

**THE OLD CHEQUE-BOOK, OR
BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE,
OF THE CHAPEL ROYAL,
FROM 1561-1744**

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The Old Cheque-Book, or Book of Remembrance, of the Chapel Royal, from 1561-1744 by
Edward F. Rimbault

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EDWARD F. RIMBAULT

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FROM 1561-1744**

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THE OLD CHEQUE-BOOK,

OR

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE,

OF

THE CHAPEL ROYAL,

FROM 1561 TO 1744.

EDITED, FROM THE ORIGINAL MS. PRESERVED AMONG THE MUNIMENTS OF
THE CHAPEL ROYAL, ST. JAMES'S PALACE,

Francis^{BY}
EDWARD F. RIMBAULT, LL.D.,
ETC., ETC.



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INTRODUCTION.

The Chapels attached to the Palaces of Sovereigns form a remarkable feature of Christian Europe, and, from the earliest time on record, they seem to have been served on the same grand scale as the Cathedrals.

In England the Chapel Royal is the most ancient choir concerning which we have any authentic account. In olden times it was the fullest, best appointed, and the most remarkable for its excellence in the performance of the choral service.

As regards the constitution of this establishment, Dr. Jebb, in his valuable work on "The Choral Service of the United Church of England and Ireland" (1843, 8vo. p. 147), gives us the following particulars:—

"The Chapel Establishment of the English Sovereign is not a corporate body. It has subsisted, however, according to its present constitution for a long time antecedent to the Reformation. Over the Chapel presides a Dean; next to him a Sub-Dean; then forty-eight Chaplains, with ten Priests in ordinary, and a numerous lay Choir, styled Gentlemen of the Chapel. The Chaplains' duty is confined to preaching on Sundays; they take no part in the performance of Divine Service. The liturgical offices are performed by the Dean, Sub-Dean, and Priests in ordinary. They have been often, but not uniformly, appointed from the Minor Canons of Westminster and St. Paul's, and it would appear as if they were originally considered as forming part of the Choir. * * * From ancient lists, it appears that formerly the officiating members of the Chapel Royal were more numerous than now. In Queen Elizabeth's time, thirty were in attendance at a time, at least occasionally.

"In strictness, this establishment belongs to no fixed place, but is bound to attend the Sovereign wherever he may be resident. Of this ambulatory service there are

proofs in records of King Henry VIII's reign; and in later times, King George IV. used to command the attendance of his Choir at Brighton. But in general their services have been confined to the King's Palace in London; formerly to the magnificent Chapel at Whitehall, which was destroyed by fire after the Restoration; and since that time to the small oratory in St. James's Palace, a place altogether too mean for its high destination.*

The earliest facts on record relating to the "King's Chapel" are contained in the *Liber Niger Domus Regis*, a MS. of the time of Edward IV. in which an account is given of this establishment in the reign of that monarch.†

First we have a "DEANE OF THE CHAPPELLE" who was "served, after a barrone service," with a daily allowance of

"iij. loaves, ij. messe of great meate, a picher of wyne, two gallons of ale; and for wintere seasons one torche, one picher, ij. candles waxe, iij. candles piche, iij. talsheds,† lyttere and rushes all the yere of the serjante usher of the hall and chambers."

He had also "lodginge suffytyente for his horse and his servants" in town or country. We are told that the Dean was also "curate of confession of household," in other words, "Confessor to the Royal Household," a title which is still kept up in the patent granted to the Sub-Dean.

* The old Chapel Royal, Whitehall, was consumed by fire Jan. 5, 1698; and the new Chapel opened Dec. 9, in the same year. Dr. Blow composed an anthem, "Lord remember David," for the occasion. The Chapel Royal St. James's was occasionally used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the service was not regularly instituted there until the beginning of the eighteenth century. The celebrated Henry Purcell (according to Wheatley's *Piccadilly*, p. 294,) once lived in "a suite of apartments in St. James's Palace, access to which was obtained by a winding staircase in the clock-tower." Dryden when in debt used to stay with him for weeks together in these apartments, where he was secure from his creditors.

† Harl. MSS. 293 and 642. See also Ordinances for the Government of the Royal Household, &c. 1790, 4to.

‡ Firewood cleft and cut into billets of a certain length; each talshed (or talwood) being sixteen inches in compass.—COWELL.