

HISTORY OF THE PRIORY OF DARTFORD, IN KENT.

By REV. C. F. R. PALMER.

When Dominic Guzman, canon-regular of St. Augustin in the cathedral of Osma, Old Castile, was preaching against the Albigenses in the south of France, he witnessed a deplorable want of religious training amongst the females of noble but reduced families. As a means of meeting the evil, in the year 1206 he founded a convent of nuns, adjoining the church of Notre Dame at Prouille, a village near Montreal, at the foot of the Pyrenees. In this house many ladies sought a devout refuge, and numbers received that education which their station in life required. The community was governed by a prioress, but Dominic kept it under his own authority, so that it afterwards became the mother-house of the Sisters of the Dominican Order.

In 1215, Dominic began the Mendicant Order which now bears his name, and Pope Honorius III, December 22nd, 1216, sanctioned and confirmed it. Both the Friars and the Sisters were placed under the Rule of St. Augustin, which, being very simple and pliant, was moulded by special constitutions, derived mostly from the Premonstratensians, into codes of laws for the respective sexes. The Friars made their profession *Secundum Regulam Beati Augustini et Institutiones Fratrum Predicatorum*; whilst the Sisters were *Ordinis Sancti Augustini secundum Instituta et sub cura Fratrum Predicatorum*.

The Sisters were professed with the solemn vows of religion. Their asceticism embraced, principally, the choral recitation of the divine office daily; certain services for the dead; claustral silence, with suitable manual employment, as needlework, etc.; perpetual abstinence from flesh-meat, with fasting from Holy Cross Day (September 14th) to Easter. The habit consisted of a white tunic and scapular with a girdle, coif and wimple, and a black veil thrown back over the shoulders, at certain times and seasons a black mantle or cloak, shoes, etc. Straw and flock mattresses were used for bedding. Linen was altogether forbidden, except when sickness rendered it necessary. The vow of poverty was personal: each community held possessions for its maintenance in common. In after-ages, the Sisters, resigning the charge of teaching, became purely contemplatives.

As the Friar-Preachers spread over the world, which they divided into provinces, so the Sisters, though vastly inferior in numbers, followed. The Friars entered England in the summer of 1221, and in course of time held fifty-two principal and two subsidiary houses. Yet no efforts seem to have been made to introduce the Sisters for nearly seventy years, and it was even sixty years later before the only community which they ever had in this country was established. The history of that Sisterhood forms the subject of the present article.

The Friar-Preachers obtained paramount influence at the royal court, especially after Henry III, in 1256, selected his confessor from their numbers; from which time the king's confessor was always a Dominican, till Henry IV broke through the custom. Queen Eleanor of Castile, "chere reine" of Edward I, held these Friars in special favour, so that she was looked upon as the *nursing-mother* of the Order. She was a great and special benefactress to many of their houses, and was contemplating the establishment of Sisters in the kingdom, when she was carried off by death, in the year 1290.

Queen Eleanor had probably expressed her desire for the foundation so earnestly, that her son, though with procrastination, took the matter in hand. Edward II proposed that the Friar-Preachers of Guildford should surrender their house to a Sisterhood. Moreover, he had founded the priory of friars at Kings-Langley, in Hertfordshire, where he had caused Sir Piers de Gavaston to be entombed, to whose memory he designed to endow that house with possessions sufficient for the support of one hundred religious, there to celebrate for ever for the soul of his favourite. But the friars refused to accept such an endowment, as it was contrary to their institute. Thereupon the king sought to adapt the letter of the friars' law to his scheme, by making the contemplated house of the Sisters subject to Kings-Langley, and letting them hold an endowment for the maintenance of the brethren. Edward II petitioned the Pope, April 22nd, 1318, to sanction this scheme, in favour of which he tried to enlist Nicholas, cardinal-bishop of Ostia and Velletri; Nicholas, cardinal-bishop of St. Eusebius; and Guillaume, cardinal-bishop of St. Sabina—all three Friar-Preachers; and he begged the master-general of the Order to have seven Sisters in readiness for the new foundation. These letters were sent to the pope, cardinals, and master by two accredited friars, Richard de Birton and Andrew Aslakeby.¹ In another letter to his holiness, October 26th, he prayed to be allowed to appropriate the church of Kingsclere to the Sisters; and he commended the same two to Pietro Fabri, papal notary, in the matter.² But an insuperable difficulty lay in the injustice of overthrowing the settlement of queen Eleanor of Provence, who was the royal foundress of Guildford convent. The king, therefore, abandoning all other considerations, tried to make over the priory of Kings-Langley, with his alms, to the Sisters; for, being founder, he could do no violence to his own will. On January 12th following, he sent this new proposal to the pope, by Birton and Aslakeby;³ but although he again urged the point in a letter dated March 23rd,⁴ he failed to obtain the change of that large, important, and flourishing establishment. So, after some delay, he settled to have an entirely new foundation, and wrote, October 8th, 1321, for the papal sanction to erect the house *anywhere*, and to endow it with Kingsclere church, sending his letters by F. Hugh de Offinton and F. John de Cleve, whom he also commended to Luke, cardinal-deacon of St. Maria in Via Lata, and to the archbishop of Vienne.⁵ Pope John XXII, November 1st following, gave full sanction for a monastery to be founded and constructed *in fundo proprio*, and granted to the Sisters who should form it the same privileges and

¹ Rot. Rom. et Franc. 11, 14th Edw.
II, m. 13, 13d.

² Ibid. m. 10.

³ Ibid. m. 9.

⁴ Ibid. m. 9 d.

⁵ Rot. Rom. et Franc. 15. 18th Edw
II, m. 13 d.

immunities which those of Bellemont, in Valenciennes, enjoyed.¹ But Edward II was dethroned before he had done anything more in the matter.

Following the example of his father, Edward III likewise bound himself by vow to carry out the design of queen Eleanor of Castile. Sir Thomas Wake of Lidell had letters-patent, August 20th, 1344, for bringing over four or six nuns of the Order of Preachers from Brabant, and for founding a house of their religion in some fitting place in England.² The letters, being in the form of a licence and not of a commission, do not seem to have had any reference to the foundation which the king designed, but indicate rather that that nobleman wished to erect a convent of Dominican Sisters; and he probably sacrificed his own inclinations rather than dim the lustre of regal munificence and piety. The king soon matured his plans. He sought the permission of the Bishop of Rochester to found the house of Sisters at Dartford, in Kent, being a town which was a favourite resort of royalty. The letter to the bishop was dated October 8th, 1345, and, on the 21st, the Archbishop of Canterbury also addressed the bishop, urging him to consent to the royal prayer. The bishop, November 3rd, referred the matter to the chapter of his cathedral, directing that enquiries should be instituted as to any detriment which might arise from the foundation of the monastery, particularly as to the appropriated church of Dartford.³ At the same time, he summoned the vicar of the church to wait upon him in person and certify in the same manner, and to declare his willingness, either simply or conditionally, to consent. Both parties were to give their answers by the 20th, the Feast of St. Edmund.⁴

The chapter, on the 13th, gave its approval of the monastery, which tended, they said, to the enlargement of divine worship, and deserved the assent of every Christian; but still security ought to be given against any future diminution of the portion of the vicarage, or the pension due thence to the chapter itself.⁵ Then the bishop, it seems, applied to the apostolic see to be permitted to comply in the matter; and this necessarily caused some delay. The king, therefore, wrote again to the bishop, January 28th, 1345-6, urging his consent; and the bishop, February 3rd, returned a favourable reply, with the stipulation of indemnity for the parish church against all detriment, and the conservation of episcopal rights. On March 1st following, the king solicited the pope to allow him to carry into effect such a monastery as queen Eleanor and Edward II had contemplated, for their souls and the souls of his predecessors, and of all the faithful departed; sending the petition by the hand of Master John de Thorstan.⁶ But the brief of John XXII, in 1321, was found sufficient, and was acted on.⁷

Having thus secured the pontifical and episcopal licenses for his work of piety, Edward III set about the foundation in earnest. He granted a royal mortmain licence, June 29th, 1349, to William Clapitus, to assign two messuages and ten acres of land in Dertford, "*dilectis nobis in Christo Sororibus domûs quam de Ordine Predicatorum in eadem villâ de novo fundare ordinamus.*"⁸ This land was most probably the site on

¹ Bullarium Ord. Præd.

² Pat. 18th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 26.

³ Thorpe's Registrum Roffense, p. 312.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 313.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Rot. Rom. 20th Edw. III, m. 2.

⁷ Bullar. Ord. Præd.

⁸ Pat. 23rd Edw. III, p. 2, m. 22.

which the habitation and church were soon erected. On November 2nd 1350, the Sisters had a royal licence to acquire lands and rents (not held of the crown in capite) to the value of one hundred marks a-year, notwithstanding the statute of mortmain.¹ The house, with all the goods belonging, was committed, January 6th following, to the custody of William de Carleton, to administer and dispose for its benefit.² William de Thorp and Carleton were also joined in a commission, March 18th, 1351-2, to superintend the house, and to enquire what lands, goods, and chattels had been left to it for the weal of *their* souls, by some who had died of the late plague and which had escheated to the crown, and had passed thence to others contrary to the will and intentions of the donors.³ Carleton was summoned to give in his accounts as receiver into the exchequer, in Hilary term, 1352-3, but as he did not then appear, the sheriff of London was ordered to distrain him to attend on the morrow of the close of Easter (April 1st), which he probably did.⁴

The Sisterhood was established, and its religious services conducted and controlled by a staff of Friar-Preachers from Kings-Langley, to whose priory this house was made subject. These friars had a pension of 20*l.* a year granted them, June 16th, 1351, which was paid them half-yearly (for the first time December 2nd, by the hand of F. Richard, a friar of Oxford) and was continued for several years.⁵ The king also provided a dwelling for them, which cost 19*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, of which sum was paid to F. John de Woderowe, the king's confessor, November 9th, 1352, 66*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, and Feb. 27th following, 126*l.*⁶

This F. John de Woderowe was a man of no small consideration in his time, and took a very active part in founding the Priory of Dartford. He became the confessor of Edward III in the spring of 1349, and on his commencing D.D. at Cambridge in that year, the king bestowed on him, July 8th, a gift of 20*l.*⁷ In 1353 he accompanied the Archbishop of Canterbury, Duke of Lancaster, and other magnates in the embassy to the King of France, receiving for his expenses, November 9th, 26*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, and January 25th following, 11*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*⁸ Next year he went to the Roman court with the Bishop-elect of London, Sir Guy Bryan, and others, for the confirmation of peace between the English king and the French, for which he had, July 7th, an advance of two hundred marks for the journey;⁹ whilst he was at the papal court, December 8th, 100*l.* was sent to him, and February 23rd, through his brother Richard, a further sum of one hundred marks;¹⁰ and after his return he had, May 5th, 8*l.* for his wages, and 38*l.* for his safe-conduct, passage and repassage of his men and horses, and other necessities. This journey occupied him from May 25th to March 29th.¹¹ In the autumn of 1356 he was again at Rome, and carried with him royal letters, dated November 12th, containing the king's off-repeated solicitation for the renewal of the privileges

¹ Pat. 24th Edw. III, p. 3, m. 13.

² Fin. 24th Edw. III, m. 5.

³ Pat. 26th Edw. III, p. 1, m. 16 d.

⁴ L. T. R. Memoranda Roll. 27th Edw. III.

⁵ Pat. 25th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 26. Exit. Scac. Mich. 26th Edw. III, m. 19, et 7 annis seq.

⁶ Exit. Scac. Mich. 27th Edw. III, m. p. 21.

⁷ Exit. Scac. Pasch. 23rd Edw. III, m. 19.

⁸ Exit. Scac. Mich. 28th Edw. III, m. 8, 18.

⁹ Exit. Scac. Pasch. 28th Edw. III, m. 14.

¹⁰ Exit. Scac. Mich. 29th Edw. III, m. 18, 27.

¹¹ Exit. Scac. Pasch. 26th Edw. III, m. 8.

of some colleges of canons, who had lost the original documents.¹ A pension of forty marks a-year was granted him May 24th, 1355,² the payment of which was changed, May 13th, 1358, from the exchequer, to 20*l.* out of the farm-rent of Nottingham, the remaining ten marks continuing out of the exchequer.³ But this pension was superseded, August 26th, 1372, by his appointment to the office of chirographer of the common bench.⁴ Moreover, he had a royal grant, June 26th, 1360, of 69*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* a-year for the support of himself and his companion at the court, four grooms serving him in the royal household, four horses and one hack, including 9*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* for the wages of these men, at 1*l.* a-day each, who attended to his horses, and 116*s.* for small necessities;⁵ and this payment was transferred, October 1st, 1362, from the royal household to the exchequer.⁶ He lent twenty marks to Jane, queen of Scotland, which after her death was paid, November 30th, 1362, out of the English exchequer.⁷ According to the custom with the royal confessors, he and his companion had every Christmas and Pentecost the black and white cloth for their habits, table napery, and bed clothes provided from the king's wardrobe; all which were continued to him even after he had given up the charge of the royal conscience.⁸ He had given him by the king, in 1366, two casks of Gascony wine,⁹ in 1371 a pipe of Rhenish wine, and in 1373 another cask of Gascony wine;¹⁰ all probably for celebrating mass. And August 18th, 1371, a messenger from the king was paid 13*s.* 4*d.* for going to him from Marlborough to Dartford.¹¹ On his retiring from the court, in 1376, he had a royal pardon, July 15th, for all offences, including debts to the exchequer.¹² He died not long after, for in October, 1380, his office of chirographer was bestowed on a succeeding confessor.¹³

Woderowe was appointed to superintend the works of the friars' and sisters' house, and received 40*l.*, January 25th, 1353-4, for his expenses in staying at Dartford.¹⁴ Through him the king lent 100*s.*, February 10th, to the friars, to be repaid at will.¹⁵

F. John de Norhampton was also an overseer of the works of the house of his brethren here, and March 12th had a tally for 100*l.* on the Prior of Spalding, in aid of them;¹⁶ as had Woderowe, on the 26th, 20*l.* from the keeper of the royal exchange in the Tower of London;¹⁷ and October 2nd, the king made a royal gift of 6*l.* for the same purpose.¹⁸

The king, June 12th, 1355, committed all the lands in England and Wales which had belonged for life to Roger Barent, and by his death had escheated to the crown, to William de Keynes, that the issues and profits, under the supervision of William de Thorp, Woderowe, and

¹ Rot. Rom. 26-31st Edw. III, m. 1.

² Pat. 29th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 21.

³ Pat. 32nd Edw. III, p. 1, m. 15.

⁴ Pat. 46th Edw. III, m. 23.

⁵ Pat. 34th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 28.

⁶ Pat. 36th Edward III, p. 2, m. 23.

⁷ Exit. Scac. Mich. 37th Edw. III, m. 18.

⁸ Rot. liberat. pannorum etc. 34-35th Edw. III.

⁹ Lib. Garder. de Will. Manton, 40-11st Edw. III.

¹⁰ Lib. Comp. Hen. de Wakefeld, cust. Garder. Hosp. Reg. 45-47th Edw. III.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Pat. 50th Edw. III, p. 1, m. 8.

¹³ Pat. 4th Rich. II, p. 1, m. 6.

¹⁴ Exit. Scac. Mich. 28th Edw. III, m. 18.

¹⁵ Ibidem, m. 21.

¹⁶ Ibidem, m. 26.

¹⁷ Ibidem, m. 23.

¹⁸ Exit. Scac. Mich. 29th Edw. III, m. 1.

Thomas de Keynes, royal almoner, might go for the construction and work of the Sisters' house.¹ So too the king, October 25th, 1356, granted the custody of the manor of Braundeston Halle, Suffolk, which he had by gift of Roger Bavent, knt., to Woderowe and William de Nesseford to apply the issues and profits "*circa operationes domus monialium de Dertford*;"² and the same day the escheator had a precept to give the manor over to Woderowe.³

Some houses belonging to Augustin Waleys, in London, had escheated, and the king, September 16th, 1356, ordered the sheriffs of London to pay the issues and rents to Woderowe, "*ad opus domus novi operis monialium predicantricum de Derteford*."⁴ And October 28th following, John de Arlern, prior of the Order of St. Augustin, being the chief executor of Matilda, widow of this Augustin, in compliance with her will, granted all the tenements, rents and services (except a tenement at the corner of Lymstret, Cornhulle) to the king, for the same purpose.⁵

The building of the conventual residence was so far advanced, if not completed, in 1356, that a community of Sisters could now take possession and commence religious observance under the friars already there. Previously the friars seem to have represented and acted for the Sisterhood, for all legal purposes. Four Sisters were brought over from France (probably from Poissy), for whose expenses Woderowe received, October 7th, 20l.;⁶ and one of them, now known as simply Sister Matilda, was appointed the first prioress. With the addition of ten other ladies, a competent band was soon formed. To them, November 19th, the king made the formal grant of the house or monastery, with its buildings, cloisters, and enclosures, dedicated to God, and to the virgin Mother of our Lord, and to the blessed virgin Margaret, for the weal of his soul, and the souls of queen Eleanor and Edward II, of all his ancestors and successors, and all the faithful departed. The Priory was constituted of a Prioress and thirty-nine Sisters, "*de Ordine Predicatorum, sub regula et habitu Sti. Augustini*," who were subject in spirituals to the Friar Preachers of Kings-Langley, whose prior was to appoint the friars here: and the Sisters had the pension of 100l. a-year out of the exchequer, till a royal endowment of the same amount was made for their maintenance, and that of the prior and fifty-nine friars at Kings-Langley, in food, clothing, and all necessities.⁷ On December 3rd, he granted a royal licence for them to acquire 300l. a-year in lands, tenements, advowsons, etc., notwithstanding the mortmain statute, for the forty sisters and sixty friars.⁸ And February 5th following, the Sisters were empowered to receive all letters-patent and writs in chancery on account of the 300l. free of fines and fees of seals.⁹

But the yearly pension of 100l. did not limit the liberality of the king. In aid of their maintenance, he made the Sisters a present of 40l., paid through Woderowe, in instalments of 23l. January 7th, 11l. January 18th, and 6l. February 4th, 1356-7; on January 27th, 20l.; in February

¹ Pat. 29th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 22.

² Rot. Fin. 30th Edw. III, m. 10.

³ Originalia, 30th Edw. III, ro. 14.

⁴ Claus. 30th Edw. III, m. 9.

⁵ Claus. 30th Edw. III, m. 6 d.

⁶ Exit. Scac. Mich. 31st Edw. III, p. 1, m. 2.

⁷ Cart. 30th Edw. III, no. 2.

⁸ Pat. 30th Edw. III, p. 3, m. 5.

⁹ Pat. 31st Edw. III, p. 1, m. 24.

another 40*l.*, partly paid on the 13th.¹ William de Nessefeld and Richard Caumbray were appointed, February 20th, to be auditors of the issues and profits which the Sisters received from their manors, etc.² The king, July 16th, appropriated to the Sisters the advowson of Whitteleye church, in Surrey.³ He gave them, September 1st, four casks of wine a-year, one each term, out of London port, for the celebration of mass and for their own use.⁴ Peter de Malolacu had to pay to Woderowe for them, October 30th, the 100*l.* in which he was fined for marrying Elizabeth, widow of John Darcy, without the royal licence.⁵ The king made over to them 850 marks, out of 1000 marks for which the manors of Wistneston, Asshehurst, Chiltyngton, Sloughtre, Hyen, and Yryngton, all acquired of Roger Bavent the son, were sold, November 1st, to Sir Peter Brewose, and Jane his wife, and their issue in fee-tail.⁶

Isabel, queen-dowager, made an offering of a diapered cloth of gold, October 21st, 1357, "*sororibus predicatoribus de Dertford*," and it was worth 53*s.* 4*d.*⁷

The conventual church of the Priory was not yet completed. Hastening on the royal works at Dartford, the king empowered John Cule, March 2nd, 1357-8, to take and select as many workmen (except those of the tithing of the church, or employed on other royal works) as were necessary for fully finishing all; and also such as were needed for carrying timber and stone.⁸ John de Northampton continued to be "*supervisor operationum nostrarum apud domum per nos apud Dertford noviter fundatam*," and, April 10th, had a pension of ten marks towards his support assigned to him,⁹ which he enjoyed till his death, some time before May, 1362.¹⁰ The king gave casually to the Prioress and Sisters, May 9th, 1358, the sum of 40*s.*, being a rent in the town of Northampton;¹¹ and July 5th, a craier with its equipment, which John Godman of Dertford had forfeited to the crown.¹² On July 12th he assigned a pension of two hundred marks a-year (till otherwise provided for) for the support of the fourteen Sisters and six Friars, and their servants, to be paid out of the London port; but on the 14th the payment was transferred to the exchequer.¹³ On this latter day, "*ob affectionem gratam quam ad nunc Priorissam dicte domus et tres sorores, que cum eadem Priorissa de partibus transmarinis in Angliam venerunt, gerimus et habemus*," he granted to each of the four an additional pension of five marks a-year in the exchequer.¹⁴ Towards the works he gave, September 24th, "*Priori et Sororibus de Ordine Predicatorum domus religiose de Dertford*" 200*l.*, being two hundred marks "*circa constructionem ecclesie dicte domus*," and one hundred marks for lead to cover the church and other buildings. This 200*l.* was the fine which Ralph de Middelneye, knt., had to pay for the pardon of a transgression.¹⁵ Woderowe exhibited the grant in the exche-

¹ Exit. Scac. Mich. 31st Edw. III, 6 to 10.

² Orig. 31st Edw. III, ro. 18.

³ Pat. 31st Edw. III, p. 2, m. 12.

⁴ Ibidem, m. 2.

⁵ Orig. 31st Edw. III, ro. 27.

⁶ Pat. 31st Edw. III, p. 3, m. 1.

⁷ Lib. recept. et liberat. hospitii regine, 31st Edw. III.

⁸ Pat. 32nd Edw. III, p. 1, m. 26.

⁹ Ibidem, m. 22.

¹⁰ Pat. 36th Edw. III, p. 1, m. 10.

¹¹ Exit. Scac. Pasch. 32nd Edw. III, m. 8.

¹² Pat. 32nd Edw. III, p. 1, m. 3.

¹³ Pat. 32nd Edw. III, p. 2, m. 31, 34.

¹⁴ Ibidem, m. 34.

¹⁵ Ibidem, m. 27.

quer, May 7th, 1359,¹ being paid gradually by tallies levied on the knight, October 15th, 1358; May 6th, October 31st, 1359; and May 8th, 1360.² John de Berland, November 29th, was appointed steward and overseer of all the lands, tenements, and rents belonging to the Sisters;³ for whose benefit, moreover, he had a precept, December 1st, to sell all the stock on the royal manor of Norton, in Wiltshire.⁴

The king, December 26th 1358, granted all the tenements in London acquired of the executor of Matilda Waleys, a rent of 10*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* from two messuages and three shops in Cordewanerstrete acquired of Margery de Weston, widow of Robert de Upton; and the manor of Shibbourn, in Kent, formerly the property of Roger Bavent, to William de Thorp and William del Peek, for their lives; with remainder to the Prioress and Sisters of Dartford, in aid of their maintenance.⁵ But litigation arose respecting Waley's property. John Turk, son of Margery, widow of John Malwayn, one of the daughters and heiresses of Matilda Waleys, established a right to the moiety, and Matilda, prioress of Dartford, had to release and quitclaim to him, November 30th, 1363, a tenement in Tower ward, one in Lymstrete ward, and another in Bruggestrete, opposite the Oystregate; whilst she retained a tenement with six shops in Alegatestrete, one in Tamstrete, and a messuage and four shops in Fletestrete. This division received the royal confirmation December 4th following.⁶

Amongst the possessions of Roger Bavent, the profits of which had been assigned to the Sisters, were the manors of Fifhide and Norton. On July 8th, 1359, the king ordered John Everard of Stratford to pull down and sell the buildings in Fifhide; John Edmund, John Russell and Robert Walebroun, to sell the wood there; and Thomas de Hungerford and Thomas atte Bergh, the buildings in Norton. All the proceeds were for the Sisters.⁷

In the spring of 1361, the masons' work appears to have been advancing towards completion. Simon Kegworth, Robert Baroun, and John Beer were appointed to gather in Kent as many carpenters, cementers and others as were necessary for the royal works of the Priory at Dartford, and also for carrying stone, timber, tiles, etc.; and a writ, of April 12th, required all sheriffs, mayors, bailiffs and others to counsel and aid in the matter.⁸ The king granted, July 1st, to John Knyvet, Nicholas de Thornehull, clerk, John de Berland, William Tank, Simon de Kegworth, and Will. de Berkyng, goldsmith, all the lands and rents in Billyngesgate, Puddylnglane, and Bruggestrete acquired of John Jurdan, citizen; also a messuage, once Jurdan's, held by Alice, widow of Alan de Horwode, and remaining to the king; all to be held by them for life, with remainder to the Prioress and Sisters, towards the maintenance and support of the chantries, alms and other pious works established by him in the Priory, for his soul and the souls of his progenitors, and all the faithful dead.⁹ But within a short time the four surrendered the whole to the king, and, thereon, the Prioress and Convent, December 11th, 1363,

¹ L. T. R. Memorand. 32nd Edw. III, Pasch. ro. 1 d.

² Exit. Seac. Mich. 33rd Edw. III, m. 4: and three following rolls.

³ Pat. 32nd Edw. III, p. 2, m. 13.

⁴ Rot. fin. 32nd Edw. III, m. 5.

⁵ Pat. 32nd Edw. III, p. 2, m. 2.

⁶ Pat. 37th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 4.

⁷ Pat. 33rd Edw. III, p. 2, m. 19. And Orig. ro. 16.

⁸ Pat. 35th Edw. III, p. 1, m. 8.

⁹ Pat. 35th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 10.

quitclaimed all right, their acknowledgment being received on the part of the king, on the 14th, by Woderowe, in their Priory.¹ Hawise, widow of Roger de Bavent, knt., October 13th, 1361, released and quitclaimed to the king and to the Priory of Dartford all her right in the manors of Norton-Bavent, Flifide, Emwelle, Billegh, Trowe, and Wythihull, in Wiltshire; Burton atte Nasse, in Dorsetshire; Pittefold and Hachesham, in Surrey; Shibburn, in Kent; Braundeston and Combes, in Suffolk; and Colveston, in Glamorganshire: which grant she acknowledged, March 12th following, at Bylegh, in Essex, before the abbot there.² John Foxcote and Margaret, his wife, in April, 1363, conveyed the manor of Braundeston Halle, in Magna Waldyngfeld, to Matilda, prioress of the new works at Derteford, and her church of St. Margaret; in return for which they were to be admitted to all the benefits and prayers in the church for the future.³ On July 12th, Woderowe received ten marks to pay the debts of the four French Sisters, and for four marble stones for their tombs.⁴

By this time, all the buildings had been finished, and it only remained to complete the endowment of the house. On February 16th, 1365-6, William de Nessefeld was appointed steward and overseer of all the lands and rents either already given, or hereafter, by advice of the chancellor, lord privy seal, or by Woderowe, to be assigned by the king.⁵ On May 16th, 1366, the king granted, in pure and perpetual almoign, the manor of Portebriigg, and all other lands, tenements, rents, and services in Derteford, Wylmyngton, and Stone, and the advowson of the chapel or chantry of St. Edmund, king, in Derteford, which he had lately of John de Bykenore of Claveryng, kinsman and heir of Robert de Bykenore of Derteford.⁶

Bavent's manor of Combes in Suffolk had been leased, April 6th, 1357, to John de Wynewyk, William de Thorp, and William de Pek, for their lives, with reversion to this Priory; and the king recovered the rent of one mark in Illeye-combusta, as parcel of the manor, from Sir Ralph de Shelton, Knt. After the death of the three tenants, and the manor had passed to the Sisters, the Prioress petitioned for this rent, and a royal mandate issued to the barons of the exchequer, June 15th, 1366, transferred it to her with arrears.⁷

The king granted, November 20th, 1366, the underwood and wood-falls of the lands in Derteford, Wylmyngton, and Stone, which he had of the gift of John de Bikenore of Claving, Thomas Houchon, Roger Ball, and William Folleswych, all three of Derteford, at the royal pleasure, for sale or use.⁸ In 1367 he gave one thousand marks for buying lands and tenements, in full of the endowment of the house. This sum was paid by the exchequer, 200*l.*, February 22nd, through F. Walter Durant, and 466*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, May 3rd following.⁹ As a recluse, and unable personally to attend the pleas and other business connected with herself and house, the prioress Matilda obtained a royal licence, November 7th, 1368, to appoint general attorneys, and now attorned Mich. Skillyng and Walter Perle, in her stead, for any court of England.¹⁰

¹ Claus. 37th Edw. III, m. 3 d.

² Claus. 36th Edw. III, m. 43 d.

³ Fin. Suffolk, 37th Edw. III, no. 208.

⁴ Exit. Scac. Pasch., 37th Edw. III, m. 36.

⁵ Pat. 40th Edward III, p. 1, m. 37.

⁶ Pat. 40th Edw. III, p. 1, m. 26.

⁷ Claus. 40th Edw. III, m. 16.

⁸ Pat. 40th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 10.

⁹ Exit. Scac. Mich., 41st Edw. III, m. 8.

¹⁰ 30; and Pasch., m. 1.

¹¹ Pat. 42nd Edw. III, p. 2, m. 21.

John Chipstede and John Walworth, June 19th, 1369, granted 16*ac.* of land in Derteford to the king, "ad opus domûs de Derteford de ordine predicatorum." The grant was enrolled in chancery July 12th following.¹

The manors of Norton and Fifhilde had been held by Sir Roger Bavant, of John, bishop of Exeter, by military service and the rent of 60*s.* a-year, which service and rent the bishop had granted to John de Montagu and his heirs for ever. By the royal gift of the manors to Dartford Priory, in frank-almoign, Montagu had suffered disinherison. In 1371 he petitioned the king and council in parliament that the grant might be revoked, and another one issued restoring his four knights'-fees and rent. An inquisition was therefore ordered June 18th, which was accordingly taken July 19th following at New Sarum, when it was found that the manors were held by the service of *three* knights'-fees and the rent, and that the bishop had never relaxed them to Bavent or the Prioress.²

The possessions of the Sisters were now considerable, and it became advisable to include them all under one royal grant. Matilda the prioress therefore surrendered to the king, April 6th, 1371, all lands and tenements of the concession of John Broul, chaplain, and which had belonged to William Claptes and Jane his wife, in Dertford, Stone, Wilmyngton, and Suthflete; messuage given by John de Cherteseve in Dertford, and three messuages in Dertford once Roger Folkes'; 2*ac.* of land in Dertford given by Simon Kegworth; tenement in London once Robert Bourton's and John de Legyton's, executors of Robert de Hauwode late citizen and merchant of London; all the tenements once Augustin Waley's; all rents and services of the two messuages and three shops in Cordewanerstrete, now held by James Andrewwe for life; the manor of Shibbourn, with all rents and services in Mallynge; the manor of Heechesham, in Surrey and Kent; all lands and tenements, with rents and services, in Putfold, Surrey; the manors of Braundeston and Combes in Suffolk; the manors of Norton and Fifhilde, with all rents and services in Billegh, Emewell, Trowe, Westwythyhull, Weremonstre, Bourton-atte-Nasshe, Wilton, Gerardeston, Rolveston, and Purbik, in Wilts and Dorset; the manors of Colwenston and Molteston in Wales; the manor of Magna-Belstede with the church of Wasshebrouk and Velchurch; and the advowsons of the churches of Alfreton, Wasshebrouk and Velchurch. Michael Skylling, Roger de Wolfreton, Nicholas Heryng, Simon Kegworth and Thomas Tye were appointed, December 12th, to receive the seisin: and the acknowledgment of the surrender, was made at Dertford, on the 19th, before Thomas de Lodelowe and Robert Bealknap.⁴

Alice de Perers, by charter dated at Dertford, December 10th, 1371, conveyed to the king all the lands and tenements in Dertford, Wilmyngton, Stone, Southflete, and Merrsh, in Kent, which she had of the gift of Nicholas de Holbourn, citizen of London; also the two messuages,

¹ Claus. 43rd Edw. III, m. 16 d.

² Inquis. post mort., 45th Edw. III (2nd Nos.), No. 52.

³ Pat. 45th Edw. III, p. 2, m. 6. Thomas Bridport, at his death, Dec. 8th, 1372, held conjointly with his wife Eleanor the manor of Bradele in Purbyk,

valued at 100*s.*, by service of the eighth part of a fief, as of the manor of Fyfhilde. Thomas, his son and heir, was ten years old. *Inquis. p. mortem*, 47th Edw. III (1st Nos.), No. 4.

⁴ Claus. 45th Edw. III, m. 6 d.

with gardens and curtilages, which she had of Thomas de Beere, rector of St. Michael's, Paternosterchirche, London, and John de Brewod, rector of Fotescreye, in the same county.¹ Kegworth and Heryng were deputed the same day to receive the seisin.² With these lands, of the yearly value of 40*l.*, the king intended to endow Dartford Priory; on the following day he gave Alice Pereres the manor of Wendovre in exchange.³

Edward III now made the royal gift of the Priory and all its possessions to the community. By letters patent dated July 20th, 1372, he granted to Matilda, prioress, and to the Sisters, the monastery, mansion and site where they now dwelt; the manors of Shipbourne and Porteburgh, in Kent; the advowson of the chapel of St. Edmund in Dertford, and all the lands and tenements of the concession of John Bronde, chaplain, in Dertford, Stone, Wilmynton, and Suthfleete; messuage, once John de Cherteseye's in Dertford; three messuages there, once Roger Folks'; two acres of land there, once Simon Kegworth's; one messuage, one dovecote, 30*a.* of land, 3*a.* of meadow, 15*a.* of pasture, and 20*s.* rent there, once Robert Mount's; 34*a.* of land, 5*a.* of meadow, and 6*s.* rent in Dertford and Wilmynton, once William de Wilmynton's; 7 messuages, 2 tofts, 4 gardens, 128½*a.* of land, 4*a.* of meadow, 30*a.* of pasture, 12*a.* of marsh, and 20*s.* rent, and the reversion of a messuage and 8½*a.* of land (held by Margery Michel for life) in Dertford, once William Neweport's, citizen and fishmonger of London; a messuage and 7*s.* rent in Dertford, once Nicholas Crofton's; two messuages and a garden in Dertford, once Alexander Folks'; a messuage there, once John Lambyn's; 3*r.* of meadow and pasture for two oxen there, once John Michel's; 16*a.* of land there, once John Chepsted's and John Walworth's, citizens of London; 30*a.* of land in Wilmynton, once John Pikman's; two messuages, and all the lands, tenements, rents, and services, once Alice Perers', in Dertford, Wilmynton, Stone, Suthfleete and Meresh, and a plot of land called le Castelplace in Dertford, also 5*s.* 3*d.* rent there, once William Moraunt's; a messuage or tenement in London, once Robert de Barton's and John de Letton's, executors of Robert de Hauwode, late citizen and merchant of London; all the tenements in the city, once Augustin Waleys's; the rents and services of two messuages and three shops in Cordwanerstrete, with the reversion of them, and 66*s.* 8*d.* rent in Tannersfeld and in Westehap, London, belonging to the manor of Porteburgh, once Robert Bikenore's; the manor of Belstede Magna, with the churches of Wasshebroke and Velechurche, the advowson of the church of Alferton, in Suffolk; the manor of Braundeston, with all pertaining in Herkestede, in the same county, and in Goffeld, Essex; the manor of Combes, with the site of a chapel there, in Suffolk; the manor of Hecclesham, in Surrey and Kent, and all the king's lands and tenements in Putford, Surrey, with the church of Wytelee and the chapel of Thoresle; the manor of Norton, with the advowsons of the church and of a chantry therein, and certain members belonging to the manor, viz., Billegh, Emewell, Trowe and Westwithillille, also with rents and services of the king's tenants in Weremenstre, Rolveston, and Madyngton, in Wilts, and all the king's rents and services in Burton-atte-Nasshe and atte More, with all other appurtenances of the manor of Norton, in Dorset; the

¹ Orig. 45th Edw. III, ro. 30.

² Ibid. ro. 34.

³ Pat. 45th Edw. III. p. 2, m. 7.

manor of Fifhilde, with all pertaining in Gerardeston, Wilton, Dige-hampton, Fouleston, and Parva Derneford, in Wilts, and all lands, &c. in Purbik, Dorset, pertaining to Fifhilde, and the advowsons of the church of Fifhilde, and of St. Michael in Westrete, Wilton; and the manor of Colwenston, in Glamorganshire, also all lands and tenements in Moldeston, in Herefordshire, with all fiefs, &c. pertaining to the manor of Colwenston. All were to be held in dowery and foundation of the monastery, in free, pure, and perpetual almoign.¹

And for the tranquillity and quiet of the Prioress and convent, the king, August 12th following, exempted them from all royal taxes, and dues, and public contributions, gave them all manorial rights, freed their monastery from forced hospitality towards any magnates or ministers of the crown contrary to the will of the Prioress; received it and all their goods into the royal protection against the king's purveyors, freed it from corrodiés, and granted them free-warren in all their lands.² A royal licence of April 18th, 1373, enabled the community to lease for life, or in fee-simple, all the manors and lands which they had received of the royal gift.³ On July 5th, they had the king's grant of the advowson of the church of Childernelangele (Kings-Langley), and leave to appropriate the church;⁴ on the 11th, they had licence to appropriate the church of Norton Skydemour, the advowson of which already belonged to them;⁵ and on the same day, William de Huntyngheld had a licence to assign to them the advowson of the church of Rokesworth, held of the crown *in capite*.⁶ The papal brief of Gregory XI, sanctioning the appropriation of the church of Langley Regis, had been granted December 16th previous, on the plea that the means of the Sisters were so slender that they could not fittingly maintain themselves, and support the burdens incumbent on them.⁷

Sir John Dauteseye chr., November 11th, 1373, acknowledged in chancery his debt of 1000 marks to the Prioress of Dartford, and bound himself to pay half at the next Michaelmas and the rest at the Michaelmas following.⁸ This knight released to the prior and friars of Derteford his inheritance of Baventre, for which they gave him 300 marks. This sum was restored to them by the king, who paid to F. Thomas Walssh, prior of Kings-Langley, December 16th, 1374, 100 marks,⁹ and to the Prioress and Sisters, through F. Walter Durant, October 15th following, 100 marks,¹⁰ and November 26th, 1376, the remainder.¹¹

F. Thomas Walssh, being, by the king's foundation, "Prior tam Fratrum Ordinis Predicatorum in manerio nostro de Chilterne Langele habitantium quam domus Sororum Ordinis Predicatorum per nos apud Dertford fundate" had a yearly pension of ten marks granted him, April 3rd, 1374, out of the Sisters' revenues, for his necessaries and labours, as long as he remained in the office.¹²

The two messuages and three shops in Cordewanerstrete, returned to the crown (as the Sisters had surrendered all their right to the king) when

¹ Pat. 46th Edw. III. m. 28.

² Cart. 46th Edw. III. m. 2.

³ Pat. 47th Edw. III. p. 1, m. 7.

⁴ Pat. 47th Edw. III. p. 2, m. 34.

⁵ Ibid. m. 32.

⁶ Ibid. m. 30.

⁷ Reg. Buckingham. vol. 1, p. 305.
Clutterbuck's *Herefordsh.* vol. i, p. 435.

⁸ Claus. 47th Edw. III. m. 12 d.

⁹ Exit. Scac. Mich. 49th Edw. III, m. 8.

¹⁰ Exit. Scac. Mich. 50th Edw. III, m. 4.

¹¹ Exit. Scac. Mich. 51st Edw. III, m. 18.

¹² Pat. 48th Edw. III. p. 1, m. 21.

the life-tenant, James Andreu died, in 1375, and the occupant, John Vine, citizen-draper, early in May, gave them up.¹ On the 19th, a royal precept was directed to the sheriffs of London to seize the whole into the king's hand, and make an inquisition of waste and estrepements under the last tenant.² The royal grant of the messuages and shops was made to the Sisters, June 28th, with all issues from the time of Andreu's death.³

Edward III died in June, 1377. Within a few years of that time, the French prioress Matilda ceased from her office, and probably went to rest under the marble stone which he had prepared for her. She was succeeded in the government of the community by Sister Jane, whose family name was Barwe.⁴

So great was the munificence of Richard II towards the Sisters, that he was entitled to be ranked as their second founder. He confirmed, April 20th, 1380, the royal grants of August 12th, 1372, and July 5th and 11th, 1373, and gave licence to carry out those grants, which had not yet been done.⁵ And July 15th following, he also confirmed the grants of July 20th, 1372; July 16th, 1357; April 18th, 1373; September 1st, 1357; and January 27th, 1365-6, being a grant of four marks a-year to the parson of Chilterne-Langleye out of the issues of the manor; and June 28th, 1375.⁶ For these confirmations a fine of five marks each was paid.⁷

On account of his devotion, "ad monasterium Sororum Predicatisarum de Dertford," the king granted them, September 3rd, 1384, the manor of Massyngnam and the reversion of the manor of West Wrotham, both in Norfolk, to find a chaplain for celebrating mass daily in the chapel lately built in the infirmary of the monastery, in relief and maintenance of sick Sisters and Friars there, and for praying continually for the good estate of the king in and after life, for the souls of the founders and benefactors, and of all the faithful. The manor of Massyngnam had gone to the crown by the feoffment of John Davenport, parson of Brom; Walter Barker, vicar of Kymberle; John Cranhous, Edmund Lakyngeth, and Richard Nooth. The manor of West Wrotham, with its appurtenances in Est Wrotham and Elryngton, had been granted in reversion by John Bacon, Henry Boghay, Thomas Godelak, and John Appulton, after the death of the five tenants, to whom they had let it for the term of the life of Katherine Breouse and for one year after her decease.⁸ This Katherine Breous or Brews was daughter of Sir Thomas de Norwich, and widow of — Brews of Salle, in Norfolk. As heiress of her second cousin, Sir John de Norwich, who died January 1st, 1373-4, she inherited the lordship of Sculthorpe; but becoming a nun at Dartford, she resigned all her right and claim, May 18th, 1378, to that manor.⁹

In 1384, John Norhampton, draper, to whom the Sisters had let the two messuages and three shops in Cordewanestrete, for forty years from Michaelmas, 1375, was convicted of high treason at Reading, September 19th, and forfeited all his possessions. On the petition of the Sisters, the king, October 7th, ordered the mayor to restore the houses to them, together with 23*l.* 8*s.* 8½*d.*, three half-years' rents still due, to be levied out of the tenant's goods.¹⁰

¹ Claus. 49th Edw. III, m. 32 d.

² Ibid. m. 34.

³ Pat. 49th Edw. III. p. 1. m. 3.

⁴ L. T. R. Memoranda Rolls, 9th Hen.

⁵ Mich. ro. 9. in reference to *ann.* 22 *Rich. II.*

⁶ Cart. 3rd Rich. II, m. 1.

⁶ Pat. 4th Rich. II, p. 2, m. 29.

⁷ Rot. fin. 4th Rich. II, m. 2.

⁸ Pat. 8th Rich. II, p. 1, m. 25.

⁹ Bloomfield's Hist. of Norfolk (1807) vol. vii, p. 173.

¹⁰ Claus. 8th Rich. II, m. 38.

Assembled in their chapter-house, Jane, prioress, and the Sisters, July 25th, 1385, unanimously granted an annuity of 18*l.* to William de Ganesburgh, or Geynesburgh, to be paid quarterly in the church of St. Mary de Arcubus.¹ He was parson of Norton-Bavent. For the payment of the annuity they gave a bond, January 22nd following, in the sum of 50*l.*, which was accepted, on the 25th, by the parties, and, February 10th, was enrolled in Chancery. On the 22nd he acknowledged his debt of forty marks to the Prioress and convent, and engaged to pay it on Midsummer day, which he accordingly did.² He got a royal confirmation of the annuity, May 4th, 1386,³ for which he paid the fine of half a mark.⁴

On account of being a recluse, Jane, prioress, obtained the royal license, February 4th, 1390-1, to appoint attorneys in all pleas and complaints anywhere in England, and she now attorned Will. Durant and William Makenade.⁵

The king acquired of Walter atte Water of Derteford four messuages, one toft, four gardens, 48*a.* of land, 2*a.* of pasture, and 12*s.* 3½*d.* rent in Derteford, and a tenement built at le Haywharf near the Thames, in London. He appointed William Makenade and John Appelton to receive the seizin, and then, July 17th, 1392, granted the whole to the Prioress and convent, in pure and perpetual almoign.⁶

Pope Boniface IX, November 1st, 1395, granted the pontifical permission for the appropriation of the parish churches of Norton-Bavent and Wittelee. He also approved and confirmed the concession of John XXII, in 1321, in favour of the then projected foundation.⁷ It was probably now that Jane, prioress, and the Sisters set their seal to the appropriation of the church of Wyttelee; which was an act remarkably delayed. The church was really given to them by Queen Philippa, to whom the patronage belonged. On their petition for the execution of the gift, the Bishop of Winchester referred the matter to his chapter in 1356, and knowing their straitened circumstance and strict and devout lives, gave his assent, December 15th, 1358, followed by that of his chapter.⁸

In 1396, John Symond, warden of St. Edmund's chapel in Derteford, received the royal ratification, May 18th, of his possession of the chapel.⁹ Hence there seems to be some error, probably of date, when it is said that Jane the prioress, together with her convent, presented him to that chantry or chaplaincy in 1399. In 1396, the principal resident friar was F. John Sill, whose name occurs in conjunction with Robert Grape, vicar of Dartford, and others, as one of the commissioners appointed by the Bishop of Rochester to receive the resignation of John Staundon, chaplain of St. Mary, Stampit, and to appoint his successor.¹⁰

The design of endowing the priory of Kings-Langley through the medium of the Sisters of Dartford was, at last, fully carried out. The Sisters received from the king, February 12th, 1393-4, the advowson of the church of Wyllye, near Baldok, in Hertfordshire, and on the same

¹ Claus. 9th Rich. II, m. 21 d.

² Ibid. m. 18 d., 21 d.

³ Pat. 9th Rich. II, p. 2, m. 22.

⁴ Orig. 9th Rich. II, ro. 36.

⁵ Pat. 14th Rich. II, p. 2, m. 36.

⁶ Pat. 16th Rich. II, p. 2, m. 31.

⁷ Bullar. Ord. Præd.

⁸ Reg. Will. de Edynden, tom. ii, fol. 38; tom. i, fol. 98.

⁹ Pat. 19th Rich. II, p. 2, m. 3.

¹⁰ Dunkin's History of Dartford.

day the royal license was given for the Bishop of Sarum and Warin Waldegrave, esq., to grant to them the advowson of Magna Gaddesden, in the same county: all for the use and benefit of the friars of Childer Langeleye.¹ Edward III, in 1376, placed the manors of Preston near Wingham, Elmstone, Overland in the parish of Ash, Woodling or Wadling, Ham or Kings-ham, Westgate in the Isle of Thanet, Good-neston, Wadeslade, Harrietsham, Byrupper or Beaurepaire, and Packmanstone, all in Kent, in the hands of ten trustees for the friars; and Richard II now granted them, April 24th, 1399, in perpetuity to the Prioress and Sisters, for the maintenance of the sixty religious there, whose house had not been sufficiently built nor properly endowed.²

Soon after Henry IV had established himself on the throne, he hastened to extend his royal favour to the Priory of Dartford. On February 11th, 1399-1400, he confirmed by letters patent the grants of July 15th, 1380, June 29th, 1349, September 3rd, 1384, and July 17th, 1392;³ and by charter the grant of April 20th, 1380.⁴ On the same day too, he ordered the chief butler to deliver to the Sisters all the arrears of the four casks of wine yearly which Edward III had granted to them in 1357.⁵ The Prioress had licence again, November 17th, 1403, to appoint attorneys for all pleas and plaints during three years.⁶

In compliance with the king's writ dated October 24th, 1404, an inquisition was taken at Derteford November 9th following, as to whether William Makenade and William Cave might assign to the Prioress and convent, without detriment, three messuages, 13½*l.* and ½*r.* of wood in Bexhille and Dertford, in aid of their support. It was found that one messuage was held of the Prioress by fealty and the service of 12*l.* a-year; another, of the heirs of Thomas de Grauntstone, by fealty and 16*l.* a-year; the third, of John Lokewyk, by fealty and 2*s.* 4*d.* a-year; and the wood, of the Archbishop of Canterbury, by fealty and the rent of 13½*l.* for every acre. The whole was worth 13*s.* 4*d.* a-year, besides reprises.⁷ In consequence of the favourable return, a mortmain licence was granted, January 28th, to make over all to the Sisters;⁸ and for the licence Makenade and Cave paid the fine of five marks.⁹ By common recovery, November 3rd, 1405, the Prioress received for her church from William Baret of Dikilburgh and Jane his wife (as of her inheritance) three tofts, a dovecote, 104*l.* of land, 1*l.* of meadow, 15*l.* rent, and the liberty of three folds in Estwrotham, Westwrotham, and Elyngton, for which she paid twenty marks of silver.¹⁰ In the autumn of 1406 Makenade and Cave had another licence, October 18th, to assign to the Sisters, two tofts, 66*l.* of land, 12*l.* of bruery, 22*l.* rent, and the liberty of three folds in West Wrotham; all to be held as of the value of 100*s.* in part satisfaction of the hundred marks which they were allowed to acquire.¹¹ The inquisition taken July 14th previously (by writ of June 20th) at Hokham, Norfolk, declared that all were held of

¹ Pat. 17th Rich. II. p. 2, m. 35.

² Pat. 22nd Rich II, p. 3, m. 15.

³ Pat. 1st Hen. IV, p. 5, m. 2.

⁴ Cart. 1st Hen. IV, p. 2, m. 36.

⁵ Claus. 1st Hen. IV, p. 2, m. 14.

⁶ Pat. 5th Hen. IV, p. 1, m. 29.

⁷ Inquis. ad quod damp. 6th Hen. IV, No. 33.

⁸ Pat. 6th Hen. IV, p. 1, m. 15.

⁹ Rot. Fin. 6th Hen. IV, m. ...

¹⁰ Ped. Fin. Norf. 7th Hen. IV, No. 61.

¹¹ Pat. 8th Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 29.

the countess of Warren, as of her manor of Salun, and were worth four marks a-year in all issues.¹

By writ dated February 1st, 1406-7, an inquisition was taken, February 19th, at Derteford, when it was found that, in part satisfaction of the hundred marks, there might be assigned to the Sisters, by William Makenade, William Cave, John Depying, Thomas atte Coton, and William Spencer, 2 messuages, 3 tofts, 2 gardens, 150*a.* of land, 3*a.* of pasture, 13*a.* of wood, and 3½*d.* rent in Sutton atte Hone; and by John Martyn, Thomas atte Cote, and the same William Cave, 20*s.* rent in Derteford. One messuage called Gyldenhill, and a toft called Williames-tenement atte Hill, 7*a.* of land, a garden, and ½*a.* of wood were held of John Weston and Richard Foster of London, by fealty and 15½*d.*, as of their manor of Rowhill; the other messuage called Fyndares-tenement, a toft called Frankleynes-tenement, a garden, 80*a.* of land, 3*a.* of pasture, 7*a.* and ½*a.* of wood in la Bampie....., Betonesgrove, and Alverichgrove, and the tenement whence issued the rent of 3½*d.* were held of the prior of St. John of Jerusalem in England, as of his manor of Sutton atte Hone, by fealty, suit of court, and the service of 19*s.* 6*d.*; 4*a.* (*sic*) were held of John Frenyngham by a dry rent of; 60*a.* of land in Hallefeld, and 5*a.* of wood there called Waryneswode were held of the heirs of Thomas Grauntstone, by a dry and quit rent of 10*s.* 10*d.*; the third toft was held of William Alverich by 1½*d.* a-year, and the tenement whence the rent of 20*s.* issued in Derteford, called Crowchefelde, was held of the same heirs of Grauntstone, by a yearly dry and quit rent of 6*s.* ...*d.* All together (excluding the rent) were of the yearly value of 20*s.*, besides reprises.² The mortmain licence was given April 26th.³

On May 9th, 1407, the Sisters had the royal grant of May 16th, 1366, exemplified.⁴ Henry V, July 18th, 1413, confirmed the letters-patent and the charter of February 11th, 1399-1400;⁵ for which the Sisters paid the fine of 20*s.*⁶

About this time, a serious difference arose between the Sisters of Dartford and the Friars of Kings-Langley, from whose jurisdiction they desired to emancipate themselves. In 1415, the provincial of the order determined to make a visitation at Dartford "in augmentationem lapse religionis et reformationem obedientie debite, ac in roborationem foundationis ejusdem domus seu monasterii;" in which light he would regard canonical slight of his own authority. In order to carry out his intention with full effect, he sought the help of the king, who, July 20th, commissioned Master John Aylmere and Master Richard Alkryton to assist him in his enquiry "de quibuscunque defectibus, excessibus, et transgressionibus infra domum sive monasterium predictum contra formam religionis, obedientie et foundationis," to chastise and punish, and to bring the Sisters one and all to live according to the statutes of their religion and the intentions of the first founders, according to the tenor of the apostolic bulls and Edward III's letters patent of November 1356.⁷ The matter was referred to the apostolic see; and the decision of Martin V, given July 16th, 1418, went wholly in the favour of the

¹ Inquis. ad quod damp. 7th Hen. IV, No. 11.

² Inquis. ad quod dam. 8th Hen. IV, No. 24.

³ Pat. 8th Hen. IV, p. 2, m. 14.

⁴ Ibidem, m. 15.

⁵ Cart. 1st Hen. V, p. 1, m. 8.

⁶ Rot. fin. 1st Henry V, m. ...

⁷ Pat. 3rd Hen. V, p. 2, m. 36.

provincial and the prior of Kings-Langley, to whose obedience the Sisters were enforced by ecclesiastical censures.¹ It is not improbable that the dispute had arisen concerning the election of a prioress, when S. Rose succeeded S. Jane in the superintendence of the community: at all events, after the authoritative decision of the holy see, the friendly relations between Dartford and Kings-Langley were fully and permanently established. An inquisition was taken, October 8th, 1421, at Estry, in Kent, by which it was returned that the term of forty years for which the friars of Childrynlangele had the manors of Preston, Elmeston, Overlonde, Hamme, and Wodelynge, had expired, and that they had taken the issues and profits for four years longer, by what right the jurors were entirely ignorant. On the statements of this faulty inquisition, the manors were seized into the crown. But Rose, prioress of Dartford, appeared by attorney in the Court of Exchequer, November 3rd, and by producing the royal grant of 1399 and confirmations, established the right of Dartford and Kings-Langley.²

Such, then, is the history of the foundation of the Dominican Sisters' Priory at Dartford, which became one of the most celebrated schools in the kingdom, "to which the best and noblest families of the country sent their relatives both for education and as Nuns."³ It is a narrative full of interest, for it illustrates the erection of a house of forty religious by the sole aid of royalty. The difficulties of the undertaking are well portrayed in the prolonged negotiations for the first establishment, the length of time occupied in building, and the shifts to which even kingly munificence had to resort to provide a sufficient endowment. Edward II intended to endow the priory of Kings-Langley for one hundred friars, and to found a house of Sisters: Edward III, under the great vow with which he bound his conscience, as he recorded in his last will, made provision for sixty friars and forty nuns, and still left the work to be completed by his successors. The subsequent history of Dartford and its final destruction remain to be detailed.

In 1422, the Prioress and convent, December 4th, presented John Blice to the perpetual chaplaincy of the chantry of St. Edmund.⁴ Henry VI had now ascended the throne, and it became necessary to obtain royal confirmation of the grants of previous kings. On February 18th, 1422-3, the charter of July 18th, 1413, and October 15th, 1424, that of November 19th, 1356, were fully ratified.⁵ In 1432, Rose the prioress and her convent presented John Derby to St. Edmund's, and he was instituted May 10th.⁶

By writ dated February 8th, 1435-6, an inquisition was taken at Derteford, November 5th following, as to whether, without detriment, there might be assigned to the Prioress and Sisters, by John Martyn, William Rotheley, and William Gronelhurst, 11*ac.* of wood and bruery in Dertford; and by the same Martyn and Rotheley, a messuage and 6½*ac.* of land in Derteford; and by Martyn 7*ac.* of wood in Byxele, in part satisfaction of the hundred marks a-year, for certain charges and other works

¹ Bullarium Ord. Præd.

² L.T. R. Memoranda Rolls, 9th Hen. V. Mich. ro. 9. A full account of the "Friar-Preachers of Kings-Langley" has appeared in the 18th volume of the *Reliquary*.

³ Dugdale's Mon. Angl. (edit. 1830), vol. vi. p. 537.

⁴ Dunkin.

⁵ Pat. 1st Hen. VI, p. 5, m. 32. Pat. 3rd Hen. VI, p. 1, m. 13.

⁶ Dunkin.

of piety to be ordained by the three grantors. A satisfactory answer was returned: the wood and bruary were worth 3*s.* 8*d.* a-year; the messuage and land, 3*s.* 4*d.* a-year; and the wood, 3*s.* 4*d.* a-year.¹ Another inquisition (by writ of November 8th) taken November 13th at the Guyhald of London, favourably returned that Thomas Osborn, mercer, and John Selby, citizens of London, might assign two messuages and the moiety of twenty messuages in London to the Sisters, in further satisfaction of the hundred marks, for certain charges and works of piety. The two messuages in St. Alban's parish, Crepulgate ward, were valued at 16*s.* 8*d.* a-year; six of the moieties in the same parish and ward, at 15*s.* a-year; and of fourteen moieties in Bradstrete ward, six were valued at 26*s.* 8*d.*, six at 10*s.*, and two at 6*s.* 8*d.*² The mortmain licence for the grant of all contained in the two inquisitions was made November 1st, 1437,³ for which a fine of twenty-six marks was paid.⁴

William, bishop of Rochester, June 19th, 1441, on receipt of 20*l.* sterling, gave the Prioress and convent an acquittance for the "manor and demaynes" of the rectory of Dertford, which they now held of him to farm, in full payment of all rents and fines, from Easter to the Nativity of St. John Baptist. And February 11th, 1442 (1442-3), they paid the bishop a further sum of 10*l.*, and received another acquittance for the "rectory-farm and lordship" of Dertford, from the Nativity.⁵

About this time S. Margaret Beaumont became prioress. She was daughter of Henry Lord Beaumont and Elizabeth his wife, daughter of William Lord Willoughby. Her brother, John Lord Beaumont, a distinguished warrior, was created earl of Bolome (Boulogne) July 27th, 1436, four years afterwards was advanced to the dignity of viscount, being the first that bore that title in England, and was slain, July 10th, 1459, in the battle of Northampton.

An inquisition, by writ of May 20th, 1446, was taken at the Guyhald of London, Sept. 30th, and it was found that Edmund Langford, Esq., might assign to Margaret Beaumont, prioress, and her convent all his pourparty in Wodestrete and Bradstrete, near the Augustinian Friars, which was once Anne Bardolf's, in part satisfaction of the hundred marks. The pourparty, consisting of lands, tenements, rents, and when let was worth 3*l.* a-year.⁶

Margaret de Bellomont (Beaumont) prioress, and her convent, October 6th, 1446, presented Thomas de Ingdeslell, or Ingledew, to the perpetual chaplaincy of St. Edmund's, on the death of brother William Crowland. Agnes, wife of Richard Fagg of Dertford, by will dated January 22nd, 1451 (1451-2), directed her body to be buried in the cemetery of the Blessed Mary and Margaret, virgins, *of Bellomont*. In 1453 died Richard Miles of Stoneham, husbandman to the Priory; he gave by will 6*s.* towards repairing the parish church of Dartford. Richard Bolton of Dertford, by will dated February 3rd, 1456 (1456-7), directed his body to be buried within the Monastery of Dertford, or in whatsoever place it should please God, and bequeathed to the Prioress and convent 20*s.*, and to the same community, for exequies and masses, 12*d.*⁷

¹ Inquis. ad quod damp. 15th Hen. VI, No. 3.

² Inquis. ad quod damp. 15th Henry VI, No. 2.

³ Pat. 16th Hen. VI, p. 2, m. 30.

⁴ Rot. Fin. 16th Hen. VI.

⁵ Dunkin.

⁶ Inquis. ad quod dampn. 25th Hen. VI, No. 12.

⁷ Dunkin.

Pressed by poverty and pecuniary straits, Margaret Beaumont and her convent obtained the royal licence, November 20th, 1458, to sell a messuage adjoining the churchyard of St. Mary de Arcubus to Isabel widow of John Rych, Thomas Urswyk, Richard Rych, John Pulter, John Alburgh, and William Duraunt and others, or to any other person.¹ Accordingly the same Prioress and convent, with the unanimous consent of their whole chapter, sold the messuage, April 12th following, to the six parties named, for a competent sum "in magna presenti necessitate nostra soluta," say the Sisters, "et in relevamine nostrorum grandium custuum et onerum, que nuper diversimode subivimus et supportavimus;" and, June 12th, their deed was enrolled in chancery.²

Margaret de Beaumont the prioress dying, was buried within her monastery, and was succeeded by S. Alice Branthwait. Of the latter, a very interesting memorial is still preserved in the British Museum. It is a theological work in small folio, beautifully written on vellum, with the first page illuminated, thus entitled after its conclusion: "The Treetis that is kallid Pricking of Love made by a Frere Menour Bonaventure that was Cardynal of the Courte of Rome," with another work imperfect at the beginning, with a like title after its conclusion. On the first spare leaf at the beginning are the following notes:

"Thys boyk longyth to Da' alys braintwath } in mercy."
 the Worchypfull priors of Dartford }
 "Orate pro anima Dominae Elizabeth Rede, hujus loci——"
 "Orate pro anima Joanne Newmarche."

At the bottom of folio 1 are the arms of Shirley and Briwes (or Brewes) quartered.³ Rede and Newmarche were probably nuns.

In 1461, the prioress Lady Alice Branswaite and her convent presented John Wells, chaplain, to the chaplaincy of St. Edmund's, July 4th, on the death of Thomas Yngledew. John Millman of Dertford, by will dated April 21st, 1462, directed his body to be buried in the church of the B. Mary and St. Margaret, and on the day of his funeral, 3s. 4d. to be given in doles and 12d. to the clerk.⁴

Edward IV showed great attachment to the Dominican Sisters of Dartford. He confirmed, November 20th, 1461, the royal grants of July 15th, 1380; September 3rd, 1384; July 17th, 1392; June 29th, 1349; February 5th, 1356-7; December 26th, 1358; July 11th, 1375; and August 12th, 1372; for which a fine of five marks was paid.⁵ Another royal confirmation was given December 16th, 1467, of the same eight grants, and also those of December 3rd, 1356, and November 2nd, 1350; and at the same time, on the supplication of Alice prioress and the Sisters, certain legal difficulties arising from the obscure and diffuse wording of those grants, which threatened disturbance and vexation of the community and even its desolation, were remedied by incorporating the Sisters "per nomen Priorisse Monasterii sancte Marie et sancte Margarete, virginum, de Dertford, et ejusdem loci Conventus Sororum Ordinis sancti Augustini secundum instituta et sub cura fratrum Ordinis Predicatorum viventium;" empowering them as such to plead and implead in all courts, the Prioress as a recluse to appoint attorneys

¹ Pat. 37th Hen. VI, p. 1, m. 18.

² Claus. 37th Hen. VI, m. 7 d.

³ Harl. MSS., cod. 2254.

⁴ Dunkin.

⁵ Pat. 1st Edward IV, p. 7, m. 16.

for all pleas, suits, etc.; amply setting forth the privileges accorded to them by Edward III in 1372 and 1356-7; and giving them a pardon in mortmain for what they had already acquired.¹

Roger Rothley of Dartford, by will dated May 6th, 1468, gave to the Prioress and convent ten marks, upon the condition, that they and their successors should perform in the said Monastery a yearly service (mass), for the repose of his soul, for ten years after his decease. Roos Pitt of Dartford, by will of July 4th, 1470, gave to the Prioress and convent 13s. 4d., to pray for her soul; to Jone Stokton, in the Abbey, 20d.; to Jone Mores in the same place, 20d. and a candlestick; and in a sort of codicil, she said, "Also I wolle that the p'oreess and co'vent have xiijs. iiijd., to pray for me."²

Jane, daughter of Lord Scrope of Bolton, was elected prioress somewhere about this time. At her death, she was buried in her cloister.³

By two writs dated March 2nd, 1471-2, on the supplication of Jane now prioress and the convent, in order that the permissions to acquire to the value of 100 marks and 300l. might be further completed, two inquisitions were taken, November 9th following, at Dartford. By the first, it was found that, towards the 100 marks, Sir Thomas Ursewyk, chief-baron of the exchequer, Henry Spelman, Richard Nedeham, and John Colard might assign to the Convent, the manor of Crokenhille in the parish of Eynesforth, Kent, valued at five marks a-year; a croft of 6a. of arable land in Eynesforth, at 6d. a-year; a croft of 2½a. of arable land called Dobysshaugh in Lullyngstane, at 2d. a-year; a croft called Begardyscroft of 3a. in Lullyngstane, at 6d. a-year; a croft called Pukcroft of 2a. in Lullyngstone, at 6d. a-year; a tenement called Isberghs in the parish of Frendesbury, at five marks a-year; a salt-marsh of pasture called Blachepole, at 6s. 8d.; a croft called Wellecroft, at 20d.; parcels of land of 20a. in the parish of Frendesbury and Halghsto in Hoo, at 8s.; 1a. of wood in the parish of Bexle juxta Danston, in Cleygrove, at 6d. a-year; and the rent of 20s. out of an inn called le Hole Bole, of old called Whalesbone, in Dartford. By the second inquisition, it was found that, towards the 300l., Ursewyk, Spelman, Nedeham, and Colard, might assign, the manor called Pettescourt, in the parishes of Bakehilde and Lynstede, Kent, and 1a. of arable land in Bakehilde in a croft called Burtonshawe, valued, the manor at 100s., and the land at 6d. a-year.⁴

Thomas Taylor of Dartford, February 16th, 1476 (1476-7), bequeathed to the Prioress and convent 20s. John Joynor of Dartford, July 18th, 1478, bequeathed "unto oʳ lady light in the abbay iiijd.; unto the prioress and convent in the abbay of Darford aforesaid, my grete bras potte."⁵

An inquisition taken at Penne, Bucks, January 28th, 1479-80 (by writ of October 19th previous), found that John Hunden, late bishop of Llandaff, and Sir Thomas Montgomere, knt., might assign to the Prioress and convent, in part of the hundred marks, 5l. yearly rent in Isnehamstede Chene.⁶ Another inquisition at Dartford November 10th,

¹ Cart. 5th, 6th, 7th Edward V, m. 5.

⁵ Dunkin.

² Dunkin.

⁶ Inquis. post mortem, 19th Edward.

³ Weever's *Funeral Monuments*. p. 128.

IV, no. 80.

⁴ Inquis. post mortem, 11th Edward IV, no. 65.

1481 (by writ of November 22nd, 1479) found that Sir Thomas Bryan, knt., for the same purpose, might similarly assign, five messuages and 60*a.* of land in Dertford; 80*a.* of land, 10*a.* of pasture, and 56*a.* of wood, in Northray; 2 messuages, 60*a.* of land, 16*a.* of meadow, 10*a.* of pasture, 20*a.* of wood, and 40*a.* of bruery in Dertford; 20*a.* of land, 4*a.* of wood, 30*a.* of bruery, in Garle; 60*a.* of land, 40*a.* of wood, 30*a.* of bruery, and 13*s.* rent in Wilmyngton; and 20*a.* of land in Dertford, valued altogether at 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* a-year.¹

About this time S. Alice was the Prioress, but her family name does not appear; she ceased, probably by death, in 1488.

Sir Guy Fairfax, knt., justice of common pleas, and Martin Bere, November 28th, 1487, granted to Margery Crofton, widow and executrix of William Crofton, Thomas Mawdishla, sac. pag. prof., Edmund Pykeryng and John Porter, gents., the yearly rent of 30*s.*, which the Sisters of Dertford paid for two messuages in Wodestrete, London.² Alice prioress and the sisters obtained Henry VII's confirmation, December 7th, 1487, of the royal grant of December 16th, 1467;³ for which they paid a fine of five marks.⁴

In 1488, S. Elizabeth Cresner became Prioress, and after governing her community for fifty years, in prosperity and adversity, died in extreme old age, in the midst of the troubles of the Reformation.

Bridget Plantagenet, seventh and youngest daughter of Edward IV by his queen Elizabeth Wyldville, was placed, at the age of ten years, in Dartford Priory, in 1490, on the withdrawal of her mother from the royal court to the nunnery of Bermondsey. This princess was born November 10th, 1480, at the palace of Eltham, where next day she was baptised by the bishop of Chichester, and from her infancy she was dedicated by her mother to the cloister. At the usurpation of the throne by her uncle Richard, she was carried by her mother, with the rest of the children, from the Tower to Westminster, May 3rd, 1483, and remained in sanctuary for ten months, but some time was lying sick at the king's wardrobe, and in consequence there were delivered for her use, out of the royal stores (in July), two long pillows of fustian stuffed with down, and two pillowbears of holland cloth.⁵ She attended her mother on her death-bed at Bermondsey, and was present at her obsequies, June 12th, 1492, at Windsor, making her offering at the mass.⁶ Her grandmother, Cecily, duchess of York, by will dated April 1st and proved August 27th, 1495, bequeathed to her "the boke of *Legenda Aurea* in velem, a boke of the life of Saint Kateryn of Sene, a boke of Saint Matilde."⁷ It was about this time, it is supposed, that she took the veil. Her sister, queen Elizabeth of York, contributed a pension of twenty marks a-year out of her privy purse, towards her maintenance, paying it in quarterly sums of 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*; and September 28th, 1502, she gave a messenger 2*s.* "for his costes riding from Winderesore to Dartford to my Lady Brigget by the space of twoo dayes at 12*d.*

¹ Ibidem.

² Cart. Miscellan. Cur. Augment, vol. iv, no. 249

³ Rot. Confirm. 3rd Henry VII, p. 2, m. 13.

⁴ Originalia, 3rd Henry VII, ro. 68.

⁵ Antiquarian Repertory, vol. i, p. 51. Hence Walpole concludes that this child

was not then in sanctuary with her mother; but Sir N. H. Nicolas thinks these articles might have been delivered before her mother sought shelter there.

⁶ Arundel MSS., cod. 26, fol. 29 b.

⁷ Nichols' and Bruce's Wills from Doctors-Commons (Camden Society) p. 1.

the day."¹ Princess Bridget spent her days in the seclusion and tranquillity of her convent, never attaining any higher rank than that of a common nun, until her death which occurred about the year 1517, when she was thirty seven years of age, and she was buried within her cloister.²

The rental of the Priory of Dartford, taken between November 20th, 1507, and November 1st, 1508, is still preserved in the British Museum, and gives the situation, extent, tenancy, and rent of all their lands, tenements and houses, with great minuteness.³

The confirmation of the letters-patent of September 3rd, 1384, was given under Henry VIII, January 25th, 1509-10; with a re-grant of the advowson of the priory or hospital of Massyngham to Elizabeth prioress and the convent, in order to remove a doubt or ambiguity in the original gift wherein the advowson had not been at all specified.⁴

The four casks of wine first granted by Edward III to the community, and continued by all the subsequent kings, at last became very irregularly supplied, for the citizens of London claimed to be exonerated of the price of wine by royal charters; and the war with France formed an additional obstacle. In lieu of the wine, the king therefore granted to Elizabeth Cressener, prioress, and the Sisters, June 8th (or 28th), 1516, 16*l.* a-year to be received out of the small customs of the port of London, at Easter and Michaelmas.⁵

F. Robert Mylys, S.T.P., provincial of the Friar-Precachers, and also prior of Langley Regis, with Elizabeth, prioress of Dertford, presented Thomas Bartlatt to the church of Elmesden; and he was admitted November 26th, 1522.⁶ Hugh le Serle of Dertford, by will, October 20th, 1523, gave, after the decease of Alice his wife, to the Prioress and convent of Dertford, the half of the rents of two tenements in Overy street in the said town, and the other half yearly to be bestowed about the repair of St. Edmund's chapel for ever.⁷

Dame Catharine, widow of Sir Maurice Berkeley, late governor of Calais, by her will made September 5th, and proved September 25th, 1526, desired to be buried in the Chapel of our Lady in the Monastery of Dertford, and that a tomb, price 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, should be constructed there to her memory; she gave to the Monastery a suit of vestments, price 20*l.*; and willed that a priest should be found to sing mass there for her soul for four years, for which she gave 32*l.*, being 8*l.* per annum. She was the daughter of Sir William Berkley of Stoke Gifford, co. Gloucester; and dying September 6th, was buried there.⁸ William

¹ Ant. Rep.

² Nicolas' Privy Purse expenses of Elizabeth of York, p. xxix. Weever.

³ Arundell MSS., cod. 61.

⁴ Pat. 1st Henry VIII, p. 2, m. 20 (15).

⁵ Pat. 8th Hen. VIII, p. 2, m. 10; also p. 1, m. 8.

⁶ Lansdowne MSS. cod. 947, fol. 74 b.

⁷ Dunkin.

Cole in his extracts from a MS. account of the Nunnery of St. Monica, founded in 1609 at Louvain (*Additional MSS. Cod.* 5813, p. 51), gives the following: "Sister Elizabeth Woodford, an English Religious of y^e Monastery of Dartford in Kent, of y^e Order of St. Augustine,

Canoness Regular, professed there Dec. 8, 1519. In 1540, Religious Houses being overthrown in England, she came to St. Ursula's in Lovain, & ob. 25 Oct., 1572, having been 53 years professed, 24 of which she lived at St. Ursula's." There is evidently some mistake. Dartford had nothing to do with the Canonesses Regular of St. Augustin, and the name of Woodford does not appear at the suppression. Eleanor Wodde, or Wood, pensioned in 1539, and still alive in 1556, was a lay-sister, not a choir-nun.

⁸ Jacob's *Complete Peerage*, vol. i, p. 596. Weever.

Maykins of Dertford, April 2nd, 1530, bequeathed 16*l.* to one of the friars of this Monastery.¹ Sir John Rudstone, knight, citizen and alderman of London, by his will dated August 16th, 1530, made the following bequests: "Item, I biquethe towards the amendmentt of the Walles abowtt the monastery of the nyves at Dertford in the Cowntie of Kennt, to thetent that the coventt of the same will haue my sowle recomendyd in th^r devowtt prayers, Twenty pownds st^lying. Item, I biquethe vnto my lady p^roesse of Dertford aforesayd, a white abbytt of v^s eu'y yard theroff. Item, I biquethe vnto Elizabeth Cresner p^rfessyd Nun'e of Dartford aforesayd, an habbytt clothe of whyte, the valewe of vj^s viij^d eu'y yard therof. Item, I biquethe vnto eu'che of Beatryce M'shall, Margaret Mownteney, & Felyce, sometyme gentillwomen to my lady of Salysbury, now nones in the said monast'y, a whyte abbytt of v^s st' eu'y yard therof."² Agnes Parker, widow, and second wife of William Parker of Dertford, innholder, August 27th, 1535, bequeathed to the friars of the Abbey 3*s.*, and to mother Bolton a frock.³

Elizabeth Cressener, prioress, and the convent granted, November 20th, 1529, to William Roper, Esq., an annuity of 40*s.* for past and future services as steward of the manorial court of Colwynston in Wales. They also leased, June 8th, 1533, to Robert Dove of Dartford, husbandman, their capital house in Stoneham and many pieces of land, for thirteen years, at the rent of 20*l.* 14*s.* a-year; and September 1st, 1534, to George Tusser of Darteforde their manor of Bignours, their two water mills, called the Wheate Myll and Maltemyll, and several other premises, for twenty-one years, at 12*l.* a-year.⁴

The storm had now gathered, which soon swept away this community in the flood of the Reformation. In 1534 a statute of parliament declared Henry VIII to be the spiritual head of the Church of England, and abolished the authority of the pope. The Priory of Dartford fell under the jurisdiction of Hilsey and Ingworth, two of the staunchest promoters of the royal will. F. John Hilsey was appointed provincial of the Friar Preachers by the king, and April 13th, in the same year, received a royal commission along with F. George Browne, provincial of the Augustinian Friars, to visit and reform the five Orders of Mendicant Friars, and reduce them to the supremacy; soon after was made master-general of his order in England, and prior of the Blackfriars of London; and at last September 18th, 1535, Bishop of Rochester. F. Richard Ingworth, prior of Kings-Langley, was rewarded for his services, December 9th, 1537, with the title of Suffragan Bishop of Dover, and the next year suppressed almost all the houses of the Mendicants throughout the land. Browne and Hilsey soon made their visitation of Dartford Priory: and May 14th, 1534, "*priorissa et conventus de Derteforde ordinis Sancti Dominici, uno ore et voce, atque unanimi omnium et singularum consensu et assensu,*" assembled in their chapter-house, in the presence of the commissioners, affixed the seal of the Convent to their acknowledgment of the supremacy of the king, and the validity of his marriage with Lady Anne Boleyn.⁵ The seal attached to this acknowledgment is still entire, though much

¹ Dunkin.

² Harl. MSS. cod. 1231, fol. 1. Elizabeth Cresner was most probably a niece of the Prioress.

³ Dunkin.

⁴ Miscellaneous Books of Court of Augm. vol. xcvi, fol. 173 b., vol. ccxvii, fol. 77, 143.

⁵ Original Acknowledgments of the Royal Supremacy, No. 39.

defaced. It is in red wax and vesica-shaped, 3 in. by 2 in. In the middle, under a groined canopy, the standing figure of St. Margaret crowned, holding a cross in the right hand. Below, under an arch, a king crowned, with the model of a church in his hands. On each side of the chief figure a shield pendent on a tree, with the arms of England and France quarterly. The lettering seems to be *sigillum soror' ordinis predicatoru' de dertforde*. Cole gives a rough drawing of another seal attached to a deed of 1446, of the same shape but slightly larger; and he thus quaintly describes it: "2 female Saints in the middle Compartment, sitting under a double or divided Canopy of spiral work (crockets), both crowned, and one having a Globe on her knee, the other praying; in two Niches under Canopies on either side of them, is first a Person crowned, holding a Book in his right Hand, a Cross in the other; the 2^d is a B^p mitred, holding a Crosier. Below in an Arch is a man in Armour on his knees holding a Church, and below it on the ground a Crown. On the sides is written, *s. causary' priorisse et conventus monasterii 'de dertford*." ¹

In 1535 the tenth of the revenues of all ecclesiastical and religious establishments was annexed to the crown for ever. The abstract of the yearly value of "*Monasteriu' b'te Marie et S'e Katerine*" at Dertforde runs as follows. Rents in Dertford, Wilmyngton, Sutton-at-Hone, Crayford, Bexley, Northeraye, and Southflete, Kent, 102*l.* 11*s.* 0*½d.*; reprises 32*l.* 16*s.* 3*½d.*, including 100*s.* for a chaplain celebrating mass in the Monastery for the souls of John Chertesey and his parents, 4*l.* for the yearly obit of the same John, 100*s.* 10*l.* in land, with 60*s.* 10*d.* for a chaplain celebrating for the soul of Will. Sedley, with 40*s.* for his yearly obit, 40*s.* for a mass twice a-week for the soul of John Millett, and 4*l.* expenses about the obit of John Nedams and other charitable gifts; leaving clear 69*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.*; manors and lands in Kent, Dorset, Wilts, Surrey, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Wales, 292*l.* 14*s.* 5*d.*; reprises 37*l.* 3*s.* 4*½d.* including 10*l.* out of the manor of Massyngham and Thorphall for two chaplains celebrating mass in the Monastery for the soul of Richard II, and 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* out of the manors of Pettiscourte and Parva Belstede for two obits in the Monastery for the soul of John Reynards: leaving clear 255*l.* 11*s.* 0*½d.*; tenements within the city of London, 50*l.* 11*s.* 10*d.*, reprises 10*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.*, including 20*s.* for the yearly obit of Master John Exmewe: leaving clear 40*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.* In Bexley and Swaynescombe, 42*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* Total revenue 408*l.* 12*s.* 4*½d.* There were allowed 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* for the fee of Robert Dymmock, high steward of the Monastery; 8*l.* for the fee of Martin Sidley, overseer of all the manors; 11*l.*, with 60*s.* for the fee of Thomas Sidley, auditor, and 8*l.* for the fee of John Sidnam, understeward; 15*l.* paid to three friars in the Monastery celebrating mass daily, of the ancient concession of the founder; 112*l.* 8*d.* for maintenance and in alms given twice a-week to thirteen poor, by ancient custom of the Monastery; and 6*l.* 10*d.* a-year paid weekly to five poor, out of lands in Swanescombe and Bexley, left for the purpose by William Millett. Remaining clear, 380*l.* 9*s.* 0*½d.* the tenth, 38*l.* 10*½d.* ²

About the following year Sir John Dymmock resigned the high

¹ Cole's MSS. : Additional MSS. cod. 846, p. 389.

² Valor Ecclesiasticus, vol. i, p. 119. The totals do not tally.

stewardship, whereon Cromwell wrote to the Prioress for a servant of his, one Mr. Palmer, to have the office. The Prioress remonstrated, stating that no one had ever occupied that place except one of the king's council, as Sir Reginald Bray, Sir John Shaw, Mr. Hugh Denys, Sir John Heron, and now Sir John Dymmock. Therefore she begged that Cromwell himself would accept the gift of it, and she sought his charitable assistance that none of any other religion might be received into her Monastery, for all there were of that profession and habit, of which none others were within this realm, and it would be very troublesome to have any others than those brought up after her own order and fashion.¹ The stewardship remained vacant for a considerable time.

Hilsey, bishop of Rochester, having taken up his quarters at the Blackfriars of London, could not live peaceably with the prior, F. Robert Stroddel, and therefore, getting his priorship *in commendam*, dispatched him off to Dartford. Stroddel took upon himself the office of president of the Monastery, and after a time purchased a royal appointment to it. The Prioress wrote to Cromwell, remonstrating against the bishop's unjust and unkind treatment in the matter. Hitherto she had governed the house for forty-nine years with great quiet, but Stroddel, of whom she had too far experience, had put her far from it. Moreover, her ghostly father, an ancient doctor, obtained at her great instance and labour, for her soul's health and quiet in her old age, and who was president, would go from her, to her great pain and desolation, unless Cromwell's most gracious aid and comfort interposed. A second earnest appeal of hers to Cromwell brought no remedy against Stroddel's importunate suit with him that he might continue at Dartford.²

Elizabeth Cressener, prioress, and the convent granted to Thomas Maykyn (clerk) their overseer, for life, Jan. 20th 1536-7, an annual rent of five marks issuing out of a *sclda* in West Chepe, London, also a tenement in the salt-marsh of Dertford, with some land there and in Stone, and a messuage at Dertford, to celebrate mass in St. Edmund's chapel (or elsewhere as the Sisters chose) for King Edward and Queen Philippa, King Edward and Queen Eleanor, Edward, late Prince of Wales, Stephen, and Constantine, for the progenitors of the founders, and benefactors of the Sisters, and for all the faithful dead. Elizabeth Cressener, prioress, and the convent, October 22nd following, granted to William Hastyngs, gent., an annuity of five marks out of the manor of Belstede Magna, for the natural life of Elizabeth Cressener, subprioress of the Monastery.³

Shortly after the aged and venerable Prioress lay on her death-bed. Very late at night she sent notice of her state to the Bishop of Rochester and to the provincial (F. John Hodgkin), that by their advice she should resign her office to one of the Sisters, or in case of her death they should fall to the election of another prioress. The bishop immediately counselled Cromwell to stay all proceedings till he made his mind known; and he recommended S. Jane Fane to be preferred, as she was of good virtue and religion, and although there were many older than she was, yet none were better learned nor more discreet, she being above thirty years of age. Within a few days the Prioress died, and the bishop

¹ Miscellaneous Letters, temp. Hen VIII, 2nd series, vol. viii, No. 44.

² Ibid, Nos. 43, 45.

³ Miscellaneous Books of Court of Augm., vol. civ, fol. 136; vol. cii, fol. 187 b.

informing Cromwell of the event, again became suitor for "that good and vertuows woman Jone Fane," to prefer whom would be doing "a ryght merytoryows deade to the honor off God," and forewarned him that the provincial, who did not bear his mind towards her, was going to present himself to his lordship to obtain the confirmation of the election into his own hands.¹ Cromwell sent Sir William Petre to Dartford to control the choice of a Prioress, and December 17th Petre informed him that he had the same day taken a compromise for the election under the convent seal, and had also taken "the state of the hows and a p'fect Inventorye."²

Jane Fane, who was thus appointed Prioress, was probably a daughter of Humfrey Fane of Hildon near Tunbridge, and sister of Ralph Fane of Hadlow. Plainly foreseeing that the end was at hand, during her short tenure of office, she and her convent diligently provided for her friends and officials by granting, within a year and a week, three offices, three leases, eleven annuities, and one grant of church presentation, whereof the fees of office, stipends and annuities soon became sinecures enduring as long as the grants ran. The offices, all granted for life, were, June 16th, 1538, William Sydenham, gent., to be overseer and receiver-general of all lands, &c., with an annuity of ten marks, potherbs for himself and servant, and the usual overseer's chamber within the precincts of the Monastery; November 1st, William Sedley and John his son to be auditor of all their manors, with an annuity of 3*l.*; January 1st, 1538-9, Thomas Lord Cromwell and Gregory his son to be high-stewards of the Monastery, with the fee of 20*l.* a-year. The leases were, January 2nd, 1537-8, to Ralph Fane, Esq., the manor of Shypbourne, and lands, pastures, woods, &c., in Shipbourne, Wrotham, Ley, and Itelham, for 99 years, at 5*l.* a-year; January 3rd, to the same Ralph Fane, of Hadlowe, Esq., the stable-room which he now held within the site of the Monastery for six horses, hay, litter and provender for the horses, lodging within the chamber in which his two servants now lay, with sufficient meat and drink for two men for keeping the horses; for his life, with forfeiture of 3*s.* for every day that any part of the grant was not fulfilled; July 15th, 1538, to Sir John Gresham, Knt., the manor of Bavent Combes, for 80 years, at 4*l.* a-year; the annuities were, May 4th, 1538, 53*s.* 4*d.* to Thomas Golde, gent., for counsel to the Monastery; September 29th, 26*s.* 8*d.* to John Hollingworth, servant, for services; October 1st, 40*s.* to Richard Fyssher, for labours, services and diligence in the affairs of the Monastery; October 8th, 5*l.* to F. Robert Stroudell, s. t. prof., for services; October 8th, 40*s.* to Robert Walpull, servant, for services; October 10th, 40*s.* to William Waller of Gray's Inn, gent., for counsel; November 1st, 4*l.* to John Frere, M.D., for gratuitous benefits; November 1st, 26*s.* 8*d.* to Thomas Upton, servant, for services; November 1st, 20*s.* to William Lycorys the elder, servant, for services; November 30th, 40*s.* to John Wyseman of London, gent., for counsel; and January 10th, 1538-9, 3*l.* to John Richardson, clerk, for services in collecting and paying the rents in the city of London, and in other matters. And August 4th, 1538, the next presentation to the parish church of

¹ Miscellaneous Letters, temp. Hen. VIII, 2nd series. vol. xxxv, fos. 108, 119.

² Ibidem, vol. xxxii, fo. 292.

Alpheton, Sussex, was granted to Matthew Greston, of London, notary public, also to Richard Myrthe and William Stewardle of the city.¹

There was a postulant, or unprofessed member of the community, named Bridget Browning, for the delivery or giving up of whom Cromwell wrote a "gentle and loving letter" to the Prioress. In her reply, September 9th, 1538, the Prioress declared that this Bridget had been brought to the Monastery a long time ago, only at the earnest request of her mother to the late Prioress, and had not been detained against her friends' wishes, but being fixed in her mind, and it would seem in her heart too, had refused to depart. So the Prioress begged his lordship to allow the same Bridget to present herself to him, that the effects of her heart and mind might be tenderly accepted and heard, so that she might be remitted as appeared good to his great wisdom and authority.²

During the latter half of the year 1538 and the following winter quarter all the communities of the Friar-Preachers in England and Wales had been dissolved and their houses abandoned to secular uses, mainly by the exertions of the suffragan of Dover. This bishop wrote to Cromwell, April 1st, 1539, giving an account of his receiving the surrender of all the houses of the friars in the north; and he prayed his lordship to let him have the receiving of Dartford too, with his instructions for the same.³ The inconveniences to noble and gentle families by a breaking up of the large and important ladies' school attached to the Priory probably arrested the blow of destruction for some time. At last the end of this venerable foundation came, and the religious community was dispersed. Pensions for life were assigned, October 18th, 1539, to each of the disbanded nuns, payment to begin from the previous Michaelmas: Jane Fane, prioress, 100 marks; Elizabeth Cressenor, 106s. 8*l.*; Beatrice Marchall, Katharine Cloffylde, Jane Drylond, Katharine Effelyn Margaret Cooke, Alice Davy, and Anne Lago, 100s. each; Agnes Rooper, 6*l.*; Elizabeth Whyte, Mary Benthams, Dorothy Sydley, Margaret Warren, Matilda Prior, Elizabeth Exnewe, Margaret Okeley, and Anne Bowson, 100s. each; Mary Stoney, 53s. 4*l.*; Elizabeth Saygood, Ellen Bostocke, Eleanor Woode, Alice Grensmyth, and Katharine Garrett, 40s. each; Mary Blower, and Mary Kitson, 4*l.* each; and every nun had also a single gift equal to her half-year's pension.⁴

Those who held leases, offices, and stipends, exhibited their claims in the court of augmentations, so that between October 11th, 1539, and the end of the year, eight grants were enrolled and allowed, eight more in 1540, and the remaining five at later dates within five years; Sydenham, October 20th, 1539, having an annuity of 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* instead of his ten marks, potherbs, and chamber; and Fane, April 20th, 1540, an annuity of 20*l.* for his stabling, etc.⁵

¹ Miscellaneous Books of the Court of Augm., vol. xciv, fol. 132, 201; vol. xcv, fol. 54, 64, 133, 179 b; vol. xcvi, fol. 7, 56 b, 115, 146, 153 b, 197 b, 209; vol. xcviii, fol. 118; vol. cii, fol. 17, 75; vol. civ, fol. 39 (2nd Nos.); vol. ccxii, fol. 200.

² Miscellaneous Letters, temp. Hen. VIII, 2nd series, vol. viii, No. 46.

³ Ibidem, No. 115.

⁴ Miscellaneous Books of Court of Augm., vol. cccxxiv, fol. 8. In the *Book of Pensions* (Misc. Books, vol. ccxlv, fol. 197) the five pensioned with 40s. are styled "Susters," or lay-sisters.

⁵ Miscellaneous Books *locis citatis*.

The late Priory of Dartford now appertained to the crown, along with its possessions, which for the most part were speedily sold, though some remained on hand till the old leases had run out. Henry VIII converted the conventual dwelling and buildings into a hunting seat, appointed Sir Richard Longe, knt., August 18th, 1540, to the office of keeper of the site and edifices, with the fee of 8*d.* a day reckoned from the previous Michaelmas, and every year half an acre of wood appointed to him for fuel.¹ The following were the principal purchasers of the possessions within the period of twenty-five years. *Sir Percival Harte*, knight, February 6th, 1539-40, the manors of Greate Belstede, Litle Belestede, and Braundeston, the rectory of Wasshebroke and the advowson of Velechurche;² February 8th, 1540-1, messuages, lands, etc., in Aynesforde, the manor of Crokenhill, and a messuage and lands at Gyldonhill and Swanley in Sutton-at-Hone;³ *Sir Thomas Jermyn*, of Russhebroke, Suffolk, knt., Mar. 10th, 1539-40, the manor of Thorpe Halle, and messuages and lands in Westwrotham, Croxton and Illington.⁴ *Martin Bowes*, citizen and alderman of London, April 16th, 1540, a messuage called Blake Ferme and lands in Bexley and Wellinge, and in Creyforde.⁵ *Sir Edward Curne*, knt., August 24th, 1543, the manor of Colwynston.⁶ *George Ludlowe*, of Hull Deverell, Wilts, gent., April 18th, 1544, manor of Fyfelde, with the members in Wilts and Dorset, and manor of Trowe, advowson of Fyfelde, and all in Fyfelde, Trowe, Wilton, Sarrardeston, and Bridemere and in the isle of Purbeck.⁷ *Sir Richard Gressham*, knt., April 18th, 1544, manor of Bavant Combes.⁸ *Thomas Johns*, king's sergeant, May 11th, 1544, rectory of Wytley.⁹ *John Lambard*, July 5th, 1544, a tenement called le Dyehouse in Thamystret, London.¹⁰ *John Cokke*, esq., August 18th, 1544, a tenement called le Bullhedde, lands, and a messuage called le Forge, all in Dertford.¹¹ *George Chaldecote*, of Querleston, Dorset, esq., August 22nd, 1544, the manor of Bylley, in the parish of Tysbery, Wilts.¹² *Henry Cooke*, merchant-tailor of London, August 27th, 1544, house called le Tile Kill, messuage, and land in Bexley, and lands in Northcraye, and a wood in Dertford, Wylmyngton, Bexley, Crave, Creyforde, and Sutton.¹³ *Christopher Campion*, mercer of London, and *John Rollesley*, of London, gent., September 8th, 1544, eight messuages in Woodstrete, Hosyar Lane in the parish of St. Mary Bow, and Thamys Strete.¹⁴ *Thomas Bochier*, of London, gent., September 23rd, 1544, a tenement called le Checker, in the parish of St. Peter the Poor.¹⁵ *John Wrothe*, gent., September 24th, 1544, lands in Welmyngton.¹⁶ *Thomas Babynghon*, of Dethycke, co. Derby, esq., October 15th, 1544, land in Southflete.¹⁷ *John Beer*, esq., and *Henry Laurence*, gent., November 8th, 1544, numerous messuages, lands, gardens, etc., in

¹ Miscellaneous Books of the Court of Augm., vol. ccxxxv, fol. 45.

² Pat. 31st Henry VIII, p. 4, m. 46 (9).

³ Pat. 32nd Henry VIII, p. 5, m. 53 (4).

⁴ Pat. 31st Henry VIII, p. 6, m. 26 (13).

⁵ Pat. 31st Henry VIII, p. 5, m. 34 (9).

⁶ Pat. 35th Henry VIII, p. 9, m. 36 (4).

⁷ Pat. 35th Henry VIII, p. 15, m. 10 (34).

⁸ Ibidem, m. 20 (24).

⁹ Pat. 36th Henry VIII, p. 27, m. 32 (19).

¹⁰ Pat. 36th Henry VIII, p. 1, m. 15 (34).

¹¹ Pat. 36th Henry VIII, p. 9, m. 24 (20).

¹² Originalia, 36th Hen. VIII, p. 4, ro. 99.

¹³ Pat. 36th Hen. VIII, p. 18, m. 34 (9).

¹⁴ Pat. 36th Hen. VIII, p. 13, m. 11 (26).

¹⁵ Pat. 36th Hen. VIII, p. 6, m. 28 (11).

¹⁶ Ibidem, m. 17 (22).

¹⁷ Pat. 36th Hen. VIII, p. 5, m. 14 (24).

Dertford, Wyhnyngton, and Stone.¹ *Sir Ralph Fane*, knt., and *Anthony Tuttesham*, gent. (his trustee), February 20th, 1544-5, manor of Shypbourne.² *William lord Grey* of Wilton and *John Bannaster*, of London, esq. (his trustee), July 19th, 1549, lands in Selwood, Norton Bavent.³ *Sir Thomas Cheyue*, k.g., treasurer of the royal household, and warden of the Cinque Ports, June 20th, 1553, tencement called Pettescoute, in Bacchilde, Kent.⁴ *John Elyott*, mercer of London, and *Alexander Chesenull*, June 8th, 1557, manor of Massyngham, alias Ladyes Manor.⁵ *John Whyte*, alderman of London, and *Thomas Kyrtson*, merchant of the staple, April 22nd, 1562, the manor of Pytford Dertford, alias Highepitford, Surrey.⁶ *Edward Darbysheire*, of Gravessende, and *John Beure*, of Swannescombe, yeomen, July 21st, 1563, a place called Ingrice Marshe.⁷ *Robert Frecke* (of . . . ern Courtney, Dorset) gent., and *John Walker*, servant to Bartholomew Brookesby, scrivener, January 29th, 1563-4, saltmarsh called Howmershe, near Rochester.⁸ Several royal leases were also granted.

After the death of Henry VIII the Priory of Dartford ceased to serve the purposes of the royal huntsman. In exchange for Richmond palace, Lady Anne of Cleves obtained the grant of this house, June 27th, 1548, with the manor Dertforde and considerable land there for her life and as long as she remained in England;⁹ and here Henry's repudiated wife resided. At the dissolution of their house the Sisters probably returned for the most part into their own families. Agnes Roper (who was daughter of John Roper of Eltham, Attorney-general of Henry VIII, by Jane, daughter and coheirress of Sir John Fineux, Lord Chief Justice) is mentioned as "late nun at Dartford" in the will of her mother, proved January 29th, 1544(-5)¹⁰ The pensions were very irregularly paid; in 1547 Katharine Clovell received the arrears for three years, Margaret Okeley for two years, and Mary Kytson for one year.¹¹ Before the end of the year 1555 Beatrice Marchall, Jane Drylond, Margaret Cooke, Margaret Okeley, Mary Stoney, and Mary Kitson had closed their lives. Cardinal Pole, after he had reconciled the Church of England with the Roman See, ordained that the fees, annuities, and pensions for Dartford Priory should be renewed, and February 24th, 1555-6, he re-established them as follows: fees, John Richardson 60s., William Sydley, auditor, 60s.; annuities, Elizabeth, widow of Ralph Fane, 20*l.*, John Wiseman 40s., Thomas Golde 53s. 4*l.*, Thomas Makyn 33s. 4*l.*, Richard Fysshier 40s., Robert Whalepole 40s., William Lycoras 20s., John Hollingworth 26s. 8*l.*, John Kettle 40s., John Fever 4*l.*; pensions, Jane Fane 66*l.* 13s. 4*l.*, Eleanor Wood 40s., Elizabeth Cresnor 106s. 8*l.*, Mary Blower 4*l.*, Elizabeth White 100s., Mary Bentham 100s., Katharine Eflyn 100s., Dorothy Sydley 100s., Alice Grenesmyth 40s., Elizabeth Exnewe 100s., Elizabeth Seygood 40s., Matilda Fryer 100s., Katherine Garret 40s., Agnes Roper 6*l.*, Anne Bosoms 100s., John Davye 100s., Alice Bostocke

¹ Pat. 36th Hen. VIII. p. 24, m. 31 (11).

² Pat. 36th Hen. VIII, p. 23, m. 26 (15).

³ Pat. 3rd Edw. VI, p. 9, m. 2.

⁴ Pat. 7th Edw. VI, p. 6, m. 38.

⁵ Pat. 3rd, 4th, Phil. and Mary, p. 9, m. 3.

⁶ Pat. 4th Elizabeth, p. 4, m. 50.

⁷ Pat. 5th Elizabeth, p. 5, m. 26.

⁸ Pat. 6th Elizabeth, p. 10, m. 3.

⁹ Miscellaneous Books of the Court of Augm., vol. ccix, fol. 87.

¹⁰ Nicolas' *Testamenta Vetusta*, vol. ii, p. 712.

¹¹ Rot. Comp. Thesaur. Cur. Aug. 36th Hen. VIII usque 1st Edw. VI, No. 5, m. 3.

40s., Margaret Warner 100s., Agnes Lego 100s., Katharine Clovell 100s.; annuities for the late house of Friars, Robert Strode 100s., William Hastynge during the life of Elizabeth Cressener 66s. 8/7.¹ Seven of the Sisters banded together petitioned King Philip and Queen Mary that they might be restored to conventual and religious life according to their profession. At the request of the king and queen, Cardinal Pole canonically erected the late priory of Kings-Langley into a monastery of Nuns or Sisters of St. Dominic, and appointed Elizabeth Cressener to be Prioress, and Katharine Clovyle, Katharine Efflin, Elizabeth White, Mary Benson, Elizabeth Exmeu, and Magdalen Frere to form the community. Thereupon letters-patent were granted, June 25th, 1557, incorporating the Prioress and convent into a legal body, and bestowing on them the house and lands attached, together with the land called Courte Wike, and the buildings within the Olde Manner, near the palings of the royal park, which had belonged to the old priory of Kings-Langley.² Here then these Sisters resumed their ascetic life; and whilst they were at Kings-Langley they had a bequest from Sir John Hastings, knight, second son of George, first earl of Huntingdon, who by his will dated March 28th, 1558, left them 40s.³

Lady Anne of Cleves dying the Priory of Dartford reverted to the crown. Thereupon Philip and Mary granted to Elizabeth Cressener, prioress of Langley-Regis, September 8th, 1558, the late Monastery of Durtelforde, with all buildings, gardens, orchards, etc., attached, and all the useful household furniture and utensils found in it, together with many pieces of lands, some in reversion as a lease expired, and some direct from the crown.⁴ Hither the Sisters speedily removed from Kings-Langley. But the death of Queen Mary, November 17th following, destroyed all their bright hopes of restoring their ancient house. Queen Elizabeth revived the Reformation, with the royal supremacy, the act of uniformity of Common Prayer, and the suppression of the newly-established religious establishments. The supremacy and Book of Common Prayer were enforced from June 24th 1559, and three visitors were chosen out of the privy council to put down all existing convents. At Dartford Priory the visitors summoned before them F. Richard Hargrave, vicar-general of the English Dominicans, and confessor to the Sisters, and tendered the oath of supremacy and Common Prayer to him and to another priest who lived with him, with great promises of dignities and favours if they would conform. Then they had the Prioress and Sisters each alone before them. But when they found that persuasions were unavailing, the visitors forthwith sold off the goods of the Convent at the lowest rate, paid the debts of the house, divided the little money over amongst the Sisters, carried off the common seal and letters-patent of possession, and commanded the Sisters to quit within twenty-four hours. The Sisters accordingly departed, taking their books and best clothing, and four days after, along with the fugitive Bridgettin Nuns of Sion House, in a vessel prepared at king Philip's expense, crossed over into Belgium. The band of Dominican exiles consisted of the two priests, the Prioress with four choir-nuns and four lay-sisters, and a young

¹ "Card. Pole's Pension Book:" Miscellaneous Books of the Exchequer, vol. 32, fol. 1.

² Pat. 3rd and 4th Phil. and Mary. p. 7, m. 10.

³ Nicolas, vol. ii, p. 750.

⁴ Pat. 5th and 6th, Phil. and Mary, p. 3, m. 20.

girl who had not yet received the religious habit. The nuns were all aged, the youngest being fifty, and three of them eighty years old. One of them was a half sister of John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, who suffered on the scaffold. The Sisters went first to Antwerp, and thence to Dendermond, where they lived for two months in a hospital. Then the provincial of Belgium, who was their only comforter, found them a refuge in the Convent of Leliendael, near Zierikzee, capital of Schowen, one of the islands of Zeeland, the house being in a barren place almost without fresh water, and nearly in ruins. Being friendless strangers they were compelled to ask the leave of the master-general of the order for disposing of their few goods to procure the necessaries of life, and they petitioned the Duchess of Parma to extend her charitable aid to them.¹ Resources failed, and as the Convent of Leliendael could not support so great a burden on its means, the English Sisters, in two months, returned to Antwerp, where they lived on casual alms. The iconoclastic outbreak of 1566, drove them from that city, and they fled to Bergen-op-Zoom. During all these times of hardship and suffering Elizabeth Cresner continued to be their prioress, and they maintained all the religious observances of their order. Death gradually reduced their numbers, so that when the master-general made his visitation about the end of December, 1573, only the Prioress and three Sisters were still alive: and he assigned them to the Convent of Engelendael, outside Bruges. There they were kindly received, spent their few remaining years in peace, and closed their eventful lives.²

¹ Hargrave's letter to the master-general, dated October 1st 1559, in Pio, *Delle Vite de gli Huomini de S. Dominico* (1607) p. 377.

² Jonghe: *Desolata Bavaria Domine-*

cana. The English Dominican Sisters were re-established, in 1660, in Belgium. Driven out of Brussels, in 1794, they came into England, and are now flourishing in the Isle of Wight.