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AN
OLD ENGLISH
HOSPITAL

S. Mary's, Chichester

WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS.

By the
Rev. J. Cavis-Brown, M.A.
*Priest Vicar of Chichester Cathedral and Rector
of S. Martin's with S. Olave's,
Chichester.*

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*An Old English Hospital : S. Mary's,
Chichester.*

THE ancient City of Chichester is full of interesting and picturesque memorials of the past. There is, first of all, the Cathedral exhibiting in its structure the architectural ability of almost every period, but also possessing original charters and grants stretching right back to A.D. 780 and specimens of English plate from A.D. 1125. Then there are the old



EXTERIOR OF ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL.

city walls still nearly perfect, the dedication-stone of a Roman Temple with its valuable inscription, the numerous small but ancient Parish Churches, the incomparable Market Cross, &c. But perhaps most interesting of all, and in its way now unique in this country, is the Hospi-

tal of S. Mary, hidden away between S. Martin's Street and the street called Little London. This is a surviving specimen of a class of institution not at all uncommon in the Middle Ages, the needs of which called them forth. The old hospitals of Europe may be divided into three classes: (1) Infirmary hospitals (such as was originally S. Mary's, Chichester) having a Hall for the sick, and at the east end a Chapel, so arranged that its services can be enjoyed by the patients as they lie in their beds; (2) Leper hospitals,—the lodgings of the lepers surrounding a court containing a Chapel, well, and offices, and generally situated near a running stream, as the ruined remains of the Leper Hospital of S. James, Chichester, outside the city, near the River Lavant; (3) Semi-collegiate, or on the Carthusian plan of separate houses round a court, as in the Hospital of Noble Poverty of S. Cross, Winchester, Archbishop Abbott's Hospital, Guildford, and Sackville College, East Grinstead. S. Mary's, Chichester, was most probably founded in A.D. 1158 by William the Dean, who also founded a Chantry at the Altar of St. Edmund the King in the Cathedral, to which Chantry the Hospital made an annual payment. The earliest historical testimony to its existence is dated 1229, in which year Ralph, Bishop of Chichester, petitioned Henry III. for permission to pull down the Church of S. Peter's in the Market, which was in the gift of the Crown, and to transfer the parishioners, who were only two in number, to the Hospital of S. Mary. The Letters Patent granting this petition and the site of the Church to the Hospital are still in existence. At this time the Hospital was situated at the corner of South and East Streets, near the present Market Cross. Its work was highly valued, for at this period many gifts were bestowed upon it.

In the library of University College, Oxford, there are about eighty conveyances bearing more or less upon property given to the Hospital. From these it may be gathered that the institution consisted of a Warden, and Brothers and Sisters serving God in it, and that their chief work consisted in relieving the sick and poor. About A.D. 1253 the original home was given up for the present site, which up to that time had been occupied by the Friars Minor, who then moved to another habitation in what is now called the Priory Park, where their ruined chapel is still to be seen. In 1285 Edward I. confirmed the Hospital in its new home by exempting it from the recently enacted Statute of Mortmain. The new site, being removed from the noise of the city, was much more suitable for the sick and weary.

We may suppose that there were dormitories, refectory, warden's lodge, and the various outbuildings always attached to a religious house, but no spacious hall where the sick could be duly tended, with a chapel at its east end, in which day by day Divine service was celebrated to their great comfort. This then had to be added, and hence the present re-

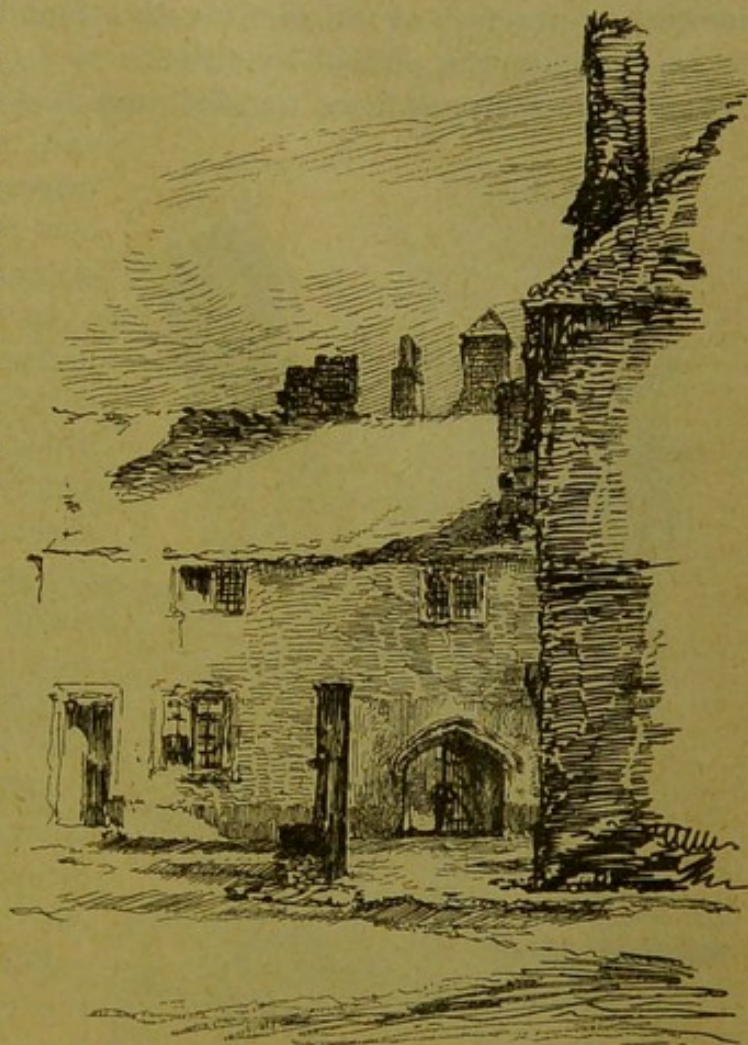
markable structure, which was evidently raised at the close of the 13th century. This view is upheld by the fact that in 1290 leave was given by Edward I. to the Custos of S. Mary's to block up and keep blocked up ("obstruere et obstructum tenere") a public pathway extending from S. Martin's Church across or inconveniently near the site required.

The architecture of the structure fits in with about this date, which is also strengthened by the fact that in the neighbouring Church of S. Olave in North Street there is a piscina, of which the details are so exactly those now found in the Hospital that they were most probably by the same skilful mason.

Now S. Olave's, although containing work of the 1st, 7th, 11th, and 12th centuries, assumed its present form and character between 1300 and 1310.

As has been already stated, these old hospitals for sick and casuals were always the same in plan, — a long hall with a chapel at its east end. At Chichester the Hall is 84 feet long, and the Chapel 47 feet. The side walls, only 6 feet high, had originally sixteen small windows, which with east and west windows in the aisles, a large piercing at the west end, and three small dormer windows, gave sufficient light, without exposing the sick to any unnecessary cold or glare.

Four great oak pillars on each side still help to support the roof. A very remarkable and beautiful oak screen separates the Hall from the Chapel. This screen appears to be modelled after the same ideas of tracery as are exhibited in the stone and marble work of Bishop Gilbert de S. Leofard's windows in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral, and this

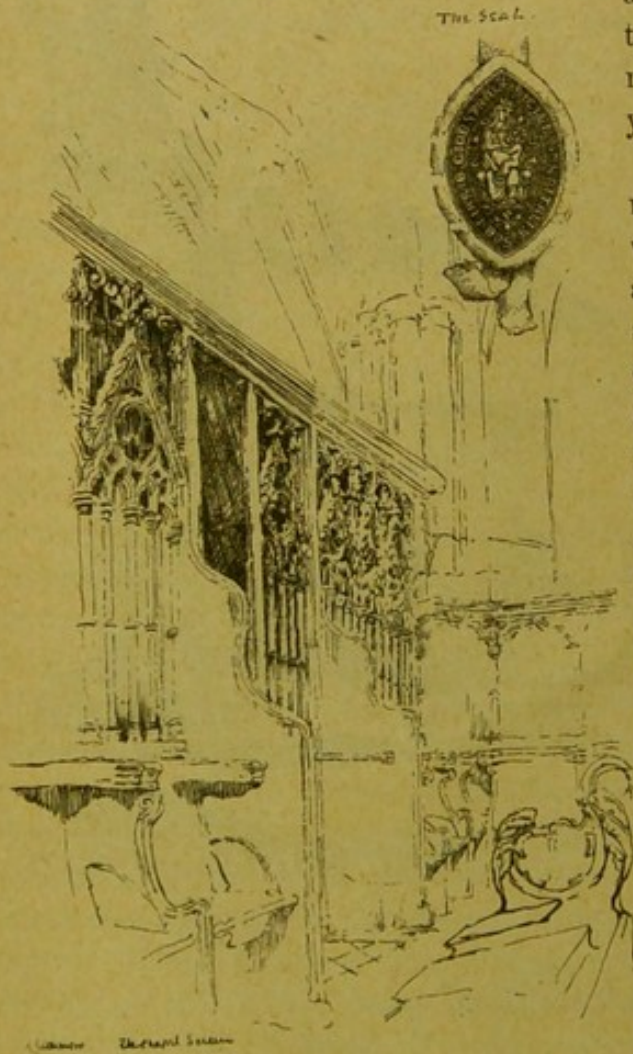


*Designed from S. Martin's Hospital
1830*

and the stall-work with its quaint "misereres" was no doubt the latest work in the completion of S. Mary's Chapel.

The great east window is a restoration. It fell into a state of ruin (it is not exactly known when), and the internal arch was filled up with walling. In the filling were worked in some old stones in the form of a small triple lancet window. It was very obvious that this filling contained many tracery stones, so it was taken out, and 54 pieces of the ancient cut masonry of the window were found. The ancient inner arch was also exposed in perfect condition.

From these stones fitted together and laid out on the floor the form and structure of the whole tracery was recovered and the new work made about fifteen years ago.



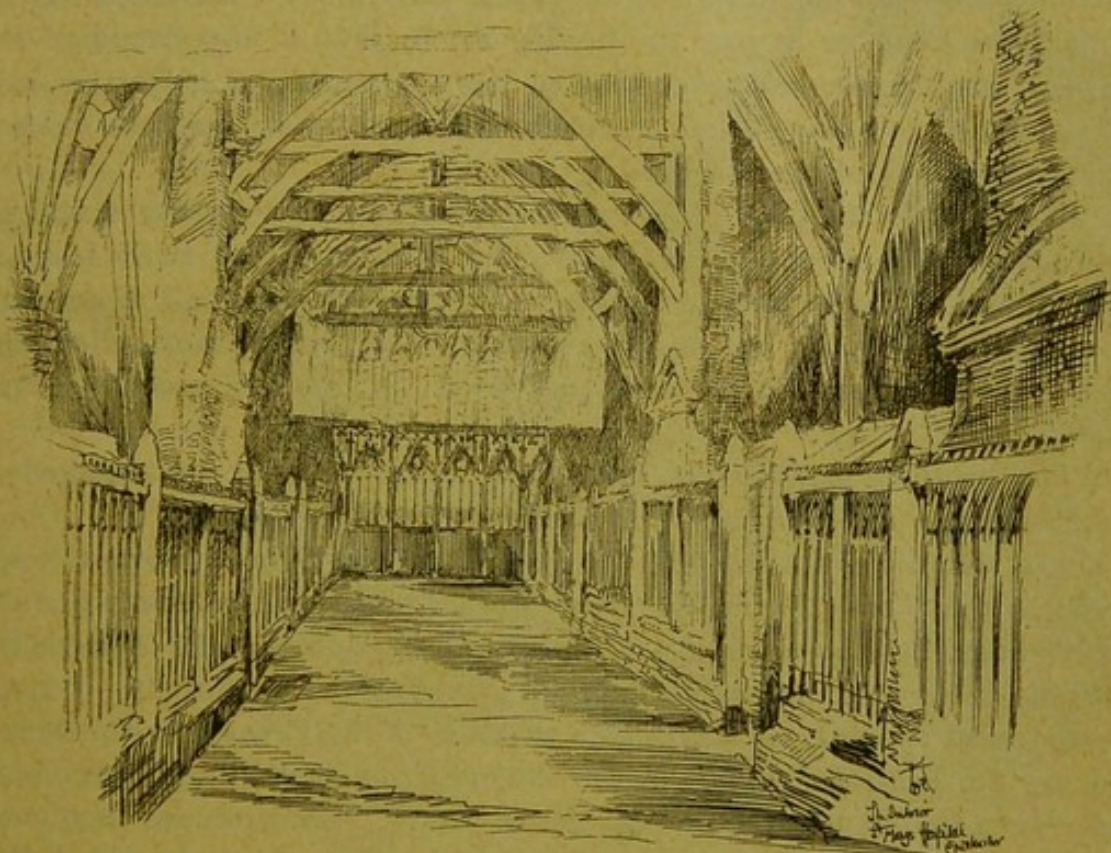
In its original state the Hall must have been very imposing with its lofty proportions, and aisles well filled with beds of the sick and weary. But in 1680 eight fireplaces with lofty brick chimneys in four stacks, one of them bearing this date upon it, were added. Also on each side of the Hall rooms 18 feet by 10 feet with flat roofs have been constructed and in front of these a long fence on a low wall hides receptacles for pails, mops, coals, &c.!

Continuing its history from the end of the thirteenth century, it will be well first to get some idea of the working of an ancient hospital. Happily among the University College MSS. there exists a document which gives us full particulars of the inner working of S. Mary's at this period.

Candidates for admission as Brethren or Sisters had to be examined as to their health and character and to be warned of the self-denials of the office sought. Then, if admitted, the candidate must swear fidelity to the House and its rules. He also promised as follows: "I, N., promise to God and to the Blessed Mary, that hereafter, with their assistance, I will observe towards myself chastity, towards my superiors obedience, and

that I will hold no property of my own without the licence and consent of the Warden."

"This done, if he is a male, he will kiss the Brethren; if a female, the Sisters, in order. Then let the males be cropped below the ear, or the hair of the women be cut off back to the middle of the neck, and thenceforward they must be addressed by the name of Brother and Sister. If a Brother, under the instigation of the devil, fall into immorality, out of which scandal arises, or if he be disobedient to the Superior, or if he strike or wound the brethren or clients, or commit any other grievous irregularity, then, if he prove incorrigible, he must be punished severely,



and removed from the society like a diseased sheep, lest he contaminate the rest. But let this be done not with cruelty and tempest of words, but with gentleness and compassion."

"If a Brother shall have a quarrel with a Brother with noise and riot, then let him fast for seven days, on Wednesdays and Fridays, on bread and water, and sit at the bottom of the table and without a napkin; and a Sister likewise."

"If a Brother or Sister shall, against the wishes of the Warden, leave the House and stay either within the city or without it: then if, changing his mind, he desire again to return, let him fast thirty days, on Wednesdays and Fridays, on bread and water, sitting as above."

"If a Brother shall be found, while alive and in health, to have money or property which he had concealed from the Warden, let the money be

hung round his neck, and let him be well flogged, and do penance for thirty days, as before."

"If anyone in infirm health and destitute of friends should seek admission into the House for a term, until he shall recover, let him be gladly received and assigned a bed. Let everything he requires be administered to him, as the means at the disposal of the House may admit. If he has anything of his own let the Warden take charge of it, and of his clothes, until he is restored to health; then let them be given to him without diminution, and let him depart, unless, of his own accord, he offer the whole, or part to the House. If he die in the House, let his goods be distributed as he has disposed of them. If he die intestate, let his property be kept for a year in the House, so that if any friend of the deceased shall come and prove that he has a claim upon it, justice may not be denied to him. If no one claim within the year, let it be merged into the property of the Hospital."

"In regard to the poor people who are received late at night, and go forth early in the morning, let the Warden take care that their feet are washed, and, as far as possible, their necessities attended to. Care must be taken that they do not annoy the sick, that they do not pilfer, that they behave respectfully in word and deed. The sexes must be separated."

"The brothers and sisters must pray continually, or be engaged in work, that the devil may not find them with nothing to do."

Those who did not know the daily offices of the Church were directed to repeat the *Gloria Patri*, the *Pater Noster*, and the *Ave Maria* a number of times, but those who knew the Psalter were to say it. A Benediction was to be said before meals, if a presbyter were present. "If no presbyter be present, let each make the sign of the Cross over the bread, and say *In Nomine Patris*. After the meal let each lift up his hands and return thanks to God, and say *Pater Noster*. Let them eat in silence, and without murmuring, whatever is placed before them, provided that what is prepared shall be sufficient for nature, and not addressed to the taste."

In the evening, after the poor who came in for the night had been received, intercessions were to be offered for the authorities in Church and State, for the Dean and Canons of the Cathedral, for the citizens of the city, and "for all the Benefactors of the House, living and dead (their names being mentioned), who founded the House, who constructed it, or gave to it fixed rents."

Prayers and the Psalms of the Lord's Day were to be said, either by a priest, or, in his absence, by one of the Brethren. These simple and sensible statutes put plainly before us the object of the Hospital, and how the work was carried on. Between 1232 and 1250 a special provision was made to provide a chaplain, by Martin, the son of Ralph, a citizen of

Chichester, and Juliana, his wife, who gave lands for his maintenance, and a further provision was made for the same purpose by Walter de Gloucester, who was Dean between 1262 and 1280.

The Hospital was now well organised both for temporal and spiritual matters. In our day, with the many comforts enjoyed by even the poorest, it is difficult to realise what great good was done by such a home for the poor. But in those days the dwellings of the poor had generally no chimney, no clear well-protected window, no proper ventilation. They were low, crowded, and confined,—filthy within and foul without. The rushes spread on the floors were often unchanged for months and salt meat was eaten during more than half the year.



Sketch of
interior of
S. Mary's Hospital

Diseases of all kinds therefore ran rampant, and the knowledge of medicine was very limited.

All this fully explains the popularity of these Houses of God, and the readiness with which generous offerings were made to them.

Towards the close of the fourteenth and all through the fifteenth century this Hospital, like all other institutions, suffered much from neglect of duty.

In 1528 William Fleshmonger, Dean of Chichester, set its affairs once more in order and gave new statutes, by which five poor Brethren and Sisters were to be elected each by the Dean and Custos alternately. They were to be aged persons, unable to earn their own living, and each was

to have a room in the Hospital, a piece of the garden, and 8d. weekly. The Custos was to be appointed by the Dean and Chapter, to whom he was to render a yearly account of all receipts and out-goings, and who was to receive £8 yearly, with 13s. 4d. for a Steward. Under these statutes the Hospital was assuming something like its present constitution, and it appears to have flourished and improved so much that possibly to this vigorous life its safety was due amid the general attack on Church property which began so soon afterwards.

In 1582, at the bidding of the Crown, the Hospital surrendered its charters, and received a new constitution by Letters Patent from Queen Elizabeth, dated February 12th, 1582. According to this new charter the Institution was incorporated under the title of "Custos and Poor People of the Hospital of the Blessed Mary in the City of Chichester," who were to be entitled to hold property in common, to possess a common seal, and to plead, sue, and prosecute in any of Her Majesty's Courts. The Dean and Chapter were to appoint the Custos, and vacancies among the inmates (five in number) were to be filled up by the Dean and Custos in turn. The Dean and Chapter were empowered to make statutes for the regulation of the Hospital, provided they were not contrary to the statutes of the realm, and they were also to receive an annual account of the management of its property. All this was enacted according to the charter, "with a view to the relief and support of the poor and infirm of the City of Chichester."

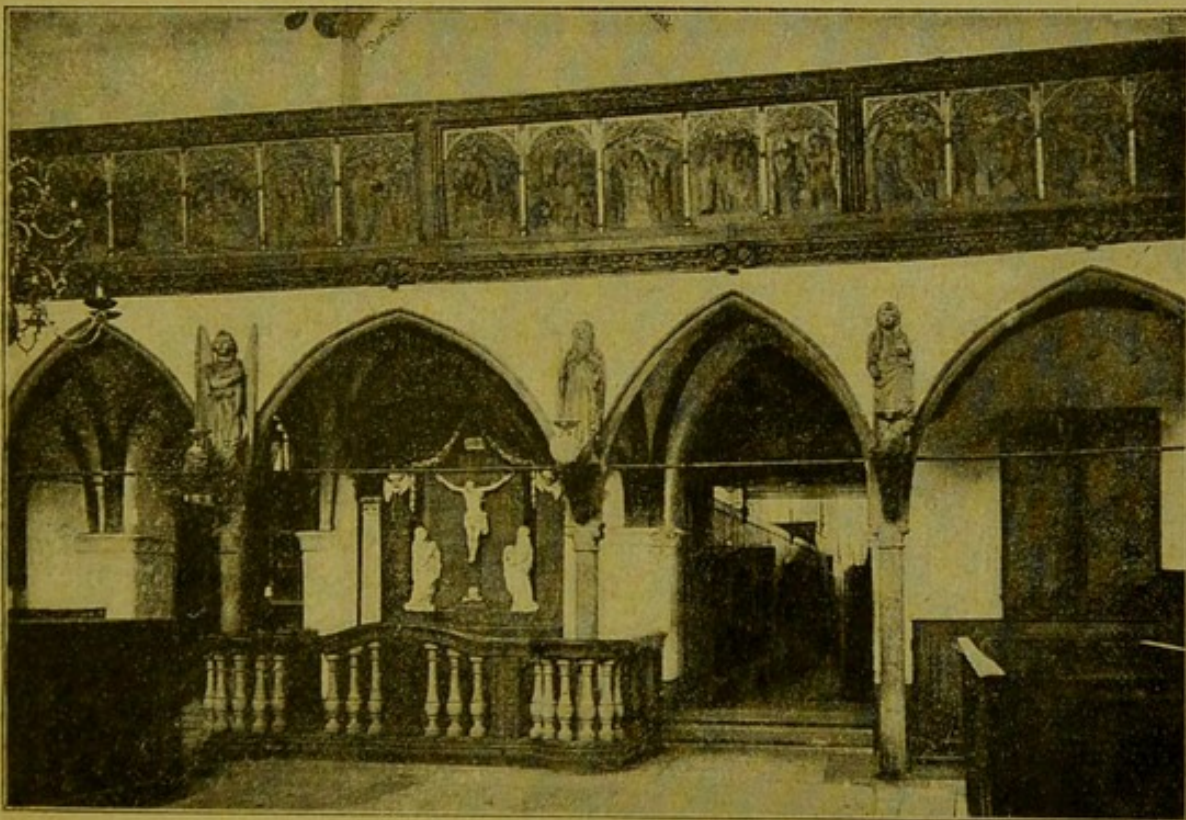
The suppression of monastic institutions had thrown the destitute very much on the public at large. At last the 45th of Elizabeth, commonly called the first Poor Law, was passed, which has since developed into our present gigantic system. Any institution calculated permanently to benefit even five paupers was therefore worthy of encouragement in Elizabeth's reign. Thus this Charter finally stamped upon the Hospital the character which, with some changes of detail, it now bears. It ceased to act as a night-shelter for casuals, and the inmates no longer acted as nurses; the Brethren and Sisters were now to be aged and infirm people, no longer capable of providing for themselves, and the business of the Hospital was to provide for them in things spiritual and temporal, and especially to secure them a quiet home for the remainder of their days.

By Letters Patent, dated December 18th, 1656, the patronage of the Hospital was transferred by Oliver Cromwell from the Dean and Chapter, who had held it from time immemorial, to the hands of the Mayor and Corporation of Chichester. However, the Restoration, four years later, brought back the old constitution again.

Dean Hayley became Custos in 1703, and got useful statutes passed by the Dean and Chapter in 1711. From these it appears that, in accordance with the proportion settled and fixed in Queen Elizabeth's

charter, the salary (£26) of the Custos was equal to that of the five poor (each 2s. weekly), and the Chaplain received £5 a-year.

In 1728 William Sherlock, Dean and Custos, was the means of obtaining the code of orders and decrees under which the Hospital is now conducted. By these the Chaplain's salary was increased to £10. Under these Sherlock Statutes the Hospital has flourished in very trying times for more than a century and a-half. In 1772 and again in 1793 sums of £300 and £800 respectively were left for the increase of the Chaplain's stipend, and in 1836 the Charity Commissioners were able to compliment the Dean and Chapter on the good care that had so long been taken of the Hospital funds and to report that, for twenty years



INTERIOR OF CHAPEL, WITH HALL BEYOND, OF THE HEILIGENGEIST HOSPITAL AT LUBECK.

previous to 1836, the poor had obtained each on an average £30 a-year and the Custos nearly £170.

In the year 1840 the Rev. Mr. Baker, of Sennicotts near Chichester, left £1,000 to the Dean and Chapter, as guardians of the Hospital, for its benefit, and the interest of this sum has been spent in adding three new inmates. These additional members are not on the foundation, nor do they enjoy the same income as the original five members. They have however each a separate apartment and share equally with the foundationers in other advantages.

In 1892 the five foundationers were paid 12s. a week, the three extra poor 5s. a week, with apartments, firing, medical attendance, &c.—

altogether receiving £281 10s. 8d. The Chaplain received £54 12s., other officers, £33 4s., repairs cost £165 16s. 5d., and the Custos was paid £187 1s. 3d., out of which he gave, besides meeting many other calls, £14 12s. 1d. towards the Chaplain's salary, £17 3s. 8d. towards the cost of the three extra poor.

At Lubeck, in Germany, there is still existing in flourishing condition an interesting specimen of this class of hospital,—the Heiligengeist Hospital, founded in 1286. Our view shows the interior of the chapel (which, unlike that at Chichester, is at the west-end of the building) with a glimpse of the hall and its little wooden chambers beyond.

The Heiligengeist Hospital was founded in the year 1286 by Bertram Mornoweg, a runaway Lubeck apprentice who returned to his native city a rich man. The front of the Hospital is a fine piece of brick-work (of which Lubeck contains many beautiful specimens) with three pointed doors. The central door gives immediate access to the chapel, which has three ancient carved altar-pieces enclosed by some simple tabernacle-work forming a small gallery.

The chapel is thus a place of continual passage and loitering, and scarcely appears to be regarded as a sacred place,—in fact, another room is provided for daily prayers. Beyond is a long hall, which in the last century was vaulted like the chapel. Here there are 123 wooden chambers in four rows,—the two rows on the north side being for women, and the two on the south for men. The rooms are numbered, and each is just large enough to hold a bed, a chest of drawers, two chairs, and a small table. At the end of the hall there are twelve somewhat larger chambers for inmates who appear to be on a higher foundation. On the north side of the hall there are common rooms for prayer, for meals, and for working, besides a large kitchen, laundry, &c.

The inmates are poor Lubeck citizens, male and female, who each receive at present 1s. 6d. per week, with board, lodging, and fuel. On admission each member brings a specified outfit, and deposits £3 for funeral expenses. The present income of the Hospital is about £3,000 a year.

I am indebted to Mr. Beresford Pite, A.R.I.B.A., for the illustrations on pages 5-9; to Kenneth Kincaid-Smith, Esq., of Wood End, Chichester, for the view of the Lubeck Hospital; and Mr. C. H. Barden, Photographer, 68, East Street, Chichester, for permission to reproduce the view of S. Mary's Hospital taken by his predecessor, the late Mr. W. N. Malby.

J. CAVIS-BROWN.