

ART. VII.—*Some Franciscans of Carlisle.* By the
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ACCORDING to the *Lanercost Chronicle* the Friars Minor first settled in Carlisle in August 1233, some nine years after the arrival of the original party in England. The Chronicler tells us that they were given a house within the walls of the city,¹ and they seem to have begun straight away to build a church and the necessary conventual buildings, for in 1235 we find Henry III giving them timber for their church and wood for their houses.² Of the history of the friary from 1233 to its suppression in 1539 very little is known. That it was one of the last religious houses to surrender is shown by a letter from Richard of Ingworth, Bishop of Dover, to Thomas Cromwell written on 23 February 1539, in which he says that he hears that there are still standing in the North "twenty places of friars" including the Friars Minor of Carlisle.³ The purpose of this article, however, is not to try to elucidate the history of this foundation during its 306 years of life, but to give the names of some of the friars of the Order of S. Francis who lived here.

Our first group comes from the year 1299-1300. In this year Edward I paid one or two visits to the North and made a number of gifts to the houses of the friars in various places. His normal custom was to give a

¹ *Chronicon de Lanercost* ed. J. Stevenson, p. 42. The friary was where Friars Court now stands.

² Close Rolls 19 Hen. III, m. 7, and 20 Henry III, m. 24; cf. A. G. Little, *Franciscan Papers, Lists and Documents*, p. 221.

³ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, vol. xiv (Pt. i) p. 135.

sum large enough to feed the friars for one, two or three days at the rate of 4d a day. Thus in the summer of 1300 we find two such gifts mentioned, one for the sixteen Friars Minor of Carlisle for three days by the hand of Brother *William de Waltby* and one for the nineteen friars for one day by the hand of Brother *John de Steynton*. Shortly afterwards he gave 22s 8d to the friars for three days by the hand of *William de Corbrigg*.⁴ Nothing further is known of these friars. Presumably they were, at the time, acting as bursars of the house.

Our second group contains two names which appear on Cotton Charter xxx, 40 in the British Museum. This document contains the names of the friars who died at certain dates, and in the list for the year 1328 (or thereabouts) occur the following:—

ffr. J. Lyninge sac' et prof' apud Karliolum

ffr. Henricus de Thadon' sac' et prof' ibidem.⁵

Of *Henry de Thadon'* nothing further is known. *J. Lyninge* may possibly be identified with Brother John de Lemyng, O.F.M. who was ordained priest at Linstock in the diocese of Carlisle, in Lent 1294.⁶

One other name belongs to the thirteenth century, that of *Richard of Durham* the author of the lost original of the *Lanercost Chronicle*. After many years of controversy Dr A. G. Little finally cleared up the problem of the authorship of this famous Chronicle which he shows to have been originally the work of two Franciscan friars but later corrected and supplemented by the canons of Lanercost.⁷ Richard of Durham

⁴ *Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobae, xxviii Ed. I*, ed. Society of Antiquaries of London, 1787, pp. 40, 42.

⁵ See *Collectanea Franciscana*, i, (British Society of Franciscan Studies), p. 150.

⁶ *Registrum J. de Halton* (Canterbury & York Society), i, p. 12.

⁷ See his article "The Authorship of the Lanercost Chronicle" in *English Historical Review*, 1916, pp. 269-79 and reprinted in his *Franciscan Papers, Lists and Documents*, pp. 42-54.

writes, under the year 1292, of the devastating fire which destroyed much of the city of Carlisle, and which he undoubtedly himself witnessed.⁸ We may therefore include him among the Franciscans connected with the Carlisle house.

So far we have discovered only six names for the first century of the friary's existence. For the next 55 years we have seventeen names. The first is Brother *Adam de Ribton* who was ordained subdeacon in September 1344, and deacon at Easter 1345, both at Carlisle.⁹ This does not definitely prove that he was a member of the Carlisle friary; for proof of that we must go to the Durham Episcopal Registers where we find a record of his ordination to the priesthood in December 1345, being definitely recorded as "de conventu Karliol."¹⁰ At about the same time the Durham Registers give us the name of another Carlisle friar *John de Thirlewal*. He was a member of the Carlisle house when he was ordained acolyte in December 1345, but moved afterwards to Hartlepool where he was ordained deacon in March 1347. His ordination to the priesthood is recorded in the York Registers for Lent 1348.¹¹

The next group of friars is found among those who received the Bishop's licence to preach and hear confessions. During the thirteenth century the friars became very popular as preachers, and some friction was caused between them and the secular clergy who resented the mendicants coming into their parishes, preaching to their flocks and hearing the confessions of

⁸ *Chronicle de Lanercost*, pp. 144-5. The words "me teste" in the description of the fire prove that the author was an eye-witness.

⁹ Carlisle Episcopal Registers: Kirkby, ff. 471, 475.

¹⁰ Durham Registers: Hatfield, f. 93.

¹¹ *Ibid.* ff. 93, 94, 95; York Registers: Zouche (Ordinations) f. 21b.

their parishioners.¹² A good deal of bad blood was stirred up over this and an attempt to settle the matter was made by the papal bull, *Super Cathedram*, issued in 1300. One of the main provisions of this bull was that in future the friars should choose certain of their own members to be licensed by their bishops as confessors, and that none should officiate without such a licence.

The fourteenth century episcopal registers contain the names of a number of friars who were thus licensed. The first of these in the diocese of Carlisle was *John de Levington* who was appointed Penitentiary for the County of Cumberland in 1346.¹³ It is not definitely stated that he was a member of the Carlisle friary, but he must have had some connection with the house since it was the only Franciscan house in the diocese. On 2 October 1350 *Richard Haward*, warden of Carlisle, was licensed to preach and hear confessions in the diocese of York.¹⁴ He is the first warden of Carlisle whose name has been preserved. Five years later Bishop Welton licensed a number of friars: *Richard de Swynesheved* who was then warden of Carlisle, *William de Kirkby*, *Adam de Waldyngfeld*, *William de Dacre*, lector to the friars at Carlisle, and *Ivo de Darlington*.¹⁵ Of Swynesheved and Kirkby nothing more is known, but a few details of the lives of the other three friars can be gleaned from the records. Waldyngfeld came originally from the friary at Richmond (Yorks) of which

¹² The Carlisle episcopal registers include an interesting letter from the Bishop to his official saying that he has received notification of the fact that the friars are annoying the clergy of Carlisle by actually intruding into their churches during the hours of divine service and appealing for money from the people with promises of large indulgences; see Bishop Welton's *Register*, f 22b. There is a similar letter from a group of London rectors to the Archbishop of Canterbury in Cambridge University Library MSS, Gg. 4. 32.

¹³ Carlisle Registers: Kirkby, ff. 442, 488.

¹⁴ York Registers: Zouche, f. 279b.

¹⁵ Carlisle Registers: Walton, ff. 117-8.

he was a member when he was ordained subdeacon in December 1345 by the Bishop of Durham. At the following Whitsuntide he was made deacon in the diocese of York, but was ordained priest in September 1346 at Durham.¹⁶ Ivo of Darlington also came from the diocese of Durham where he was ordained acolyte in 1344 and priest in 1346.¹⁷ William de Dacre also came from Durham where he was ordained subdeacon in 1341.¹⁸ His name is of especial interest as he is described in Welton's Register as "lector" to the Franciscans of Carlisle. This shows that, like many of the more famous houses, Carlisle friary had its own School. It is probable that Dacre, who looks as if he must have been a Cumberland man, had been either to Oxford or to Cambridge in order to qualify as a "lector"; but there is no trace of his name among the friars of the University towns. But it is interesting to note that even a small and remote friary like Carlisle was determined to have its school and its lecturer.

The names of the remaining eight friars of the fourteenth century who are known to have been at Carlisle all come from the Ordination lists. The first was *John de Hextildesham* who was ordained acolyte in 1344, was definitely "of Carlisle" when he was ordained subdeacon in December 1345, was promoted to the diaconate in September 1346 and to the priesthood in the diocese of York in 1348.¹⁹ There follow *Adam de Dunsford* (acolyte in Lent 1354 and priest in Lent 1359);²⁰ *Robert de Griseley* (deacon, Lent 1354);²¹

¹⁶ Durham Registers: Hatfield, ff. 93-4; York Registers: Zouche (Ordinations), f. 16.

¹⁷ *Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense*, iii, p. 149; Durham Registers: Hatfield, f. 94b.

¹⁸ *Regist. Palat. Dunelm.* iii, p. 112.

¹⁹ *Regist. Palat. Dunelm.* iii, p. 149; Durham Registers: Hatfield, ff. 93-4; York Registers: Zouche (Ordinations), f. 21b.

²⁰ Carlisle Registers: Welton, f. 125; Durham Registers: Hatfield, f. 103.

²¹ Carlisle Registers: Welton, f. 125.

and *William de Tyndale* (deacon, Lent 1355).²²

Finally we have a group of four friars, all of Carlisle, ordained by Bishop Appleby: *John de Korkeby* (acolyte, Whitsuntide 1382); *David Syngeler* (subdeacon, Whitsuntide 1382; deacon, Lent 1383); *John Talbot* (acolyte, February 1383); and *Thomas Capell* (deacon, Lent 1383).²³ Nothing further is known of these friars.

The registers of the fifteenth-century Bishops of Carlisle having, unfortunately, perished we have no ordination lists later than those of Bishop Appleby. The register of Bishop Langley of Durham does, however, reveal the names of two further Carlisle friars. The first of these was *William Ellom* "of the city of Carlisle" who was ordained priest in September 1420,²⁴ and the second *John Cowton* who was at Newcastle when he was ordained subdeacon in December 1433 and again at his ordination to the priesthood in March 1434, but who appears to have spent a few months at Carlisle in the early part of the year 1434 for he is definitely stated to have been of that friary when he received deacon's orders in February.²⁵ From the York Registers also come the names of two Franciscans of Carlisle both of whom received licences as confessors in February 1409. One was *Thomas Carlell* licensed for the deanery of Copeland, and the other *Richard de Burgh* licensed for the deanery of Kendal.^{25*}

Finally we have the name of one of the last wardens of the Carlisle friary, Dr Saunderson, who, according to Canon Wilson, held that office in 1523.²⁶ There were two Franciscans of the name of Saunderson in the

²² Ibid. f. 126. This friar was at Stamford when ordained priest in May, 1358 (Lincoln Registers: Gynwell, v. f. 88b).

²³ Carlisle Registers: Appleby, ff. 282-3.

²⁴ Durham Registers: Langley, f. 274.

²⁵ Ibid., ff. 208b, 302b.

^{25*} York Registers: Bowet, i, f. 18b.

²⁶ *V.C.H. Cumberland*, ii, 198.

sixteenth century who had graduated as doctors of divinity. One was John, who took his degree at Oxford in 1512,²⁷ and the other Robert, of whose life a good deal is known. He was at Cambridge when ordained subdeacon and deacon in 1497²⁸ and at London when ordained priest in 1498.²⁹ He then proceeded immediately to Oxford where he took his B.D. in 1511 after twelve years' study, and graduated D.D. in 1513.³⁰ After this he went to Bristol, of which house he was for a time warden,³¹ and if he is the Dr Saunderson of Carlisle he must have come north shortly after this. He remained in the north, for we find him as warden of the Grey Friars at Richmond at the Dissolution in 1538.³²

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So far the friars mentioned have been quite certainly attached in some way to the Carlisle house. In addition, there were a good many more who were associated with the diocese, though it cannot be definitely proved that they were ever members of the community at Carlisle. The probability is, however, very strong. There was only one house of Friars Minor in the diocese, and it is therefore most likely that all Franciscans who were living in the diocese were members of this house.

We begin with a small group of three friars who had at some date been licensed as preachers and confessors but whose licences were not renewed in 1355 when Swynesheved, Kirkby, Waldyngfeld and Dacre were appointed. The three who were thus replaced were

²⁷ Little, *Grey Friars in Oxford*, p. 275.

²⁸ Ely Registers: Alcock, ff. 242b., 244b.

²⁹ London Registers: Savage.

³⁰ Little, *op. cit.* p. 274.

³¹ A. R. Martin, *Franciscan Architecture in England*, p. 220n.

³² *Eighth Report of the Deputy Keeper*, Ap. ii, p. 38.

*John de Dalton, Thomas Faunell and Robert de Shirwood.*³³ Nothing further is known about these friars except that Dalton came from York where his ordinations are recorded.³⁴

Next we have the friars ordained by Bishop John de Halton. All the following were ordained within the diocese and may therefore be regarded as almost certainly friars of Carlisle: *Henry de Bothal* (p. 1295); *John de Byker* (d. 1306); *Thomas de Corbrigg* (sd. 1306, d. 1307); *Thomas de Elmedene* (sd. 1306, d. 1307); *John de Morpath* (sd. and d. 1306); *William* 1306, d. 1307); *Thomas de Elmedene* (sd. 1306, d. 1307); *Thomas de Norton* (ac. and sd. 1307); *Robert de Nignebonkes* (ac. and sd. 1307); *John de Kirkeby* (ac. and sd. 1307); *Walter de Chatton* (sd. 1307); *William de Boghes* (ac. and sd. 1307); *Thomas de Bywell* (sd. 1310); *Peter de Midelton* (d. 1310, p. 1312); *Symon de Tors* (ac. 1312); *John de Clifeton* (sd. 1313); *Roger de Lee* (p. 1315); *Roger de Askeby* (d. 1317); *Richard de Carliolo* (d. 1317); *Roger de Queston* (d. 1317); *Benedict de Stylington* (d. 1317); *Robert de Byker* (p. 1317); *Richard de Kellawe* (ac. and sd. 1317); *John de Greystok* (p. 1324).³⁵

Most of these are mere names, nothing further being known of these friars either before or after this date. But a few have left some trace behind them beyond the mere record of their ordination.

Much the most interesting of these men were two friars, Thomas de Elmedene and Walter de Chatton, who appear to have been contemporaries at Carlisle. Both left the North some time after their ordination and made

³³ Carlisle Registers: Welton, f. 117; cf. *V.C.H. Cumberland*, ii, p. 197.

³⁴ Subdeacon in 1343, deacon in 1344 and priest in 1348; York Registers: Zouche (Ordinations), ff., 3, 8, 26.

³⁵ The above will all be found in *Registrum J. de Halton* (Canterbury and York Society), *passim*.

their way to the Universities—Elmedene to Cambridge and Chatton to Oxford. It is possible that, having shewn particular ability in the friars' school at Carlisle they were chosen, as *studentes de debito*, to go on, first to the custody school at Newcastle, and then to one of the two universities. At any rate they both proved to be good scholars, for Chatton became lector at Oxford about 1329 while Elmedene held the same office at Cambridge a few years later.

At this time something in the nature of a pamphlet war was being waged over the question of Franciscan poverty. Towards the end of 1321 a sermon was preached in the South of France in which the preacher declared that Christ and His apostles had been entirely without possessions either individual or corporate. For this statement the preacher was brought before the Inquisition at Narbonne and charged with being a heretic. Immediately friends rushed to his defence, including a group of Franciscans, who pointed out that to condemn such a statement as heretical would be to cut at the root of the very ideals upon which the Order of S. Francis had been founded. The matter was referred to the Pope, John XXII, who, after some consideration, came down on the side of the Inquisition. The bull *Ad conditorem*, which he issued in December 1322, was little more than an attack on the Friars Minor and was followed up, in the following year, by *Cum inter nonnullos* in which he declared it to be heretical to deny that Christ and His apostles were the owners of property.

To this monstrous statement various Franciscans replied, among them two English friars, Richard Conington and Walter de Chatton. Chatton's "Tractatus de Paupertate evangelica" is preserved in a manuscript at Durham and was edited by Miss Decima Douie

in 1932-3.³⁶ He devotes the first part of his work to the question of the poverty of Christ and His apostles, proving from the Bible and the Fathers that they had in fact held no property either individually or in common. Later on he discusses the Franciscan theory of Poverty and respectfully demolishes the arguments put forward by John XXII in *Ad conditorem*. Soon after this Chatton went to Avignon where he was appointed by Benedict XII in 1335 as one of a commission to enquire into the question of the Beatific Vision,³⁷ and in the following year he was consulted by the Pope when he was drawing up his Statutes for the Franciscan Order.³⁸ About the same time Clement VI provided him to the see of St. Asaph under the erroneous belief that it was vacant.³⁹ He died at Avignon in 1343.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, at Cambridge, Chatton's friend Thomas de Elmedene and three other friars had also plunged into the controversy on the question of Poverty and had preached openly against the Pope. Tidings of this eventually reached the curia, and the Pope wrote to his nuncio in England in 1329 to say that certain friars had "burst forth into such madness as to have publicly preached certain damnable and wicked errors and heresies." The four guilty men were to be sent to Avignon to stand their trial,⁴¹ but whether they went and, if so, what befell them there is not recorded. Was

³⁶ *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, vols. xxiv and xxv. The MS. is in Bishop Cosin's Library, No. V, iii. 18. For a summary of it see D. Douie, *The Nature and the Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli*, pp. 202-6.

³⁷ Denifle, *Chart. Univ. Paris*, ii, pp. 453-4.

³⁸ Sbaralea, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vi, p. 26.

³⁹ *Calendar of Papal Petitions*, i, p. 48.

⁴⁰ Little, *Grey Friars in Oxford*, p. 170.

⁴¹ The papal correspondence is in Sbaralea, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, V, pp. 401-2, 464-5 and an abstract will be found in *Calendar of Papal Registers*, ii, pp. 492-3. The three other friars were Peter de Saxlingham, John de Aquinton and Henry de Costesy.

Thomas de Elmedene the ringleader in this? That we do not know; but the fact that a few years earlier he had been with Walter Chatton at Carlisle, and the probability that they had there discussed questions of this kind, make it reasonable to suppose that each of these incidents—the publication of Chatton's treatise and the sermons of Elmedene—owed something to their friendship at Carlisle.

A third friar among those ordained in the diocese of Carlisle also went on to the University. This was Richard de Kellawe, whom we find as Warden at Cambridge in 1338 when he was licensed by the Bishop of Ely to hear confessions.⁴² Three years later he received a further licence "until the return of the Chancellor to Cambridge to absolve scholars of Cambridge who had laid violent hands on clerks."⁴³ By this time he had taken his D.D. and was lector to the friars.⁴⁴

Yet another of these northern friars who were ordained by Bishop Halton may have had connections with the University. This was Henry de Bothal, who may possibly be identified with a certain Franciscan of the name of Bochale who preached at Oxford in 1290. Nothing further, however, is known about him.⁴⁵

From this date onwards our information becomes very scanty. Bishop Kirkby's Register yields the names of six Franciscans, but nothing is known of their subsequent history. The names are as follows: *Benedict de Kokurmuth* (d. 1333); *Robert de Neynbenkes* (ac. sd. and d. 1334);⁴⁶ *Thomas de Salkeld* (sd. 1344);⁴⁷ *Richard*

⁴² Ely Registers: Montacute, f. 95.

⁴³ British Museum, Add. MSS. 5824, f. 143.

⁴⁴ Eccleston, *de Adventu Fratrum Minorum*, p. 74.

⁴⁵ Little and Pelster, *Oxford Theology and Theologians*, c. 1282-1302, p. 184.

⁴⁶ His ordination as acolyte and subdeacon is also recorded in the Durham Registers; *Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense*, iii, pp. 152-3.

⁴⁷ He was ordained acolyte and deacon in the diocese of Durham in 1344 (*Reg. Palat. Dunelm.* iii, pp. 142, 146) and priest at York in 1346 (York Registers: Zouche (Ordinations) f. 16).

de Walton (p. 1335); *Henry de Newbygyng* (sd. 1337) and *William de Glenton* (sd. 1339).⁴⁸ Bishop Welton's Register gives us another four: *Thomas de Skelton* (d. 1354); *William de Cliff* (d. 1354); *Henry de Muskham* (p. 1354) and *John de Tanfeld* (p. 1358);⁴⁹ but these also are mere names to us.

Bishop Appleby's Register records the ordination of eighteen Franciscans, as follows:⁵⁰ *Peter de Rotham* (ac. and sd. 1363, d. 1364); *Robert de Lonesdale* (ac. 1364); *William de Karliolo* (sd. 1364); *Richard de Brighton* (d. 1364); *Nicholas de Gresmore* (d. 1365); *Simon de Whityngjame* (ac. and sd. 1366, d. 1367); *William de Hotoun* (ac. 1366, d. 1367); *Richard de Burgh* (ac. 1366, sd. 1367);⁵¹ *Thomas Ippeswell* (sd. 1366); *John de Midelton* (ac. and sd. 1367); *Robert de Karle* (ac. 1369, sd. 1370); *Radulphus de Bethune* (ac. and sd. 1369); *William Leisingh* (ac. 1371); *John Sourlay* (ac. 1371, sd. 1372, d. 1375); *John de Patryngton* (d. 1371); *Richard de Gresiner* (p. 1371); *Wyardus de Canoutria* (?) (d. 1371); *William de Sourby* (ac. 1373); *Robert de Overton* (sd., d. and p. 1373); *William de Hardred* (sd. 1373); *John de Hibernia* (sd. and d. 1374); *John de Masham* (p. 1374);⁵² *Richard Oteryngton* (d. 1379).⁵³

Of these eighteen friars practically nothing is known. The only one who has left any record of himself apart from his ordination is Richard de Burgh, who was committed to the Constable of the Tower in 1412, probably as being an idle vagabond.⁵⁴ But perhaps the most

⁴⁸ Carlisle Registers: Kirkby, ff. 251, 290, 315, 354, 397, 475.

⁴⁹ Carlisle Registers: Welton, ff. 126, 128.

⁵⁰ Carlisle Registers: Appleby, ff. 266-280.

⁵¹ He was ordained deacon in the diocese of York in 1371 (York Registers: Thoresby).

⁵² He was ordained deacon in the diocese of Durham in 1365 (Durham Registers; Hatfield, f. 109).

⁵³ He was ordained sd. in the diocese of Durham in 1378 (Durham Registers: Hatfield, f. 113).

⁵⁴ *Calendar of Close Rolls, Henry IV*, vol. iv, p. 278.

interesting name is that of Wyardus de Canoutria (?). The name is scarcely legible in the Register but is clearly a foreign name and suggests that this friar may have been one of the many foreigners who came over to England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to study at the English universities and schools.⁵⁵ We know very little of the school at Carlisle, but we do know that there was a lector there in 1355.⁵⁶

These notes have introduced us to a total of eighty-two Franciscans, of whom twenty-seven can be quite certainly regarded as members of the house at Carlisle while the remaining fifty-five were probably associated with it. This is, of course, only a small proportion of the friars who belonged to this convent during the three centuries of its existence. Yet it was probably never a large house. The only indication which we have of its size is derived from the gifts of the King in 1300. The number of friars then fluctuated between sixteen and twenty-three, and it is probable that the average was about twenty until towards the end, when the numbers fell rather steeply in most friaries. There is no record of the dissolution of the house and therefore no list of the friars who signed the surrender such as we have for at least thirty Franciscan friaries. The community was still in existence in February 1539 but how many friars it contained at this time is unknown.

Our information is, therefore, rather fragmentary, and many of the friars whose names are known to us appear only for a moment out of obscurity. But the few of whose lives some definite facts are known appear to have been men of considerable character, such as we should expect to find in the annals of a Northern house.

⁵⁵ See "The Foreign Element among the English Franciscans" in *English Hist. Review*, 1947, pp. 289-303.

⁵⁶ See above, p. 78.