

THE FRIAR-PREACHERS, OR BLACK FRIARS, OF GLOUCESTER.

By the Rev. C. F. R. PALMER.

The rapidity with which the Friar-Preachers or Dominicans spread throughout England immediately after their Order was introduced into this country, in the year 1221, is a remarkable evidence of the favourable reception accorded to them by every rank of persons. The priory at Gloucester was the fifteenth, which they established in the course of seventeen or eighteen years. It was founded, about the year 1239, by Henry III and Sir Stephen de Harneshull, knt., and was probably first colonised from Oxford, where the principal and most important house flourished as the head of that division of the English Dominican province called the Visitation of Oxford, within the jurisdiction of which Gloucester lay. It may be conjectured that the Lord of Harnhill, in Gloucestershire, bestowed the first site, and that the king was the chief promoter of the building of the dwelling and church; for there does not exist any record of the royal grant of a site, whilst the notices of material help in the fabrics and in the extension of the first domain are numerous and important, on the part of the king.

The munificence of Henry III, at the cost of the revenues of the kingdom, extended over a period of twenty-five years. The king being at Gloucester, Feb. 1st, 1240-1, ordered the keepers of the Archbishopric of Canterbury (the archbishop being in exile) to let the friars have twenty marks for the construction of their buildings.¹ The constable of St. Briavels, June 14th, 1241, was directed to let them have five oaks in the royal forest of Dene for timber, towards the work of their church,² for which works, June 18th following, the king also gave ten marks.³ The same constable was enjoined, Feb. 15th, 1241-2, to let them have six oaks out of the forest of Dene, "ad operacionem claustrui sui;"⁴ and the sheriff, next day, to carry the oaks to their house;⁵ while the constable again, May 6th following, was directed to give six oaks in the forest of Dene, where they could be most conveniently had.⁶ In 1243, fifteen oaks for timber, with all escheats, were similarly given, Nov. 5th, where most convenient and at hand in the forest of Dene, for the fabric of the church and the construction of the houses,⁷ the sheriff having been directed, the day *before*, to carry the trees to the Friar's house.⁸ The

¹ Liberat. 25 Hen. III, m. 17.

² Claus. 25 Hen. III, m. 8.

³ Liberat. 25 Hen. III, m. 9.

⁴ Claus. 26 Hen. III, p. 1, m. 10.

⁵ Liberat. 26 Hen. III, p. 1, m. 10.

⁶ Claus. 26 Hen. III, p. 1, m. 2.

⁷ Claus. 28 Hen. III, m. 19.

⁸ Liberat. 28 Hen. III, m. 20.

keepers of the Bishopric of Bath (*sede vacante*) had a mandate, Mar. 3rd, 1243-4, to let the friars have twenty marks "ad se hospitandos;"¹ and Simon de Wanton, keeper of the Bishopric of Chester (*s. v.*) Nov. 8th following, to pay F. William de Abbendon and the friars twenty marks for the fabric of their church.² This F. William, whose family name shows his Oxfordshire origin, was probably the first prior of the house.

And now the friars were evidently crippled in carrying out their plans of building, for want of space. The king gave them, July 8th, 1246, the sum of forty-one marks out of the issues of the county of Gloucester, to buy a plot of land for constructing their church, enlarging their churchyard, and making a road to the great thoroughfare of the town; and the sheriff was to find them all things necessary in food on the day they had seisin in the land.³

Afterwards the building was in progress for several years, and the royal alms were continued for this work and other purposes. The king bestowed five marks out of the issues of the bailiwick of *Waleramus Teutonicus*, Nov. 30th, 1252, for carrying timber.⁴ The constable of St. Briavels, May 14th, 1254, was ordered to give three oaks (*robora*) out of the forest of Dene, for fuel.⁵ The Bishop of Worcester had a royal mandate, Aug. 23rd of the same year, to let the friars have the chattels of Robert le Chaluner, who had slain a Jew of Bristol (which pertained to the king, but fell into the bishop's hands when the culprit fled with them into a church) whether such chattels consisted in ready money or other goods; and on the 30th, the gift was signified to the justices-itinerant in Gloucestershire.⁶ John Fitz-Hugh, keeper of the royal forest of Syrelet, was enjoined, June 1st, 1255, to give six good oaks for the works of the church.⁷ The king being at Gloucester, July 24th, 1256, issued two mandates, one to the constable of St. Briavels for five oaks out of the forest of Dene, the other to the keeper of the royal forest of Gillingham for five more, all for timber, with their escheats.⁸ The same keeper, Sept. 26th, 1257, was to provide ten oaks, where they could be most easily got on account of carriage.⁹

The path or road which the king had enabled the friars to make from their house down to the river Severn under the castle, ran between the castle-ditch and a garden belonging to the Priory of Lanthony. After a time, however, the canons of Lanthony raised some dispute, and blocked up the road. Thereupon an appeal was made on behalf of the friars to the king, who took them into his special protection, and Apr. 20th, 1258, ordered Henry de Bath and Robert Waler' to go in person and remove the obstruction without delay, and empowered them also, that if anything were unduly attempted, they should fully correct it, and compel the transgressor to redress.¹⁰ Moreover, at the request of the friars, Henry de Bath was commissioned to make some ordination in the matter, which he accordingly did, for their utility and accommodation; and Aug 25th. his decision received the royal confirmation.¹¹

Twice within the next seven years, there were royal gifts of timber, the first by an order, Nov. 2nd, 1260, to Thomas Gresle, justiciary of

¹ Ibid. m. 13.

² Liberat. 29 Hen. III, m. 16.

³ Liberat. 30 Hen. III, m. 6.

⁴ Liberat. 37 Hen. III, m. 14.

⁵ Claus. 38 Hen. III, m. 7.

⁶ Rot. Vascon. 37. 38. 39 Hen. III.

m. 4 intus et in sched.

⁷ Claus. 39 Hen. III, p. 1, m. 9.

⁸ Claus. 40 Hen. III, m. 6.

⁹ Claus. 41 Hen. III, m. 2.

¹⁰ Claus. 42 Hen. III, m. 9 d.

¹¹ Pat. 42 Hen. III, m. 2.

the forest on this side the Trent, for four oaks out of the forest of Dene where best at hand :¹ the second by an order, May 12th, 1265, to the constable of the castle of St. Briavels, for twelve oaks out the same forest. This last gift was revoked just before the battle of Evesham, (fought Aug. 4th) but was renewed, Aug. 22nd, for ten oaks, while the king was at Gloucester.² And now the building of the priory and church appears to have been finished. The house accommodated forty religious.

In the year 1257, the provincial chapter of the order was held at Gloucester, in this priory.³ Walter Giffard, archbishop of York, gave two quarters of corn, Mar 2nd, 1268-9, to the friars; on the Nativity of our Lady (Sept. 8th) 1270, an alms of 13s. 4d.; and June 2nd, 1271, a mark and two logs of wood for their fire: about the end of Feb., 1289-90, the Bishop of Hereford gave 6s. 8d.⁴ During three royal visits to this town, Edward I bestowed alms on these friars. He gave them, June 30th, 1277, 10s. for food.⁵ Roger de Clifford, justiciary of the royal forest on this side Trent, was ordered, Aug. 13th, 1278, to let them have four oaks (*robora*) out of the forest of Dene for fuel;⁶ Ralph de Sandwyk, the king's steward in the same forest, Apr. 12th, 1280, to let them have six *robora* with the escheats: and Roger Strange justiciary, Mar. 26th, 1290, to let them have there three oaks for timber, "ad curdulas inde faciendas ad claustrum ecclesie sue."⁷ The executors of Queen Eleanor of Castile, soon after Michaelmas, 1291, gave 100s. to this convent, amongst most others of the Order, to F. William de Hotham provincial, by the hand of Robert de Middelton.⁸

It is probable that this donation from the *chere reine* of Edward I enabled the friars to carry out the design of enlarging their domain, which they were then contemplating. A royal mortmain-license was granted, Aug. 28th, 1292, for Roger le Mareshal to assign a messuage and land three perticates long and one-and-a-half broad, Henry de Blethesden land six perticates long and the same broad, and the prior of St. Bartholomew's at Gloucester land three perticates long and the same broad, to the friars, and also for the friars to enclose a lane amongst the same lands, leading from the street to their garden.⁹ All which could be done without detriment, as had been found by an inquisition taken at this town, May 23rd previous, in virtue of a writ dated as far back as July 11th, 1290. Mareshal's land was held of the crown, in capite; Blethesden's, of the priory of St. Bartholomew, by 2s. 10d. a-year, but the friars had obtained a quit-claim of that service; and the land of the priory of St. Bartholomew owed service to none; and all three plots of land were not worth 2s. a-year in all issues.¹⁰

About the reign of Edward I, Thomas Lord Berkeley (who flourished

¹ Claus. 45 Hen. III, m. 26.

² Claus. 49 Hen. III, m. 4, 2.

³ Kirkpatrick's Hist. of the religious orders, etc. of Norwich.

⁴ Dixon's Fasti Eboracenses, by Raine: Household Roll of Bp. Rich de Swinfield (Camden Society).

⁵ Rot. garder. de oblat. et elemos. regis, 5 Edw. I.

⁶ Claus. 6 Edw. I, m. 5.

⁷ Claus. 8 Edw. I, m. 9: 13, m. 13.

⁸ Rot. (garder.) liberat. pro regina, 19-20 Edw. I.

⁹ Pat. 20 Edw. I, m. 4.

¹⁰ Inquis. post mort. 18 Edw. I, No. 136. Jurors: Hen. Claung', Will de Asthale, Nich. de Malvarne, Gilb. de Twiggeworthe, John de Chaddesleye, Rog. Thursteyn, Tho. de Kydermunster, John le Lokyare, Steph. de Gardiner, John le Maurydyn, Alex. Achard, and Adam de la Berewe.

from 1281 to 1321) relieved the brethren of this house very liberally out of his granaries.¹ Godfrey Giffard, bishop of Worcester, by will dated Sept. 13th, 1301, bequeathed 40s. to them; he died Jan. 26th following.²

The provincial chapter of the order was held here in 1311, and towards the expenses of it, Edward II, July 20th, gave £10 to F. William Pikeringg.³ This king being at Gloucester, Apr. 11th, 1321, gave 11s. to the (33) friars of this priory, for a day's food, through F. Walter de Cestrelad.⁴ Again at this town, Jan. 18th, 1323-4, on his arrival, he bestowed 9s. 8d. on the 29 religious of the convent through F. John de Lemynster, for the same purpose.⁵ Twice being at this town in 1326, he gave, May 11th, a groat each to the 40 religious through F. John de Burford; and Oct. 11th, 12s. 8d. to the 38 religious through F. Thomas de Wantinge, both times for one day's food.⁶

Edward III, on a visit to the town, Dec. 19th, 1328, gave 11s. to the 33 friars, for a day's food.⁷ He bestowed the usual royal gift of £15 towards the costs of the provincial chapter held here again Aug. 15th, 1333, and following days, half the amount being paid, May 4th, and the remainder, June 5th, out of the exchequer.⁸ And Oct. 5th, 1337, he gave a groat each to 31 friar-preachers, who, with the same number of carmelites and also of friar-minors, went out with the procession of welcome on his arrival at the town on the 15th of the previous month.⁹

At this time all the mendicant orders were much troubled with unruly subjects, who broke their "obedience," and wandered up and down the country in a vagabond manner, to the great scandal of religion. Amongst them was one F. William de Hassefeld, a friar of this house, who became an apostate, and stripping off his habit went about in the guise of a layman. He was arrested by the constable of Gloucester castle, who delivered him over to the prior here, to be punished according to his offence. But some of his friends and abettors gathered a great mob to procure his liberation, and day after day threats of violence were uttered against the prior and religious. The latter appealed to the king for help; and a mandate was issued, April 18th, 1338, to the sheriff of the county and bailiffs of the town, to make proclamation against any molestation of the friars and disturbance of the peace, and to arrest any who acted contrariwise.¹⁰

Elizabeth de Burgh, lady de Clare, by will dated Sept. 25th, and proved Dec. 3rd, 1360, bequeathed £8 to the four orders of friars at Gloucester. She was the third daughter of Gilbert de Clare, last earl of Gloucester and Hertford by Joan of Acres, daughter of Edward I; and died Nov. 4th.¹¹

By a writ dated Jan. 26th, 1364-5, an inquisition was taken at Glouc', Apr. 6th following, by which it was declared that William de Chilternham might assign a plot of land six perticates in length and one perticate in

¹ Rudder's Gloucestershire.

² Thomas' Survey of the Cathedral Church of Worcester.

³ Exit. scac. pasch. 4 Edw. II, m. 4.

⁴ Lib. garder. 14 Edw. II: Additional MSS. cod. 9951.

⁵ Lib. de partic. expens. forensec. contra rot. garder. 17 Edw. II.

⁶ Rot. garder. de partic. expens.

forinsec. 19 Edw. II. Ibid. 20 Edw. II.

⁷ Contrarot. cust. garder. reg. 2 Edw. III.

⁸ Exit. scac. pasch. 7 Edw. III, m. 5, 10.

⁹ Comp. garder. reg. 11-12 Edw. III.

¹⁰ Claus. 12 Edw. III, p. 1, m. 12 d.

¹¹ Nichols' Royal Wills.

breadth to the friars, for enlarging their homestead. The land was held of the prior of Lanthony by the service of 6d. a-year, and its true value in all issues was 6d. The prior held it of Humphry earl of Hereford, and the earl held it of the crown.¹ The mortmain licence was granted May 8th, for the transfer of the land.²

Henry IV ordered the warden of the royal park of Harsfeld or his lieutenant, Aug. 5th, 1404, to deliver to the friar-preachers of Gloucester "sept keisnes appelez Rowers p^r foaill," to be taken where it could be done with the least waste and destruction. The king made a similar gift of oaks, June 3rd, 1412, out of the same park, which pertained to the duchy of Lancaster.³

For the long period of one-hundred and twenty-five years only few incidents come to light in the history of the Black Friars of Gloucester. The master-general of the order, at Rome, granted leave, June 4th, 1475, to F. John Albe to accept any chaplaincies or benefices legitimately conferred on him, and to celebrate mass out of his convent and lend his services to any nobles (*dominis*) who required them; but he was to give a suitable part of his emolument to his convent. On the 13th of the same month, F. John Wyth of this house was assigned to it by the master-general; and inasmuch as he had gone to Rome without due leave, it was assented to and to be left unpunished, and as his journey back was long, he was empowered to stay at any convent on his way as long as the president pleased. F. Richard Schrevot was assigned, June 19th, 1481, to his native convent of Gloucester, for his devotion, in perpetuity, from which he might not be removed; nor could he be forced to accept the office of prior.⁴ Jane lady Barre, late wife of Sir John Barre knt., by will dated Feb. 3rd, 1484-5, and proved July 23rd following, bequeathed 20s. to the "Blak Freris of Glouceter."⁵

The civil Wars of the Roses were very detrimental to the religious orders both in their numerical strength and in their financial prosperity. When members of these orders were forced from their cloisters to betake themselves to the ranks of the secular clergy, it generally discloses the straitened conditions of the affairs of the communities to which they belonged; and such appears to have been the case when F. John Albe sought external service. But the years immediately preceding the dissolution of monasteries formed the period of the greatest trials for the mendicant orders. The friar-preachers of Gloucester were brought down to seven in number, and suffered such poverty, that sooner than allow their gardens to lie useless and desolate on their hands, they leased them to one of the principal inhabitants of the town, who was their friend, but at last powerfully co-operated in their destruction.

When the suppression of all religious houses was on hand, F. Richard Ingworth, prior of Kings Langley, but now suffragan bishop of Dover, received a royal commission, Feb. 11th, 1537-8, to make the visitation of the mendicant orders in the kingdom; and May 5th following, a mandate

¹ Inquis. ad q. d. 39 Edw. III, No. 15. Jurors: Tho. Muleward, Ranulfatte Felde, Hugh Honsom, Will. Janes, Tho. Laurence, Will. Heyhamstude, Pet. de Londe, Reg. atte Hall, Simon de Apperlegh, John Rastel, John Breware, and Walt. atte Wode.

² Pat. 39 Edw. III, p. 1, m. 11.

³ Reg. of grants of the Duchy of Lancaster, vol. xiv, fol. 35b, and vol. xv, fol. 69.

⁴ Regist. mag. gen. ord. Romæ asservat.

⁵ The Herald and Genealogist, vol. viii.

from the king required him to sequestrate the seals, goods, and ornaments, and to take inventories of them in all the places visited by him.¹

Under these instructions, the suffragan set out on his route of destruction. His first visit to Gloucester was limited to examining into their property and goods. During his stay in this town, he was bounteously entertained by Thomas Bell the elder, an alderman, who was the lessee of the black friars' gardens, and had the deepest interest in securing his favour. The alderman was very active in helping to rescue the friars' plate that was pawned, and had the custody of it in his own house. After the suffragan had departed from the town, Bell obtained a letter certifying that the white friars and black friars here could no longer remain in their houses, on account of poverty. This letter he carried to the suffragan, and solicited that the black friars' house might be granted to him. The suffragan immediately wrote to the king's vicar-general, Thomas Cromwell, recounting the alderman's hospitality and assistance, and urging that as he daily set above three-hundred people to work and his premises were confined, it would be a very good deed if he could have the black friars', for it was fit for nobody so much as for him, and he was a great maintainer of the commonwealth by employing so many poor folks. This letter was given to Bell, to carry in person to lord Cromwell.²

Towards the end of July, the suffragan of Dover made his second and last visitation at Gloucester. On the 27th, he informed lord Cromwell that the houses of the black and white friars should be within the king's pleasure and command within four days.³ The next day, the black friars voluntarily gave up their house to him, saying that they could no longer maintain it, received license to visit their friends and go to other houses, and so departed with the sum of 16s. 8d. distributed among them. All which was certified by the mayor and three aldermen, in whose presence the visitor had executed his commission. Bell and his son made the inventory of the house, and appraised all the goods.

"M^d. thys xxviii day of July In y^e xxx yer of ow^r most dred sov^en lord kyng he^ry the viiith, Rychard byschop of Dowor and vesytor vnder y^e lord p^rvy selle for the kyngs grace was In glowsetur, and ther befor the meyar and aldermen In the howseys of freers ther at ij tymeys In ij days putt the seyd Freers att ther lyb'teys whether they vold co'tynew In ther howseys & kepe ther relygyon and Iniuncyons accordeing to y^e same or ellys gyff ther howseys In to the kyngs handds. the iniuncyons he ther declareyd among them the whyche war thowthe by the seyd meyar & aldermen to be good and resonabyll, and also y^e sayd freers sayd y^e they war accordeyng to ther rewlys, yet as y^e warlde ys nowe they war nott abull to kepe them & leffe In ther howseys: wherfore volu'taryly they gaffe ther howseys In to y^e vesytors hands to the kings vse. the vesytor seyde to them, thynke auctorytye to suppressse yow, but only to reforme yow: wherfor yf ye woll be reformeyd accordeyng to good order ye may co'tynew for all me. they seyde they war nott abull to co'teynew, wherfor the vesytor toke ther howseys and charytabully delyu'yd them, and gaff them lett's to vesyte ther frynds, & so to goo to oder howseys, wth the

¹ Lansdowne MSS. cod. 979.

² Misc. letters, temp. Hen. VIII,

series 2, No. 113.

³ Ibid. No. 129.

whyche they war very well co'tentt, & soo dep'teyd: thys whe y^e seyde
meyar & aldermen testyfy by ow^r hands subscrybeyd.

MAIST' WYLLYAM HASARD meyr.

MASTER WYLYAM MATHEW alderman.

MR. THOMAS BELL THE ELDER aldermon.

THOMAS PAYNE alderman."¹

"The Inuentorye of the blacke frearys in Gloucester made
and praysyd by Mayst^r Thomas bell the elder, & mayst^r Thomas
bell the yonger assyngned by mayst^r Mayre.

It'm a sewt of red velvett, prest deacon & s'bdeac'	.	.	xijs.
It' a sewt of blew velvett in lyk man'	.	.	xs.
It' a sewt of blew sylke w ^t goldyn bests	.	.	xs.
It' a sewt of whyet velvett w ^t garters	.	.	xs.
It' a sewt of black goldyn flowrys	.	.	xiijs. iiijd.
It'm a sewt of grene sylke	.	.	vijjs.
It' a sewt of blew sylke	.	.	xijjs.
It' a sewt of red veluet	.	.	xs.
It'm a sewt of whyet sylke	.	.	vjs. viijd.
It'm a sewt of chekar worke	.	.	xs.
It' a noy' sewt of veluet & clothe of bawdekyn lackyng y ^e preyst	.	.	vs.
It' a noy' sewt st[r]ypeyd lackyng an albe	.	.	vs.
It'm a syngle vestymment blew sylke	.	.	xxd.
It'm a blew cope	.	.	vjs. viijd.
It'm a syngle vestymment blew veluet	.	.	vjs.
It'm a syngle vestymment blew sylke	.	.	xxd.
It'm a blew cope	.	.	vs.
It'm a cope of blew velvet	.	.	vijjs.
It'm a whyte cope	.	.	ijs.
It'm a cope of red veluet	.	.	vs.
It'm a blew cope w ^t ymags	.	.	iiijjs.
It'm a cope of sylke	.	.	iiijjs.
It'm a noy' cope [<i>erased</i>]	.	.	iiijjs.
It'm a noy' ray cope	.	.	[blank.]
It'm a noy' ray cope	.	.	iiijjs.
It'm a whyet cope	.	.	iiijjs.
It'm a noy' whyet cope	.	.	ijs.
It'm a noy' cope w ^t flowrs	.	.	ijs.
It'm x corporas casys w ^t vij clothys	.	.	vjs. viijd.
It'm ij surpleys	.	.	ijs.
It'm iij cuscheyns sylk	.	.	xvj d.
It'm vij paleys	.	.	ijs.
It'm ij dyap' clothys	.	.	xxd.
ij fruntletts	.	.	ijs.
It' j sylke	.	.	vjd.
It' ij payr of curteyns	.	.	xij d.
It'm to y ^e iij alters iij alt' clothys	.	.	iijs.
It'm iij sylks for y ^e sepulcre	.	.	xij d.
It'm iij clothes for y ^e sepulcre	.	.	iiijjs.
It'm a palle for y ^e herse	.	.	xxd.

¹ Cotton. MSS. Cleopatra E iv, No. 161.

It'm in y ^e Ind' chamb' callyd rewar' a flock bed, a bolster	
wt test' & hangyngs about y ^e chamber	vjs.
It'm a bedstede, a coffer wt' an olde almery & a small fourme	ijs.
It'm in y ^e 2 ^d bed chamber a flock bed & a bolst' & ij old cou'ynge	iijs.
It'm in the great chamber ij fetherbedds ij bolsters	vjs. viij ^d .
It'm a table folde wt' a fowrme	xvj ^d .
It'm ij bellys in y ^e steple	xls.
It'm y ^e tabls of alablastre	vjs. viij ^d .

The kechyn.

It'm xiiij peyce of pewt' great & small	iijs. iiij ^d .
It'm iiij brass potts, ij great & ij small	vjs. viij ^d .
It'm an old cawdron	xij ^d .
It'm iiij broochys	iijs.
It'm ij great candelstycks & iiij smal candelstycks	viijs.
It'm a holy Watt' stope	vjd.
Item a payre of organs	vjs. viij ^d .
It'm a lampe hangyng in y ^e quere	xvj ^d .

S^a totalu' xiiij^{li}. xvijs. vjd. [sic.]

[The rest is in the suffragan's handwriting.]

Of thys sum ^a payd for plate y ^t lay to plege	xli. vjs.
It'm to y ^e coke for y ^e quart'	iijs. iiij ^d .
It'm to y ^e Freers	xvjs. viij ^d .
It'm costs ther	xijs. vjd.

S^a xj^{li}. xviijs. vid.So resteyth styll in y^e vesyters handds lixs.

the house wt' all the grounde the seyd vesyter hathe put in y^e handds of Mast' Thomas bell alderman to se it saveyed tyll the kyngs plesur be forthe knowen.

besyde theys the sayd vesyter hathe putt in y^e seyd aldermanys handds thys plate vnderwrityn : a brokyn crosse xix vnc', ij brokyn chales xxxij vnc', a lytyll pyxte & the bande of a maser xiiij unc', a senser & a schyp iij schar' xj vnc', besyde y^t a chales that longyd to y^e whyte Freers xj vnc' : the hole s'm^a ys

vij schar' vnc' & ix vnc'.

All ys to y^e kyngs vse &c.

RICARD' DEVORAC'.

[Dorso] The Blacke fryers Gloucetur.¹

The suffragan immediately rendered to lord Cromwell an account of all he had done at Gloucester. He said he had been at Bristol, and also in two houses here, where, on account of the outcry for debts he had men assigned by the mayors to appraise all within those three houses, had sold the goods and paid the debts, and had put the houses in safe custody. The substance in most houses was very small : in different places little more than the debts ; and the clamour of the poor men to whom the money was owing was "to tedyus." "In Glowseter," he wrote, "I haue dyschargedyd iij howseys, as by y^e mayer & aldermenys hands ye may p'seyue. the blacke fryers ys p(ro)p(er) lytyll howse, lytyll led but on yle, no rennts but ther gardens y^e whyche master bell y^e alderma' hathe In lese vnd' ther co'ue't sell for many yers," and then he reiterated his request that master Bell the alderman might have the blackfriars, and solicited that young Thomas Bell should have the "goodly howse" of the

¹ Treas. of rec. of exch. vol. A 1¹, fol. 11.
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grey friars, of part of whose gardens he was the lessee.¹ At the same time he heartily petitioned Cromwell to be good lord to those poor men who had given up their houses, that they might have some discharge, so as to be able to put off their habits.

"1538. To my synguler goode lord Crumwell lord p'uy seale.

28 July. I be seche yow^r lordeschype to haue dyschage for theys fryers to change ther apparell.

The black fryers of glosset'.

fryer John raynoldes bachyler In dyuynyte p'or nup'.

fryer John howp'.

fryer Rychar'd bylond.

fryer Wyllyam swan.

fryer Wyllyam Walton'.

fryer Raffe Howell.

fryer Thomas meykyns."²

Then follow the other religious orders. Whether the friar-preachers availed themselves of this opportunity to sink into the ranks of the secular clergy is not evident, as their subsequent career is unknown. Among "the Housses of Freres lately geven vp, which haue any substa'ce of leyd," the suffragan returned, "The blak freres in Glocestr' oon Ile of the Church & p't of a Chapell, w^t div'se gutters."³ Their plate was deposited in the royal treasury, Apr. 25th, 1539, by Thomas Thacker.⁴

Thomas Bell the elder, who held of the friars two cottages with gardens, very soon completed the purchase of the whole, with the church, belfry, churchyard and all buildings and lands. For the sum £240 5s. 4d., he received by royal grant, July 21st, 1539, the Blacke Fryers, valued altogether at 26s. 8d. a-year, and some possessions of the late priory of Lanthony and abbey of Rilegh, to be held by him and Jane his wife, and his heirs and assigns for ever, by service of the twentieth part of a knts.-fee and the yearly rent or tenth of 12s. 2d. a-year; with the revenues from the last ladyday.⁵ The grantee was a clothmaker and draper, and one of the first that brought the trade of capping into Gloucester. By his industry he acquired wealth sufficient to maintain the knighthood which Henry VIII afterwards conferred on him, and twice was mayor of Gloucester. He turned the blackfriars' church into a beautiful residence for himself called Bell's Place, and the monastic buildings into a manufactory; and close by he founded and endowed some almshouses. His widow Jane outlived him; and as his only son Thomas (who did not get the greyfriars) died before him without issue, the blackfriars went to Jane his sole daughter. After her mother's death, she carried it, with a fair estate, into the family of Dennis, in which it remained for a few generations. Since 1769, the house has passed into many hands. The church is still a good residence, and the buildings have been changed into cottages, workshops, and outhouses.

The remains of this priory are very extensive and interesting. The traditions of the Dominican order required that the buildings should be arranged quadrilaterally, enclosing a plot of ground which formed the

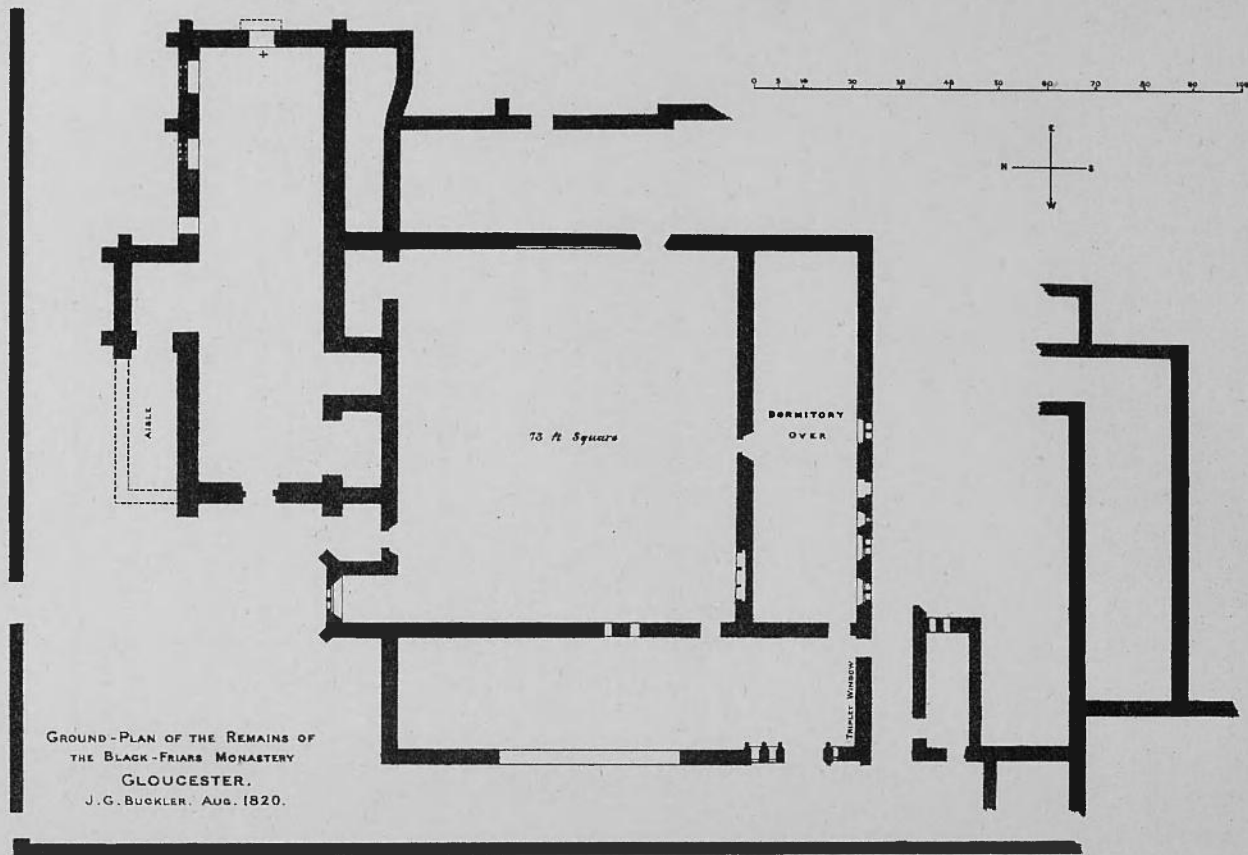
¹ Cotton. MSS. Cleopatra E iv, No. 160.

² Ibid. No. 162.

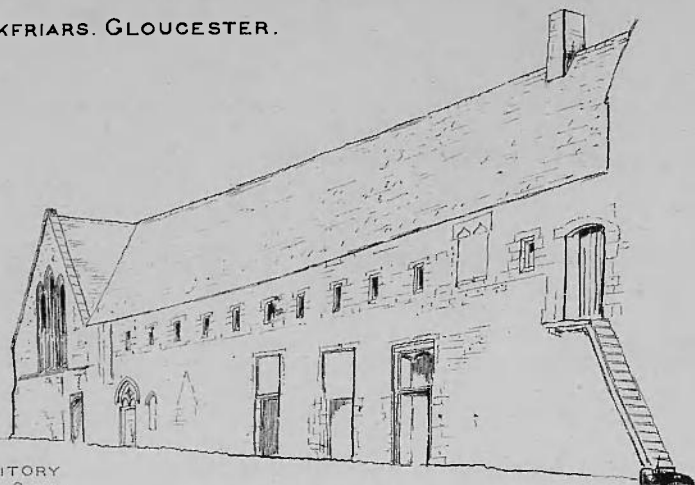
³ Treas. of rec. of exch. *ut sup.*, fol. 4.

⁴ Williams' Account of monastic treasures confiscated (Abbotsford Club).

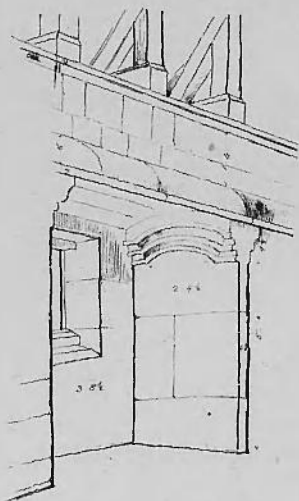
⁵ Pat. 31 Hen. VIII, p. 1, m. 37 (8).



BLACKFRIARS. GLOUCESTER.



DORMITORY
SOUTH SIDE.



DORMITORY WINDOWS.

C.A.B. del. 1860.



VIEW FROM NORTH WEST.

J.C.B. del. 1820.

cloistral cemetery for the deceased of the community, one side being occupied by the church ; but no fixed rule was adopted for the distribution of the offices. This is apparent from the plans of several of the English priories founded within the same period of twenty years. At Gloucester, Bristol, and Stamford, the church formed the north side of the quadrangle, whilst at Norwich and Canterbury it was on the south, and at Newcastle-on-Tyne on the east, being probably regulated by the conveniences of the localities ; and even orientation was not uniformly preserved. The culinary offices at Gloucester were evidently on the south, whilst at Canterbury they stood on the west.

The early Dominican churches were exceeding simple in arrangement and severe in details. A good example of them existed at Canterbury, where the choir, nave, and two aisles were all included under one long unbroken roof, and a porch at the west end afforded entrance to the congregation. The church at Gloucester, consisting of choir, nave, north chapel or transept, and north aisle, being rebuilt about the beginning of the 16th century, departed somewhat from this plan, inasmuch as the chapel was covered with a distinct transverse roof. It occupied only about three-fourths of the side of the quadrangle, the rest being completed by monastic buildings. In the church were three altars : the steeple with two bells, and the aisle have disappeared.

The rest of the buildings which complete the quadrangle, about 73 ft. square, are doubtless the original structures of the 13th century. The dormitory forming the second storey of the south side, with its exterior stairs, is still perfect, even to the stone partitions of the separate cells. On the ground floor was probably the refectory. The triplet window in the south gable of the west buildings is deserving of notice. But the interiors of all these buildings have been so much changed and adapted for modern requirements, that it is difficult to ascertain their monastic destinations. The cellaring is extensive, but presents little worthy of remark. It is best, however, to turn to the original plan and drawings, with which we have been favoured by Mr. C. A. Buckler, whose talents as an architect secure our confidence and esteem, whilst we tender to him our thanks for his kindness on this occasion amongst many others.

From time to time, some objects of interest have come to light again. In 1714 a missal was found in the friary, in which were the names of Walter Bowden and Agnes his wife, Richard Warminster, John Brigge, and Robert Darnal and Juliana his wife, who were probably benefactors. Upon a stone dug up in 1716, was the effigy of a friar ; and on another, *Ossa Johannis Bisely*. In the year 1779 there were in the floor of one of the houses made out of the ruins, the arms of Archbishop Dene (who occupied the see of Canterbury from 1501 to 1503) and those of the bishopric of Durham, St. Peter's Abbey at Gloucester, and more frequently a bend cotized between six lioncels (not six trees, as Rudder says) for Bohun, all being probably the memorials of benefactors to the house. These tiles were still preserved in 1819. In the north wall of the church is what is called a sort of shrine, but is evidently the remains of the paschal sepulchre.

The seal of the convent was doubtless sequestered by the suffragan of Dover. The matrix of the seal of the friar-preachers of Truro, which shared the same fate, was dug up, in the autumn of 1842, in the garden of the vicarage-house of Sturry, near Canterbury ; but what the wanderings of

the Gloucester matrix for two hundred and seventy years have been, it is idle to conjecture. This matrix is made out of one block of brass wrought into shape by hand, being about a quarter of an inch thick, the handle being formed of a ridge along the back and pierced with a hole to secure a firm grasp. The stamp shows some traces of gilding; but the back and handle are rough in workmanship, presenting nothing but the marks of the file. The seal contains two principal figures, one bald-headed and bearded, clad in flowing garments, and holding a book and a reversed sword by the point; the other tonsured, habited in the cappa and capuce of the friar-preachers, and holding a long cross and a book: below, the demi-figure of a friar praying: legend, s'. COMMUNE: FRM: PREDICATOR'



GLOUCESTRIE. We believe that the figures are those of St. Paul the Apostle and St. Dominic, and that they were the saintly patrons of this priory. The date of the seal has been considered to be about the year 1280, but there is probably no reason for denying it a somewhat earlier period.