynari est, fragmenta diligenter colligere,....." (Fleta. Commentarius Juris Anglicani ed. J.Selden, 1647. p.81)

The Organisation of the Almoner's Work.

ii Methods of Supply and Account.

During this period the almoner seems to have drawn his supplies mainly from two sources, from the exchequer, either directly or indirectly through officials responsible for the collection of revenue, or from the cofferer of the wardrobe. Payments direct from the exchequer were rare, and owing to the organisation of wardrobe finances which will be discussed below, supplies obtained from officials responsible to the exchequer or from within the wardrobe are sometimes difficult to distinguish. From 1322-27 the king's chamber was also a source of supply.

The authorisation of payments directly from the exchequer is exemplified by only three instances, two of them from the reign of Henry III, and these are perhaps survivals of an earlier practice. In 1257 a writ of liberate was issued, ordering a payment to John of Colchester, the almoner for the funeral

expenses of the king's daughter, Katherine¹ and in 1261 a payment of £20 was similarly ordered for money spent on bread to be distributed to the poor.²

Three other payments from the exchequer may also be mentioned here, although none of them is a payment directly to the almoner for the business of almsgiving.

In 1267 15 marks was ordered to be paid from the exchequer to Thomas of Wymondham who had bought three lasts of herrings from the alms at John the almoner's request³ and once also the treasurer was ordered to buy and distribute herrings to certain religious houses⁴ according to a list supplied by the almoner, but here again it does not appear that the money passed through the almoner's hands. In 1263-4 an order was made under privy seal for a writ of liberate authorising the payment of £4 to the almoner for oats bought for the king's business. I have not succeeded in finding the

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1. Liberate Roll 1256-7 P.R.O.C. 62/33, m.6.
 2. Liberate Roll 1260-61 P.R.O.C. 62/37, m.3.
 3. Liberate Roll 1266-7 P.R.O.C. 62/43, m.5.
 4. Close Rolls, Henry III, 1259-61, p.238.

writ and it is not certain that the expenditure had any connection with almsgiving.^{1.}

In Edward I's reign I have found only one instance of supplies drawn direct from the exchequer, probably to be explained by the nature of the currency required. It is an item among the exchequer receipt in the wardrobe book for 1305-6 of £10 to be paid in farthings to Henry of Blunsdon for the king's alms.^{2.}

The receipts direct from persons responsible for the collection of revenue, before they accounted to the exchequer were perhaps the most considerable, and include the bulk of the entries connected with almsgiving on the Liberate Rolls and a few of those on the Close Rolls of Henry III's reign. Simon of Offham and John of Colchester were accustomed to receive shoes for distribution three times a year, at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun. The delivery of these was usually arranged by contrabreve, authorizing the mayor and

1. Chan. Misc. 3/7, no. 7.
2. E.101/369/11. f. 5.

bailiffs of a town to pay for them out of the farm¹. Cloth for tunics distributed at the same time was usually obtained from the buyers of the wardrobe and its delivery was authorised by letters close.²

After Henry III's reign entries of this sort disappear from the Close and Liberate Rolls, owing to changes in the financial arrangements of the wardrobe and exchequer.³ In Henry III's reign it seems to have been the practice for wardrobe officers to obtain part at least of their supplies by means of separate

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1. For Easter, Whitsun and Christmas, 1257, for example the sheriffs of London supplied 171, 164 and 150 pairs of shoes respectively (Liberate Roll, 1256-7, P.R.O.C. 62/33, m.s. 7 & 8 and 1257-8 P.R.O.C. 62/34, m.2.) and in January, 1272 the Mayor and bailiffs of Winchester were ordered to pay for shoes distributed at Christmas, 1269, 1268 and 1267 (Liberate Roll, 1271-2 P.R.O.C. 62/48, m.11)
 2. In 1258, for example the buyers of the wardrobe were ordered to supply cloth for 150 tunics for Easter, 171 for Whitsun and 171 for Christmas (Close Rolls, Henry III pp.203, 216, 352)
 3. Only a small proportion of the almoner's supplies, as we have seen above was obtained in this way. Some came from within the wardrobe, but I have not traced any payments large enough to provide for Henry III's gifts of meals to the poor.

writs for small sums to be paid by the
exchequer or by officials accounting to it.

In Edward I's reign, however such writs seem
to have been superseded by one writ, authorising
the payment to the keeper of the wardrobe of a sum
large enough to supply the needs of the office
for some time. Supplies would then be obtained
by the heads of wardrobe departments or their
subordinates from persons responsible for the
collection of revenue and a tally given in
exchange. The tally, on presentation at the
wardrobe would be exchanged for a wardrobe
debenture and its amount put down as a prest
or advance to the departmental head who had to
account for it later. The debenture was then
presented by the official who had supplied the
wardrobe's needs, with his accounts to the
exchequer, and the sum endorsed on the current
writ of liberate to the wardrobe, a new writ
being issued when this was exhausted. This means
that the distinction drawn in the wardrobe books
between exchequer and foreign receipt is largely
illusory, as a large part of the exchequer receipt

was actually paid direct to wardrobe creditors by a
1.
sheriff or other official.

The wardrobe's record of such transactions
was kept in books of unde respondebit containing
lists of prests, classified under the office to
2.
which they refer. These books, however are
often badly preserved and incomplete. For 1305-6,
however there is one which appears to be complete,
containing among others, lists of advances to the
3.
almoner. The whole total of the prests to the
almoner entered in this book is £255.17.3. and the
wardrobe book of this year records a sum of
£343.2.10. spent by the almoner on feeding the poor,

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1. The system of account in the wardrobe of Edward I has been described by Mr. Charles Johnson (Trans: Royal Historical Society, 4th Series VI, 54) and in the wardrobe of Edward II by Mr. J. H. Johnson, (Ibid. 4th Series, XV, 75).
 2. Lists of prests are also to be found in some of the wardrobe books (e.g. E 101/369/11), but, as almost any kind of advance payment to a wardrobe official seems to have been called by this name it seems unsafe to conclude that they refer to supplies obtained as described above.
 3. E 101/368/27. The list of prests to the almoner is not arranged chronologically.

The cofferer, *...*
 with an additional £55.10.5. spent by him on
 miscellaneous charity and oblations, making a
 total of £398.13.3.¹ In this year, therefore
 the almoner's receipts from this source were
 sufficient, for more than half his expenditure,
 but the comparison of totals is probably unfair.
 On the one hand the list of prests contains
 several small sums ascribed to payments which do
 not appear in the wardrobe book² and on the
 other the list of prests is perhaps incomplete.
 Moreover, as it is not always stated for what
 purpose the prests were intended it is possible
 that they may have been used for the administrative
 expenses of the almonry.

The almoner also received varying proportions
 of his expenditure from the cofferer of the wardrobe.

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1. E.101/369/11.
 2. For example 20d. said to have been given to the poor on the king's journey from Watford to St. Albans in June, 1306. (E.101/368/27, f.44.)

The cofferer, kept a record of each day's receipts and expenditure, called a journal,^{1.} and in these accounts entries of payments to the almoner occur fairly often. They are sometimes described vaguely as "for the expenses of the office", but are more often attributed to some particular item of expenditure. The total of these payments varied greatly; in some years it was relatively insignificant and in others the cofferer seems to have financed the almsgiving almost entirely.^{2.}

In the kinds of expenditure for which the almoner drew his supplies from the cofferer, some changes seem to have occurred during the period. In an incomplete journal for January to November, 1278, for example, the elemosina statuta of 4s. a day

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1. J. H. Johnson. Trans: Royal Historical Society, Series 4, XII, 76.
 2. For the five months, March to July, 1301 the almoner received only £15.12.8. (E 101/359/5) whereas in the eight months, April to November, 1303 he received £59.19.0. (B.M.Add.MS. 35, 292)

for when the king was travelling is recorded among
 blessed the sums paid to the almoner¹. No later
 one of Journal records this item which in the rest
 of the period is usually mentioned only on
 the roll of daily expenses of the household,
 later but it was perhaps paid out of the grants described
 drawn generally as "for the expenses of the office"
 which are numerous in later journals. This
 change journal of 1278 also seems to show the whole of
 the almoner's expenditure on the customary and
 at the per preceptum regis feeding of the poor. The
 of the later Journals all contain some entries of payments
 for this purpose, but more irregularly, and in
 none of those that I have examined is provision
 made for the whole of such expenditure². The journal

1. Chan. Misc. 4/1. f.3v^o et passim.
 2. The journal for March to July, 1301 makes
 no mention of the feeding of the poor. There
 are, however, nine entries of 17s. 6d. and
 two of 12s. 6d., the sums required for
 feeding one hundred and forty and a hundred
 poor respectively at the standard rate of
 1½d. a head. (E.101/359/5).

for 1278 also provides for payments to sick persons blessed by the king, a type of almsgiving which only one other surviving journal records.¹ The inclusion of regular provisions for all the varieties of almsgiving for which the almoner was responsible later in the reign suggests that, at this time, he drew all his supplies from this source.²

By the end of the reign however, this had changed. Although by 1303-4 the expenditure on almsgiving was very much greater than it had been at the beginning of the reign,³ the total receipts of the almoner in the journal of this year were only £101.4.4.⁴ compared with £111.15.2. for nine months

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1. The journal for 4 Edward II, 1310-11 contains two payments of 2s. and 5s. for this purpose. (E.101/374/7 ff.4,6).
 2. If the sum of £111.15.2. for nine months of 1278 is compared with the expenditure of £190.9.4½. recorded on the complete alms roll of 1276-7 (E.101/350/23), it will be seen that it probably does represent the whole of the almoner's expenditure for the period it covers.
 3. The total of alms for 1303-4 amounted to £815.10.4½. (B.M.Add.MS. 8835 f.6.)
 4. B.M.Add.MS. 35,292

in 1278.^{1.} The wardrobe book for 1303-4 shows an expenditure of £306.0.10.^{2.} by the almoner on the feeding of the poor alone, so that the sum obtained from the cofferer represents only about a third of the amount required for this part of the almsgiving. We are fortunate in having for the same year an apparently complete book of unde Respondebit^{3.} which records a total of £143.5.2. to be accounted for by Henry of Blunsdon. In this year therefore the journal and the book of unde respondebit together account for only £244.9.6. out of a total of £306.0.10., leaving a deficit of £61.11.4. on one department of the almsgiving. A receipt given by Henry of Blunsdon in 1297 for a payment of £100 on his office from the keeper of the wardrobe^{4.} suggests the possibility that

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1. Chan. Misc. 4/1.
 2. B.M.Add MS.8835 f.4.
 3. B.M.Add.MS.35293
 4. Dated 10 June, 1297 and sealed with the almoner's official seal which shows an almoner, giving charity to five poor men, one of whom is holding out his hand in supplication. (E.101/369/21). An entry of this payment occurs in a roll of prests for 1296-7 (E.101/358/27, m.3)

the almoner may have been accustomed to receive some of his supplies directly from the keeper.^{1.} Some of the deficiency may have been made up in this way in 1303-4, although it seems unlikely, as no record of such a transaction appears in the unusually copious surviving accounts of this year. *The only complete journal I have found for the*

reign Two other suggestions may be made; first that the list of prests, as it stands, may not be complete (although there are no obvious gaps) and secondly that the almoner perhaps received some supplies in goods and not in money. This had been the case in Henry III's reign, when the king was accustomed to order cloth for distribution at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun to be bought by the buyers of the wardrobe and handed over to the almoner,^{2.} and there is some evidence that Henry of Blunsdon received supplies in this way too. Three undated lists of Edward I's reign record issues of bread, beer and wine to the almoner,^{3.} the bread and the

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1. No other receipts survive, but there are occasional allusions to their having been given, e.g. (E ICI/364/13. f.30.)
 2. See above p.102 n.1.
 3. E ICI/356/13 ms.1,2 and 2d.

beer for the alms and the wine for the almoner. Bread and beer each to the value of 14d. daily were issued from Tuesday, 6 April to Easter Monday, 19 April and wine at 1d. or 2d. a day for the same space of time. In each list nothing is entered for Easter Saturday and Sunday.

The only complete journal I have found for the reign of Edward II relates to the year 1310-11.¹ It records issues to the almoner of £10.1.4., £5.2.0. of which is for wages and almonry equipment.² I have not found a wardrobe book for this year, but if the almsgiving was as small as that of later years in this reign this may represent the whole of the almoner's expenditure.

During this reign the almoner's requirements were naturally much smaller, and although the evidence is scanty, it seems that he ceased to obtain supplies from

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1. It has become divided into two parts; E 101/374/7 which runs from 3 July, 1310 to 14 Feb. 1311 and E 101/373/30 which begins on 16 Feb. 1311 and runs to the end of the regnal year.
 2. £5. 0. 0. was paid to him for wages (E 101/374/7 ff. 13 & 24 and E 101/373/3) and 2s. was spent on two iron bound buckets for the almonry. (E 101/374/7, f. 25).

officials accounting to the exchequer, as I have not found any payments for almsgiving in the books of unde respondebit.^{1.} He continued occasionally to receive prests on his office, but it is impossible to say precisely from what source these came, and some of them are said to be for wages.^{2.} It seems reasonable to conclude that in the early part of the reign his supplies came chiefly from within the wardrobe.

At the end of the reign the almoner began to draw supplies from the chamber which was then rising to importance, and from 1322 onwards entries relating to almsgiving may be found in the chamber accounts. The amounts paid from this source seem

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1. A book of unde respondebit for 1307-8 contains no payments for alms. (B.M. Add. MS. 35,093)
 2. A wardrobe book for 1312-13 which has lost its contemporary heading, but appears to be a book of unde respondebit records one payment to Bernard of Kirkby for wages. (E.101/374/5. f.31v^o) In 1307 John of Leek received a prest of 50s. on his wages (E.101/373/15. f.7.)

2. E.101/373/15 and E.101/380/4
 3. E.101/373/15 and E.101/381/4.

insignificant^{1.} and are often assigned to some casual act of charity, but they often represent a large proportion of the almsgiving of the last years of Edward II's reign. For 1323-4 and 1324-5 for which years both chamber accounts^{2.} and a book or roll of foreign expenses of the wardrobe^{3.} have survived it is possible to compare the totals provided from each source and the kinds of expenditure they include. In 1324-5 the alms in the roll of foreign expenses are made up of the provision of meals for the poor at the four great feasts, gifts to sick blessed by the king, gifts of clothing at Easter and a money distribution for the soul of Queen Eleanor, £20.0.10. in all. The chamber account contains only casual gifts, a payment for food to the Dominicans of Langley and funeral expenses and money for masses for the dead,

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1. Although the individual gifts are often small, the totals are comparatively large; £13.10.6. in 1323-4 (E.101/379/17); £16.16.8. in 1324-5 (E.101/380/4) and £9.10.6. in 1325-6 (Lib.Soc. Ant. MS.No.122.
 2. E.101/379/17 and E.101/380/4
 3. E.101/379/19 and E.101/381/4.

£16.16.8. in all. This seems to suggest that the customary and traditional alms were at this time a charge on the wardrobe, while the chamber supplied the alms given by the personal wishes of the king and this conclusion is borne out by analysis of the two types of account for the previous year.

Information about the almoner's methods of account is less easy to obtain than evidence of his sources of supply, despite the existence of seven rolls of alms for the reign of Edward I.^{1.} Here also changes occurred during the period under review. From the reign of Henry III no accounts of expenditure on almsgiving survive except for entries on a roll of daily household expenses recording sums spent on wax and in pascendo fratres^{2.} for October, 1259 to October, 1260. The almoner was at this time receiving allowances in the Close and Liberate Rolls for shoes and clothing to be distributed to the poor, which were usually received in kind.^{3.} For these and

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1. E.101/350/23, 351/15, 352/18, 353/16, 357/29, 359/15 and 361/21.
 2. E.101/394/27.
 3. See above, p. 102

other issues of goods and money which were ordered to be given to the almoner he either made no official return or the accounts, if presented, have disappeared.

It seems possible that there were no accounts, for no almoner's roll survives earlier than a fragment covering fourteen weeks of 1293; of the three earlier rolls of alms for 1276-7, 1283-4 and 1288-9 Professor Johnstone has said "they do not seem to be almoner's rolls, but the summary made by the wardrobe clerks of meals to the poor, oblations, distributions by the wayside and other miscellaneous charitable expenditure.¹ These rolls are arranged in running paragraphs, each of which is summed separately, the total of the whole roll is entered on the dorse and the roll is summed intermediately two, or as in 1288-9 three times. The roll for 1276-7 is headed Rotulus de oblationibus Regis et elemosina data diversis pauperibus a festo sancti Edmundi Regis

1. Poor Relief, p.160, n.1.

et martiris anno regni regis Edwardi quinto
incipiente usque ad idem festum eidem anno
finiente videlicet per totum annum integrum^{1.}

and the other two have similar headings. They are uncanceled so that they appear to be final and not subsidiary accounts.

They distinguish between the feeding of the poor which is entered in blocks of two or three months at a time and the miscellaneous alms and oblations which were given by various hands and in the later wardrobe books were entered as alms given by the wardrobe.^{2.} The roll for 1283-4 includes also large donations towards the building of the abbey of Vale Royal and Meynam, £563.6.8. to Vale Royal alone so that the total of the roll is nearly double the expenditure on the normal items of almsgiving.

1. E.101/350/23. See Appendix III.
2. e.g. Lib. Quot. pp.25-47.

seems practically certain that these rolls are the accounts kept by the almoner of the expenses of his office for presentation for audit, for the line of cancellation is, of course, the ordinary indication

The four later rolls are quite different; they are much smaller and less elaborately and carefully kept. The two earliest are fragments covering only fourteen weeks of 1293 and November, 1299 to April, 1300. The last two, however, are complete; these rolls deal only with the meals for the poor provided by the king's almoner. The fragment for 1293 is endorsed Particule Domini H. Eleemosinarii and the roll for 1299-1300 Compotus H. Eleemosinarii. The roll for 1301-2 records after the total, the payment of £25 to Henry the Almoner for the daily almsgiving of the king on the household roll for one hundred and twenty five days. The expenditure is entered each day, the total for each week is entered separately, and except in the case of the fragment for 1293, the sum of the whole roll is entered at the end of the account. In these rolls the account is continued on the dorse, and is cancelled by a line drawn from head to foot. It seems practically certain that these rolls are the accounts kept by the almoner of the expenses of his office for presentation for audit, for the line of cancellation is, of course, the ordinary indication

of an audited account. The auditing office, presumably was the wardrobe.

It therefore appears that a separate official account of the almoner's expenditure was kept by him only at the time when the provision of meals for the poor was at its height, from 1293, or perhaps from 1290¹. to the end of the reign of Edward I, and that it was always limited to this aspect of the almsgiving.

If this is true, it appears that in the reigns of Henry III and Edward II and in the first half of the reign of Edward I no separate record was kept of the almoner's expenditure, and the entries on the three earliest alms rolls and under the heading of alms in the wardrobe books of Edward I until after 1288-9 and Edward II must have been extracted from the journals and the books of unde respondebit and perhaps the lists of prests. The completeness of the record of almsgiving contained in the journal for 1278² suggests that this could

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1. The last of the earliest type of alms rolls belongs to 1288-9.
 2. See above p. 102

have been done. When the almoner's rolls begin, the journals would have been less satisfactory as records of almsgiving, both because they show only a part of such expenditure¹. and because they often omit particulars of how money given to the almoner was to be spent.² Sums given in alms and oblations through others are usually assigned to a precise purpose³. This difference appears to confirm the suggestion that earlier the Journal was the only record of such details, whereas later, particulars of meals to the poor would be supplied by the almoner, although details of other varieties of almsgiving would not.

In Edward II's reign the fragmentary surviving Journals revert to the earlier practice with a few exceptions. The two fragments of that for 1310-11

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1. See above p. 107
 2. Ibid.
 3. In a fragment of a journal for 1301, for example, there are numerous payments to the almoner "on his office" while details are given for payments through others for oblations and pittances to religious houses (E.101/359/5).

Both records of sums paid to John of Denton for alms, including the provision of meals for the poor, E.101/331/4. Ms. 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19.

record a number of payments to the almoner, of which only two are given without particulars. Later in the reign when rolls or books of foreign expenses^{1.} appear to take the place of the journals, the practice of particularising the payments to the almoner continues, and although he must still have felt the need for some private record of his financial activities, there seems no reason to suppose that he kept any official account for presentation to the wardrobe.

It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that, until the feeding of the poor reached the unprecedented heights of the second half of Edward I's reign, no separate account rolls were kept by the almoner and that when Edward III reduced the scale of his almsgiving, the practice of presenting such accounts was discontinued.

1. A roll of foreign expenses survives for 1324-5 (E.101/381/4. and a book for 1323-4. (E.101/379/19). Both record details of sums paid to John of Denton for almsgiving, including the provision of meals for the poor (e.g. E.101/381/4. ms. 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 20, 22)

In considering the almoner's methods of both supply and account one receives an impression of great elasticity and freedom from fixed traditions and rules of procedure, in keeping with the changes in the almoner's work during this period. It is even more difficult to define precisely the almoner's sources of supply, or lay down general rules about his methods of account than it would be to give an exact and exhaustive list of his duties.

chapter to trace in detail the careers of these officials and to attempt to draw from this survey some general conclusions as to the qualifications required for the office, its importance and the possibilities of further promotion which it offered. Before considering the almoners individually it may be noted that the practice begun by Henry III with the appointment of Simon of Offham in 1255 of employing secular clerks in this capacity was continued by Edward I and II. Previously the

CHAPTER IV.

almoners had been Templars, but of nine

The Biographies of the Almoners.

consideration six were secular clerks and three

The records of the period supply copious information for the biographies of most of the almoners who held office during the period covered by this study although, as will be seen the sources are less abundant in the case of those almoners who were mendicant friars. It is proposed in this chapter to trace in detail the careers of these officials and to attempt to draw from this survey some general conclusions as to the qualifications required for the office, its importance and the possibilities of further promotion which it offered. Before considering the almoners individually it may be noted that the practice begun by Henry III with the appointment of Simon of Offham in 1255 of employing secular clerks in this capacity was continued by Edward I and II. Previously the

The friars may be said to have been almoners had been Templars,¹ but of nine almoners holding office during the period under consideration six were secular clerks and three were mendicant friars. The combined tenure of office of the three friars amounted to only fifteen years between 1255 and 1327.

1. Poor Relief. p.163

The first of the friars to hold office was Brother Ralph, who was almoner from at least 1275 to

1278. Apart from his roll of alms for 1276-7 and such info. The friars may be dealt with first, as their careers are necessarily very different from those of the secular clerks. Their employment in this capacity was a new experiment and forms an interesting parallel to the long popularity of the Dominicans as royal confessors. It would seem that their itinerant mode of life and wide experience of all classes of society should have fitted them particularly for such a post, but no friar remained almoner for very long and the experiment did not initiate a custom. Biographical details relating to their careers are unfortunately very scanty, owing to the absence for them of those lists of preferments, grants of land and other business transactions in connection with the ownership of property, and the possession of money which furnish so much information in the case of the secular clerks.

1. [faint]
2. [faint]
3. [faint]
4. [faint]
5. [faint]
6. [faint]
7. In the wardrobe book for 1292-30 Ralph of Boston is Brother Ralph, who was almoner from at least 1276 to 1280.
8. He is last described as almoner in a list of prebys for 1281-2. W. 103/272/14 m. 18.
9. In the wardrobe book for 1319-20 it is recorded that 2s. 2d. was paid to the grace of Brother Phillip of Boston of the Order of Preachers for winter shoes. (R.M. 270. 20. 17867. f. 32.)

1278. Apart from his roll of alms for 1276-7^{1.} and such information as can be gained from the journal of the wardrobe for 1278,^{2.} nothing certain can be said of him. He may perhaps be identified with a Trinitarian friar of the same name, who went on embassies for Henry III in 1252^{3.} and 1254^{4.} and who received a robe from that king in 1253.^{5.} This identification, however, cannot be proved. He was alive and travelling with the king from June to November, 1289-90 when he was given a special daily allowance to give to the poor on the king's behalf.^{6.}

A friar did not again become almoner until 1320^{7.} when Edward II appointed Philip of Baston who continued to hold office until 1322.^{8.} Philip was a Carmelite,^{9.} and in 1318 was a chaplain of the

1. E 101/350/23.
 2. Chan.Misc. 4/1.
 3. Close Rolls, 1251-3, p.433.
 4. Ibid, 1253-4, p.228.
 5. Ibid, p.185.
 6. Chan.Misc.4/4 f.46v.
 7. In the wardrobe book for 1319-20 Philip of Baston is described as almoner on and after 19 May. (B.M.Add. MS.17362)
 8. He is last described as almoner in a list of prests for 1321-2. E 101/378/14 m.1d.
 9. In the wardrobe book for 1319-20 it is recorded that 2s. 3d. was paid to the grooms of Brother Philip of Baston of the Order of Carmelites for winter shoes. (B.M.Add.MS.17362, f.22.)

king.^{1.} He may have been the brother of Robert of Baston or Boston, a distinguished member of the same order and, according to Leland a writer and a poet.^{2.} Robert had a brother Philip, to whom Leland devotes a few lines in his notice of Robert. He says:-

(Robertus) "habuit, ut quidam volunt, Philippum fratrem sed germanum Carmelitam quoque, in ditione Snotingamensis natum, olimque in Isidis Vado educatum. Scripsit Snotenhami degens librum Epistolarum".^{3.}

Bale adds to this information that he was also, like his brother, prior of the Carmelite house of Scarborough.^{4.}

The identification of this Philip of Baston with the king's almoner is strengthened by the fact that the latter was closely connected with Oxford where Baston is said to have studied. In 1317 protection was given to the master and scholars of Merton on his information,^{5.} and in 1318 John of Bishopton of Oxford received licence at the request of Philip of Baston to quit claim to the vicar of St. Mary Magdalene

1. C.P.R. 1317-21, p.168.
 2. John Leland, Commentarii, p.338.
 3. Ibid.
 4. John Bale, Anglorum Heliades, B.M.Harl.MS.3838, f.59.
 5. C.P.R. 1317-21, p.63.

without the north gate of Oxford and the proctors of the chantry of St. Mary in the same parish, 6s. 8d. of rent in the suburbs.¹ Edward II had just granted his palace near the north gate to the Carmelites for a dwelling place² together with the land which, on its south side adjoined the chantry of St. Mary in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene³ and it seems possible that Baston's connection with the royal household may have had some part in inspiring the king's generosity.

Later writers, while repeating substantially the facts given by Leland and Bale about Philip Baston's career add that he died about 1320 and was buried at Nottingham.⁴ If this is true he cannot

1. C.P.R. 1317-21, p.168.

2. Ibid. p.75.

3. Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum, VI, 1577.

4. John Pits calls him Philip Boston and says that he studied at Oxford for a long time, Philosophy and Theology and then returned to the Humanities; that he was an assiduous preacher and that he is said to have died and been buried in his own convent at Nottingham about 1320. Relationum Historiarum de Rebus Anglicis: De Illustribus Angliae Scriptoribus. p.411. Leland, however, writing earlier had given no date for Baston's death.

be the same as the king's almoner who was certainly alive some years later than this. He was almoner from 1320-1322¹. and in 1327 Edward II ordered that he should be supplied with a suitable habit yearly during his life from the king's wardrobe.² His identification with the writer must therefore remain a matter of conjecture.

Brother Richard of Ipswich who succeeded Baston in May, 1322³. continued to be almoner until May, 1323⁴. although from March in this year he was acting through a locum tenens, brother Richard of Blyton. Nothing whatever is known of his career save for the fact that for some reason he ceased to fulfil his duties as almoner in March, 1323⁵. and his brief tenure of office is remarkable only because his locum tenens was one of the most important men who had charge of

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1. See above p. 125
 2. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 187.
 3. He occurs as almoner from the beginning of the alms section in the wardrobe book for May, 1322-July, 1323 (B.M. Stowe MS. 553, ff. 21-23v)
 4. On 15 May, 1323 John of Denton occurs as almoner (Ibid. f. 22v^o)
 5. He gave alms for the last time on 27 March, 1323. (B.M. Stowe MS. 553, f. 22)

the king's almsgiving during this period. Blyton was, like Philip of Baston, a Carmelite¹. and in 1319 was elected as the English provincial of this order,² a position which, according to John Bale he occupied for seven years.³ It seems strange that, while provincial of the Carmelites in England he should have found time to act as almoner, even for so short a space of time as two months and that he should not have regarded the position of locum tenens to the king's almoner as beneath his dignity. It is possible that Blyton may have consented to act in this capacity purely out of regard for the king. He was evidently sincerely attached to Edward II for in 1329 he took part in the hopeless rebellion of Edmund of Kent which was inspired

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1. In a roll of liveries for 1324-5 five ells of white cloth were given to Richard of Blyton of the Order of Carmelites for his habit. The christian name is almost obliterated, but sufficient remains to allow it to be identified. (E 101/381/1 m.3.)
 2. Acta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis B.V. Mariae de Monte Carmelo. ed. Zimmerman I, p.24 n.2.
 3. Bale, Anglorum Heliades, B.M.Harl. M.S.3838 f.62. The value of Bale's testimony will be considered later.

by a report that Edward was still living.¹ It is interesting to observe that in the same year that he had this experience in the royal household, Blyton was the confessor of Hugh Despenser, the younger.²

The rest of our information about Blyton rests upon the authority of Leland³ and Bale⁴ writing

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1. G. le Baker, Chronicon, Caxton Soc. p.108. In this connection it may be significant that Blyton is traditionally said to have been confessor to Edward II in 1326 (Acta Capitulorum Generalium Ordinis B.V. Mariae de Monte Carmelo I, p.24) This however does not appear to be capable of proof from contemporary sources (R.D. Clark, Some Secular Activities of the English Dominicans, M.A. Thesis, London, 1930 p.240) and Friar Robert of Duffield is said to have been Edward II's confessor from 1316-7 (C.F.R. Palmer, The King's Confessors, The Antiquary, Vol.22 p.119) (See also n.2 p.133 below).
 2. E 101/379/17 f.3. He received 40s. from the king's chamber on 6 Nov.1323.
 3. Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis, p.382
 4. Biographies of Blyton occur in two of Bale's works. Scriptorum Illustrum Maioris Britanniae, usually known as Centuries of British Writers, which was first published at Ipswich in 1548 and was republished in a revised and enlarged edition in 1557 at Basel while Bale was in exile in Switzerland. The references given here will be to this edition. And the Anglorum Heliades which exists only in MS. (B.M.Harl. MS.3838.)

in the sixteenth century and it is difficult to be sure how far to trust its accuracy. Bale is well known to have been a bigoted Protestant, violent and unscrupulous in his writings on Catholicism¹. and Leland, usually a more trustworthy writer made at least one mistake in his biography of Richard of Blyton.² Against these disadvantages, however we must consider the fact that these men had unrivalled opportunities for collecting their information. Leland was commissioned by Henry VIII "to make a search for English antiquities in the libraries of all Cathedrals,

1. Fuller said of him that he was "more learned than discreet, fitter to write than govern as unable to command his own passion and biliosus Balaeus passeth for his true character" The Worthies of England II, 332) Anthony Wood is said to have called him "foul mouthed Bale" (C.H. & T. Cooper, Athenae Cantabrigienses, 225) while John Stevens said that Bale "huddled up the centuries of English writers from Leland and with most prodigious slanders defiled the truth of Chronology" (A History of the ancient abbeys, monasteries, hospitals cathedrals and collegiate churches. Being two additional volumes to Sir W. Dugdale's Monasticon Anglicanum II, 158)
2. Leland says that Blyton was admired by Richard of Bordeaux (Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis, p.382. This is evidently a slip due to the misreading of Edward II as Richard II for Blyton flourished between 1320-1330.

Abbeys, priories and colleges and all places where records, writings and secrets of antiquity were deposited"¹. and he made his great tour of England, carrying out this commission just before these libraries were broken up². Bale had himself been a Carmelite friar³. before his conversion to Protestantism and drew most of his material for the Centuries of British Writers from the libraries of the English Carmelite houses.⁴ It seems probable therefore that the facts given by these writers are for the most part reliable.

Leland's account of Blyton may be quoted in full, for it is short and to the point. He says:-

"Richardus Blithodunus, Carmelita, cultor Isiaci gymnasii celebris, lauream theologici nominis tandem

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1. S. Lee, Article on John Leland, the Antiquary in D.N.B.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Thomas Fuller, The Worthies of England, II, 332
 4. C. H. & T. Cooper, Athenae Cantabrigienses, I, 225

acceptit. Admiratus est aliquando Richardus Burdegalensis¹

hujus at eloquentiam et nervos in sacris concionibus.

Ergo ex multis unum illum qui praeesset auriculari suae

confessionem delegit.² Scrpsit concionum librum et

alterum Epistolarum, tertium etiam cui nomen Repertorium.³

Bale quoted the foregoing passage almost verbatim in the Centuries and although the account which he gives there is much longer, as the additional matter is mainly abuse of Catholicism it does not add greatly to our knowledge. He tells us that Blyton was born in Lincolnshire,⁴ and then quotes Leland's remarks, adding that he was the tenth English provincial of his order. He says that he flourished about 1320 and died fourteen years later, (i.e. 1334) a decrepit old man, and was buried in the Carmelite house at Lincoln.⁵ The Anglorum Heliades, in which Bale succeeded rather better

1. A mistake for Edward II (See n.1.)

2. The belief that Richard of Blyton was Edward II's confessor appears to rest upon this sentence. (See n.130 p.130. supra).

3. Leland, Commentarii, p.382.

4. Perhaps at Blyton, near Lincoln.

5. Centuries, p.377.

in controlling his religious bigotry, adds that Blyton was a very popular preacher in England and that he was frequently consulted by the king on affairs of state. In this book Bale contradicts his previous assertion as to the date of Blyton's death, and declares that he lived to a decrepit age and died in his convent at Lincoln on 31 July, 1361¹. I have not found evidence in support of either date, although the fact that Blyton was sufficiently active in 1329 to take part in a rebellion and suffer imprisonment for so doing². makes it appear that if the first date is correct, he declined very swiftly into decrepitude.

In view of Philip of Baston's close connection with Oxford, it is interesting that his successor's locum tenens, also a Carmelite should have been a doctor of that university.

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1. Anglorum Heliades. B.M.Harl.MS.3838, f.62.
 2. G. le Baker, Chronicon, Caxton Soc. p.108.

So much for the friar almoners. We must now turn to the secular clerks who held the office. Simon of Offham,¹ the first of these was already in office on 3 May, 1255² and ceased to be almoner between 29 May and 5 November, 1256.³ He was, like many of his successors an old royal servant and had already spent some twenty years in the king's service. In 1232 Simon was chaplain to Hubert de Burgh⁴ who presented him to the living of Hemswell in Lincolnshire⁵ and in 1235 the king had taken him

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1. From the evidence available it seems that Simon derived his surname from Offham in Kent, as his territorial connections, so far as they appear in the records of the period, are with that county. He may however have belonged either to Offham near Arundel in Sussex, or perhaps to Offenham in Worcestershire, and he may be the "Simon dilectus nobis capellanus de Offenham" who was presented to Kenfar by the king in January 1228 (Patent Rolls, 1225-32, p.176). There is however no further indication that he had anything to do with either Offenham or Kenfar.
 2. Close Rolls, 1254-56, p.77.
 3. John of Colchester was described as almoner on 5 Nov.1256 (Close Rolls, 1256-9 p.13)
 4. In April, 1232 an order was given for oaks from Sherwood to be given to Simon of Offham, chaplain of Hubert de Burgh. (Close Rolls, 1231-34, p.50)
 5. Rotuli Hugonis de Welles C.Y.S. I.230.

into his own service.^{1.} From Michaelmas, 1235 to Easter, 1241 he was chaplain of St. Stephen's chapel in the palace of Westminster, in which capacity he received 25s. in wages every half year^{2.} and was provided with robes.^{3.} Simon continued to be a royal chaplain until his death which occurred before 8 December, 1256^{4.} while he was still almoner, but between 1240 and 1248 he seems to have ceased to be chaplain of St. Stephen's and to have taken up similar duties at Windsor for in 1248 he is described as "King's chaplain ministering at Windsor" and arrangements

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1. On 8 July, 1235 the king repeated his order for the gift of oaks and ropes from Sherwood to Simon of Offham, describing him as "chaplain of the king" (Close Rolls, 1234-7, p.114)
 2. C. Lib. R. 1226-40, pp.241, 263, 296, 307, 329, 377, 471, 500. On 2 Oct. 1240 he received also a gift of 2 marks (Ibid, p.495)
 3. In January, 1240 a tunic and supertunic made of cloth at 2s. an ell and furred with lambskin were ordered for him and in 1239 the king ordered him to be given money for a furred cape. In November, 1239 a furred cape to the value of 16s. was ordered for him. (Ibid. 1226-40, p. 308, 359, 432)
 4. A pardon for killing a man in self defence was issued to Thomas Taylor of Burnham on 8 December, 1256 at the instance of Simon who had interceded for him before he died. (C.P.R. 1247-58, p.533).

are made for the payment of his wages from the farm of the town.^{1.} In the same year he had an indult allowing him to hold an additional benefice with cure of souls^{2.} but I have not found any record of further presentations until he received the livings of Harrow^{3.} and Otford^{4.} in 1242. In 1247 he became dean of Stafford and the king ordered the sheriff of Stafford to give him possession of the temporalities of his deanery by his proctor, Adam Wymer.^{5.} He also received a grant enabling him to appropriate to his own use whichever he pleased of the prebends of St. Mary's, Stafford, when it should fall vacant.^{6.}

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1. C.Lib.R. 1247-51 p.204
 2. C.P.L. 1198-1304, p.186.
 3. Patent Rolls, 1232-47, p.316.
 4. Ibid, p.332 and 333. This living had been given to Ralph of Necton who had resigned it on presentation to the church of Northfleet. Both Harrow and Otford were given to Simon by the king in the vacancy of the see of Canterbury.
 5. Close Rolls, 1242-47, p.525. Adam Wymer was perhaps a resident of Stafford, as later William Wymer, keeper of the royal fishponds there is mentioned. (Close Rolls, 1247-51, p.254)
 6. Patent Rolls, 1247-58, p.1.

It does not seem that Simon can have resided long in any of his benefices,^{1.} as in 1250 and 1251 he was a keeper of the works at Windsor, and was receiving instructions from the king about building operations there.^{2.} In 1251 the king presented him to the living of Peckham near Tunbridge in the diocese of Rochester.^{3.} This was apparently the last preferment he received and as he did not become almoner till 1255,^{4.} it cannot be regarded as a reliable indication of the reward thought suitable for the holder of that office.

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1. He was apparently at Stafford in January, 1250 for William Wymer was ordered to deliver him four pike and four bream from the king's fishponds there. (Close Rolls, 1247-51, p.254).
 2. On 25 May, 1250 the sheriff of Stafford received a quittance for the payment of 55s. to Simon, keeper of the works at Windsor out of the goods of a man who had left the kingdom for theft. (Patent Rolls 1247-58, p.66). On 22 Jan.1251 Simon and other keepers of the works at Windsor were granted 200 or 300 marks for their works (Close Rolls 1247-51, p.405) and on 11 and 20 Aug. directions for the work were issued to Simon and others, on 11 Aug. for lengthening the chaplains' chamber and building a privy chamber and kitchen (Ibid. p.487) and on 20 Aug. for roofing and decorating with paintings of the apostles the king's cloister at Windsor. (Ibid. p.492)
 3. Patent Rolls, 1247-58, p.121 and 174.
 4. See above p. 135

Simon of Offham seems to have been closely connected with Kent. He had a house at Lewisham in which Alice, his mother was living in 1242¹. and in 1238 he was granted oaks for building from the king's wood at Eltham.² Some of his livings were also in this county. Otford, for instance is near Sevenoaks³. and West Peckham is near Tunbridge.⁴

Simon or his mother received grants of money or goods from the king on several occasions⁵. and these

1. In 1242 the king ordered the keeper of the vacant see of Canterbury to have felled and delivered to Alice, seven tree trunks from Croydon wood for fuel. (C.Lib.R. 1240-45, p.153).
2. Close Rolls, 1237-42, p.109.
3. See above p. 137.
4. See above p. 138.
5. In April, 1242 the king ordered 5 marks to be given to Alice to buy corn (C.Lib.R. 1240-45, p.124) and in September of the same year he granted her 100s. towards her keep (Ibid. p.157) Simon was granted 10 oaks for building from the estate of Earl Warenne in 1241. (Close Rolls, 1237-42, p.377) and 4 hinds in 1249 (Close Rolls 1247-51, p.244). In 1250 the keeper of the king's wines at Guildford was ordered to give him a tun of wine by the king's gift. (Ibid. p.253) and a similar order was given to the keepers of the king's wines at Westminster in 1251. (Close Rolls, 1247-51, p.464). In 1251 also the king issued a writ for the payment of a sum of money to two citizens of London, including among other items £13.14.10. for samite to make a cope and chasuble with an alb and embroidered ornaments and orphreys for Simon. (C.Lib.R. 1247-51, p.354).

and was closely connected with the household of the king. The fact that the post of almoner was given to him after some twenty years of sueful service in the household makes the office appear to be of some importance. It is unfortunate that Simon died so soon after obtaining the post that his career does not furnish information as to the preferment considered by Henry III the appropriate reward for the office.

In 1256 Simon of Offham was succeeded by John of Colchester¹. who held the position until the death of Henry III.². He had property in Colchester³. of which town he was probably a native,

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1. On 29 May, 1256 shoes to be distributed at Whitsun were ordered to be given to Simon, chaplain and almoner. (Liberate Roll, no.32. m.8.) On 5 Nov. in the same year cloth for 150 tunics was ordered to be given to "John, chaplain and king's almoner" (Close Roll, 1256-9, p.13)
 2. John's name occurs as almoner until Henry's death. He does not appear to have served Edward I in this capacity, for in June, 1280 he is described as "sometime almoner of Henry III" (C.P.R. 1272-81, p.381)
 3. On 23 Feb. 1272 John was granted the house which Ursel of Colchester, Jew had of the pledge of Ralph de la Haye in the parish of St. Peter, Colchester and adjoining his houses in the same parish. (C.P.R. 1266-72, p.269).

and was closely connected with Willingale Doe near Ongar in Essex. In June, 1260 letters of protection were issued at the instance of John, the almoner for "Richard de la Rokele, his patron, gone to Ireland."^{1.}

This family of Rokele or Rockell appears to have held the manor of Willingale Doe in succession to the family of Ou^{2.} from which the village derives its distinguishing appellation^{3.} and in 1270 Richard de Rupella or Rockell granted to John of Ardern his manor of Willingale and thirty eight and a half acres in the vill of Plesingho^{4.}

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1. C.P.R. 1258-66, p.77. Richard Rockell had probably presented John of Colchester to the church of Willingale Doe of which he was said to be rector in 1270 (C.P.R. 1266-72, p.483). Richard Rockell had been given land in Clanodath in Ireland by Edward, the king's eldest son before 1270. See Inspeximus of a charter of Edward to John of Ardern, 18 Sept.1270 (Calendar of Charter Rolls 1257-1300, p.149).
 2. The manor was held by William de Ou in the reign of Stephen (Morant, History of Essex, II p.477) Hugh de Ou and William de la Rochelle held land of Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex in the reign of Henry II (Red Book of the Exchequer, Rolls Series 1, 346,7.) but the descent of the manor and the relationship of the two families are not clear. (See also J.H.Round "The Church and Glebe of Willingale Doe" Essex Arch. Soc. Trans. VIII, 375).
 3. To distinguish it from the neighbouring village of Willingale Spain it was called usually Willingale Doe, but sometimes also Willingale Rockell, Ibid.
 4. Plesingho was believed by Morant to be Pleshey but Mr. J. H. Round showed clearly that it was a tenement in the Willingales, the name of which has now disappeared. (Ibid. VIII, 333-4 & 376)

in exchange for land in Ireland, given to Ardern by Edward, son of Henry III.^{1.} In the same year John of Ardern granted "the whole of his land of Plesingho in the parish of Wylingeshale late of Sir Richard de Rupella" to John of Colchester, rector of Willingale Doe and Walter his brother for three years from Michaelmas 1270.^{2.} In a note contributed to the Transactions of the Essex Archeological Society in 1907, Mr. W.C. Waller pointed out that since by this agreement John and Walter grant to John of Ardern "a moiety of all wards as well of the manor of Wylingeshale as of the land of Plesingho falling in within the said term "they appear already to have had

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1. Essex Arch.Soc.Trans:VIII, 376 Charter (Harl. Cart. 45, D.7.) quoted by J. H. Round. On 18 Sept. 1270 an inspeximus was made of a charter of Prince Edward granting to John of Ardern various property in Ireland including "three towns near the Suke on the west in Ornithen near the land of Sir Richard de la Rokele in Clanodath" to be held "as the said Richard holds his lands in Clanodath" by the service of one knight's fee. This inspeximus was probably obtained in preparation for the coming exchange. (Calendar of Charter Rolls 1257-1300, p.149)
 2. C.P.R. 1266-72, p.483.

an interest in the manor of Willingale Doe¹. Mr. Waller also noted that the agreement contains no mention of any consideration for the grant and commented upon the inclusion of a curious provision for losses incurred by war,² probably inspired by the recent disturbances of the Barons' War. John of Colchester had of course a previous connection with Sir Richard Rockell and this grant may perhaps have been due to his influence with John of Ardern.³

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1. But an inspeximus of this agreement dated 1271 describes the property concerned as "all the manor of Wylingehale (Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1257-1300, p.165)
 2. "In case war arise within the realm of England within the said term so that they cannot take the fruits and issues of the said land, the said John and Walter may after the said three years keep the land until by the view of good men they have had satisfaction for any losses incurred thereby" (Essex Arch.Soc.Trans.XIII, 142 and C.P.R. 1266-72, p.483).
 3. Sir Richard Rockell is said by Morant to have died in 1277 (Morant, History of Essex II, 477) and his inquisition post mortem included lands in Essex and in Kent but none in Ireland. (Calendar of Inquisitions, II no.218) Richard's granddaughter, Maud however, the daughter of his son Philip was said in a proof of age on 16 June, 1301 to have been born in Ireland. The family of Rockell does not seem to have left Willingale entirely, for in 1331 John Rokle held a held a quarter of a knight's fee in Wylyngehal of Edmund, Earl of Kent (Calendar of Inquisitions Edw:III, Vol.VII, p.231)

A few years before the grant of land in Plesingho John of Colchester had been given the wardship of the land and heirs with the marriage of the heirs of Robert of Trumpington of Great Tey in Essex.^{1.} By the inquisition post mortem this land was found to consist of a messuage with land in Great Tey worth fifty five shillings and tenpence and twenty two and a half acres in Tey Godmar held of Geoffrey of Terring. The heir was Robert of Trumpington's son, another Robert, aged sixteen.^{2.}

It does not appear that John of Colchester held any benefices before his appointment as almoner; he was presented to Barton Episcopi in May, 1257^{3.} and to Crantock in Cornwall in 1258.^{4.} Crantock or St. Karentoc

1. C.P.R. 1266-72, p.42
 2. Calendar of Inquisitions Henry III, no.644. In 1284-5 Robert of Trumpington held half a carucate of land in Great Tey worth 60s., finding the king one horse and one canvas sack and one brock in his army in Wales during 40 days at his own charge. (Morant. History of Essex II, 307)
 3. 28 May, 1257, C.P.R. 1247-58, p.557.
 4. 14 Feb., 1258., Ibid, p.616.

was a collegiate church which contained ten prebends, varying in value at the time of Pope Nicholas' Taxation from 6s. 8d. to 60s. The vicar's portion was worth 40s.^{1.} In 1258 John was presented to Kirby Misperton.^{2.} This living was a rectory and in 1282 Master Ralph of Wighton was instituted as vicar on the presentation of John of Colchester.^{3.} In February, 1283-4 Archbishop Wichwane of York ordered that, on the removal of John of Colchester by death, resignation or any other means, Ralph of Wighton, the vicar should also be removed so that the church should have only one priest in future. Ralph of Wighton was to be compensated by the patrons, the abbot and convent of St. Mary's, York who were to pay him ten marks yearly until they presented him to a benefice worth twenty pounds a year.^{4.} This

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1. The Registers of Walter Bronescombe & Peter Quivil, Bishops of Exeter, p.471
 2. 19 June, 1258, C.P.R. 247-58, p.635.
 3. 25 March, 1282, Register of William Wichwane, Surtees Soc. p.127
 4. Ibid, p.296.

he was ordered to remove from custody of the hospital.
 arrangement was presumably carried out, for in
 February 1286-7 Master Thomas of Brompton was
 presented to Kirby Misperton by the abbot and
 negligent^{1.} and had conduct. The goods of the
 Convent.

In January 1261 John of Colchester was
 presented to Ebbisbourn Wake in Wiltshire^{2.} and
 in August of the same year to Kilmoon in Armagh^{3.}
 and in December, 1269 to Burgh Castle in Lothingland,
 Suffolk^{4.} In October, 1270 he was presented to
 Mayfield in Sussex^{5.} and in March, 1272 he received
 his last benefice, Monk's Eleigh in Suffolk.^{6.}

In June, 1274 John of Colchester was keeper
 of the hospital of the Holy Innocents without Lincoln;

1. Register of John le Romeyn, Surtees Soc.I, 163.
2. C.P.R., 1258-66, p.136.
3. Ibid, p.172.
4. C.P.R. 1266-72, p.399.
5. Ibid, p.468
6. Ibid. p.636.

2. V.C.H. Lincoln II, 231.

he was ordered to remove from custody of the hospital,
 1. Walter Otre to whose charge he had committed it,
 so that he might not be blamed for Walter's
 negligence and bad conduct. The goods of the
 hospital had been so wasted and dispersed that it
 was feared that the brethren might be forced to
 beg elsewhere for lack of maintenance. Shortly,
 after this John himself either resigned or was
 removed from his position as warden, for in November
 of the same year Richard of Codington, chaplain was
 appointed as keeper of the hospital "so that he
 convert all the issues to the use of the brethren
 and sisters as with their counsel he thinks best"².

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1. C.Cl.R. 1272-9, p.86. It may be noted that all John of Colchester's preferment, with the exception of the church of Willingale Doe, was given him by the king. Barton, Crantock, Ebbisbourn, Kilmoon, Burgh Castle, Mayfield and Monks' Eleigh by vacancy of the sees of Norwich, Exeter, Winchester, Armagh and Canterbury and Kirby Misperton by vacancy of the Abbey of St. Mary's, York. The hospital of the Holy Innocents, a leper hospital was in the king's gift as it had been refounded by Henry I, (Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum, VI, 627)
 2. V.C.H. Lincoln II, 231.

to this he received in 1265 a grant of houses. This hospital had been refounded and endowed by Henry I for "ten lepers, with a master and two chaplains to celebrate for the souls of the king and queen, their sons and daughters and the souls of all faithful, and one clerk to minister to the church of the hospital"¹. The finances did not recover under the rule of Richard of Codrington; licences for the brethren to beg were issued from time to time during Edward I's reign and under Edward II an inquiry into its administration became necessary.²

The reward of John of Colchester's service as almoner did not consist entirely of church preferment. As previously stated the king granted him in 1267 the wardship of the land and heir of Robert of Trumpington of Great Tey³ and in 1272 a house in the parish of St. Peter at Colchester which had belonged to Ursel, the Jew.⁴ In addition

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1. Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum, VI, 627
 2. V.C.H. Lincoln, II, 231.
 3. C.P.R. 1266-72, p.42.
 4. C.P.R. 1266-72, p.629.

to this he received in 1265 a grant of houses on the Thames, near Castle Baynard, which had belonged to William Dible, the king's enemy.¹ Although it is not expressly stated it seems probable that William Dible had lost his property for participation in the scarcely concluded struggle between the king and the barons. Another echo of this civil war is to be found in letters of protection given to Nicholas le Espigornel on testimony by John of Colchester and two others that he had never withdrawn his fealty from the king.²

A few other brief glimpses of John of Colchester's activities can be obtained from the chancery enrolments; in December, 1260 Thomas Parker of Woodstock escaped punishment for killing a deer belonging to the king on John's testimony that it had been given to the almonry.³ and a few days later John gave similar testimony on behalf of other men.⁴ In July, 1262

1. C.P.R. 1258-66 p.464.
 2. Ibid. p.442
 3. Close Rolls, 1259-61, p.319
 4. Ibid. p.320.

that this occurred some time between 1263 and 1266. He

protection was given to him on going to France with the king^{1.} and in 1264-5 he with two others was acting as executor for a certain Master J. Mans.^{2.}

A safe conduct was granted to him in 1267, allowing him to take his corn where he wished^{3.} and in 1268 he received letters of protection for one year.^{4.}

In June, 1280 a licence in mortmain was issued for Thomas le Barbour, a citizen of London to sell John of Colchester his house in the parish of St. Nicholas-in-the-Shambles for the use of the Friars Minor of London.^{5.} As a licence in mortmain was required it appears that John of Colchester was acting as the agent of the Friars in this transaction, but I have not found any other evidence to connect him with the Franciscans.

It is impossible to fix with any certainty the date of John of Colchester's death, but it seems probable

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1. C.P.R. 1258-66, p.220.
 2. Close Rolls, 1264-68, p.129.
 3. C.P.R., 1266-72, p.30.
 4. Ibid, p.204.
 5. C.P.R. 1272-81, p.381.

that this occurred some time between 1283 and 1286. He was living on 26 Feb. 1283-4 when the Archbishop's order concerning Kirby Misperton¹ was issued and in February 1286-7 Thomas of Brompton was instituted to this church, but the reason for the vacancy is not given.² The dates of presentation to his other benefices are not significant. Monks Eleigh, for example he must have resigned very soon after he received it, for in December, 1279 it was described as vacant "by the death of Master R, sometime rector".³ A new vicar was collated to the church of Crantock on 7 March 1284-5, but it seems impossible that this vacancy can have been due to Colchester's death as he was alive on 26 February.

1. See above, p.146
 2. Register of John le Romeyn, Surtees Soc. I, 163.
 3. Registrum Johannis Peckham, C.Y.S. p. 103.
 4. Master Robert Marsh, Registers of Walter Bronescombe and Peter Quivil, p.353.

The first secular clerk to become almoner in Edward I's reign was Henry of Blunsdon, almoner from 1282^{1.} to 1306.^{2.} Nothing is known of his earlier life, but it is probable that he was a native of Blunsdon in Wiltshire where he is known to have held land.^{3.} He also had land in the neighbouring villages of Upper and Lower Widhill and in West Tockham^{4.} in another part of the same county.

In addition to his Wiltshire property Blunsdon held land in many other counties as is shown by royal letters dated February, 1297, ordering the sheriffs of the counties of Southampton, Dorset,

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1. On a roll of necessaries for 1282-3 it is recorded that Henry of Blunsdon, almoner bought a horse on 2 Dec. 1282. (E 101/351/9).
 2. In the wardrobe account book for 1305-06, Henry of Blunsdon appears as almoner to the end of the regnal year, i.e. 20 Nov. 1306 (E 101/369/11).
 3. On 1 May, 1306 he received licence to alienate in mortmain land in Blunsdon St. Andrews and Blunsdon Gay and the advowson of Blunsdon St. Andrews Church (C.P.R. 1301-7, p.437).
 4. He received licence to alienate this land in mortmain in July, 1302 (C.P.R. 1301-7, p.43).

Somerset, Warwick, Essex, York, Kent and Rutland to restore his lay fees in these counties.^{1.} In 1294 he was enfeoffed of land in West Challow in Berkshire.^{2.} He had property also in London, for in April, 1300 he was granted by the king in part payment of a loan, a messuage in Dowgate, and land in the parish of St Mary Bothaw with the advowson of that church,^{3.} while in 1309 he possessed a dwelling place in St. Pancras and houses in the abbey of Westminster.^{4.} Particulars as to the property held by Blunsdon in the counties referred to above do not appear to be available, but we know that his land in Essex included fifty acres in Witham^{5.} and the

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1. Calendar of Chancery Rolls: Various, p.40. The clergy had agreed to grant a fifth to the king.
 2. Licence was given to Achard, tenant-in-chief to enfeoff Blunsdon of land and villeins in West Challow on 1 July, 1294 (C.P.R. 1292-1301 p.78)
 3. Ibid. p.507.
 4. On 5 June, 1309 he was exempted for life in respect of this property in Middlesex from livery of the king's stewards chamberlains and other ministers. (C.P.R. 1307-13 p.160).
 5. He alienated this land in mortmain to the Abbey of St. John at Colchester in 1303 (C.P.R. 1301-7 p.147)

manor of Coln Quincy which he held for life of
 1. John Wake and his wife. Moreover in 1303 he bought
 from Queen Margaret the custody of the lands and heir
 of John of Coggeshall, late of the same county.^{2.} Thus
 Blunsdon was obviously a man of substance and it is not
 surprising that towards the end of Edward I's reign,
 when the royal finances had been thrown into confusion
 by the expenses of the Scotch wars the king on several
 occasions borrowed large sums of money from him.^{3.} In
 1305 Edward of Carnarvon who was at the time out of

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1. On 22 July, 1297 a writ was issued to him as tenant of this manor, ordering him in future to do fealty for it to the king who had been enfeoffed of it and seven other manors by John and Joan Wake. (C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.296) On 14 Aug. 1297 the eight manors were regranted to John Wake and his wife (C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.303).
 2. This sale was confirmed in March, 1303 (C.P.R. 1301-7 p.121).
 3. For example on 4 April, 1300 he lent the king 400 marks. (C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.507) and between 20 May and 19 November, 1303 he lent the wardrobe sums varying from 54s. to £39.6.8. and amounting in all to £75.0.6. (wardrobe account book E 101/363/19,m.2.)

favour with his father was attempting to recover from the executors of the bishop of London the sum of fifty marks which the bishop had borrowed from Blunsdon and which the Prince wished to borrow in his turn.^{1.} He also lent £100 in 1302 to the bishop elect of Worcester towards the expenses of his enthronisation.^{2.}

Blunsdon does not seem to have held any benefice during the first years in office, perhaps not until 1293 when he became keeper of the hospital of God's House at Southampton.^{3.} In 1290 he received £2. 15. 6. in payment of his wages for a little more than three months^{4.} and he was, therefore probably unbeneficed at this time.^{5.}

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1. H. Johnstone. Letters of Edward Prince of Wales 1304-5. Roxburghe Club pp.32 and Xliii
 2. Diocese of Worcester, Registrum Sede Vacante. 1301-1435. p.52. Blunsdon was pressing the prior and convent of Worcester for repayment and they finally offered to pay in two instalments of £50. (Ibid. p.55)
 3. C.P.R. 1292-1301. p.17.
 4. Chan. Misc. 4/4 f.22.
 5. The Household Ordinance of 1318 laid down that the almoner's wages were to be 7½d. a day until he was advanced by the king. This ordinance was considered by Professor Tout to embody accepted custom and his receipt of wages may therefore indicate that Blunsdon was not yet otherwise provided for. (Tout, Place of Edward II in English History. Appendix I, p.278).

In view of Blunsdon's long connections with
 After 1293 Blunsdon acquired many benefices.
 In June, 1297 during a vacancy of the see of Salisbury he became archdeacon of Dorset;^{1.}
 April, 1297 he became warden of the House of Converts, London^{2.} and in August of the same year in he was already a canon of Salisbury cathedral.^{3.}
 In July, 1300 he received a dispensation allowing him to hold, in addition to this preferment, the churches of Gussage, Grittleton, Wotton Bassett, Hannington, Runhall, and Middleton, as well as canonries and prebends in Wells, Chichester and St. Pauls.^{4.}

1. C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.252.
 2. Ibid, p.341. This hospital had been founded for converted Jews by Henry III in 1232 and rebuilt by Edward I who continued to take a great interest in it. (R. M. Clay The Medieval Hospitals of England, p.20). The numbers of its inmates declined considerably after the expulsion of the Jews in 1290.
 3. C.P.R. 1292-1301, p:303.
 4. C.P.L. 1198-1304, p.588.

In view of Blunsdon's lay connections with Wiltshire it is interesting to notice how much of his preferment was in that part of the country. Hannington, Grittleton, Wotton Bassett, Gussage and Gillingham, to which he was presented in 1306^{1.} are all in the see of Salisbury, the first three in Wiltshire and the last two in Dorset. Hannington and Wotton Bassett soon passed out of Blunsdon's hands^{2.} but the number of his benefices caused Dr. J. C. Cox, who wrote an account of the hospital of God's House, Southampton in the Victoria County History to deplore with some justice his appointment as warden. He says:- "Warden Bluntesdon, a favourite of the king, seems to have been the first non-resident warden. The scandal of giving the chief emoluments of hospitals, founded for the poor and infirm to men who rarely, if ever, visited the house, over which

1. Registrum Simonis de Gandavo. C.Y.S., p.685.
 2. John, son of Reginald became rector of Hannington in 1301 (Ibid. p.607) and William of Handley of Wotton Bassett in 1302. (Ibid. p.623.)

were supposed to preside because, alas the rule and not the exception.^{1.}

In Blunsdon's case this criticism is not wholly deserved, for although non-resident, he seems nevertheless to have taken interest in the affairs both of this hospital and the House of Converts and to have had some knowledge of their needs. For example in July, 1294, the king granted him oaks for the repair of beds in God's House^{2.} and in 1298 the mayor and sheriffs of London were ordered to help him in recovering rents due to the House of Converts,^{3.} while a similar order was issued to the mayor and bailiffs of Oxford in 1300.^{4.}

Blunsdon was a charitable and religious man. Between 1302 and 1306 he received licence to alienate land to the church on three occasions. The first was

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1. V.C.H. Hampshire, II, 203.
 2. C.Cl.R. 1288-96. p.354.
 3. C.P.R. 1292-1301. p.345.
 4. Ibid. p.491.

July, 1302 concerning a grant of land in West
 Tockham to the prior and convent of Bradenstoke in
 Wiltshire;^{1.} the next in June, 1303, with regard to a
 hundred and twenty five acres of land in Witham, Essex
 to be given to the abbey of St. John at Colchester;^{2.}
 the third in May, 1306 as to land and rent in Blunsdon
 St. Andrews and Blunsdon Gay and Upper and Lower Widhill
 in Wiltshire with the advowson of the church of
 Blunsdon St. Andrews to endow three chaplains to
 celebrate mass in that church for his soul and the
 souls of the faithful departed.^{3.} Blunsdon continued to
 serve the king until the end of his reign and was one
 of his executors.^{4.} By that time he must have been an
 old man, for in 1309 an order was made that he should
 not be harassed with his business as an executor of the
 late king on account of his age and infirmity.^{5.}

1. C.P.R. 1301-7 p.43.
 2. Ibid. p.147.
 3. Ibid. p.437.
 4. Tout. Chapters, II. 48, n.2.
 5. C.P.R. 1309-13 p.107.

He spent the last years of his life in retirement at Salisbury, probably choosing to live in that part of England with which he was most closely associated. In 1314 he petitioned the archbishop of York by a proctor that he might be excused from residence at Cropton and Lockton in his parish of Middleton in that diocese, because of his age and infirmity and the fact that he was living at Salisbury. The date of his death is uncertain, but as he was already infirm in 1309 it may not have been long delayed after 1314. Nothing can be deduced with certainty from the dates at which his benefices became vacant, as he resigned some of them long before 1314,² but it is perhaps worth notice that a new warden was appointed at God's House, Southampton in 1316.³ It is at least certain that Blunsdon was dead before 1333, for in July of that year an inquisition ad quod damnum was held in

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1. Register of William Greenfield, Surtees Soc. p.155.
 2. e.g. the churches of Hannington and Wotton Bassett (see p. 157 n. 2. above). Moreover in 1307 Adam of Osgodby became keeper of the House of Converts (V.C.H. London I, 553).
 3. V.C.H. Hampshire III, p.205.

connection with the desire of John of Tyringham^m and James of Groundwell to grant ten pounds of rent in Wellow^{1.} to St. Mary's, Salisbury for a daily mass for the souls of Edward I and Henry of Blunsdon.^{2.} This inquisition supplies further evidence of his connection with the Blunsdons, for Groundwell is a part of the parish of Little Blunsdon^{3.} and it is stated that, besides the rent to be alienated, James of Groundwell holds a messuage and a carucate in Groundwell.^{4.}

1. In Wiltshire, a few miles from Salisbury.
2. Wiltshire Inquisitions Post Morte^m for Edward III.
E.A.Fry. p.97.
3. Calendar of Inquisitions Post Morte^m, VIII, p.614.
A list of chantry furniture bought by Thomas Chafyn of Mere after the spoliation of the chantries included the following items from "Blunsdon's chantry within Our Ladye Church of Sarum":-
"A chalyce of sylver weighing xii ounces
Foure olde vestments of lyttle valewe wherof lackyth one albe and two amyses.
Three corporasses with the lases, of lytel valewe
A masse-boke, ii cruetts, one of pewter, the other of glasse."
(J.E.Jackson "Wiltshire Chantry Furniture"
Wilts Magazine Vol.22, 318)
4. See above n.2.

The first almoner of Edward II's reign was John of Leek, a secular clerk who held office from 1307^{1.} to 1309^{2.} and who had previously been in the royal service for some years. He first appears in the records of the royal household in 1296 when he was one of the king's chaplains and was a good deal employed on the business of the wardrobe. An account rendered by him for November and December, 1296 is preserved in the Chancery Miscellanea;^{3.} he handled large sums of money, for the totals of receipts and expenses each exceed eight hundred pounds, but some of the money entered here probably did not pass through Leek's hands. For example the sum of forty nine pounds, eighteen shillings and sixpence is entered as a receipt from Master Hugh Despenser for a vessel of silver, sold by Master John of Droxford, by the hands of Adam of Harrowdon and Thomas of Cross, merchants on 6 Dec.

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1. He received a prest on his wages on 6 Nov. 1307. (E 101/373/15, f.7).
 2. He is last mentioned as almoner in a chancery warrant dated 19 Dec. 1309 (Calendar of Chancery Warrants 1244-1326. p.306).
 3. Chan. Misc. 4/7.

The same amount is entered as paid to Master John of Hustwayt "by the hands of Thomas Cross, merchant receiving the money from Master Hugh Despenser who owed it to Master John of Droxford for the silver which was sold to him on 1 December".^{1.} These are evidently mere bookkeeping entries and do not represent the passage of money through the hands of John of Leek. Most of the entries are, however of small sums, paid as prests on offices, for the expenses of messengers and other servants of the wardrobe and household, for the carriage of all kinds of supplies and the manifold other small household expenses.

Leek was probably a satisfactory and competent servant for he was shortly afterwards appointed as one of the clerks of Edward of Carnarvon's household^{2.} and in 1302 had become the almoner of this prince.^{3.}

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1. Chan. Misc. 4/7 f.1. Much of the financial business of the wardrobe and exchequer was conducted in this way. See Tout, Chapters II and C. Johnson The System of Account in the Wardrobe of Edward I. Transactions Royal Historical Society. Series 4 Vol.VI. p.54.
 2. He first occurs in this capacity in 1300 (E 101/360/17).
 3. E 101/363/18 f.3.

He retained office in the same capacity when that household ceased to be the court of a prince and became that of a king. By this time he had already received several benefices; in September, 1303 he was parson of the church of Tankersley,^{1.} in November, 1305 he was presented to the church of St. Peter at Northampton^{2.} and in September, 1307 he was appointed precentor of St. Patrick's church, Dublin.^{3.} In view of this preferment it seems strange that in November, 1307 he should receive fifty shillings for his wages as almoner,^{4.} and it may perhaps suggest that the custom of paying the almoner's wages only until he was advanced by the king was not at this time very firmly established.^{5.}

After 1307 he received several other benefices; in 1308 he was granted the church of Great Lynford,

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1. Calendar of Chancery Rolls, Various p.72.
 2. C.P.R. 1301-7. p.395.
 3. C.P.R. 1307-13 p.6.
 4. E 101/373/15 f.7.
 5. See above p. 155 n.5

I have not found any record of the granting of this dispensation nor of Leek's petition, but it may be surmised that Leek's request was for a dispensation legalising his pluralism.

but this he surrendered,^{1.} he was presented to the church of Denham probably in the same year^{2.} and before July, 1309 he became a canon of Dunkeld cathedral.^{3.} In May, 1308 Edward II sent a letter to the Pope,^{4.} asking him to grant to John of Leek a dispensation according to the form contained in the letter which Leek himself had written to the Pope.^{5.}

This letter contains high praise of John of Leek and clearly shows that Edward was anxious to

1. C.P.R. 1307-13 p.135.
2. The letter patent relating to this presentation is enrolled among those of 1308, but bears no date. (C.P.R. 1307-13 p.35).
3. Calendar of Chancery Warrants. 1244-1326. p.294.
4. Rymer, Foedera (1816) I, ii,987 and Ibid. II, i,46. Rymer prints this letter twice, once under 1306, as if written by Edward I and again under 1308. On the first occasion he refers it to the Roman Roll for 34 - 35 Edward I m.I. and on the second to the Roman Roll for I - 3 Edward II m.I. I have found the original on the roll for 34 - 35 Edward I, but it is dated 1308 and was obviously written by Edward II. The Chancery clerks were presumably in arrears with this series of enrolments and the letter was enrolled by mistake under the wrong reign.
5. I have not found any record of the granting of this dispensation nor of Leek's petition, but it may be surmised that Leek's request was for a dispensation legalising his pluralism.

do all he could to help him in his suit to the Pope. After referring to the numerous occasions on which the king has previously petitioned the Pope on behalf of his clerks and the great condescension and kindness which the Pope has shown him in this way the letter runs:-

"Attendentes itaque vitae meritum morumque honestatem, quibus dilectus nobis Johannes de Leek, elemosinarius noster esse dinoscitur insignitus; necnon labores multiplices quos a nostrae primaevae aetatis exordio in nostris subiit obsequiis; digne credimus agere si vota ipsius votivis praeveniamus affectibus operamque studiosam impendamus ut sui commodi et honoris incrementum sedulo procuremus"

In 1309 Matthew, bishop of Dunkeld died and on 18 July, 1309 the king issued a warrant

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1. Rymer, Foedera (1816) II, i, 46.
 2. C. Eubel. Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi. I 232.

ordering letters to be sent to Thomas of Jorz^{1.} the English Cardinal, explaining that licence to elect a new bishop had been given to the chapter of Dunkeld which had failed to reach an agreement. In this divided election the rival candidates were John of Leek and William of St. Clare, and the cardinal was therefore asked to prevent the latter from being heard in the Curia.^{2.} Edward II seems to have been anxious that Leek should obtain the bishopric, for in addition to this letter to the English cardinal he very quickly notified the Pope of his own consent to Leek's election and on 28 Aug sent letters to the Pope recommending his protégé to him as bishop of Dunkeld.^{3.} In December

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1. Calendar of Chancery Warrants, 1244-1326. p.294. Thomas of Jorz was an English Dominican, who became Cardinal of St. Sabine in December, 1305 and who died at Grenoble in 1310. Before his appointment as Cardinal he had been the confessor of Edward I, and it may be noted that Edward's previous confessor, William of Winterburn, another English Dominican had preceded him in his cardinalate. (C. Eubel. Hierarchia Catholica medii Aevi. I. 13 & 14)
 2. Calendar of Chancery Warrants. 1244-1326 p.294.
 3. Rymer Foedera (1816) I,ii,46.

he gave Leek who was still his almoner, a safe conduct for one year that he might go overseas, on the business of his election.^{1.} In the same month he appointed Leek as his proctor to receive the books, vestments and chapel ornaments of Matthew, late bishop of Dunkeld,^{2.} evidently anticipating that the election would be confirmed. It was at about this time that Leek gave up his post as almoner, perhaps in expectation of his preferment.^{3.} But during 1310 no further trace of this matter appears in the English records. Leek probably spent this year at the papal court, ingratiating himself with the Pope and cardinals and trying to obtain a favourable decision.

In November, 1310 Richard of Havering, Archbishop of Dublin resigned his see to become a papal chaplain^{4.} and the Pope provided as his successor, John of Leek.

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1. C.P.R. 1307-1313 p.202.
 2. Ibid, p.203.
 3. Leek is last mentioned as almoner on 19 December, 1309 (Calendar of Chancery Warrants 1244-1326 p.386) and Bernard of Kirkby, his successor occurs as almoner for the first time on 27 July 1310. (E 101/374/7).
 4. C.P.L. 1305-42, p.80.

On 21 February, 1311 Leek was described as archbishop elect¹ and was formally provided on 18 May.² Leek apparently had need of money at this time, perhaps owing to the payment of first fruits for on February 21 he was given faculties by the Pope to borrow two sums of eight hundred and seven hundred marks "to meet his expenses at the apostolic see",³ while Edward II, to relieve Leek's financial embarrassment conferred on him the great honour of ordering debts due to him from John of Hustwait, a royal clerk to be paid before those due to the king himself.⁴ Edward, therefore although not actively concerned in advancing Leek to the see of Dublin was nevertheless still desirous of promoting his interests. This particular privilege however was accompanied by a permission, probably equivalent to a definite command for the new archbishop to stay at the Papal Court until the next General Council,⁵ "wherein he may be of use to the king".⁶

1. C.P.L. 1305-42, p.82.

2. Ibid. p.83.

3. Ibid. p.82.

4. Calendar of Chancery Warrants. 1244-1326 p.360.

5. This was the Council of Vienne which decreed the dissolution of the Order of the Temple.

6. Calendar of Chancery Warrants. 1244-1326 p.360.

The situation in Dublin at this time is summed up in the preliminaries of a mandate, issued on 1 June, 1311¹ for letters to be sent to the Pope about the vacancy of the see. It appears that when the chapter of Holy Trinity and St. Patrick's, Dublin heard of the resignation of Richard of Havering they had proceeded to choose a successor and elected by way of inspiration Alexander of Bicknor, a king's clerk. This they had told the king by their letters, but heard later that the Pope, because the resignation had occurred in his court, had provided the churches with a new archbishop, and as Alexander of Bicknor wished to be obedient to the Pope, they were unwilling to contest the appointment. The nobility, clergy and people of Ireland however had informed the king that in the state of Ireland and the condition of the diocese of Dublin, which was "much depressed by many long vacancies and because those who have been made archbishop by the Popes have not come or stayed there" it would be greatly to the general advantage if Bicknor could be appointed so that the see might be looked after "and the peace of the land well

1. Calendar of Chancery Warrants. 1244-1326 p.365.

guarded by one who was acquainted with those parts". In consequence of this the king ordered letters to be sent to the Pope "praying him to have regard to the unanimity of the election and the devotion of the said clerk, and suffer him to sue the election, recommending the said clerk as well as possible in the letters.^{1.} This order seems at first sight to make the king's position in this affair a little ambiguous, but it may be pointed out that the warrant was issued on 1 June when Leek's appointment as archbishop was already almost a fortnight old, and anything that the king did in the matter would be too late to have effect in Avignon, while serving to conciliate the baronage in Ireland. On 5 April the king had sent to the Pope thanking him for having promoted John of Leek to the archbishopric of Dublin.^{2.}

It seems that Leek was yet another absentee archbishop; in November, 1311 he was granted protection

1. Calendar of Chancery Warrants. 1244-1326 p.365.
 2. Rymer, Foedera I,ii,132.

in Ireland while he stayed abroad at the Council of Vienne;^{1.} on 27 December attorneys were appointed for him in Ireland for two years^{2.} and in May, 1312 the Pope gave him an indult, in consideration of the disturbed state of his diocese to visit it by deputy for three years while receiving visitation fees.^{3.} Later in the same year the king gave him letters of protection in Ireland while he stayed in England on the royal service^{4.} and before 8 August 1313 he was dead.^{5.} Thus most of his archiepiscopate had been spent either at the Papal court or on the service of Edward II in England, a fact not likely to reconcile the Irish to the provision of papal nominees to the archbishopric of Dublin.

He was evidently regarded favourably by the Pope, for on 13 July, 1312 he was granted numerous privileges

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1. C.P.R. 1307-13 p.400.
 2. Ibid. p.413
 3. C.P.L. 1305-42 p.102.
 4. C.P.R. 1307-13. p.492.
 5. A letter was issued on 8 Aug. accepting a collation to a benefice in the diocese of Dublin made by John, the late archbishop. (C.P.R. 1313-17, p.11)

1. C.P.L. 1305-42. p.102.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. See also Erskine, History of the Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, II, 11-12, p.713.

mainly in relation to his archbishopric¹. Among these was a faculty "to absolve persons of his diocese who in the frequent fights that go on there have been guilty of killing or wounding and thereby have incurred sentences from which they could ordinarily be freed only by going to the Pope."² This seems to bear out the statements of the chapters of Holy Trinity and St. Patrick's as to the condition of the country and to show that there was some justification for their desire to have a resident archbishop. The Pope also granted that no papal legate should excommunicate him for three years and that he might dispose of his personal property by will. Perhaps the most important of the favours granted to him at this time was the issue of a statute establishing a university of scholars in Dublin. This statute was said to be issued on the archbishop's petition in which it had been pointed out that "doctors and bachelors in the study of theology and masters in grammar and arts have no university of scholars in Ireland, West Scotland or Norway, so that in these parts there are few literate persons"³. This attempt to

1. C.P.L. 1305-42. p.102.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. See also Rashdall, History of the Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages. II, pt. II, p.719.

found a university in Dublin seems to show that Leek, although non-resident had some interest in his diocese and a desire to improve the condition of his see as well as an interest in the spread of learning. This project, however did not flourish and the archbishop died a year later without having done anything further towards setting up a university. It remained in abeyance during the long vacancy of the see which followed Leek's death and was revived by Alexander of Bicknor, who became archbishop in succession to Leek, in 1320.^{1.}

It seems that even after his elevation to the see of Dublin Leek continued to serve the king, although I have not been able to discover in what capacity. The protection of September, 1312 already referred to describes him as staying in England on the king's services^{2.}

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1. Rashdall, History of the Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages. II, pt. II, p. 719. The university did not flourish even after this. Rashdall includes it in the Appendix to Vol. II which he calls "Paper Universities" and says that although at various times during the fourteenth century there were a few students it never really came into being. Neither he nor Dr. d'Irsay in the Histoire des Universités think it worth inclusion in their academic maps.
 2. C.P.R. 1307-13 p. 492.

one who had risen higher in the household and received a greater reward. Most of the business which he had to and the Pope, in exempting him from the necessity of visiting his diocese makes reference to his "arduous occupations"¹. presumably in the service of Edward II. On 20 May, 1313 the king created him Treasurer of the Exchequer at Dublin². and on 22 May certain persons were pardoned at his request and lands, alienated by the previous archbishop were restored to him as a special favour.³ But Leek did not live long to enjoy these grants. Between 26 July and 8 August, 1313 he died.⁴ It is interesting to note that Leek's executor was the famous Walter Reynolds,⁵ bishop of Worcester, and later archbishop of Canterbury, who had served in the household of Edward II as Prince of Wales and as the king, a civil servant of the same type as Leek, but

1. C.P.L. 1305-42. p.102.
 2. C.P.R. 1307-13. p.585
 3. C.P.R. 1313-17. p.595.
 4. On 26 July, a mandate was sent to him to induct a clerk into a benefice (C.P.R. 1313-17 p.4.) and on 8 August he was referred to as "John, late archbishop of Dublin" (C.P.R. 1313-17. p.11).
 5. C.P.R. 1313-17 p.13.

one who had risen higher in the household and received a greater reward. Most of the business which he had to supervise as executor was in connection with the "great and divers debts"¹ which the king claimed from the archbishop's estate and to attend to this matter in Ireland, Reynolds, on 25 August, 1313 appointed Walter of Thornbury and John of Clifton as his attorneys.² On 20 August the king had ordered the barons of the exchequer at Dublin to cause the archbishop's bailiff and reeves to render their accounts to the exchequer so that these debts could be levied.³ At the same time he ordered the archbishop's goods and chattels in Ireland to be sold and his debts collected, the money thus obtained to be kept safely, "according to the directions of Walter of Thornbury and John of Clifton whom the king has appointed to supervise the premises."⁴ On 1 September the king ordered that the goods and money of the late archbishop which he had commanded to be taken into his hands should now be delivered to Walter Reynolds "for the execution of the archbishop's will, charging the debts due to the king from

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1. C.Cl.R. 1313-18. p.11.
 2. C.P.R. 1313-17 p.13.
 3. C.Cl.R. 1313-18 p.11.
 4. Ibid.

him upon his successors¹. On 29 October the king ordered Leek's goods in Yorkshire to be taken into his hands for the levying of his debts,² but it is evident from his dealings with his almoner's property in Ireland that he did not wish to press hardly upon his estate.

Leek's private and territorial connections are very much less well defined than those of Blunsdon. He may have been born at Leek in the hundred of Totmonslow in Staffordshire, for he is known to have held land in that county,³ but it is possible that he was a native of Leek Wotton in Warwickshire. There is however no evidence that he had any connection with this county. He held land in Yorkshire at the time of his death and in December, 1307 he had granted to the abbot and convent of Kirkstall the rent payable for land which they held

1. C.Cl.R. 1313-18, p.11.
 2. Rymer, Foedera (1816) II,i,232.
 3. On 13 May, 1313 John of Leek, Archbishop of Dublin acknowledged a debt of £91.5.0. which was to be levied of his lands in Co.Stafford in default of payment. (C.Cl.R.1307-13, p.581).

of him in Broughton in the North Riding¹. In addition to these possessions he held land in King's Langley granted to him by the king sometime before 2 March 1310.²

This was the entire extent of his landed property so far as it appears in the records of the time and it may easily be seen that his position was very different from that of Blunsdon. He was to a far greater extent dependent on his promotion in the king's service, as he was a much less important personage apart from his official position, so that he corresponds more closely than his predecessor to the usual type of household official of his day.

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1. C.P.R. 1307-13. p.24.
 2. On 2 March, 1310 the king granted to William of Melton one acre of land in Langley adjacent to that previously granted to John of Leek and Ingelard of Warley (C.P.R. 1307-13. p.212.)

Bernard of Kirkby succeeded Leek in 1310. Our earliest information shows him as one of the vicars of the great collegiate church of Beverley in 1303.^{1.} He continued to fill this position until 1307, when he resigned in order to become one of the king's chaplains.^{2.} The organisation of the church of Beverley was peculiar in that the lands, appropriated to the different prebends were very scattered so that the prebends were known not by territorial titles, but by the names of the various altars in the church.^{3.} Each of these prebendal altars carried with it a cure of souls and was served by the vicar choral of the prebend who acted also as the parochial vicar.^{4.} Kirkby seems to have been vicar choral of St. Martin's prebend, the richest and most important in the church before his resignation in 1307.^{5.}

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1. Memorials of Beverley Minster, The Chapter Act Book. ed. A. F. Leach. Surtees Society, I, 18.
 2. On 31 Oct. 1307 John of Nassington presented John of Swine to the vicar choralship of his prebend on the resignation of Bernard of Kirkby, chaplain of Edward II. Ibid I, 211.
 3. V.C.H. Yorkshire, III, 354.
 4. Ibid. I, 355.
 5. John of Nassington appeared before the auditor of the chapter of Beverley on 31 October, 1307 to announce Kirkby's resignation and to appoint his successor. Memorials of Beverley Minster, The Chapter Act Book. ed. A.F. Leach, Surtees Society, I, 211)

yet in 1305 a certain Roger was described as
"perpetuus vicarius altaris Beati Martini et capellae
 Beatae Mariae eidem altaris annexae"^{1.} The vicar of
 St. Martin's prebend had to keep assistant priests
 both in the chapel of St. Mary's attached to the
 prebend and in the chapel of St. Martin's altar^{2.}
 and it is possible that Kirkby in 1305 may have
 occupied one of these subordinate positions under
 "Roger the perpetual vicar." It seems certain however,
 that at the time of his resignation Kirkby was the vicar
 choral of St. Martin's, for John of Nassington, canon
 of this prebend called him "suus vicarius" in announcing
 his resignation and John of Swine, his successor was
 definitely spoken of as vicar choral of Nassington's
 prebend.^{3.} Kirkby was also at some time the chaplain
 of the chantry of the brotherhood of St. Nicholas in
 Beverley Minster, for in 1311 when a dispute arose
 as to the right of presentation to this chantry the
 chapter of Beverley asserted that it had always

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1. Memorials of Beverley Minster, The Chapter Act Book.
 ed. A.F. Leach. Surtees Society I, 57.
 2. Who, however were only called parish chaplains.
Ibid. I, lxxxii.
 3. Ibid. I, 211.

exercised the right of presentation and in proof of this drew up a list of the chaplains thus presented. Among them is Bernard of Kirkby, but there is no indication of the date at which the presentation was made.^{1.} This was the oldest and most valuable chantry in Beverley Minster^{2.} so that Kirkby's total income must have been fairly large. By an ordinance of 1269 the vicar of St. Martin's prebend was to receive "the annuals and trigintals with legacies and Lenten tithes worth twenty marks" and the pence offered at the altar worth five marks a year in addition to a stipend of ten marks from the canon. Out of this, however, he had to pay clerks to serve the chapel of St. Mary's and St. Martin's altar itself^{3.} and his stipend may have been paid rather irregularly, for in 1302 the archbishop had found it necessary to order the canons to pay their vicars choral promptly on pain of double pay for each day in arrears.^{4.}

John of Nassington, canon of St. Martin's prebend^{5.} from July, 1304 was also the official of the archbishop's

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1. Memorials of Beverley Minster, The Chapter Act Book, ed. A.F. Leach. Surtees Society, I. 288.
 2. Ibid I, Lxxiv.
 3. Ibid. I, 194.
 4. Ibid. II, XL.
 5. On 4 June 1304 John of Nassington appointed proctors to take possession of his prebend. (Ibid. I, 19)

Court at York,^{1.} and probably had many duties to keep him away from Beverley so that as in most of the Beverley prebends the obligations in connection with the Minster services and the parochial duties would be largely performed by the vicar or his assistants. But Kirkby himself, although certainly resident at Beverley at the beginning and end of 1305,^{2.} was away during the greater part of the next year; in September, 1306 he was carrying the standard of St. John of Beverley with the king^{3.} on his last journey to Scotland to subdue the rebellion of Robert Bruce. This expedition had started north in July and Kirkby probably joined it soon after. He seems never to have resided at Beverley again.^{4.} He remained with the Scottish

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1. Memorials of Beverley Minster, The Chapter Act Book, ed. A.F. Leach. Surtees Society. I, 136. Archbishop Greenfield sent to the Canons of Beverley, explaining this and requesting that he should nevertheless receive the income of the prebend.
 2. He was present in chapter on 11 Jan. (Ibid. I, 26) and on 6 Feb. (Ibid. I, 52) and on 17 Nov. (Ibid. I, 101), on 9 Sept. he was one of a commission appointed to inquire into the state of buildings belonging to the chapter (Ibid. I, 92) and on 20 Nov. was a witness to an admonition to one of the canons (Ibid. I, 99)
 3. On 17 Sept. and 19 Nov. he received prests on his expenses for this purpose at Thirlwall (E 101/368/27, f.45v).
 4. On 28 November, 1306 while he was still in Scotland, a proxy was appointed in the names of all the vicars, including Kirkby to act for them in matters arising out of a visitation by the Archbishop of York. (Memorials of Beverley Minister, The Chapter Act Book, ed. A.F. Leach, Surtees Society I, 173)

expedition until its end, after the death of Edward I^{1.} and appears to have attracted the notice of Edward II at this time, as an entry in a book of prests for 1307-8 records that he was kept with the court during September, 1307 to celebrate mass for the king during the absence of his chaplain.^{2.} He apparently became a royal chaplain almost immediately after this^{3.} and served in this capacity for almost three years, till, in the course of 1310, he became almoner.^{4.}

On 20 November, 1309 he was granted "the grace pertaining to the king for one of his clerks" on the

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1. Wages were paid to him for his attendance with the standard of St. John up to the end of August, 1307. (E 1 01/369/16. f.17 and E 101/373/15, f.11). It is interesting to notice that the last of these payments distinguishes between attendance at the war, paid for at the rate of 12d a day and at a distance, paid for at 7½d. a day.
 2. Ibid.
 3. See above p.179 n.2.
 4. He is first mentioned as almoner on 27 July, 1310. (E 101/374/7, f.4.)

creation of a new prior of Lenton^{1.} and in December of the same year he was presented to the living of Brauncewell,^{2.} but this he resigned in February, 1310.^{3.} Kirkby does not appear to have received further preferment until 21 March, 1312 when the king presented him to the living of Norton-iuxta-Billingham during a vacancy of the bishopric of Durham.^{4.} The archbishop of York, however disputed the king's right of presentation to Norton, claiming it himself as metropolitan of the see of Durham. On 16 February, 1312 the king issued a writ taking back from the archbishop of York the right of presentation to Norton^{5.} and on 25 February once more granted the vicarage to Kirkby.^{6.} Two days later the archbishop of York appeared before him to answer on the plea that he should allow the king "presentare idoneam personam ad vicariam ecclesiae de Norton-juxta-Billingham".^{7.} The

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1. Calendar of Chancery Warrants. 1244-1326. p.305.
 2. C.P.R. 1307-13. p.202.
 3. Ibid. p.206.
 4. Ibid. p.335.
 5. Reg. Pal. Dun. II, 841.
 6. C.P.R. 1307-13, p.432.
 7. Reg. Pal. Dun. II, 842.

archbishop declared that the right of presentation to Norton was a spiritual function of the bishop of Durham and therefore, during a vacancy of the see passed to himself as the bishop's spiritual superior. On behalf of the king it was argued that the advowson of Norton was a lay possession and passed to the king as the bishop's lay superior. It was pointed out that a dispute arising from the previous presentation had been pleaded in a lay court and this argument apparently settled the matter for

1. "predictus archiepiscopus nihil respondet in hac parte" and judgment was given for the king. This affair however was not yet closed, for on 5 March, 1312 an inquisition was ordered into the right of presentation to Norton, its value and the length of time it had been vacant. 2. On 10 March Kirkby was admitted to the vicarage, "saving all rights whatsoever which appertain to the bishop," 3. but at the same time a commission was issued for the sequestration of the fruits of the vicarage and an

1. Reg. Pal. Dun. II, 842.
 2. Ibid I, 158.
 3. Ibid. 157.

inquiry into its value.^{1.} From an entry in the Durham Register on 22 March it seems that the vicarage was already in the possession of a certain Ralph of Dalton, here described as vicar of Norton.^{2.} The bishop of Durham ordered that the sequestration of Dalton's goods should be relaxed but that he should give satisfaction in the investigation to be made by the bishop.^{3.} This order was followed by a further mandate, notifying the sequestrators of the relaxation and ordering them to give satisfaction to Ralph of Dalton "possessioni vicariae de Norton incumbendis" for what they have used during the sequestration.^{4.} It does not appear that these orders can have taken effect for on the following day the custody of the sequestered fruits of the vicarage was granted to John of Norton who received at the same time a commission from the bishop to cause Ralph of Dalton to show cause why Bernard of Kirkby should not enter into possession of the vicarage.^{5.} The matter seems

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1. Reg. Pal. Dun. I, 158.
 2. Ibid. 166-7.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid. I, 175.

now to have been finally settled, for on 3 April, 1312 Kirkby was formally instituted as vicar^{1.} and Ralph of Dalton gave no further trouble.

Kirkby had received his vicarage "cu^m onere curae ac perpetuae personalis residentiae"^{2.}, clearly an impossibility while he acted as king's almoner. There is in the Durham Register an undated copy of a letter from the king to the bishop of Durham, asking him to change the terms on which Kirkby held his benefice so that he could follow the king, instead of being held to perpetual residence.^{3.} Another entry, also undated appears to be part of the same correspondence and thanks the bishop for the favour he had shown to Kirkby.^{4.} It seems that these two letters must belong to the summer of 1312 as the bishop's permission to Bernard not to reside was superseded by a papal bull issued in September of that year giving permission to Kirkby to enjoy the fruits of his vicarage of Norton without the obligation of personal residence.^{5.} An order was sent

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1. Reg. Pal. Dun. I, 172.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid. IV, 506.
 4. Ibid.; 530.
 5. C.P.L. 1305-42, p.102.

with this bull to Walter Reynolds, bishop of Worcester, to see that it was carried out^{1.} and it was presented to the bishop of Durham on 9 January, 1313.^{2.} Kirkby was ordered in the bull to provide a sufficient vicar to undertake the cure of souls, but I have not found evidence that this was done. As king's almoner Kirkby had been receiving sevenpence halfpenny a day^{3.} or eleven pounds, eight and sixpence a year, and the vicarage of Norton was valued at thirteen pounds

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1. In Reynold's episcopal register it is recorded that Bernard presented to the bishop two documents, one the bull itself and one letter to Reynolds, ordering its execution. The bull was to remain in Kirkby's possession, but Reynolds might have a copy made if he wished. Both documents are then given. The two others named as responsible for the execution of the Pope's orders are the Abbot of Westminster and Roger Wodale, Canon of Dunblane. (Worcs. Hist.Soc. Publications, The Register of Walter Reynolds, Bishop of Worcester, p.57) The Durham Register in recording receipt of the Pope's orders gives also a covering letter from Walter Reynolds, who alone appears to have acted in the matter. (Reg.Pal.Dun.I, 274).
 2. Ibid. 269.
 3. E 101/374/5. f. 30.

a year in 1306,^{1.} so that his income was slightly increased by his preferment^{2.} although it must have been inferior to those of his predecessors in office. Although not resident in his benefice Kirkby seems to have been closely connected with the see of Durham; in November, 1316 he was entrusted with the mission of carrying the seal for the vacancy of the see to the king on the death of Richard Kellawe, the bishop^{3.} and he later received presentation to a second benefice in the same diocese.^{4.} From 19 March, 1320 he ceased to act as almoner^{5.} although he seems to have continued to serve in the

1. The churches of the see of Durham appear to have been reassessed for taxation in 1306 owing to a fall in value caused by Scottish raids. The church of Norton was collegiate, and was well endowed. The vicarage was valued at £20 under the old assessment and at £13 under the new. The prebends had fallen from £6 to £4. (Reg. Pal. Dun. III, 88 and 101). See also V.C.H. Durham III, 313-4.

2. If, however he appointed a vicar as enjoined by the dispensation for non residence, he can scarcely have benefited.

3. C.Cl.R. 1313-18, p.439.

4. See below p.190.

5. B.M. Add. MS. 17362, ff.4 & 5.

royal household, for during 1322 he received a prest in the wardrobe of three pounds, seventeen shillings and fourpence^{1.} and in 1328 he, in company with several others received forty two shillings for "staying by the body of the late king at Gloucester"^{2.} This seems to indicate some measure of devotion on his part to Edward II although it is impossible to say precisely what service it implies. In 1322 he was described as rector of the church of St. Nicholas, Durham,^{3.} and after 1328 he presumably retired to that diocese, as he appears no more in the accounts of the household. He was still rector of St. Nicholas in 1335^{4.} when he was granted protection for one year. St. Nicholas was assessed at five pounds, ten shillings a year in 1306^{5.} and as there is no indication that he received any further preferment, his income must altogether have been rather less than twenty pounds a year. In comparison with the preferment given to Blunsdon

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1. Enrolled Foreign Accounts, Wardrobe and Household. E.361/2 m.20.
 2. E 101/383/8 f.11v^o.
 3. He was described as rector of St. Nicholas when he received a prest in the wardrobe in 1322 (See
 4. C.P.R. 1334-8. p.101.
 5. See above p.189. n.1

and Leek, this seems a surprisingly small reward for Kirkby's ten years' service as almoner and twenty years of connection with the royal household.^{1.}

He died probably in 1335, in which year a new vicar was appointed to Norton.^{2.}

Kirkby was succeeded in office by the friars, Philip of Baston and Richard of Ipswich whose careers have already been described. In 1323 the office again passed to a secular clerk, John of Denton, Edward II's last almoner.^{3.} There is some difficulty in tracing Denton's career, as there was at least one other clerk of the same name in the king's service at the time. Entries on the Close and Patent Rolls referring to John of Denton, "dilectus clericus noster" without further detail may therefore deal either with the

1. He became a royal chaplain in 1307 (Memorials of Beverley Minister, The Chapter Act Book, ed. A.F. Leach Surtees Society, I, 211), and did not sever his connection with the royal household till the death of Edward II (E 101/383/8, f.11v^o).
2. William of Stafford is said to have become vicar in 1335. (D.S. Boutflower, Fasti Dunelmenses, Surtees Society, p.122).
3. John of Denton appears as almoner for the first time on 29 Oct. 1323 (E 101/379/19 f.1.).

career of the king's almoner or with that of John of Denton, clerk of the works at Westminster in 1322.^{1.} Where there is no positive evidence to the contrary, such entries have been treated as referring to the almoner.

In 1317 John of Denton was presented to the church of Wotton Bassett in Wiltshire by the elder Hugh Despenser^{2.} and in 1318 to the living of Salletwarpe in Worcestershire by the king.^{3.} In 1322 he was presented to the church of Loughborough in the diocese of Lincoln^{4.}

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1. E 101/325/9 m.2.
 2. Institutiones Clericorum in Comitatu Wiltonie, T. Phillips, p.15. This benefice had been held by Henry of Blunsdon, whose successor William of Handley resigned it in 1318. Denton appears to have resigned it in 1322, for a new presentation was made in that year. Ibid. p.19.
 3. C.P.R. 1317-21, p.274. The manor of Salletwarpe which belonged to the Beauchamps, Earls of Warwick was in custody of the king during the minority of the heir of Guy, Earl of Warwick. The king granted the custody to Hugh Despenser, (Nash, History of Worcestershire, II, 337), who is said to have made the presentation. The church of Loughborough also was granted him by Hugh Despenser.
 4. C.P.R. 1321-24, 72.

and in 1323 the king granted him^{1.} the prebend of Leckford in St. Mary's Abbey, Winchester. It seems that there was trouble over this last presentation, for in July, 1324 the king issued a prohibition against interference with his right to present to the prebend and against molestation of John of Denton.^{2.} On 1 June, 1324 the Pope reserved to John of Denton, rector of Loughborough, at the request of Edmund of Woodstock, son of Edward I a canonry and prebend in the collegiate church of Southwell,^{3.} and on 19 November a certain John of Denton was described as rector of St. Ruwald in the county of York.^{4.} There is, however, nothing to show that the rector of St. Ruwald was the same person as the rector of Loughborough and it is possible that he was not a king's clerk at all.

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1. C.P.R. 1321-24, p.340. A number of canons had prebendal stalls in the abbey. They were usually pluralists. The presentation to Leckford was normally in the hands of the Abbess, but in 1323 the temporalities were in the king's hands. (V.C.H. Hampshire, IV, 449).
 2. Ibid. p.437.
 3. C.P.L. 1305-42, p.203.
 - 4.

In 1325 when the temporalities of Hereford were in the king's hands,^{1.} he presented John of Denton to the prebend of Moreton in that cathedral and asked the bishop to assign the new prebendary a stall and a place in the chapter.^{2.} In the same year Denton was also presented to the living of Potton in Bedfordshire.^{3.} In 1329 he obtained an order from the Pope that the proceeds of these benefices were to be paid to him for three years, during which he was engaged on the study of canon law,^{4.} and in 1335 a dispute began over his right to a canonry in Southwell,^{5.} reserved to him by John XXII in 1324.^{6.} The canonry of Northwell

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1. Because Adam of Orleton, the bishop had been convicted of complicity in the rising of Roger Mortimer. The king's right to present was disputed by Orleton. (Registrum Adae de Orleton, C.Y.S. pp.326,327).
 2. C.P.R. 1324-27, p.132.
 3. Ibid. p.164.
 4. The benefices mentioned are Potton and the prebends of Moreton and Leckford (C.P.L. 1305-42, p.311). No other benefices are mentioned. It may be that Denton had resigned his earlier preferment. A new presentation to Sallelwarpe was made in 1327. (Nash, History of Worcestershire II, 338).
 5. There were 16 prebends at Southwell, each called after a parish where the canon was responsible for the cure of souls. The canons each had 2 vicars, one for the collegiate church and one for his parish and they had full liberty to appoint whom they wished. In founding the two latest prebends in 1291 Archbishop Romeyn of York had provided also for vicars, apparently taking non residence for granted. There were three prebends of Northwell and the first of these was the richest in the church. (V.C.H. Nottingham II, 153).
 6. See above p.193

in the collegiate church of Southwell had fallen vacant and had been claimed by John of Thoresby who appealed against the provision of Denton to the prebend. Denton sent proctors to take possession on his behalf and these were resisted and imprisoned by William of Northwell who also intruded himself into the benefice. William also threatened to seize and imprison John of Denton himself if he were caught in England, so that Denton was forced to flee the country.¹ The matter was still unsettled in 1342 when William of Northwell was cited by the Archdeacon of Norwich to appear before the Pope because he had violated the sequestration of the fruits of the prebend, made after sentence had been given at Rome in favour of John of Denton.² Nothing further is heard of this dispute and it may perhaps be assumed that Denton now obtained peaceful possession of the prebend.

1. I have included Richard of Blyton in this reckoning, although he was only a locum tenens for Richard of Ipswich.

1. C.P.L. 1305-42 p.528.
2. C.P.L. 1342-1362, p.36.

3. See above p. 17.
4. It is possible that others may also have been royal chaplains, but I have found no evidence to this effect.

The careers of these ten ^{1.} almoners so far as I have been able to trace them, offer a number of interesting points of comparison and contrast, but it is difficult to draw from them reliable inferences as to the importance of the office or the qualifications needed for it. This difficulty is caused partly by the fact that Edward I and Edward II occasionally appointed friars whose careers necessarily show few points of resemblance with those of the secular clerks. Moreover the careers of the seculars themselves show more differences than likeness.

It was of course essential that the almoner should be a clerk and secular clerks seem on the whole to have been more eligible than members of a religious order.^{2.} It seems also that it was a recommendation for an almoner to have been a royal chaplain before appointment.^{3.} Offham,^{4.} Leek,^{5.} Kirkby,^{5.} and Baston^{6.} had all begun their careers in the royal household in this position.^{7.}

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1. I have included Richard of Blyton in this reckoning, although he was only a locum tenens for Richard of Ipswich.
 2. Only four were friars.
 3. See above p. 136.
 4. See above p. 162.
 5. See above p. 179.
 6. See above p. 126.
 7. It is possible that others had also been royal chaplains, but I have found no evidence to this effect.

Most of the almoners were men of little or no importance apart from their position in the household, but there are two exceptions to this rule. Henry of Blunsdon held a good deal of land in a lay capacity, especially in his native county of Wiltshire¹. and Richard of Blyton was eminent in his order and a very famous preacher². before he became locum tenens for the king's almoner. Offham, Colchester, Leek, Kirkby and Denton however seem to have been men of the more usual type of medieval household clerk, wholly undistinguished in private life and entirely dependent on the promotion and preferment they received from the king.

The office of almoner was however in a rather different position from the other household posts. The king's almsgiving had originally been part of the work of the royal chaplain, and the almoner, a specialized official made necessary by the increase in the king's charity continued to be one of the royal chaplains. He

1. See p. 163
 2. If Philip of Baston is to be identified with the writer and preacher of the same name, he also was a notable man independently of his position in the household.

was a more confidential and more personal servant of the king than were the ordinary wardrobe clerks.^{1.} His business was more clearly defined and called for less versatility, and although he might be called upon to go on the king's errands or perform other business outside his own sphere, such demands were infrequent and he had, on the whole very little concern with the administration of the kingdom.

The importance of the office itself may perhaps best be gauged from the wages and allowance for robes laid down for the almoner in the Household Ordinance of 1318. He was to receive 7½d. a day, the wage of an ordinary chaplain and 8 marks a year for his robes;^{2.} this was equal to that ordained for the Controller of

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1. It is probably significant that the almoner of the late king never seems to have been reappointed in the new reign. Unfortunately the force of this argument is diminished by the fact that extensive changes of personnel occurred in the wardrobe at the beginning of the reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III. At the beginning of Edward I's reign this was due to a change in the business of the wardrobe, in 1307 to the friction which had existed between Edward I and his son and in 1327 to the chaos and confusion of the last years of Edward II.
 2. Tout. Place of Edward II in English History. Appendix I, p.278.

the Wardrobe and for the chief chaplain, so that in this respect the almoner was inferior only to the Keeper of the Wardrobe. The wage of $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ a day was subject to deductions for days on which the almoner was absent from his duties and was to be paid only until he was advanced by the king; Kirkby was the only secular clerk who received the wage for any length of time,^{1.} so the robes allowance which continued to be paid throughout the almoner's tenure of office is probably a truer indication of his standing than his wages which were only intended as temporary remuneration. It would appear therefore that the almoner ranked among the most important of the king's servants by virtue of his office, but in view of the differences in the preferment received by different almoners his importance must have varied considerably during this period. A comparison of the reward received by Blunsdon or Leek with that of Kirkby is very greatly to the disadvantage of the last and suggests that Leek and Blunsdon held a higher position

1. Kirkby remained unbeneficed from the time of his appointment in July, 1310, until he was instituted to Norton-iuxta-Billingham in April, 1312. (see above p. 184)

in the king's estimation than Kirkby. This difference may be due to incompleteness in the surviving information as to Kirkby's benefices, but from the available evidence the contrast is remarkable.

The preferment of each secular clerk may be briefly summarized in illustration of this: Offham held four livings and was dean of St. Mary's at Stafford; Colchester held nine livings and was keeper of the hospital of the Holy Innocents at Lincoln; Blunsdon held six livings and four canonries and was keeper of God's House, Southampton and the House of Converts in London, and was archdeacon of Dorset; Leek held three livings, a canonry and a precentorship and was archbishop of Dublin; Kirkby held two livings and Denton held four livings, a prebend in St. Mary's Winchester and a canonry in Southwell.^{1.}

The striking contrast in the rewards of Leek and Kirkby seems especially to demand an explanation. This may perhaps be found in the change, already described^{2.} in the

1. There is some doubt whether this preferment may properly be assigned to John of Denton, the almoner. (See above p. 193).
2. See Chapter II.

king's almsgiving under Edward II. The considerable diminution of the almoner's work caused by the drastic reduction of the king's almsgiving perhaps reacted on his position and the office, as it involved less responsibility and demanded less from its holder also carried less reward. The fact that Leek, the first almoner to be affected by the change in almsgiving was also the man to gain the greatest advancement from his services is easily explained by his long service in the household of Edward of Carnarvon before 1307 and the special friendship with which Edward regarded him¹. Kirkby, a royal chaplain only from 1307 obtained the office when its decline had already begun, and received a reward appropriate to its diminished status. It is impossible to be sure whether this is the true explanation, as

1. In 1305 Edward of Carnarvon wrote of "l'especiale affection que nous avons a nostre cher clerk' Sire Johan de Leek' e ses bon desertes e aussint les bon services quil nous ad fait de graunt temps e fait de iour en autre". (Letters of Edward, Prince of Wales 1304-5. H. Johnstone. Roxburghe Club. p.90)

Kirkby's immediate successors in office were friars, whose careers give no help in determining the reward considered fitting for the almoner, and John of Denton, the last almoner of the period was rewarded by greater advancement than Kirkby, though by much less than that of his predecessors in office.

One fact emerges clearly from a study of the careers of these officials; the office was not, at this time an avenue to further promotion in the royal household. So far as the king's service was concerned it was an end in itself and its reward consisted in church preferment and not in high administrative advancement. Most of these men seem to have left the royal service on retirement from the position of almoner,¹ although Leek continued to serve the king, first by attendance at the Council of Vienne,² and later in England. Just before his death he was appointed Treasurer of the

1. For example Blunsdon retired to live at Salisbury (see above p. 160) and Denton went to study canon law (see above p. 194).

2. See above p. 169

1.
Exchequer at Dublin, but he cannot have had time to take up the duties of his office. Kirkby also remained in the king's service, but he does not seem to have held any specific household post.^{2.}

In conclusion it may be suggested that the office was one of considerable importance and prestige, involving a degree of personal contact with the king which might make it a way to lucrative preferment in the church. It was clearly a little apart from the hierarchy of the household, in that its holders were not destined for high administrative posts. The qualifications required for the office were not rigidly dictated by custom and the remarkable change in the work which it entailed under Edward II appears to be reflected in the reward given to its holders. This flexibility is characteristic of the evolutionary nature of

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1. See above p. 175
 2. See above p. 190 He was with Edward II apparently until he died (Ibid).

administration at this time. The wardrobe, elevated under Edward I into a great spending department performing functions hitherto reserved for the exchequer was being rivalled by the king's chamber at the end of the reign of Edward II and such a minor office as the almonry would naturally be no more stable than the organisation of which it formed a part.

...by alterations of
 ...and illustrates
 this... The phrase used of the king's
 ...a belief that it was fixed, rigid
 and... Henry III speaks of "my accustomed due",¹
 part of Edward I's magnificent provision for the poor
 is described in the records as given "as custom" and
 the Record of 1318 says that the king feeds the
 poor at the... "determined custom".² Nevertheless

1. Year Books
 2. ... of Edward II in English History, p. 118.

CHAPTER V.

General Conclusions.

Even a slight acquaintance with the surviving household accounts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries creates a lively impression of a versatile institution with a constant fertility of invention in administrative matters, and of an organisation of supply and account which could respond rapidly and resourcefully to demands caused by alterations of practice. The present study confirms and illustrates this adaptability. The phrases used of the king's almsgiving suggest a belief that it was fixed, rigid and eternal; Henry III speaks of "my accustomed alms",¹ part of Edward I's magnificent provision for the poor is described in the accounts as given "de custuma" and the Household Ordinance of 1318 says that the king feeds the poor at the four great feasts "dauncien custume!"² Nevertheless

1. Poor Relief.
 2. T.F.Tout. The Place of Edward II in English History, p.318.

neither Edward I nor Edward II treated his father's almsgiving practice as binding on himself, and the king's charity fluctuated widely, not only during the whole period, but during a single reign. To meet this variation in the volume of work administrative practice changed also.

The evolution of the office during the period falls into three phases. The first, from 1255 to about 1290 is a time of gradual stabilisation of practice in the giving of alms, of experimental methods of obtaining supplies and the growth of a recognised routine of account, and the building up of an office staff. During this first period Edward I developed his fixed benefaction of six hundred and sixty meals each week, and the division of the alms into the feeding of the poor, and the oblations and casual alms given by the wardrobe first appears, with the clear allocation of responsibility for the sums spent between the almoner and the wardrobe. The

1. A record is mentioned in 1282-3 (B 101/351/3 m.1)
2. A record is mentioned in 1285-6 (B 101/351/26. m.1)

first subordinate officials appear in the accounts, a yeoman¹ and a clerk².

These developments are, of course partly accounted for by the general growth in importance and complexity of the wardrobe under Edward I, but it is tempting to ascribe the increase in almsgiving and the improvement in organisation partly to the influence of Henry of Blunsdon, almoner from 1283. He was obviously a man of considerable force of character, a competent official and man of business and, so far as can be judged, kindly and conscientious in looking after the institutions placed under his care. It would be in keeping with this, if he had, in fact, helped to stimulate the remarkable and sustained increase of the king's almsgiving in the second period, from 1290 to 1307.

This appears to be the most flourishing in the history of the office. Very large numbers of poor were being fed each week, and the alms accounted for by the wardrobe were also extensive. The normal almonry staff

1. A yeoman is first mentioned in 1282-3 (E 101/351/3 m.1)
2. A clerk first appears in 1285-6 (E 101/351/26. m.1)

must have proved inadequate to the increased work, and Blunsdon was served, not only by the clerk and the yeoman attached to the office, but also by other men, described as his yeoman who do not seem to have formed an official part of the Wardrobe staff¹. Towards the end of the reign also one of the other chaplains was helping regularly with the work of the office². Regular accounts of the expenditure on the feeding of the poor were being drawn up under the almoner's supervision and presented to the wardrobe, and the almoner himself was one of the most honoured and respected of the royal servants, very secure in the king's favour.

This state of affairs might have been expected to continue with the appointment in 1307 of John of Leek who had already been almoner to Edward II as Prince of Wales, but Edward II's reign is, instead a period of decline in the history of the office,

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1. They received no allowances for shoes or robes. (See above p. 86)
 2. Ralph of Stamford. (See above p 84.)

and it is again tempting to connect the change with the influence of the almoner. It seems clear that Edward II felt liking and respect for Leek, and that in making him his almoner, he intended to reward him for his past services. The immediate reduction in the scale of almsgiving, which must in due course affect the dignity of the office would surely have been the subject of discussion and consultation with the official most concerned, especially as he had already served the king in the same capacity. It seems justifiable, therefore to conjecture that the reduction of the king's alms was a policy jointly approved by both king and almoner. Evidence is unfortunately lacking to suggest whether they were actuated merely by the need for economy, or whether they had some conception of the dangers inherent in the indiscriminate charity of Edward I.

From whatever cause it arose, the reduction in the work of the office was lasting, and is illustrated by the decline in importance of the holders. No one of the calibre of Blunsdon and Leek held it for the rest of Edward II's reign, with the exception of Richard of Blyton, who appears to have had a special

regard for the king and was probably impelled by this to perform the duties of the office. The separate accounts of the office also disappear, although the clerk and the yeoman remain part of the official complement of the household.

The expansion of the king's charity in the second half of Edward I's reign was, therefore of short duration, and the glory of the almoner's office soon departed. While it lasted he must have been among the busiest and most important of all household officers with the particular bond with the king of a confidential and religious duty to perform. Even later it remained a dignified position which could on occasion be filled by an important personage.

Note on the Constable of the Abbey

The Constable of the Household had, like most of his royal officials a more dignified counterpart who appeared only at coronations. Unfortunately in the period under survey evidence as to the descent and functions of this office is very scanty.¹ In 1235 his duties were to provide a blue APPENDICES. route from Westminster Hall to the throne in the Abbey, to distribute that part of the cloth lying outside the chapel to the poor, to collect and distribute alms and to exercise jurisdiction over the poor and diseased persons who came to solicit alms.² Similar functions as to the provision and distribution

1. This is so throughout its subsequent history. Mr. J. K. Stow said "Another reason for not discussing this office in detail is that its rightful succession is historically very doubtful." (The King's Sergeants and Officers of State, p. 287)
2. L.S.M. Recs., English Coronation Records, p. lxxiv

APPENDIX I

Note on the Hereditary Almoner

The almoner of the household had, like most of his fellow officials a more dignified counterpart who carried out his duties only at coronations. Unfortunately in the period under survey evidence as to the descent and functions of this office is very scanty.¹ In 1236 his duties were to provide a blue cloth to cover the king's route from Westminster Hall to the throne in the Abbey, to distribute that part of the cloth lying outside the church to the poor, to collect and distribute alms and to exercise jurisdiction over the poor and diseased persons who came to solicit alms.² Similar functions as to the provision and distribution

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1. This is so throughout its subsequent history. Mr. J.H.Round said "Another reason for not discussing this office in detail is that its rightful succession is historically very doubtful." (The King's Sergeants and Officers of State, p. 327)
 2. L.G.W. Legg, English Coronation Records, p.lxxiv

of the cloth are prescribed in the Coronation Roll of Edward II, but no special jurisdiction is given to him.¹ These duties were considerably cut down later, for Mr. J.H.Round said that his functions "had dwindled down to nothing even before the abolition of the banquet and procession had put an end to his fee!"² The fee was the silver dish in which the alms were collected and its linen cover, and a tun of wine.³

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1. Coronation Roll, Edward II. P.R.O. C.57/1. "Et faciet prius dominus N. de Bello Campo Bedeford' qui a veteri elemosinarie habet officium pannum virgulatum sive burellum prostrari sub pedibus Regis incedentis a palacio usque ad pulpitum monasterii. Pars autem panni illius qui est in ecclesia cedet semper in usus sacriste loci et reliqua pars tota quae est extra ecclesiam distribuetur pauperibus per manus supradicti N. elemosinarii!"
 2. The King's Sergeants and Officers of State, p.326.
 3. L.G.W.Legg, English Coronation Records, p.lxxvi.

heirloom. A possible fact for which I can advance no explanation is that the Corporation Hall of Edward II,

1. The descent of the office is very difficult to trace. It belonged to the holder of the barony of Bedford and until 1236 was handed down in the family of Beauchamp of Bedford.¹ After the death of John, the last baron, the lands were split up among his three sisters.² The office was not a sergeanty³ and it was not attached to any particular portion of the lands of the barony so that successful claims have been made at different times by the holders of part of the possessions of all three

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1. J.H.Round. The King's Sergeants and Officers of State, p.327.
 2. V.C.H. Bedfordshire, III, 12.
 3. J.H.Round, The King's Sergeants and Officers of State, p.327. "The barony was held of the king in chief by knight service."

heiresses¹. A puzzling fact for which I can advance no explanation is that the Coronation Roll of Edward II,

1. The three heiresses were Maud, Beatrix, and Ela. Maud married Roger Mowbray and her share, which included the site of Bedford Castle, passed through Isabel Mowbray, to her son William, Marquess of Berkeley who assumed the title of Baron of Bedford in 1488 and alienated the site of the castle to Sir Roger Bray. (G.E.C. Peerage, I, 88). The office of almoner was successfully claimed by Thomas Mowbray, a minor in 1377. (L.G.W. Legg. English Coronation Records. p. lxxiv). At Edward VI's coronation John, Lord Bray performed the duties of almoner, but in 1603 two Lord Brays claimed without success. The site of the castle was alienated to the Duke of Bedford who claimed the office at the coronation of George IV. (V.C.H. Bedfordshire, III, 12). Beatrix married Thomas Fitzotes (Fine Rolls, I, 1272-1307, 454) Her share passed to her granddaughter, Elizabeth Botetort (G.E.C. Peerage, VIII, 469) whose son John Latimer claimed the office in 1377 and performed it for himself and Thomas Mowbray (L.G.W. Legg. English Coronation Records, p. lxxv) His daughter, Elizabeth married John, Lord Nevill. Their son John died without issue in 1430 (G.E.C. Peerage. VIII, 477) and the title of Lord Latimer passed to Ralph, John Nevill's son by his second marriage. Elizabeth Latimer's property also passed to Ralph instead of to her daughter, Elizabeth. John Nevill, Lord Latimer was almoner at the coronation of Edward VI, jointly with Lord Bray, and claimed the office in 1603 when it was performed by his son-in-law Thomas Cecil, Lord Burleigh. (L.G.W. Legg, English Coronation Records, p. lxxv) Ela married Baldwin Wake and her property passed to her daughters, Ida and Joan. Sir George Blundell, a descendant of Joan claimed the office at the coronation of James II and a special salvo jure to his rights was attached to the award of the office to the Marquess of Exeter. (L.G.W. Legg, English Coronation Records, p. lxxv) Part of Ida's share of the barony was sold to John Gostwick and in 1547 and 1603 William Gostwick made claims. His right was recognised in 1547 and he served as under-almoner without fee. (Ibid.)

laying down the functions of the almoner ascribes them to "N.de Bello Campo Bedeford'" although the family was by then extinct in the male line and its possessions split up.¹ I have been unable to discover who performed the office in 1307.

In 1256 William Beauchamp of Bedford, the last of his family to act as Hereditary Almoner was still alive. He succeeded his father, Simon as baron of Bedford in 1207-8. He was a baronial leader² and in 1215 Bedford Castle was taken by Fulk de Bréauté.³ In 1217 he fought at the battle of Lincoln and was taken prisoner, but returned to his allegiance to the king, and orders were given for the restoration of his lands.⁴ Bedford castle, however remained in the possession of Fulk de Bréauté for when he rebelled in 1224, it was his chief stronghold. It was ordered to be destroyed and the site given back to William Beauchamp who thereupon tried to prevent the

1. D.N.B.

2. Ibid. and Wendover. Flores Historiarum, English Historical Society III, 349.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. IV, 24.

destruction.¹ In 1233 he took part in the king's campaign against Llewelyn and the rebellious Earl Marshall on the Welsh border and when the king was defeated at Grosmont was forced to flee, leaving all his goods behind.² In 1236-7 he was sheriff of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire and was a Baron of the Exchequer.³ In 1236 he acted as hereditary almoner at the coronation of Queen Eleanor⁴ and in 1254, on refusing to answer a suit brought against him by the Abbot of Warden, his barony was temporarily seized by the crown.⁵ Sometime between 1256 and 1257 he conveyed his lands to his younger son, William.⁶ He died in 1260 and was succeeded by William.⁷ The younger William Beauchamp died in 1262 without issue

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1. Wendover, Flores Historiarum, English Historical Society IV, 279. and Royal Letters of the Reign of Henry III. ed. Shirley. Rolls Series, I, 236
 2. Wendover, Flores Historiarum, English Historical Society. IV, 279.
 3. D.N.B.
 4. Red Book of the Exchequer, Rolls Series II, 756
 5. V.C.H. Bedfordshire, III, 12.
 6. Ibid.
 7. He is said by Mr. J.H. Round to have died in either 1260 or 1262 (D.N.B.) The V.C.H. gives 1260 and says that the barony passed to his elder son, Simon. An agreement between Ida, William Beauchamp's widow and William as his heir, about her dower was made in June, 1261 which seems to confirm the earlier date and suggests that the barony passed to William, Simon perhaps having died before his father. (Feet of Fines for Essex. Essex Arch. Soc. I, 256)

and in 1265 his younger brother, John was killed at Evesham.^{1.}

I have not discovered who acted as hereditary almoner at the coronations of Edward I and Edward II. According to the later practice by which the holder of any part of the barony seems to have been entitled to claim the office, the husband of one of the heiresses could have acted at Edward I's coronation. One of them, Thomas Fitzotes, the husband of Beatrix was probably already dead, as she was a widow in October, 1275 when she had permission from the king to marry whom she pleased.^{2.} Before the coronation of Edward II her share of the barony had passed to her daughter, Maud who had married John Botetort.^{3.} Roger Mowbray, Maud Beauchamp's son was holding her share of the lands by 1281^{4.} and he and John Botetort could have claimed in 1307. Ela's inheritance also was probably by this time in the possession of her daughters and their husbands.

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1. V.C.H. Bedfordshire, III, 12
 2. Fine Rolls, I, 1272-1307, 54.
 3. John and Maud Botetort were still alive in 1322-3 (Feet of Fines for Essex, Essex Arch. Soc., I, 134.)
 4. Morant, History of Essex. II, 329.

APPENDIX II

Note on Adam of Brome.

Adam of Brome, a king's clerk who served during the reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III, founder of Oriel College is traditionally said to have been almoner of Edward II,¹ but I have found no contemporary reference to him as such. There are,

1. Creighton in the article on Brome in the D.N.B. says that he was a clerk in Chancery, rector of Hanworth in Middlesex from 1315 (actually of Handsworth, Yorkshire (see p. 213)) vicar of S. Mary's, Oxford, almoner of Edward II, received a licence to found Oriel College in 1324 and obtained several benefactions to the College from Edward II, and died in 1332 and was buried in St. Mary's, Oxford (D.N.B.) The authorities I have consulted on the history of Oriel College (Rashdall, Universities, II, pt. II 492, p. 3.), C. G. Brodrick, History of the University of Oxford, p. 141) all describe Brome as almoner of Edward II, but none of the documents, relating to the foundation and early history of the College published in Oriel College Records by C. F. Shadwell and G. Salter refers to him in this way. He is called "rector of S. Mary's" "provost of Oriel", "clerk" more than once and by Edward III in 1330 "clericus noster Ada de Brom capellanus". The earliest reference to him as almoner that I have traced is in Anthony Wood. History of the Colleges and Halls of Oxford. p. 122.

however gaps, sometimes of several months between the last mention of one almoner and the first mention of the next during Edward II's reign, and it remains possible that he acted as almoner during one of these periods of transition. I propose, therefore to give an account of his career and examine such evidence as is available upon this point.

He appears to have derived his name from Brome in Suffolk where in 1301 he held land of the earldom of Cornwall.¹ The earliest reference to him that I have found is in a Letter Close of 1292 when Gilbert of St. Faith acknowledged a debt to him.² He is described simply as "clerk" in this entry, and was

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1. An order was made on 27 March, 1301 for her dowry to be paid to Margaret, widow of Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, including a moiety of a knight's fee in Brome, held by Adam of Brome (C.Cl.R. 1296-1302, p.436).
 2. C.Cl.R. 1288-96, p.267.

perhaps not in the royal service at the time. By 1297, however he was a royal clerk and was arranging for the collection of grain and other stores, to be taken to Gascony.^{1.}

From 1298 to 1301 he was employed mainly on business arising out of Edward I's wars in Scotland, collecting provisions and raising and paying and taking soldiers to the Scottish border. He was sent to Ireland for this purpose twice in 1298,^{2.} once in 1300^{3.} and once in 1301^{4.} He appears to have spent

1. C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.242.

2. On 15 April, 1298 he received letters of protection because he was going to Ireland and on the same day the authorities in Ireland were ordered to supply the provisions and informed that Brome was the king's agent in the matter (C.P.R. 1292-1301, pp.344,345). On 13 Dec.1298 he and another clerk were sent to Ireland to supervise arrangements for sending grain and other stores. (C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.389.)

3. On 17 Jan. 1300 he and another clerk were sent to supervise the dispatch of soldiers as well as stores (C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.488) and the Justiciar of Ireland was ordered to pay them 2s. a day each for their expenses from the Irish Exchequer (C.Cl.R. 1296-1302, p.330).

4. On 3 April, 1301 he was sent with a different companion to send stores to the king at Berwick on Tweed. (C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.385).

1299 in England, as he was appointed as attorney for one of those who accompanied Edward I to the Scottish war,^{1.} but he was still employed on similar business. In the last fortnight of June he was raising soldiers in Yorkshire and taking them^{2.} to Carlisle. His repeated employment on the business of supplies for Edward I's war suggests that he was competent and businesslike, and was earning the trust and confidence of the king. This is confirmed by his presentation^{3.} in 1301 to his first benefice, Wyke Risingdon and in 1302 by a grant of six oaks from the king's forest of Wychwood.^{4.}

In the entry relating to his enlisting journey to Yorkshire he is described as "clerk of the chancery",

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1. C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.455. The enrolment is dated 16 Nov. 1299 and nominates Broome to act until Michaelmas, but if this means Michaelmas, 1300 he must have been away during the greater part of the period. (See above. p. 210 n. 3.).
 2. The wardrobe book of 1299-1300 records the payment of £2.2.0. for his expenses on this journey and a further payment of 19s.5d. for baskets and ropes for carrying £185 received from the exchequer for the wages of the soldiers. (Lib. Quot. p.77).
 3. C.P.R. 1292-1301, p.590.
 4. C.Cl.R. 1296-1302, p.541.

and he may have been so from 1297, but the earlier entries refer to him only as "king's clerk". From later entries on the Close and Patent rolls, however, it is clear that he continued to be a chancery clerk at least until 1330¹.

His next employment on special business appears to have occurred in 1305 when he was appointed with others to audit the accounts of the sub-collectors of a papal tenth,² and this was followed by his preferment as keeper of God's House, Dunwich in 1306.³

In 1311 during the vacancy of the bishopric of Durham he was entrusted with the seal for the custody of the bishopric,⁴ and acted as chancellor of the diocese⁵ until superseded by another king's clerk.⁶

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- 1. His name appears as a witness on chancery documents until May 1330 (C.Cl.R. 1330-33 p.139) and he was given a commission with two others to survey the hermitage of Cripplegate in London to determine the justice of complaints of neglect and dilapidation in November, 1330. (C.P.R. 1330-34. p.59).
 - 2. C.P.R. 1301-1307, p.309.
 - 3. Ibid. p.439.
 - 4. C.P.R. 1307-13, p.327.
 - 5. C.Cl.R. 1307-13, p.345.
 - 6. Adam of Middleton (C.P.R. 1307-13, p.332). Brome, however delivered the seal at the Exchequer on 26 June in this year (C.Cl.R. 1307-13, p.356) and was paid £20 for his expenses in July (Ibid.p.321).

In the next year he was one of a commission for assessing tallage in four midland counties^{1.} and before 26 Nov., 1313 he was presented to the living of Handsworth^{2.} in Yorkshire, and in the following year to S. Creed in the diocese of Exeter.^{3.}

In 1316 he again had custody of the chancellor's seal for the vacancy of the bishopric of Durham and was to receive 6s. 8d. a day for his expenses.^{4.} This time he retained the office until the see was filled in May, 1317.^{5.}

In 1317 he seems to have been acting for the Carmelites of Fleet Street and procured exemption from^{6.} royal exactions for houses built by him on their lands. During 1320 Bromme was archdeacon of Stow for five months^{7.} at the end of which time he resigned and was

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1. Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. (C.P.R. 1307-13, p.521).
 2. He is described as parson of Handsworth in the acknowledgment of a debt on 26 Nov. 1313. (C.Cl.R. 1313-18, p.81).
 3. C.P.R. 1313-17, p.174.
 4. C.Cl.R. 1313-18, p.376. The seal was delivered to him on 15 Nov. 1316. (Ibid. p.440) It had been brought from Durham to Newburgh by the almoner, Bernard of Kirkby (see p. 139).
 5. Ibid. p.466.
 6. C.P.R. 1317-21, p.61.
 7. The grant was made on 26 Jan, 1320 (Ibid. p.416) and he resigned on 16 June, 1320 (Ibid., p.457).

presented to S.Mary's at Oxford.^{1.} Between June and October, 1320 he and Henry of Cliff, another chancery clerk^{2.} administered the affairs of the Cluniac priory of Bermondsey which had been taken into the king's hands owing to debt.^{3.}

From 1320 onwards there are frequent references to Brome in the capacity of justice. On 6 Aug. 1320 an order was issued relating to a case already heard by John of Charlton and Adam of Brome.^{4.} This case dealt with an offence against the charter of the Wool Staple, and Brome seems often to have dealt with this type of case during the next three years.^{5.} He was sometimes appointed as a justice of assize,^{6.} but more

1. C.P.R. 1317-21, p.457.

2. He was a man of some importance. He was often one of those entrusted with the custody of the great seal from 1318 to the end of the reign during the illness or absence of the chancellor. (Tout, Place of Edward II in English History, pp.325-7) and became keeper of the rolls of chancery in 1325. (Ibid. p.329).

3. They were appointed as keepers on 17 June (C.P.R. 1317-21 p.457) and the king let the priory out of his hands on 26 Oct. (C.Cl.R. 1318-23, p.269 and C.P.R. 1317-21 p.513).

4. C.Cl.R. 1318-23, p.254.

5. e.g. on 6 Aug. 1321 (Ibid. p.392) and on 20 May, 1323 (C.P.R. 1321-4 p.317).

6. e.g. in Essex on 3 July, 1321. (C.Cl.R. 1318-23 p.308)

frequently was given commissions of oyer and terminer to try special cases. In 1322, for example, he was employed on cases in Wales arising out of the Despenser rebellion¹. and in the same year he replaced a judge, who had died, in a case against the Abbot of Meaux.² In 1322 also he was associated with two other justices in a case arising out of a complaint by the Abbot of Rewley that his houses at Nettlebed and Bensington had been burnt and his trees and other goods stolen.³

In 1321 he had been sent to receive Hugh Despenser's lands in Glamorgan, but was obstructed by Roger DeMory who held them.⁴ In the end orders were sent to John Walwayn, escheator south of the Trent to receive the lands.⁵

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1. On 23 April, 1322, Three justices, including Bromie were appointed for cases arising out of the theft of horses forfeited by rebels (C.P.R. 1321-24, p.153) and this commission was renewed in the next year with an increased list of malefactors and added justices. (Ibid. pp.258, 308).
 2. On 9 Aug. (C.P.R. 1321-4, p.251).
 3. C.P.R. 1321-4, p.253.
 4. C.C.I.R. 1318-23 p.402.
 5. Ibid. p.408.

In 1323 he was appointed with the sheriff of York as a collector of the sixteenth in that city,^{1.} and in 1324, a few months after the grant of a licence to found a college at Oxford,^{2.} he was appointed to hold the smaller piece of the seal for recognisance of debts at Oxford.^{3.} During 1324 he also gave land to the Carmelites of Oxford; three acres adjoining their house.^{4.} At the same time his duties at the chancery were apparently onerous, and he was granted letters of protection in Dec. 1324 because he was constantly attending in the chancery.^{5.} The protection was renewed in the following year^{6.} and in 1326 he was relieved of a commission of oyer and terminer^{7.} because he was busy on other business

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1. C.P.R. 1321-4, p.324. Roger Somervell, the sheriff made account for the tax on 24 May, 1325 (Memoranda Roll, P.R.O. E 159/100)
 2. The charter was issued on 21 Jan. 1324 at Norwich (Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1300-26, p.485)
 3. C.P.R. 1324-7, p.109.
 4. C.P.R. 1321-4, p.423.
 5. C.P.R. 1324-7, p.62. From 1321-1328 Brome appears fairly often as a witness to enrolments or to events in the chancery. e.g. On 6 July, 1325 he was among those who witnessed the transfer of the keys of the chests of the rolls of chancery from Richard of Airmyn to Henry of Cliff. (C.Cl.R. 1323-7, p.386) Brome had also witnessed Airmyn's oath on appointment on 26 May, 1324. (Ibid. p.186).
 6. C.P.R. 1324-7, p.192.
 7. C.Cl.R. 1323-7, p.284. The commission had been granted before 26 Dec. 1325 on complaints from Suffolk of extortion by the commission of array (C.Cl.R. 1323-7, p.535).

for the king. The impression gained from the record of his activities at this period of his life is of a perpetual round of public business.

In 1326 he was made warden of S. Bartholomew's Hospital at Oxford^{1.} and this, with a pension from the bishopric of Norwich^{2.} and a grant of tithes in Wighton, Norfolk^{3.} completes the list of his preferment.

He continued to be active in the king's service in the beginning of the reign of Edward III. In September, 1327 he was appointed with two others to visit the hospital of S. Leonard at Derby which was said to have been impoverished by misgovernment,^{4.} and his name appears as a witness on chancery enrolments until 1330 when he probably retired to Oxford where he died in 1332.^{5.}

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1. C.P.R. 1324-7 p.248.
 2. C.Cl.R. 1327-30, p.415. Edward II had claimed a pension due from the bishop of Norwich for one of his clerks for Adam of Broome on the bishop's elevation to the see. It was ordered to be paid until Broome received a suitable benefice.
 3. C.P.R. 1321-4, p.217.
 4. C.Cl.R. 1327-30. p.
 5. D.N.B. He died before 26 June, 1332 when the tithes he had held in Wighton were granted to Thomas of Edgefield, Broome, being referred to as lately dead. (C.P.R. 1330-34 p.311).

In addition to his public business Brome seems to have had considerable private business interests as well. Debts owed to him¹. and, less frequently, by him². are often acknowledged on the close rolls of the time, and while some of these appear to arise from his activities on behalf of the king,³. it seems unlikely that all are to be accounted for in this way. In 1323 and 1327 Brome had dealings with a certain William of Hawksgarth who appears to have acted as his agent in receiving and spending money.⁴.

1. e.g. Stephen of Maldon owed him 5 marks in 1311. (C.Cl.R. 1307-13, p.361) Edmund of London owed him 100s. in 1316 (C.Cl.R. 1313-18, p.330), Richard le Whayt owed him 40s. in 1319. (C.Cl.R. 1318-23, p.209) and Roger and Richard le Gayte owed him 10 mks. in 1317. (C.Cl.R. 1313-18, p.475.)
2. e.g. in 1302 he owed 10 mks. to William of Thorntoft. (C.Cl.R. 1296-1302. p.578) and in 1313 he owed Robert of Bardelby £40. (C.Cl.R. 1313-18 p.81).
3. Walter Peacock and Thomas of Doren owed 16 mks to Brome and Henry of Cliff in 1320, but it seems probable that this debt arose from the custody of Bermondsey Priory which they then held. (C.Cl.R. 1318-23, p.322 and see p.224)
4. A dispute had arisen between them over money which had been received by Hawksgarth as Brome's agent (C.Cl.R. 1323-7 p.388) and in 1327 William acknowledged that he had to give account for 5 mks given him by Brome with a verbal commission for spending it (Ibid. p.492.) In 1319 and in 1327 Hawksgarth acknowledged debts to Brome (C.Cl.R. 1318-23 p.217 and C.Cl.R. 1327-30 p.200)

Bro^ue was also frequently no^uinated as attorney^{1.} for people who were lea^uing the country for a time and this is, perhaps further proof of his efficiency and business ability.

His career is certainly that of a busy and capable man of affairs, and is very unlike that of any of the al^uoners of his time. Diverse as these are among themselves, they have collectively little resemblance to that of Bro^ue. He was a clerk of the chancery, certainly by 1299 and perhaps earlier, and was never, so far as the surviving evidence goes a wardrobe clerk. The al^uoners of the period were not associated with any office but the wardrobe, and several of the^u were chaplains before beco^uing al^uoners.^{2.} The chancery and the wardrobe were, in some degree, rivals, as the

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1. e.g. On 16 March, 1310 for John of Lewes, Canon of Wingham who was going to the papal court (C.P.R. 1307-13 p.214). On 17 Feb. 1315 for Richard of Clare (C.P.R. 1313-17, p.221) On 16 March, 1318 for John of Sheffield who was going to Ireland. (C.P.R. 1317-21, p.125) and on 6 March, 1324 for Oliver Deyncourt. (C.P.R. 1324-7, p.106).
 2. See above Chapter IV, p.196

wardrobe was increasing in importance, and there does not appear to have been any transfer of clerks from one to the other as a rule. It may further be suggested that the busy and competent Adam of Broome would have been wasted on the amount of work which fell to the almoner's share in Edward II's reign, although the post might earlier have been suited to his capacity.

At the end of Edward's reign the list of almoner's is probably complete and at this time also Broome was very fully occupied on chancery and judicial business. In 1309-10 between the tenures of Leek and Kirkby there is a gap of several months in which I have found no record of the almoner's activities. If Broome ever acted in this capacity, it must have been at this time, when he was less constantly employed on other business than he later became.

If this were so it is surprising that none of the numerous references to him on the patent and close rolls then or later mentions this. The almoners of the time are always given their description and never described as king's clerk or chaplain only, after their elevation to the office.

It is equally surprising that no record of payments to him in this capacity appears in the surviving wardrobe

accounts. The almoners received prests on their office and money for shoes and robes, as well as wages, unless already beneficed, and such payments were often in arrears, so that we might expect to find some trace of Broome's name in the wardrobe books of the reign if he had ever served in the wardrobe.

It appears, therefore that the weight of evidence is against the traditional claim that Broome was Edward II's almoner, but complete proof of the negative is not at present available.

APPENDIX III

Transcript of beginning of P.R.O. E 101/350/23.

Alms Roll, 1276-7.

Rotulus de oblationibus Regis et elemosina data diversis
pauperibus a festo Sancti Edmundi Regis et Martyris anno
regni regis Edwardi quinto incipiente usque ad idem
festum eodem anno finiente videlicet per totum annum
integrum.

Bassigburn' Die Lunae In festo Sancti Clementis. In
pascendis xxx pauperibus eodem die pro
elemosina Regine per manus Pagani capellani
sui iijs. ixd. Pro elemosina Regine statuta
per quatuor dies per quos itineravit cum Rege
de Turri usque Waltham', Ware, Corneye et
usque Bassigburn' per manus eiusdem Pagani
viijs. In pascendis c et iiiij pauperibus
die Sancte Katerine pro elemosina Regine
per manus Bartholomei capellani Regine xijs.
xd. o.¹. In pascendis fratribus de Monte

1. The abbreviation o. for obolus has not
been extended in this transcript.

Carmeli apud Canteb' pro elemosina Regis
die Sancte Katerine xs. Die Dominica
xxix die Novembris. In pascendis L
pauperibus die Sancti Clementis in honore
Sancti Clementis pro elemosina Regis per
manus fratris Radulphi vjs. iijd. Item
per manus eiusdem Radulphi In pascendis
L pauperibus die Sancte Cecilie pro elemosina
Regis vjs. iijd. Item In pascendis L
pauperibus diebus lunae et Veneris in
septimana precedenti pro elemosina Regis
per manus eiusdem Radulphi xijs. vjd.
Item In pascendis xiiij pauperibus quolibet
die per dictam ebdomadam pro elemosina
Regis xjs. iiijd. o. Item quatuor egrotis
benedictis de manu Regis de dono Regis
pro elemosina Regis iijd. In pascendis
fratribus minoribus Cant' per duos dies
pro elemosina Regis xxvjs. viijd. Item pro
putura eorundem fratrum per alios duos
dies pro elemosina Regis xxs. Item in
pascendis fratribus predictis Cant' per duos
alios dies pro elemosina Regis xxs. In
pascendis fratribus de Sacco apud Cant' pro

elemosina Regis viijs. In pascendis
 fratribus de Carmelo eiusdem ville pro
 elemosina Regis xs. In pascendis
 fratribus de Pica de eadem villa pro
 elemosina Regis iiijs. In pascendis
 fratribus predicatoribus de Donestaple
 per duos dies pro elemosina Donestaple
 Wyndes' Regis xijs. Die dominica die Sancti
 Nicholai pro elemosina Regine per
 quinque dies per quos itineravit cum
 Rege de Bassigburn' usque Herliston'
 Baudak' Donestaple Amondesham et usque
 Wyndes'¹. per manus Pagani capellani
 Regine xs. In pascendis c pauperibus

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1. During the fortnight covered by this first paragraph of the roll the king's route appears to have lain from the Tower through Waltham, Ware and Corney to Bassingbourn which is just off the Royston - Huntingdon road, about two miles north of Royston. From there he went to Harston on the road to Cambridge and then, without apparently staying in Cambridge itself back to Bassingbourn, Baldock, Dunstable and Amersham to Windsor.

die Sancti Andreae pro elemosina Regis
xijs. vijd. In pascendis L pauperibus die
Veneris sequente pro elemosina Regis vjs.
iijd. In pascendis xiiij pauperibus
quolibet (die) In ebdomada precedente
die Sancti Nicholai xjs. iijjd. o. Tribus
egrotis benedictis de manu Regis in eadem
ebdomada de dono Regis pro elemosina
sua iijd. In oblationibus Regis ad
magnum altare apud Waltham' die quo
Rex erat ibi vijd.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY.

CLASSIFICATION:

A. Primary Sources

I Manuscript; listed according to
Repository

II Printed:

(i) Collections and Calendars of Records

(ii) Literary Sources

B. Secondary Works

I General

II Articles in Periodicals and Transactions
of Learned Societies

C. Works of Reference

Unless otherwise stated, all the works
included in this bibliography were published
in London.

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Add. MS. 35291 Wardrobe Book. 1299-1300

Add. MS. 7966A Wardrobe Book. 1300-1

Add. MS. 8835 Wardrobe Book. 1303-4

Add. MS. 35292 Journal of the Wardrobe. 1303-6

Add. MS. 35093 Book of Unde Respondebit 1307-8
(See p. 20)

Add. MS. 35293 Book of Unde Respondebit 1303-5

Add. MS. 37655 Journal of the Wardrobe 1305-6

Add. MS. 17362 Wardrobe Book 1319-20

Add. MS. 9951 Wardrobe Book 1320-1

Stowe MS. 553 Wardrobe Book 1322-3

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Add. MS. 32097 ff.46v.- 70) Late copies of
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) p.267)

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(ii) Library of the Society of Antiquaries

- MS. 120 Wardrobe Book 1316-7
 MS. 121 Wardrobe Book 1317-8
 MS. 122 Account Book of the King's
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(iii) Public Record OfficeRecords of the Chancery

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 Chancery Miscellanea C 47
 3/7 Bundle of Writs of Privy Seal
 4/1 Journal of the Wardrobe. Jan.-Nov., 1278
 4/2 Wardrobe Book. 1284-5
 4/4 Wardrobe Book. 1289-90
 4/5 Wardrobe Book. 1289-90 (Controller's
 Duplicate of 4/4. Incomplete)
 Coronation Roll. Edward II, C 57/1

Records of the Exchequer

Exchequer K.R. Accounts, Various E 101

All the documents in E 101/Bundles 349-382 have been examined for the purposes of this thesis. The following list includes only those records which have special value as evidence.

- 349/27 Roll of Daily Expenses of the Household 1259-60
- 350/23 Roll of Alms and Oblations 1276-7
- 350/27 Roll of Daily Expenses of the Household 1277-8
- 351/3 Roll of Issues of Winter Shoes 1281-2
- 351/9 Roll of Issues of the Wardrobe 1282-4
- 351/13 Roll of Daily Expenses of the Household 1283-4
- 351/15 Roll of Alms and Oblations 1283-4
- 351/26 Allowances for Robes 1285-7
- 351/28 Roll of Daily Expenses of the Household 1285-7
- 352/18 Roll of Alms and Oblations 1288-9
- 353/16 Rolls of Alms 1293 (Incomplete)
- 354/5 Book of Prests 1300 (see p. 20)
- 356/1 Roll of Prests 1298-9
- 356/8 Roll of Prests 1298-9
- 356/9 Roll of Prests 1298-9
- 356/13 Lists of Issues of Wine, Bread and Beer (Undated)
- 357/15 Book of Debts of the Wardrobe 1298-1307

- 357/25 Roll of Daily Expenses of the Household 1299-1300
- 357/29 Roll of Alms 1299-1300 (Incomplete)
- 358/27 Roll of Expenses 1296-7
- 358/28 Roll of Daily Expenses of the Household 1300-1
- 359/5 Journal of the Wardrobe March - July, 1301
- 359/15 Roll of Alms 1300-1
- 360/17 Roll of Liveries of the Household of Edward, the King's Son 1300-1
- 361/15 Journal of the Wardrobe 1299-1301
- 361/21 Roll of Alms 1301-2
- 363/18 Account Book of the Wardrobe of Edward, the King's Son 1302-3
- 363/19 List of Debts of the Wardrobe 1302-3
- 364/13 Book of Unde Respondebit 1302-3
- 367/26 Roll of Prests 1304-5
- 368/6 Book of Prests 1304-6
- 368/26 Charges of the Wardrobe 1305-6
- 368/27 Book of Unde Respondebit 1305-6
- 369/11 Wardrobe Book 1305-6
- 369/16 Book of Prests 1306-7
- 369/21 Receipt for £100 by Henry, the King's Almoner 1297
- 370/16 Journal of the Wardrobe Nov.-July, 1306-7

- 374/7) Journal of the Wardrobe 1310-1
- 373/30) Account of Works at Windsor 1296-7
- 373/15 Book of Prests 1307-8
- 373/26 Book of Prests 1308-1322
- 374/5 Book of Unde Respondebit 1310-1
- 375/8 Wardrobe Book 1312-3
- 376/7 Wardrobe Book 1315-6
- 378/14 Roll of Prests 1321-2
- 379/7 Account Book of the King's Chamber 1322-3
- 379/14 Roll of Liveries 1324
- 379/17 Account Book of the King's Chamber 1323-4
- 379/19 Book of Foreign Expenses of the Wardrobe
1323-4.
- 380/4 Account Book of the King's Chamber 1324-5
- 380/8 Roll of Daily Expenses of the Household
1324-5
- 381/1 Roll of Liveries 1324-5
- 381/4 Roll of Foreign Expenses of the Wardrobe
1324
- 381/11 Bundle of Miscellaneous Wardrobe Accounts
1325-6
- 382/1 Roll of Daily Expenses of the Household
July-Nov. 1327
- 382/6 Roll of Foreign Expenses of the Wardrobe
1326-7
- 383/8 Wardrobe Book 1327-8

- 492/12 Account of Works at Windsor 1296-7
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 E 361/2
Memoranda Roll 18 Edward II E 159/100

(For classes of MSS. in the P.R.O. examined for material for this thesis, but which yielded no information, see p. n.)

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