impression of the background, and thus a sort of miniature model of the church was made, with its statues and the inner planes of the façade seen through the open tracery work,—the effect being extremely rich and delicate. When the finished obverse and reverse had been fitted together, the legend was added on their edges by means of the fourth piece of the matrix,—a strip of bronze with letters cut into it on both its

edges ; first one

side and then the

other of this strip

was pressed against

the rim of the wax

seal, which thus

received the im­

pression of the

complete legend

all round its edge.

The seal of South­

wark priory, also

of the 14th cen­

tury, is even more

elaborate, as both

sides have open

tracery separately

applied, and thus

the matrix consists

of five distinct

pieces. Many of

the bishops’ seals,

though less com­

plicated in design,

are of equal beauty

to those of the

chapters. The common design has a standing figure under a richly decorated canopy. Fig. 3 shows a very beautiful example, the seal of Richard, bishop of Dur­ham. The standing figure of the bishop in mass vest­ments is modelled with wonderful skill and shows ex­treme taste in the treatment of the drapery; the legend is s[igillum] ricardi . dei . gra . dvnelmensis . epi. A great variety of sacred subjects occur on ecclesiastical seals

in addition to single figures of patron saints ; the most frequent were perhaps the Crucifixion, the Annunciation, the Coronation of the Virgin, and the Virgin enthroned in Heaven ; small figures of kneeling worshippers were

often added. Fig. 4 shows one of the most magnificent of this class, with, in the centre, a figure of the Virgin in glory, between St Nicholas and Henry VI., each under a very rich canopy ; at the sides are shields charged with England and France, and France (modern) alone, held by two monks. @@1 This very beautiful work of art dates about the year 1443. In the 15th century the ecclesiastical seals began to fall off in richness and beauty, and after the Reformation were of little artistic value. Very hand­some seals were used by lay corporations, especially the municipalities of towns. These last frequently have a careful representation of the town itself, with its circuit of walls or that of its chief castle or cathedral, and thus often afford valuable evidence as to the form of its de­fences and principal

buildings. Fig. 5

shows a fine example,

3 inches in diameter,

—the corporate seal

of Rochester, made

in the 13th century;

it has a minute re­

presentation of the

keep of Rochester

Castle, surrounded

by an outer circuit

wall and a moat. On

one of the turrets

of the gateway is a

sentinel blowing a

signal horn ; legend,

sigillvm . CIVIVM . ROFENSIS. The reverse has the same legend repeated round the scene of the Crucifixion of St Andrew. Other corporation seals are covered with small figures under elaborate canopy work, much like those of the ecclesiastical foundations.

Seals of hospitals are often designed in a similar way, with a representation of the hospital building very minutely treated. In the 15th century seals began to be designed in a rather pictorial style, which, though very graceful, is inferior to the earlier

and more architect­

onic class. Very

magnificent seals

were used by state

officials : those of

the lord high ad­

miral of England are

especially fine, from

the beautiful form of

the ship on the ob­

verse. Fig. 6 shows

that of the earl of

Huntingdon, who

was lord high ad­

miral in the reign

of Henry VIII. In

design it resembles

those of the admirals of the previous century. On the sails are embroidered the royal arms of England.

Among private seals those of powerful barons are often large and very beautifully cut. Fig. 7 shows a silver matrix, now in the British Museum, which is remarkable for the great beauty of its workmanship. Its legend is SIGILLVM . ROBERTI . filii . Walterl On it an armed knight, of the time of Henry III., is riding over a dragon, whose tail ends in a scroll of very beautiful conventional foliage, modelled with the greatest spirit and delicacy.

@@@1 This class of seal is often a sort of miniature reproduction of some magnificent altar retable, as in fig. 4.