

THE BLACK FRIARS OF SUSSEX.

BY REV. C. F. R. PALMER.

Concluded from Vol. 28.

CHICHESTER.

[Our readers may consider our volume *too* rich in Chichester lore, but as the following paper is short, and a continuation one, and forms a not inapt sequel to that on the Secular Clergy of our Diocese, I have not hesitated to give it a place.—ED.]

THE Black Friars gained a footing in Chichester in the year 1283, or very early in 1284, when they obtained for themselves a habitation on the south side of East Street, near East Gate and the city wall. At first they seem to have adapted existing buildings to conventual uses, for, although they immediately laid out a churchyard for the burial of the dead, it was twenty-six years before they began to erect their church and finished the cloister. This Priory was dedicated to St. Mary and St. Vincent. The Friars had secured the favour and patronage of Edmund Earl of Cornwall; and, as they now settled within his domains, that great nobleman became their special benefactor, by quitclaiming to them, Apr. 11th, 1284, for the health of his soul, the whole rent of their plot, with all services, giving them leave, at the same time, to acquire other sites around, so that they might have a suitable place, to enclose all with a wall or hedge, and there to build their oratory, and other cloistral offices.¹ Eleanor, of Castile, consort of Edward I., was so generous to the Friars, that she has been styled the foundress of this house. At the end of July, 1285, the King was at Chichester, with all the Royal Court. The Queen then bought of John Blel a plot of land 104ft. long and 44ft. broad, held of the Earl of Cornwall by the service of 10d. a year, in order that the Friars might enlarge their area. A Royal writ was issued, July 27th, for an inquisition as to whether it would be detrimental for the Queen to carry out her gift. The enquiry was made on

¹ Pat. 4 Edward II., p. 1, m. 24 per inspex.

the following day, and a favourable return was made.² And on that same day the Mortmain licence was issued for the grant of the plot, which lay contiguous to the Friars' close.³ Shortly after, the Queen bought another area of land, with all buildings and appurtenances, from Sir John the chaplain, son of the late Nicholas the goldsmith, which lay in East Street, between the land of Julienne, sister of the same John, on the W., and *Poukelane* on the E.; and in honour of God, St. Mary, and St. Vincent, and for her soul's sake, she gave it, Apr. 30th, 1286, to the Friars, to be held in pure and perpetual almoign, and by the services due to the lord of the fief.⁴

In forming the grounds, it became necessary or useful to enclose two public ways, one leading from St. Andrew's Church, in Pallant, to the city wall on the S. of the Friar's plot, the other from South Gate to East Gate, and under the shadow of the city wall. A Royal writ, issued May 6th, 1289, elicited, by inquisition taken here, June 8th, that no damage would accrue by stopping the first street, but the enclosure of the second would be injurious to St. Mary's Priory, Clement de Addesdene, Thomas Sandervill, Gilbert le Melemongere, and Robert le Barbur, as it would make the road from East Gate, under the wall, to their lands and tenements, longer and more indirect by five perches, unless the Friars made another road as large as one of the two, to run direct from St. Andrew's Church to the city wall on the S., upon their own land, and then no detriment would arise. The Friars had foreseen this difficulty, and proposed to form a new road on the west of their plot.⁵ Accordingly, Aug. 20th, a Royal license was granted for the enclosure of the two roads, on condition that the new thoroughfare was made.⁶

² Inquis. post mortem, 13 Edw. I., no. 83. Jurors: Rog. Pluket, Nich. le Taverner, Godfr. le Gordevan, Will. le Tunder, John de Palente, John Bissop, John le Juvene, Rog. de Coleworth, Rich. de Somerle, Rich. le Taverner, Tho. Tredgold, Rich. Damel.

³ Pat. 13 Edw. I., m. 8.

⁴ Pat. 18 Edw. I., m. 15, per inspex.

⁵ Inquis. post mortem, 17 Edw. I., no. 67. Jurors: Dennis de Crofte, Ad. le Juster, John de Brommore, John de Almodytone, El de Cotes, Hen. le Hunte, John le Jefne, Gilb. Poleyn, Hen. le Sherer, Rob. le Mareschal, Hen. de la Snape, Alex. Streyt.

⁶ Pat. 17 Edw. I., m. 11.

The Royal confirmation of Queen Eleanor's gift of land in 1286 was granted July 16th, 1290, by Edward I.⁷ The Earl of Cornwall's gift in 1280 also received the ratification, July 15th, 1310, of Edward II., who took occasion, at the same time, out of his affection for the Order, as the Friars had not space enough for their church, churchyard, and cloister, to give them licence to acquire five plots of land, 400ft. long and 300ft. broad, contiguous to their homestead, so that they might enlarge their burial ground and cloister, and build their church and houses.⁸ Edward III. confirmed the concessions of his father, July 25th, 1337, probably after the enlargement and buildings had been completed, previous to which the dwelling stood on the first acquired land.⁹

Very few incidents concerning this Priory have drifted down the stream of time to the present days.

Edward I. came to Chichester May 26th, 1297, and gave 34s. to these Friar Preachers, by F. Henry de Lytelmor, for three days' food.¹⁰

Edward II. also visited this city July 5th, 1324, and, on his arrival, gave 7s. to the twenty-one Friar Preachers, by F. John de Andevere, for one day's food.¹¹

In 1347 four subjects of this house were ordained by the Bishop of Winchester. On May 26th F. John de Barnstaple was promoted to the minor order of acolyte; and Sept. 22nd, following, was ordained subdeacon, along with F. John de Grenstede, F. William Garet, and F. William Slyndefeld.¹²

By will, Nov. 22nd, 1374, William Laxman left 20s. to the Friar Preachers of Chichester.¹³ See *Arundel Black Friars*, xxviii. S.A.C.

At the prayer of the Prior and Brethren, Richard II., by letters patent, dated June 28th, 1380, after reciting the grants of 1284, 1310, and 1337, freed their six plots of land, comprised in the same grants, from all suit in

⁷ Pat. 18 Edw. I., m. 15.

⁸ Pat. 4 Edw. II., p. 1, m. 24.

⁹ Pat. 11 Edw. III., p. 2, m. 22.

¹⁰ Lib. Gard., 25 Edw. I. Additional MSS. of the British Museum, no. 7965.

¹¹ Lib. de partic. expens. forinsec. Contrarot. Garderobæ, 17 Edw. II.

¹² Reg. dni. Joh. de Edynton, epis. Winton.

¹³ Cart. Antiq. Priorat. de Lewes: Treas. of Rec. of Exch., vol. B₂, fol. 7.

the Royal courts. The Friars seem to have been much troubled with these secular services, and the King bestowed this favour upon them, in order that they might serve God more peaceably, and pray all the more devotedly for him in life and death, and for the souls of his progenitors.¹⁴

Richard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey, by will, dated Mar. 4th, 1392-3, ordered that his executors should look after the Houses of Friars at Chichester, and other places, as they were bound to pray for the souls of his father and mother, and his wife, and for himself, when he passed out of this world.¹⁵ See *Arundel Black Friars*, xxviii. S.A.C.

About the year 1400 the Bishop of Chichester appointed F. Henry Halle, of the Friar Preachers here, to be penitentiary of the diocese.¹⁶

Richard Burre, of Sompting, by will, Aug. 3rd, 1527, directed certain sums to be sent yearly to the Black Friars of Chichester.¹⁷ See *Arundel Black Friars*, xxviii. S.A.C.

This Priory contained from twenty to thirty religious; but, when the troubles of the Reformation fell on it, the number dwindled, and at last there were only seven Friars here, and they were in such poverty that they had to pledge even part of the church plate in order to maintain themselves. On Oct. 8th, 1538, Richard, Suffragan Bishop of Dover, entered the house, and took it into the King's hands. The act of surrender on the part of the religious ran as follows:—

“M^d we y^e p^or and co^ue't of y^e blacke fryers of chychest', w^t one assent and co^sent, w^towt any man' of coaccyon or co^ssell, do gyue ow^r howse In to y^e hands of y^e lorde vysytor, to y^e kyng's vse; desyerynge hys grace to be goode and gracyous to vs. In wyttenes, we subscribe ow^r namys w^t ow^r p^or hands, y^e viijth day of october, In y^e xxx^{te} yere of y^e raygne of ow^r most drede sou^ern lorde kyng he'ry y^e viijth.

¹⁴ Pat. 4 Rich. II., p. 1, m. 43.

¹⁵ Nichols' Collection of Royal Wills, p. 135.

¹⁶ XVII., S.A.C., p. 198.

¹⁷ Nichols' "Herald and Genealogist," i., p. 280.

In Wetnes here of, I hafe subcryby[d] my name,

FRYER JOHN ANTEM, p'er, manew prop'ia.

FR. JOHAN'ES LAYART.

FR. WILLIELM' HALL.

FR. THOMAS SENTHYLL.

FR. THOMAS WYLSON.

FR. JOH'ES HOLYDAY.

FR. JOHE'ES CUTTEFARD."¹⁸

With the aid of William Bradbridge, mayor of the city, and Ellis Bradshaw, a citizen, the visitor sold almost all the goods and implements, and it took the full proceeds to satisfy the creditors of the house, so that he had to pay his own expenses; but he carried off, for the King's use, 81 ounces of silver plate, which partly he found in the house, and partly redeemed from the money lenders. He committed the keeping of the church and choir, stripped of everything except the altars and old stalls, and the house, with some boards, old ceilings, and bedsteads, to the mayor and citizen, and so departed to Arundel.

“The blacke freerys of chichestr’.

“This indenture makith mençyon of all the stuffe that longith to the howse of blacke freerys in chichestr’ receyued by y^e lorde visitor vnder the lord p’uey seale for the kingis grace, & deliude to m^r Will’m bradbregge, meyer’, & m^r ellys bradschow, to order & kepe to y^e kingis vse, till his g^aceis ples’ be further knowen.

Deliu’eid to y^e seid keparys y^e howse, w^t y^e app’ten’nce, as yt standith, y^e chirche & quere w^t owt eny ornamentis excepte y^e altarys & stallys olld as y^ei war, the ostre & frayt’, w^t y^e bordis & certeyne olld sileins & bedstedis in diu’sse placis: the rest of all implements y^t longid to all officis, by y^e visitor & meyer & other war solld and eu’y peny payde for dettis in y’ p’sens, & plegis by y^e visitor receyuyd, so y^t y^e visitor hathe w^t him to y^e kingis vse in silu’ y^t was in the howse & y^t laye to plege ^{xx}/_{iii} vnc’ &

¹⁸ Treasury of Receipt of Exchequer: vol. B₁, Submission of Monasteries, etc., no. 2.

on' vnc'. And so the visitor payde his owne costis and departeid.

By me, WILL'M BRADBRIGE, mayer
in chichester.

By me, ELYS BRADSHOW,
cetezen their."¹⁹

This was one of the houses of Friars that had no substance of lead, save only some of them had small gutters.²⁰

After standing void for more than a twelvemonth,²¹ the house and premises found a tenant in Edward Millet, of Westmister, yeoman of the Royal household, who, Dec. 8th, 1539, took a lease of the whole for twenty-one years, from the last Michaelmas, at 20s a year, all timber being reserved to the King;²² and Nov. 3rd, 1540, the same Millet purchased this Priory and the Blackfriars of Arundel for 27*l*. The grant included the house and site of *the late Priory of Blacke Freres in Chichestre*, with the church, belfry, and churchyard, and all buildings, gardens, and lands, within and without the precincts of the same. The service of the twentieth part of a knight's fee, in common with Arundel, and the yearly rent of 2s. for this house, were reserved to the Crown.²³

Edward Millet died Dec. 28th, 1548, leaving an only daughter, Cecily, then eighteen years old, who became a ward of the Crown. This Cecily sought livery of the site of the late *Blake Fryers in Cicestr'* (then held by the hundredth part of a knight's fee, and valued at 4*l*. a

¹⁹ Treas. of Rec. of Exch.: vol. B₁₉, Submission of Monasteries, no. 28.

In the previous July, this Suffragan executed his commission throughout Sussex, for subjecting all Friars to the King's supremacy. About the 27th he reported his progress to Cromwell. At WINCHELSEA all the *stufte* of the Black Friars sold for about 10*l*.; no lead, but slate and tile; the house falling down; a close let for 20s. a year, but the rent, for four years to come, received five years ago; the Friars submissive. At ARUNDEL, the house poor, so as not to pay a penny of his costs, nor the con-

tribution; with only three Friars, but in good name and favour. At CHICHESTER, the two houses of Friars in good order. *Miscellaneous Letters, temp. Hen. VIII., 2nd series, Vol. viii., nos. 81, 84.* Goodness was here measured by submission.

²⁰ Treas. of Rec. of Exch.: vol. A₁^s, Inventories of Friaries, fol. 5.

²¹ Ministers' Accounts, Court of Augmentations, 31-32 Hen. VIII., no. 147.

²² Inrolment of leases: Miscellaneous books of the Court of Augmentations, vol. ccxii., fol. 40d.

²³ Pat. 32 Hen. VIII., p. 4, m. 39 (10).

year) May 8th, 1550, and May 12th, in the following year, doing homage, had seisin.²⁴

By this time nearly all the buildings had been pulled down. In Speed's plan of Chichester, dated in 1610, the turret of a church, a gate-house, outbuilding, and two trees, mark the site of the "Blackfryers;" but soon every vestige of the Priory had disappeared; and its name now appears only as an extra-parochial spot within the city. The descent of the site to the present time is accurately traced in the topographical histories of Chichester, but it does not concern our subject, as the Priory, with all its religious associations, is merged in the shadows of the past.

²⁴ Originalia, 5 Edw. VI., p. 1, ro. 189.
