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THE LAST TEN YEARS OF THE PRIORY OF
S. HELEN'S, BISHOPSGATE, WITH THE TOPOGRAPHY
OF THE HOUSE.

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[Read in Ironmongers' Hall, 10th March, 1864.]

IN mediæval times the City of London and its suburbs contained a number of Houses of Religious Women, among which were conspicuous, both for their architectural excellence and the value of their possessions, those of Clerkenwell, Stratford-le-Bow, Halliwell, S. Helen's, and the Minoreesses. The annals of each of these communities are full of interest, and deserve a very different amount of attention from that which they have hitherto received. The reader will not therefore, as I suppose, be sorry to be introduced to a history of the last ten years of one of these establishments,—of which, I may add, the particulars already given to the press are of a very meagre and unsatisfactory character,—as well as to what can be gathered of its architecture and topography. I select the individual House, from its special interest for London archæologists, while the length of the interval to which I wish to give attention is limited, from a desire to impart to its investigation that fulness of detail which my space would not allow me to apply to the consecutive periods of its entire history.

I make no apology for the copiousness with which the facts are presented to the reader. True students of history, whether sacred or secular, do not require a narrative compressed, as a free and easy critic has suggested, into the "space of a nutshell." Such details would, no doubt, be quite as voluminous as the intellect of such a reader could entertain; but other men, better and greater than he, are desirous of possessing something more really akin to the interest and importance of the subject. Mere skeleton histories of Religious Houses are already in the reader's hands, and the repetition of such, apart from being useless as a twice-told tale, would necessarily lose in value what it might gain in brevity. The particularity, then, of my information I hold to be its special excellence. Those only entertain a light opinion of such particularity "who are either indifferent to the subject itself, unconscious of their own deficiencies, or have an evil purpose to serve" in keeping others ignorant of the truth.

To introduce the reader to what I am about to offer, a very few words are needful about the earlier history of the place.

The Benedictine Priory of S. Helen's, Bishopsgate, was founded about the year 1212. A Church had existed on the site of the present structure some time before the foundation of the Priory, and was granted to the Canons of S. Paul's by Ranulph, and Robert his son, as appears by an agreement given at length in Newcourt's *Repertorium*,* and the works of other writers. According to the terms of this instrument, which was made in the reign of Henry II., they were to retain it for their lives, at a rent of twelve pence a year, and were to appoint a third incumbent who should hold it after their decease, at a rent of two shillings a year, to the end of his life, after which event it was to determine to the Canons.† On the death of these three parties, the Canons granted the right of patronage to William the son of William the Goldsmith. William obtained from Alard de Burnham, Dean of S. Paul's, permission to found a Priory for Nuns. This must have been not later than the year 1216, for the Dean departed this life on the 14th of

* Vol. i. p. 363.

† Reg. Dec. et Cap. A. f. 32.

August in that year. Stowe, Howel, Weever, and others, are in error, who attribute the foundation to William Basing, Dean of S. Paul's; for, in the first place, there is no such person in the list of those dignitaries, and, in the second, a document among the archives of the Dean and Chapter distinctly proves that my attribution of the good work to William fitz William is correct.* Basing was a Sheriff of London in the second year of Edward II., and was a considerable benefactor, but not the founder.

In agreement with my intention expressed just now, of confining myself to the history of the last ten years of this ancient and interesting Community, I pass over its annals, although I am in possession of some curious information belonging to various periods, during the interim between its foundation and those times of trouble when, like all similar establishments, it was beginning to encounter its last trial,—when the storm was all but bursting, which should consign it and them to the horrors of a common catastrophe.

There are, however, one or two scraps of information connected with earlier times which, I have reason to think, will be particularly welcome to those who live near to or are well acquainted with the place.

The Nuns endeavoured, especially during the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I., to stop up the lane or passage through the court of their House, from Bishopsgate Street to S. Mary-Axe. *In the thirty-third year of the former King they obtained a licence to include a lane lying across their ground, inasmuch as it had been found by inquest that no damage would accrue thereby to the citizens of London.* The licence was dated at Westminster, the 24th March, 33 Henry III. 1248-9.† Some resistance, as it appears, was made to this inclusion, for in several subsequent inquests the jurors describe the lane as a common thoroughfare, from the Gate of the Nuns of S. Elen to the Church of S. Mary at Ax, called “Seint Eleyne Lane,” through which there was always in ancient times a common passage for carts and

* Reg. Dec. et Cap. A. f. 24b.

† Pat. 33 Hen. III. m. 7.

horsemen, as well as for foot passengers.* Their obstruction was at least partially successful, and, as such, has descended to our own time. There is still no thoroughfare for carriages.

Reynold Kentwode, Dean of S. Paul's (1422—1441), together with his Chapter, made a number of Constitutions for the Nuns, dated the 21st of June, 1439.† Many of these are extremely curious, and furnish us with most descriptive illustrations of conventual life. I have accurately transcribed them from the original document, now among the Cottonian Rolls, and have placed them as an Appendix at the end of this memoir.

The names of the three Prioresses which are given by the last editors of Dugdale, are Eleanor de Wyncestre or Winton, in the 7th and 12th of Edward III.; Alice Assfeld, who granted a lease to Sir John Crosby, the builder of Crosby Hall, in 1466;‡ and Mary Rollesley, the last Prioress. To these I am able to add four others, D——, Alice Wodehous, Alice Tracthall, and Isabel Stampe. The first-mentioned lady I believe to have been the first Prioress. She addressed a petition, which I have given in the Appendix, to Alard de Burnham, dean of S. Paul's, and Walter Fitzwalter, archdeacon of London, in or some short time previous to the year 1216. The second was the immediate predecessor of Alice Assfeld, and granted to Sir John Crosby a lease of the house in which he resided when he obtained from the latter that of the same and adjoining premises, on which he subsequently built his magnificent mansion. I presume that she resigned her office of Prioress, as a lady of the same name and probably herself stands first of the eleven present and consenting Sisters in the document of 1466. The third, Alice Tracthall, leased some premises in Birchin Lane, about which more details will be given, to Thomas Knyght, by indenture dated the 20th March, 13 Henry VII. 1497-8. The fourth, Isabel Stampe, was the last Prioress but one. When she succeeded to her office I cannot determine, nor the time of her decease or resignation;

* Rot. Hundred. i. 409, 410, 420, 425, 426, 431. † Rot. Cott. v. 6.

‡ See the particulars in the Author's History of Crosby Hall, Transactions of the Lond. and Midd. Archæol. Soc. vol. i. p. 40.

but, as we shall see presently, she granted leases of some of her conventual property on the 3rd of December, 1512, and on the 1st of November, 1526.

The will of Elizabeth Rollesley, who would appear to be the mother of the last Prioress, is given by Madox in his *Formulare*. It was dated the 23rd August, 1513, 5 Henry VIII.; and, among other bequests, she directs: "Item; I bequeth to the Prioress and Covent of S. Elyns in London, v li. Item; I bequeth to Dame Mary, my dowter, being a Nonne of the same place, v li." Another daughter, Alice, was a Nun of Dartford, and to her was left a similar legacy.*

We will now proceed with the history of the last ten years of the House in its chronological order. I have collected the details from the Conventual Leases, the Ministers' Accounts, the Valor, the Surrenders, the Particulars for Grants, the Orders and Decrees, Pension Lists, Surveys, and other Records of the Court of Augmentations, the Patent and Originalia Rolls, and several collections of Rolls and Charters, or documents usually called by that name, &c. &c. And, although there may have been various other transactions of which no record has been preserved, the result will probably give the reader a more lively notion than that which he may already possess of some of the multifarious business which was a necessary ingredient in the life of a wealthy Religious House during its last few years of possession and power.

On the 26th January, 19th Hen. VIII. 1527-8, the Prioress, Mary Rollesley, and Convent leased to Richard Berde a tenement in the parish of S. Ethelburga, for a term of forty years, at an annual rent of xx s.†

On the 21st December, 20th Hen. VIII. 1528, they leased to Robert Nesham, citizen and baker, and Agnes his wife, one bakehouse, with appurtenances, in the parish of S. Andrew Undershafte, for a term of forty years from the following Christmas, at a yearly rent of lxxij s. iiij d. The repairs were to be done by the farmer.‡

* Madox, *Formulare Anglicanum*, p. 440.

† Ministers' Accounts, 31-32 Hen. VIII. No. 112.

‡ London Conventual Leases, No. 24. Ministers' Accounts.

On the 20th May, 21st Hen. VIII. 1529, they leased to Richard Staverton a tenement in the parish of S. Mary Magdalene in the Old Fishmarket for a term of sixty years, at a yearly rent of xxxij s. iiij d.*

On the 20th September, 23rd Hen. VIII. 1531, the Prioress and Convent leased two tenements, with two gardens adjoining to the same, within their close, to William Shelton, from the Michaelmas following, for twelve years, and, after the expiration of those years, for a term of fourscore and nineteen years, at a rent of 1 s. a year, payable at the four usual terms. The repairs were to be done by the farmer aforesaid.†

On the 26th January, 23rd Hen. VIII. 1531-2, they leased to Richard Berde aforesaid and Alice his wife a tenement in the parish of S. Ethelburga for a term of sixty years, at a yearly rent of xlv s. Repairs by the farmers.‡

On the 10th of June, 25th Henry VIII., 1533, Mary Rollesley, Prioress, and Convent entered into an agreement with Richard Berde aforesaid, citizen and girdler of London, by which, inasmuch as the late Prioress of S. Helen's, Dame Isabell Stampe, had, by a deed bearing date 1st Nov. in the 18th Hen. VIII. 1526, granted and let to Thomas Larke, citizen and Merchant Taylor, their great tenement or inn called the Black Bull, with cellars, &c., in the parish of S. Alburghe, in the Ward of Bishopsgate, and two adjoining tenements, for one and twenty years, from Midsummer following, at a yearly rent of 9*l.* 14*s.* sterling, they transferred the same to the said Richard at the same rent. If unpaid six weeks after due, the Prioress might enter and distrain. The agreement was allowed by the Court of Augmentations, on the 5th Jan., 32nd Hen. VIII., 1540-1.§

On the 10th of July, 25th Hen. VIII. 1533, they leased to the aforesaid William Shelton a tenement with appurtenances in their close, for a term of four score and eighteen years from the next following feast of the Nativity of S. John the Baptist, at a yearly rent of x s. payable at the four terms. Repairs by the farmer.||

* Ministers' Accounts.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Conventual Leases, No. 17. Orders and Decrees, vii. f. 35 b.

|| Ministers' Accounts.

Among Dean Kentwode's orders, previously referred to, is the following regulation :

“ Also for as moche that diu^{er}ce fees ppetueff corrodies and lyuers have be grauntyd be for this tyme to diuerce officers of 3owre house and other' psones whec^h have hurt the house and be cause of delapidacyoⁿ of the godys of 3owre seyde house we ordeyne and jnioyne 3ow that 3e reseyyve noon officer' to noo ppetueff ffee of office ne graunte noo annuete corody ne lyuery without speciall assent of vs.”

The examples subsequently given afford only too many instances of the violation of this good and prudent rule. The Prioress and Nuns of S. Helen's, however, were no exceptional case. The records of most Religious Houses present instances more or less numerous of the same exactions. That these were forced upon them by the unscrupulous we may be well assured, and that they endeavoured, although unsuccessfully, to abate the evil is no less indubitable.

On the 10th of September, 26th Hen. VIII., 1534, the Prioress and Convent gave to the infamous Thomas Crumwell, secretary of the king, an annuity of four marcs, issuing from their lands and tenements in London, for the term of his life, payable yearly at Michaelmas. If in arrear for three weeks, the said annuitant might enter and distrain. Four pence were paid immediately, as earnest and parcel of the annuity. This was allowed by the Court of Augmentations, with arrears from the dissolution of the House, on the 8th of February, 30th Hen. VIII. 1538-9.*

I hardly need tell the reader that this was one of those shameless extortions from which the Religious Houses were the sufferers during their last few years of tenure—offerings intended to propitiate a man of influence, who might subsequently be of assistance to the Community in the preservation of their rights. In the present instance the receiver was the implacable enemy of the victims that he pillaged, and a traitor alike to God and his

* Orders and Decrees, x. f. 131.

earthly sovereign. We shall subsequently meet, as I have said above, with several other grants of the same kind.

On the 10th September, 1534, they also leased to Richard Berde aforesaid a tenement in the parish of S. Alborough, in the ward of Bishopsgate, for a term of three score years, from Michaelmas next ensuing, at a yearly rent of xvjs. sterling, payable at two terms of the year. If in arrear for six weeks, the Prioress and Convent might enter and distrain.*

On the 1st of October, 26th Hen. VIII., 1534, Dame Mary Rollesley, Prioress, and Convent granted and leased to fee farm to John Rollesley, gent. all their manor of Burston or Bruston, in the county of Middlesex, with all the lands, tenements, woods, underwoods, court-leets, profits of courts, fines, americiaments, and other profits and commodities whatsoever appertaining to the same manor, from the Michaelmas last past to the end of fourscore years next ensuing, at a yearly rent of 9*l.* payable at Lady Day and Michaelmas, in equal portions. Repairs were to be made by the aforesaid farmer. If the aforesaid rent or any parcel thereof were in arrear for forty days, the Prioress and Convent were to enter and distrain. This was allowed by the Court of Augmentations, on the 8th of November, 34 Hen. VIII. 1542.† The original of this lease still exists among the documents of the Augmentation Office, and has appended to it the common seal of the House, representing S. Helen, in agreement with the most important fact of her history, standing under the Cross which she embraces with her left arm, and holding in her left hand the three nails of the Passion. On the right, opposite to the empress, is a multitude of women with extended arms and upraised countenances. Beneath is a trefoiled niche, and under it a woman's (?) head and left arm in the same attitude as that of the figures above. The legend is SIGILL. MONIALIVM. SANCTE. HELENE. LONDONIARVM. Representations of this seal have been given by Malcolm and Wilkinson.‡

On the 2nd of December, 26th Hen. VIII. 1534, the Prioress

* Conventual Leases, No. 25.

† Ministers' Accounts. Orders and Decrees, xiii. f. 14 b.

‡ Malcolm, Lond. Rediv. iv. 548; Wilkinson, Lond. Illustr. i.

and Convent leased to Alan Hawte, his executors and assigns, a messuage with a garden within their close for a term of fourscore and nineteen years, at a yearly rent of 1 s. payable at Lady Day and Michaelmas in equal portions. Repairs by the farmer.*

On the 24th December, 26th Hen. VIII., 1534, the Prioress and Convent appointed Sir James Bolleyne, knt., to be steward of their lands and tenements in London and elsewhere, the duties to be performed either by himself or a sufficient deputy, during the life of the said James, at a stipend of forty shillings a year, payable at Christmas. If in arrear for six weeks, the said James might enter and distrain. Allowed, with arrears from the Dissolution, by the Court of Augmentations, on the 10th of February, 30th Hen. VIII. 1538-9.†

On the 1st January, 26th Hen. VIII. 1534-5, Mary Rollesley, Prioress, and Convent made Richard Berde aforesaid, their seneschal, receiver and collector of all their manors, &c. by charter under the conventual seal, dated as aforesaid, for the term of his life from the date of the instrument, with a fee or stipend of 12*l.* sterling, and 20*s.* for his livery; also with eatables and drinkables, two cartloads of fuel and ten quarters of charcoal a-year allowed and delivered to him, and the use and occupation of one chamber, and of a certain parlour appertaining to the same, within the precinct of the Priory, with free ingress to and egress from the same at all convenient and lawful times during his life.‡

On the 20th of January, 1534-5, 26th Hen. VIII., the Prioress and Convent granted, demised, and let to Regnald or Rouland Goodman, citizen and fishmonger, their lands or great gardens, with a "Shedd" and other appurtenances, with free entry and issue, incoming and outgoing at all times convenient, requisite, and necessary, into and from the same, by and through the next way now used, had, and occupied, lying and being in the parish of S. Botolph without Bysshoppesgate, in the tenure of John Newton, "pulter," from Michaelmas, 1540, for fourscore years, at a yearly rent of four marcs sterling, payable at Ladyday and Michaelmas, in equal por-

* Ministers' Accounts.

† Orders and Decrees, x. f. 141b.

‡ Conventual Leases, No. 20; Ministers' Accounts.

tions. The said Rowland to keep and maintain competently all the fences of the said lands or gardens. If in arrear for a quarter of a year, the Prioress and Convent to have again and repossess their premises, as in their former estate. Allowed by the Court of Augmentations, on the 26th of November, 31st Hen. VIII. 1539.*

On the 10th of December, 27th Hen. VIII. 1535, they leased to John Rollesleye their messuage or mansion place, with the gardens, cellars, solars, &c. appertaining to the same, lately in the tenure of Nicholas late Bishop of Landaff, situated between the tenements of Sir John Russell, knt. and Alen Hawte, within the close of S. Helen's, from the Christmas following, for four score years, at a yearly rent of xlvj s. viij d. sterling, payable at the four terms in even portions. If in arrear for thirteen weeks, the Prioress and Convent might enter and distrain. Repairs to be done by the farmer. As in the other instances given in the notes, the original lease still exists.†

On the 20th December, 27th Hen. VIII. 1535, they leased to Thomas Pett, citizen and grocer, a messuage in the parish of S. Ethelberga for a term of twenty years at a yearly rent of xlv s.‡

* Ministers' Accounts. Orders and Decrees, vi. f. 27. Among the documents in the possession of the Leathersellers' Company is one of the same year as the seven last described, 1534, and probably the counterpart of one of them. I regret that I cannot give positive information on this point, inasmuch as to my application to the Court of the Company for permission to inspect it for a few minutes, in order to include its details in the present memoir, that body thought fit to issue a refusal! It is difficult to understand the reason of such a repulse, further than that it appears to be a sort of tradition with the Company to resist all such solicitations. So long ago as the year 1803 Malcolm complained that he "received no encouragement in his inquiries." "As it is," he adds, "what can be viewed by the passenger I shall describe; but further this deponent cannot say." (iii. 562.) This jealous custody and concealment of documents, which are now possessed simply of historical and archæological interest, I had almost hoped were among the follies which have passed away—or, at any rate, that it would not have found an apparently perpetual lodgment in a worshipful Company of the City of London.

† Conventual Leases, No. 14.

‡ Ministers' Accounts.

On the 7th of April, in the 27th year of Hen. VIII., 1536, the Prioress and Convent granted, demised, and let to John Rolesley ten tenements, with gardens thereunto adjoining, and three chambers, with their appurtenances, situated within the close and tenements aforesaid; the tenements in the holding respectively of Richard Parker, Guy Crayford, Edward Waghan, Edward Bryseley, Margaret Dalton, widow, John Bernard, Richard Harman, John Harrocke, and Andrew Byscombe; and the chambers, one on the ground, in the tenure of Emma Lowe, widow, and the other two up the stairs, over the chambers of the said Emma, in the tenure of William Damerhawle; together with the alley, tenements, cellars, and solars, to the said alley appertaining, situated in the same close, (except a tenement or chamber in the said alley, wherein Johane Heyward then dwelt,) and another tenement outside the close, wherein Thomas Rancoke then dwelt, from Michaelmas last past for threescore years ensuing, at a yearly rent of £15, payable at the four usual terms of the year. The said John to keep the said premises in good and sufficient repair. If the rent were in arrear for six months after any of the said feasts, and no sufficient distress for the arrears could be found, the Prioress and Convent might re-enter and repossess. This was allowed by the Court of Augmentations, on the 17th of April, 31 Hen. VIII. 1540.*

On the same day the Prioress and Convent granted and let to the same John their tenements with appurtenances in the parish of S. Alphe in "Muggewell Strete," and S. Olave in "Silver Strete by Crepulgate," from Michaelmas next coming for a term of fourscore years, at a yearly rent of £7 sterling, payable at the usual terms. The said John to keep the premises in competent and sufficient repair. If the rent were in arrear for six weeks, the Prioress and Convent were to have power to enter and distrain. If for a quarter of a year, or if the repairs were not accomplished in avoiding rain and other extreme weather, they might re-enter and repossess themselves wholly of the property.

* Conventual Leases, No. 15. Ministers' Accounts. Orders and Decrees, v. f. 1.

This was allowed by the Court of Augmentations on the 20th April, 31 Hen. VIII. 1540.*

On the same day, the Prioress and Convent leased to John Rollesleye, his executors and assigns, two tenements in the parish of S. Elen's outside the close, one in the tenure of William Shurburne, citizen and barber-surgeon, and a marsh called the "Hare Marsshe" in the parish of Stebunheth in the county of Middlesex, for a term of sixty years, at a rent of viij li. xv s. iiij d. payable at the four usual terms.†

In the 27th of Hen. VIII. the "Valor" was taken of all ecclesiastical property, to determine the tenth which was henceforth ordered to be paid to the King for the support of his new-fledged dignity of Supreme Head of the Church of England. The yearly value of all the possessions of the House was £376 6s., in rents from tenements in the city of London, the rectory of S. Helen's, tenements in Bordeston and Edelmeton in Middlesex, Eyworth in Bedfordshire, Barmeling in Kent, Balamesmede and Marck in Essex, Ware in Hertford, and Dacet in Buckingham. Out of this sum various rents for lands in several parishes of the city were to be deducted, together with the stipends of Sir James Bulleyn, knight, chief steward, Richard Berde, receiver, and John Dodington, auditor; and pensions to David Netley, chaplain of the perpetual chantry of the B. V. M. in the Church of S. Helen's; Thomas Criche, chaplain of the chantry of the Holy Ghost, in the same church; the churchwardens of S. Mary Botowe; the wardens of a fraternity in Bow Church; Thomas More, chaplain of a chantry in S. Michael's, Cornhill; poor people at the anniversaries of Adam Fraunces, Robert Knolls, and Hugh Wynarde, in the Church of S. Helen's; the vicar of Eyworth; the Bishop of Lincoln, for sinodals and procurations; and the Abbess and Convent of Barking. These amounted to £55 10s. 3½d., leaving clear £320 15s 8¼d.; the tenth to be deducted from which was £32 1s. 7d.‡

On the 6th October, 28th Hen. VIII. 1536, they leased to

* Ministers' Accounts. Orders and Decrees, v. f. 2.

† Conventual Leases, No. 9. Ministers' Accounts.

‡ Val. Eccl. v. i. pp. 392, 393.

John Dodington a tenement called "the Sterre" at Ware, with all its chambers, cellars, solars, &c. for a term of sixty years from the next following Michaelmas, at a yearly rent of xl s. payable at Lady Day and Michaelmas, in equal portions. Repairs to be done by the aforesaid farmer.*

On the 20th of May, 29th Hen. VIII. 1537, the Prioress and Convent granted to Richard Wolverston, yeoman, for sundry good services, an annuity of twenty shillings sterling, issuing as before, for the term of his life, payable in equal portions at Christmas and Midsummer. If in arrear for six weeks, the said Richard might enter and distrain. Allowed, with arrears from the Dissolution, by the Court of Augmentations, on the 12th of February, 30th Hen. VIII. 1538-9.†

On the 30th May, 29th Hen. VIII. 1537, they leased to John Thurgood, his executors and assigns, a tenement with shops, cellars, solars, &c. in Ivelane, in the parish of S. Faith in Pater-noster Rowe, for a term of fifty-one years from the Lady Day of that year, at a yearly rent of liij s. iiij d. payable at the four usual terms. Repairs by the farmer.‡

On the 1st July, 29th Hen. VIII. 1537, they leased to Richard Stafferton a tenement, with shops, cellars, solars, &c. in the parish of S. Mary Wolnoth, for a term of fifty years, at a yearly rent of xxij s. iiij d. payable at the four terms.§

On the 1st of December, 29 Henry VIII. 1537, they leased to Sir Arthur Darcy, knt. a messuage within their close, late in the occupation of Thomas Benolt the herald, from Michaelmas last past, for a term of four score and sixteen years, at a rent of xls., payable at the four usual terms. Repairs by the farmer.||

On the 1st December, 29th(?) Hen. VIII. 1537, the Prioress and Convent granted to John Dodington an annuity of xl s. for the term of his life, payable in equal portions at Easter and Michaelmas.¶

On the 2nd of December, 29 Henry VIII. 1537, they leased to

* Conventual Leases, No. 18. Ministers' Accounts.

† Orders and Decrees, x. f. 164 b.

‡ Ministers' Accounts.

§ Ibid.

|| Conventual Leases, No. 11.

¶ Ministers' Accounts.

Elizabeth Hawte, widow, their tenement or messuage, with cellars, solars, gardens, woodhouses, stables, &c. " abbutting vpon the well yarde in the said P^orye on the westt, one other parte therof ending at the gate called the tymber halle gate buttyng vpon the Inner dorter on the East pte, the other pte therof w^t the gardeyne therto adioynnyng stretching alonge the ffrater on the sowthe parte, and the other parte therof lyeng alonge the cartewaye goyng into the tymber yarde on the north parte," from the Christmas following for fifty years, at a yearly rent of xx^s. sterling, payable at the four terms. The Prioress and Convent to keep in repair.*

On the 20th of December, 29th Hen. VIII., 1537, the Prioress and Convent granted to John Dodyngton, gent. aforesaid, auditor of their accounts, to have the first advowson, nomination, and presentation of their vicarage of Eyworth, in the county of Bedford and diocese of Lincoln, for one single turn, whenever the said vicarage should by death, resignation, promotion, or in any other way, chance to be vacant, as fully and entirely as they themselves the patrons. Allowed by the Court of Augmentations on the 9th of February, 35th Hen. VIII. 1543-4.†

On the 21st of January, 29th Henry VIII. 1537-8, the Prioress and Convent granted to John Sewstre, gent., for good counsel, past and future, an annual pension of four marcs, issuing as before, for the term of his life, in equal portions at Lady Day and Michaelmas. If in arrear for five weeks, the said John to have power to enter and distrain. Allowed, with arrears, by the Court of Augmentations on the 12th February, 30th Hen. VIII. 1538-9.‡

On the 16th March, 29th Henry VIII. 1537-8, they leased to Nicholas De la Mare, priest, one little tenement on the north side of the close or churchyard, from Lady Day following, for the term of the ensuing forty years, at a yearly rent of x^s. payable at Michaelmas and Lady Day. If in arrear for half a year, the

* Conventual Leases, No. 16.

† Orders and Decrees, xiv. f. 78.

‡ Ministers' Accounts. Orders and Decrees, x. f. 149.

Prioress and Convent might enter and distrain. The lessors were to do all necessary repairs. If the said Nicholas died before the end of the aforesaid term, a month after his decease the lease to be void, and of no effect.*

On the same 16th of March, 29th Hen. VIII. 1537-8, they leased a tenement to David Necton, for a term of forty years from the following Lady Day, at a yearly rent of x s., payable at Lady Day and Michaelmas in equal portions.†

On the 20th March, 1537-8, they granted to Thomas Percye, citizen and skinner, the renewal of a lease, which Alice Tracthall, a former Prioress, had granted to Thomas Knyght, by indenture dated the 20th March, 13th Henry VII. 1497-8, of a tenement or "brue hous called the Scomer vpon the Hope, sett and being in Byrchin Lane, and a plour sett on the northe syde of the hatte dore of the said tenē Bruehous towardē the Strete," &c. from Lady Day, 1547, when that lease would expire, to the end of a term of three score years, at a yearly rent of vj li. xij s. iiij d. sterling, payable at the four terms. If in arrear for six weeks, the Prioress and Convent to enter and distrain; if for fourteen weeks, to repossess. Repairs by the farmer. The lessors or their deputies might examine the premises twice in every year, to see that the farmer fulfilled his engagement.‡

On the 28th of March, 29th Hen. VIII. 1538, they leased to Antony Bonvixi, merchant, their great messuage, with all houses, solars, cellars, gardens, &c. called Crosbyes Place, together with nine messuages belonging to the same, for a term of seventy-one years, immediately after the end and completion of a term of ninety-nine years to John Crosbye, citizen and grocer of London, viz. from the feast of the Nativity of S. John the Baptist, 1565, at a yearly rent of xj li. vj s. viij d. payable at the usual terms.§

On the 30th of March, 29th Hen. VIII., 1538, the Prioress

* Conventual Leases, No. 12.

† Ministers' Accounts.

‡ Conventual Leases, No. 6.

§ Conventual Leases, No. 10. Part. for grants, Antony Bonvyxe. Ministers' Accounts.

and Convent granted to Edward Rollesley, gent., in consideration of good and faithful service, an annuity of forty shillings sterling, issuing as before, for the term of his life, payable at Lady Day and Michaelmas in equal portions. If in arrear, the said Edward might enter and distrain. The said Edward was put into possession by a payment to him of fourpence. Allowed by the Court of Augmentations, with arrears from the Dissolution, on the 26th of October, 31st Hen. VIII. 1539.*

On the 12th April, 29th Henry VIII. 1538, they leased to Robert Owterede, citizen and cordwainer, two tenements outside the close, for a term of thirty years, at a rent of xlvj s. viij d. payable at the usual terms.†

On the 17th April, 1538, they renewed to Domenic Lomelyn a lease formerly made to him by Isabell Stampe, Prioress of S. Helen's, dated the 3rd of December, 4th Henry VIII. 1512, of a tenement in S. Elen's, for four score and eleven years, at a yearly rent of x li. x s. sterling. If in arrear for six weeks, the Prioress and Convent to enter and distrain.‡

On the 20th June, 30th Hen. VIII. 1538, they leased to John Melshame a tenement in Chepesyde, in the parish of S. Matthew in Ffrydaye Strete, with shops, solars, cellars, &c., "wherof one shoppe hath the signe of the Mylke mayde w^t tankarde on her hedde, and the other shoppe hath the signe of the Cowe," from the Midsummer following, for a term of forty years, at a yearly rent of vj li. xiiij s. iiij d. payable at the four usual terms.§

On the 26th June, 30th Hen. VIII., 1538, the Prioress and Convent granted to John Rollesley, gent., for good counsel past and future, an annuity of four marcs sterling, issuing as before, for the term of his life, payable in equal portions, at Ladyday and Michaelmas. If in arrear for one month, the said John might enter and distrain. Allowed, with arrears from the Dissolution, by the Court of Augmentations, on the 24th of April, 31st Hen. VIII. 1539.||

* Orders and Decrees, vi. f. 47b.

† Ministers' Accounts.

‡ Conventual Leases, No. 26.

§ Conventual Leases, No. 8. Ministers' Accounts.

|| Orders and Decrees, x. f. 298b.

On the 30th June, 30th Hen. VIII. 1538, Mary, the Prioress, and Convent gave to Henry Bowsell, gentleman, of London, a certain annuity or annual rent of ten shillings, issuing from their lands and tenements in the city of London. It was granted in reward of good counsel given previously, and to be rendered in time to come, and was to be paid in equal portions at Christmas and Midsummer. If it were unpaid for the time of six weeks, the said Henry might enter and distrain. This was allowed by the Court of Augmentations on the 28th January, 34th Hen. VIII. 1542-3.*

On the same day the Prioress and Convent granted to Henry Bowsfell, gent., for good counsel, &c., and certain other considerations then moving them, a certain annuity or annual rent of twenty-six shillings and eightpence sterling, issuing from their property in London and elsewhere, for the term of his life, payable yearly at Christmas and Midsummer, in equal portions. If in arrear, in part or in whole, for six weeks, the aforesaid Henry might enter and distrain. Allowed, with arrears from the Dissolution, by the Court of Augmentations, on the 17th of October, 31st Hen. VIII. 1539.†

On the 1st July, 30th Hen. VIII. 1538, they leased to William Shyrborne a tenement with cellars, solars, &c. outside the close, from the feast of the Nativity of S. John the Baptist in that year, for a term of thirty years, at a yearly rent of xx s. payable at the usual terms.‡

On the 2nd July, 30th Henry VIII. 1538, they leased to William Shelton two tenements in the parish of S. Mary at Naxe, for a term of fourscore years from the following Michaelmas, at a yearly rent of xls. payable at the four terms. If in arrear for a quarter of a year, the Prioress and Convent might enter and distrain. Repairs by the farmer.§

On the 9th July, 30th Henry VIII. 1538, the Prioress and Convent granted to Jerome Shelton, gent., for good counsel past and future, an annuity or annual rent of four marcs sterling,

* Orders and Decrees, xiii. f. 126 b.

† Ibid. vi. f. 114 b.

‡ Ministers' Accounts.

§ Conventual Leases, No. 7. Ministers' Accounts.

issuing from their tenements in the city of London or elsewhere, for the term of his life, payable at Christmas and Midsummer, in equal portions. If in arrear for forty days, the said Jerome might enter and distrain. The Court of Augmentations continued this payment to the said Jerome, with arrears from the Dissolution of the House, on the 12th of February, 30 Hen. VIII. 1538-9.*

On the same day, the Prioress and Convent granted to Roger Hall, for good and faithful service, an annuity of twenty shillings, issuing as before, for the term of his life, payable at Christmas and Midsummer. If in arrear for five weeks, the said Roger might enter and distrain. Allowed, with arrears from the Dissolution, by the Court of Augmentations, on the 19th of November, 32nd Hen. VIII. 1540.†

On the same day, the Prioress and Convent granted to John Staverton, gent., for good counsel, &c., an annuity of four marcs sterling, issuing as before, for the term of his life, payable at Christmas and Midsummer, in equal portions. If in arrear for fourteen days, the said John might enter and distrain. Allowed, with arrears from the Dissolution, by the Court of Augmentations, on the 20th November, 32nd Hen. VIII. 1540.‡

On the 1st August, 30th Henry VIII. 1538, they leased to John Rollesley their manor of Marke, with all and singular its appurtenances, situated in the parishes of Leyton and Walcombestowe, in the county of Essex, together with all its lands, tenements, rents, services, &c. for a term of fourscore years from the next following Michaelmas, at a yearly rent of viij li. payable at Lady Day and Michaelmas in equal portions. Repairs to be done by the aforesaid farmer.§

On the 20th August, 30th Henry VIII. 1538, they leased to Thomas Persey one messuage with shops, cellars, solars, &c. in the parish of S. Martin Owtewiche, for a term of sixty years, at a yearly rent of liij s. iiij d. payable at the four usual terms.||

* Orders and Decrees, x. f. 127.

† Ibid. viii. f. 56 b.

‡ Ibid. viii. f. 89 b.

§ Conventual Leases, No. 21. Ministers' Accounts.

|| Ministers' Accounts.

On the 1st September, 30th Henry VIII. 1538, they leased to Richard Staverton a messuage with appurtenances in the parish of S. Mary Magdalene in the Old Fishmarket, for a term of fourscore years, at a yearly rent of lxxvj s. viij d.*

On the 10th of September, 30th Henry VIII. 1538, they leased to Richard Staverton aforesaid, his executors and assigns, two tenements outside the close for a term of fourscore years from the Michaelmas of the same year, at a rent of xlvj s. viij d. payable at the usual terms.†

On the same day they leased to Richard Staverton aforesaid a tenement in the parish of S. Matthew in ffrydayestrete, for a term of fourscore years, at a yearly rent of lxxvj s. viij d. payable at the four usual terms.‡

On the same day they leased to the aforesaid Richard Staverton, his executors and assigns, two tenements in the parish of S. John in Walbrooke, for a term of fourscore years, at a rent of lxxvj s. viij d. payable at the four terms.§

On the 1st of October, 30th Hen. VIII. 1538, the Prioress and Convent granted to John Melsham, gent., for good counsel, &c., an annuity of twenty shillings, issuing as before, for the term of his life, payable at Lady Day and Michaelmas, in equal portions. If in arrear for five weeks, the aforesaid John might enter and distrain. Allowed by the Court of Augmentations on the 22nd November, 32nd Hen. VIII. 1540.||

On the 4th of October, 30th Henry VIII. 1538, they leased to Antony Bonvixi, his executors and assigns, a tenement with solars, cellars, &c. situated in a certain alley within their close, over the "larder-house" and the "cole-house" of the said Antony, and lately in the tenure of Julian Fraunces, for a term of fourscore years from the feast of Michaelmas in that year, at a yearly rent of x s. payable at the usual terms. Repairs were to be made by the farmer.¶

* Ministers' Accounts.

+ Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

|| Orders and Decrees, viii. f. 81.

¶ Conventual Leases, No. 22. Part. for grants, Antony Bonvyxe, and Ministers' Accounts.

This was the last act of the Prioress and Convent before the event which removed from them the power of entering into any similar engagements for the time to come. In less than two months afterwards the storm had fallen upon them, and all was over. The unhappy Sisters, like hundreds of others in similar establishments, were ruthlessly expelled from their ancient home, to encounter the dangers of a world of which they had hitherto little or no experience. The original deed of Surrender still exists in the Record Office. There are no signatures to this document, which was forced on the sufferers against their will, already prepared before it was submitted to their acceptance, and slightly concealing, under a flimsy disguise of law, an act of the basest and most shameless despotism. The common seal of the Priory was appended; but only a fragment of it now remains. The document bears date the 25th of November, 30th Hen. VIII., 1538—not 1539, as the editors of *Dugdale* have stated in error.

The names of the last Prioress and Sisters, so far as I can recover them, were Mary Rollesley, Prioress, and Margaret Sampson, Elizabeth Graye, Katherine Glassappe, Joan Pamplyn, Elionor Hanham, and Ann Alleyne, Sisters. The latter were surviving in 1556. It is probable that half were by that time dead. But we have no certain account of the number who witnessed the destruction of their House, or of the dreadful interval. Those were days of silent and secret *martyrdom*, inflicted on victims least able to endure the terrible ordeal.

It is not unlikely that the last named Sister was daughter of the John Aleyn and Agnes his wife to whom the Prioress and Convent, on the 19th of July, 12th Henry VIII., 1520, leased a tenement in the parish of S. Olave by London Bridge, called the "Sonne," alias the "Salutacyon," and a messuage adjacent to the same, for the term of the life of the survivor, at a yearly rent of six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence.* Was she related also to the famous Bishopsgate benefactor, the munificent Edward Alleyne, born in the parish of S. Botolph, on the 1st of September, 1566, and founder of Dulwich College in 1619?

* Ministers' Accounts.

Roger Hall, already mentioned, was janitor of the west-gate of the close, and with Alice his wife was at the Dissolution of the Priory in possession of a house worth 10 s. a year.*

At the time of the Suppression the Prioress received a gratuity of xxx li. and the grant of an annual pension of x li; † and four annuities, or "perpetual pensions," in behalf of the dissolved House, amounting yearly to the sum of cxij s. ij d. ob. were paid by the Government to "the Deane and Chapter of Pawles" in the 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, and 38th years of Hen. VIII. ‡

In the year 1556 the annuities and pensions paid to the former officers and inmates of the Priory were as follow :

S. HELEN'S LATE PRIORY.

Annuities.

Edward Rowlesley . . .	xl s.	
John Rowlesley . . .	liij s.	iiij d.
Richard Berde . . .	xl s.	
John Melsham . . .	xx s.	

Pensions.

Margaret Sampson. . .	liij s.	iiij d.
Elizabeth Graye . . .	liij s.	iiij d.
Katherine Glassappe . . .	liij s.	iiij d.
Joan Pamplyn . . .	lxvj s.	viiij d.
Elionor Hanham . . .	liij s.	iiij d.
Ann Aleyne . . .	liij s.	iiij d. §

This is the last mention which I find of the Sisters in any of the records of the period.

We have already seen that there were two Chantries in the church of S. Helen's, the priests of which received annual stipends from the Priory. These incumbents at the time of the "Valor," in 1536, were

David Netley, B. V. M. . . .	viiij li.
Thomas Criche, Holy Ghost . . .	vij li.

* Ministers' Accounts.

† Misc. Books, Off. Aug. vol. 245, n. 228.

‡ Misc. Books, Off. Aug. vols. 248, 249, 250, 256, 262.

§ Cardinal Pole's Pension Book, f. iii.

In the Ministers' Accounts, 31-32 Hen. VIII. we find

Nicholas de la Mer, B. V. M. founded for the soul of Adam Fraunces . . .	vij li.
Thomas Ryson, Holy Ghost, founded for the soul of Adam Fraunces, . . .	vij li.
Thomas Wynestaneley, Nuns' chaplain	vj li. xiiij s. iiij d.

In the Certificate of Chantries and Fraternities, 2nd Edward VI. the names of the last incumbents are thus given, with their previous stipends and post-Dissolution pensions:

S. Ellens.

Thomas Wynston, vj li. xiiij s. iiij d.	pension c s.
Thomas Robson vij li.	„ c s.

In the Particulars for the Sale of the Chantry Lands we learn that certain property in S. Helen's of this nature was sold on the 24th December, 3 Edward VI. 1549, and on the 26th January, 3 Edward VI. 1549-50, to John Roulande, page of the King's wardrobe, and was "past in the names of John Dodington and William Warde, as parcel of the sum of Mccclxxv li. iiij s. viij d."*

Lastly, from Cardinal Pole's Pension Book we learn that the priests before mentioned were still living in 1556.

CHANTRIES IN THE CHURCH OF S. HELEN'S.

Pensions.

Thomas Robson, lately incumbent there . . .	c s.
Thomas Wynstanley, lately incumbent there . . .	c s.†

Of the scene of these transactions, much less than could be desired is now to be known. Not a stone remains to tell of the House and its glories. A view of the place as it existed at the close of the last century, which is happily furnished by Wilkinson in his *Londina*, represents the ruins of edifices whose main portions and features are of the Early English period, and which were probably coeval with the foundation of the Priory. These he calls the "Remains of the Fraternity." He had the advan-

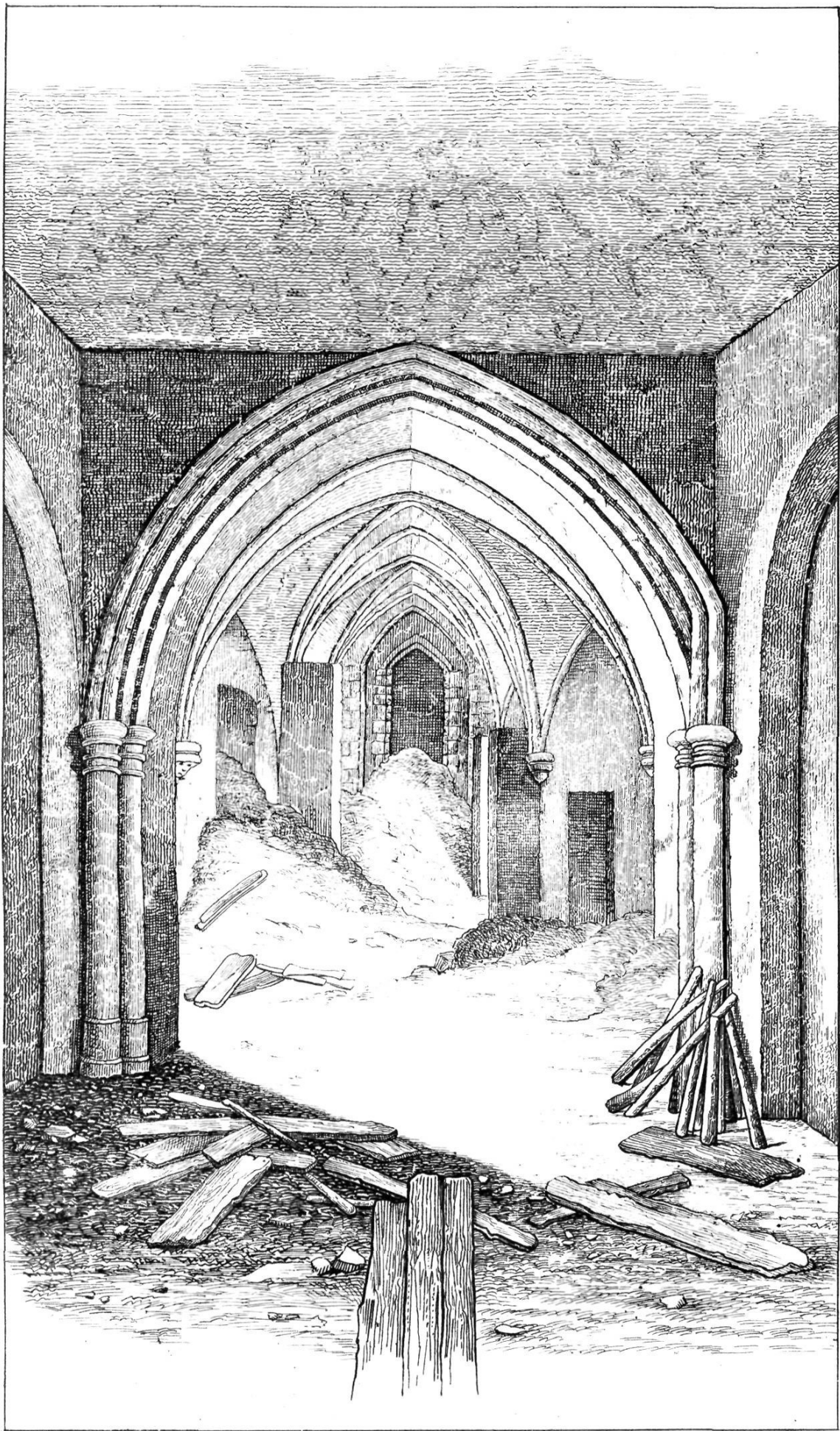
* Parts. for Sale of Chantries, vol. i. p. 270 b.

† Cardinal Pole's Pension Book, f. iiiij.



PART OF THE PRIORY OF S. HELEN, BISHOPSGATE, DESTROYED IN 1799.

[From an original drawing in the possession of J. E. Gardner, Esq.]



R. Canton

London

PART OF THE PRIORY OF S. HELEN, BISHOPSGATE
Destroyed in 1799.

From an Original Drawing in the British Museum

tage of a personal examination of these beautiful memorials. "The door," he says, "leading from the cloister to the fraternity, which the writer of this well remembers to have seen at the late demolition of it, was particularly elegant, the mouldings of the upper part being filled with roses of stone painted scarlet and gilt; the windows of the fraternity itself also, which were nearly lancet-shaped, were extremely beautiful." He also gives two views of the beautiful "crypt," and one of the hall above it; the former of which is in the Early-English style, while the latter has ornamental additions of post-Dissolution times. It appears by his plan that there were at least two "crypts," one under the hall, and another to the south, under what would be called the withdrawing room. It is the former which is represented in his engravings. Of the latter I am glad that the kindness of a friend* has enabled me to present the reader with an original and most interesting delineation (*see the engraving*). The part represented—the eastern end of the southern "crypt"—may easily be identified by an inspection of Wilkinson's plan. This was evidently of the same style as that which adjoined it, the beautiful Early-English. My second illustration, which is of no less interest and value, is taken from an original drawing in the British Museum (*see the engraving*), which I am permitted to copy by favour of the Trustees.

Of contemporary descriptions, that contained in the "Valor" simply makes mention of the "scite of the Priory, with the court-yards and little gardens, with divers houses situated within the precinct." And the Ministers' Accounts are similarly meagre. A few particulars, already given from several of the leases, necessarily refer to the adjoining premises rather than to the Priory itself. Stowe, Howel, and others furnish us with nothing to supply the deficiency. Truly valuable, therefore, and by far the most interesting description of the House with which I am acquainted, is the following Survey of the King's Officers, pre-

* I have much pleasure in offering my thanks for this favour to John E. Gardner, Esq. whose collection of original drawings and engravings of London localities is only equalled by his kindness and courtesy in placing his stores at the disposal of his friends.

liminary to the disposal of the property. It is a picture of the place as the Nuns left it, and before the changes which soon afterwards ensued:

“The late Priorye of Saint Elenes within the Citye of London. The View and Surveye ther taken the xxith daye of June, in the xxxiiij Yeare of the raigne of our Sovereigne Lord Kinge Henrye the viijth, by Thomas Mildmay, one of the King’s Auditors thereunto assigned. That is to saye,

“The Parisshe of Saint Elenes, within the Citie of London. The Scite of the late Priory their.

“Fyrste, the cheaf entre or cominge in to the same late Priory ys in and by the street gate lyying in the pische of S^t Elenes, in Bysshopsgate Streat, which leadeth to a little cowrte next adioyning to the same gate, havinge chambers, howses, and buyldinges, environinge the same, out of w^{ch} cowrte there is an entre leadinge to an inner cowrte, w^{ch} on the North side is also likewise environed wth edificyons and buyldings, called the Stewardes lodging, with a Countinge house apperteninge to the same. Item, next to the same cowrte ther ys a faire Kechinge, withe a pastery house, larder houses, and other howses of office, apperteninge to the same; and at the Est ende of the same Kechyn and entre leadinge to the same hall, wth a litle plor adioyning, having under the same hall and plor sondrie howses of office, next adioyning to the Cloyster ther, and one howse called the Covent plor. Item, iij fair Chambers adioyninge to the hall, whearof the one over the entree leadinge to the cloyster, thother over the Buttree, and the third over the larder. Item, from the said entre by the hall, to the Cloyster, w^{ch} cloyster yet remaneth holly leaded, and at the North side of the same cloyster a fare long howse called the Fratree. Item, at thest end of the same Cloyster, a lodginge called the Suppryors lodging, wth a litle gardin lieng to the same. And by the same lodginge a pare of staires leading to the Dortor, at the Southend whearof ther is a litle hows, wherein the Evidence of the said hows nowe dou remayne, wth all howses and lodginges vnder the same Dorter. Item, at the Westende of the same cloyster, a dore leadinge in to the nuñes late Quire, extending from the dore out of the

churche yarde unto the lampe or pticyon deviding the priorye from the pisshe, w^{ch} is holly leaded. Item, at thest ende of the said cloyster, an entre leading to a little Garden, and out of the same littell garden to a faire garden called the Covent Garden, cōteninge by estimaċn half an acre. And, at the Northend of the said garden, a dore leading to another garden called the Kechin garden; and at the Westende of the same ther is a Dovehowsshe; and in the same garden a dore to a faire Woodyerd, wth howses, ptiċons, and gardens, wthin the same Woodyerd a tenement, wth a garden, a stable, and other thapptances to the same belonginge, called Elizabeth Hawtes lodginge. All which pmisses ben rated, extentyd, and valued, The Kings highnesse to be discharged of the repaċons, of the yerely value of

vj li. xiiij s. iiij d.

“ Item, one Tenement their in, in the hold of Wiffm. Baker, by the yeare, xx s.

“ Item, one other Tenement, in the hold of Jane Julian, by the yeare, xiiij s. iiij d.

“ Item, one other Tenement ther, in the hold of Edmūde Brewer, by the yeare, xiiij s. iij d.

“ Item, one other Tenement ther, in the hold of Gye Sturdye, by the yeare, xiiij s. iiij d.

“ Item, one other Tenement ther, in the hold of Lanclott Harryson, by the yeare, xiiij s. iiij d.

viiij li. xiiij s. iiij d.

Sm^a x li. vj s. viij. d.

Ex^m p me THOMAS MILDMAIE, Auditor’.*

It will be interesting to compare this description with the bird's-eye view of the place in Aggas's Map of London, 1560. The resemblance, although not striking, is nevertheless perceptible. (*See the engraving on the next page.*)

The House was evidently a large and goodly collection of edifices. You entered from Bishopsgate Street by a gateway into a court surrounded by the more humble buildings of the Community, and from thence into an inner court which con-

* Archæol. xvi. 29. Malcolm, Lond. Red. iii. 550, 551.

tained some of the more important offices, the steward's lodging and counting-house, the kitchen, pastry-house, larder, and other apartments, the entrance to the hall and an adjoining parlour, with offices below them, as well as that to the cloister and the Convent parlour. The entrance to the cloister, the buttery, and



larder had each an elegant chamber above them adjoining the hall. Next came the Cloister, on the north of which was a long and goodly building, called the Fraternity, and on the east the lodging of the Sub-prioress with its garden. Adjoining this a flight of stairs led to the dormitory, south of which was a small house, in which were deposited the various leases and other legal documents connected with the conventual property. West of the cloister a door led to the Nuns' church. An entry on the east side, by the Sub-prioress's lodging and the dormitory, introduced you to a little garden, and thence to the fair pleasure-garden of the House. At the north end of this a door led to the kitchen garden, with a dove-house at its western end; and a further door communicated with a capacious wood yard, which embraced various inclosures, tenements, gardens, a stable, and other appurtenances. Such was the home of the Nuns of S. Helen's.

The north aisle of the Church of S. Helen's was "the Nunnes Quire," and was divided, by a screen from pier to pier of the arcade, from the part appropriated to the parish. One of the fastenings, or a piece of iron popularly considered so to be, is still to be seen occupying its original position on the east side of one of the piers. In the wall of this aisle is a curious hagioscope, which at first sight looks like an altar-tomb. Its base is ornamented with panels, and through these, which although now filled up behind were pierced with oblique openings, an altar at the east end of the same aisle might have been seen from the so-called "crypt," which, I believe, was used by the Nuns as a cloister. There is a view of it in Malcolm, and one of a somewhat similar design, at Chipping Norton, is figured in the Glossary of Architecture, plate 194. In the same wall a doorway remains, bricked up and indeed half buried, by which the Sisters obtained access from the Cloister to the Church. The level of the sill is about three feet below the present pavement.

I have, lastly, to furnish the reader with some account of the dispersion of the spoil, so far as regards the site of the house, and of the various adjoining tenements in and about the close.

On the 21st of April, 30th Henry VIII. 1539, the King granted to Balthazar Gwercy, of the city of London, surgeon, and Joan his wife, certain tenements, gardens, &c. in the parishes of S. Mary at Nax and S. Andrew Undershafte in consideration of £71 10s. the property to be held of the King in chief by the service of a twentieth part of one knight's fee, and a yearly rent of xxvj s. viij d. payable at Michaelmas.*

On the 3rd of October, 31st Henry VIII. 1539, the King granted to Guy Crafford, Esq. and Joan his wife, in consideration of the sum of £54, a messuage or tenement, with cellars, solars, stables, gardens, &c. situated in the parish of S. Helen's, and within the close of the late Priory, formerly in the tenure of Thomas Benolt, then in that of Sir Arthur Darcy, knt. and lastly in that of the aforesaid Guy. Also another messuage adjoining the same on the west, and lately in the tenure of

* Ministers' Accounts. Pat. 30 Hen. VIII. p. 8, mm. 8 (20), 7 (21).

George Taylour, gent. Both were among the possessions of the late Priory, and were to be held from Lady Day last past by the service of a twentieth part of one knight's fee, and a yearly rent of six shillings and eight pence by name of tithe payable at Michaelmas. The grant was made without fine great or small, and was dated, witness the King at Westminster, on the day aforesaid.*

On the 3rd of March, 31st Henry VIII., 1539-40, the King granted to William Crane, Esq. and Margaret his wife, and their heirs, ten tenements, within the close and circuit of the late Priory of S. Helen's, then in the tenure of John Parker, Guy Crayford, Hugh Vaughan, Edward Brysseley, Margaret Dalton, John Barnard, Richard Herman, John Harrope, and Adrian Byscombe; three chambers, in the tenure of William Damarall and Emma Lawe, within the close; and six chambers in the tenure of Richard Atkyns, Alice Paule, Reginald Deane, Elizabeth Watson, and the aforesaid William, situated in a certain alley within the close; a tenement in the tenure of John Parker within the close, in the parish of S. Andrew Undershaft; and another tenement in the tenure of the said William within the close, all belonging to the said late Priory, and leased to John Rollesley. The property was to be held by the service of a twentieth part of one knight's fee, and a yearly rent of thirty-four shillings and eightpence. The grant is dated at Westminster, on the day above mentioned.†

Then came the grant of the site of the House itself.

On the 29th of March, 33rd Hen. VIII., 1542, the King granted to Sir Richard Williams, knt., alias Crumwell, in exchange for the manors of Brampton and Hemyngford Grey, in the county of Huntingdon, and for the sum of £731 0s. 7½d. sterling, various lands in the counties of Glamorgan, Herts, Huntingdon, Bedford, Norfolk, &c. Also the whole of the site, sept, circuit, and precinct of the late Priory of S. Helen's, the church vulgarly called "the Nonnes Church of Seynt

* Pat. 31 Hen. VIII. p. 4, m. (35) 20. Orig. 31st Hen. VIII. p. 1, r. lv.

† Pat. 31 Hen. VIII. p. 7, m. 1 (32). Orig. 31st Hen. VIII. p. 2, r. ccv.

Helyns," and all and singular messuages, houses, buildings, &c., &c., belonging to the said site. Also certain messuages in the tenure or occupation of William Baker, Jane Julyan, Edmund Brewer, Guy Sturdye, and Lancelot Harrison, or their assigns. Added to this horrible amount of sacrilege, other lands in the counties of Devon, Herts, Huntingdon, and others, lately belonging to the dissolved monasteries of Ramsey, Nethe, S. Alban's, Huntingdon, Forde, Yermouth, &c. The property was to be held in chief, by the service of a tenth part of one knight's fee and the payment of various yearly rents for the different portions, that for the S. Helen's property amounting to thirty-nine shillings and ninepence farthing sterling, for all services and demands. The grant bears date, witness the King, at Westminster, on the day above mentioned.*

On the 9th September, 34th Henry VIII. 1542, the King granted to Antony Bonvixi, merchant, in return for the sum of £207 18s. 4d. together with certain property in Essex, the reversion of Crosbyes Place, and all solars, cellars, gardens, lanes, messuages, tenements, void pieces of ground, and all other appurtenances thereunto belonging. It had been already leased to him, as we have seen, by indenture dated 28th March, 29th Hen. VIII. 1538. Also various curtilages in the parish of S. Mary at Naxe, leased to the same on the 4th October, 30th Hen. VIII., 1538. Crosbyes Place with appurtenances was valued at the clear yearly sum of £11 16s. 8d. and the property in the adjoining parish at that of 12s. The former was to be held in chief, by the service of a fortieth part of one knight's fee and the payment of a yearly rent of twenty-three shillings and eight pence of lawful money of England payable at Michaelmas by name of tithe. The latter also in chief, by the service of a hundredth part of one knight's fee, and a similar rent of 15d. payable at Michaelmas. The grant was dated, witness the King, at Westminster, the 9th December, 1542.†

* Pat. 33 Hen. VIII. p. 6, mm. 37 (16)—34 (19). Orig. 33rd Hen. VIII. p. 3, r. xxi.

† Pat. 34 Hen. VIII. p. 1, mm. 14 (13)—12 (15). Orig. 34th Hen. VIII. p. 1, r. xvi.

On the 16th July, 35th Hen., VIII. 1543, the King granted to Roland Goodman, citizen of London, for £146 0s. 6d., the property formerly leased to him, a tenement called "le Shedd," lately in the tenure of John Newton, with a garden and three closes of land, in the parish of S. Botolph without Bishopsgate, and belonging to the Priory. Property belonging to other houses accompanied the aforesaid. That of S. Helen's was to be held in chief by the service of a hundredth part of one knight's fee and a yearly rent of five shillings and four pence. The grant was dated, witness the King, at Terling, on the day before named.* The original instrument is still preserved among the Harleian Charters, a large sheet of parchment, with a pen and ink miniature of the royal dealer in the upper left-hand corner, and a tolerable impression of the Great Seal appendant at the foot.†

On the 24th September, 36th Henry VIII. 1544, the King granted to Roger Higham and William Grene, among other possessions of various London houses, divers tenements in the parish of S. Helen's lately in the tenure of William Shirborne, Robert Owtred, William Plumpton, Richard Kyrton, William Hunte "wever," John Dymmoke, and Richard Staverton, with other tenements in the parish of S. Ethelburga and elsewhere, belonging to the late Priory. The annual value of these amounted to the sum of £19 12s. 8d. and they were to be held in free burgage for all services and demands. The grant was dated, witness Katherine, Queen of England, and General Ruler of the same, at Westminster on the day named above.‡

The more distant portions of the possessions were granted to Henry Lord Audley, William Gurle, Sir Martin Bowes, Christopher Campion, John Rollesley, Richard Tate, John Pope, Robert Curson, John Gates, William Bodye, John Small, Thomas Goodwyn, Dominic Lomelyn, Robert Harrys, Richard Taverner, and others. To pursue the history of these does not enter into

* Pat. 35 Hen. VIII. p. 9, mm. 14 (26), 13 (27). Orig. 35 Hen. VIII. p. 4, r. iiij^{xx}xv.

† Harl. Cart. 51 H. 21.

‡ Part. for Grants, William Grene. Pat. 36 Hen. VIII. p. 14, mm. 37(3)—34(6). Orig. 36 Hen. VIII. p. 5, r. 1.

the scope of my subject, which ends with the dissolution of the House that owned them.

I have already informed the reader that no part of the ancient structure is now visible. It is said that masses of masonry yet exist below some of the neighbouring houses, and the memory of the Priory still lingers not only in the adjoining Church, but in the courts and offices which stand upon its site. Very sad it is to know that some of the most beautiful portions of the House were reserved for modern Vandalism needlessly and stupidly to destroy. "What remains to be said of the ancient crypt?" asks Malcolm. "That it would not have required repair for 500 years to come. Had the enormous masses of fungous webs which depended from the arches of this beautiful work been carefully swept away, and the walls rubbed with a dry broom, the ancient windows reopened, the earth that clogged the pavement removed, and its other defilements cleared off, these crypts, now scattered in piles of rubbish, would have formed a church—how infinitely superior to forty I could name! The regret with which I saw those slender pillars torn from their bases, and the strong, though delicate, arches sundered in masses, is still warm to my remembrance."*

To whom the disgrace of this barbarian act is to be attributed, the reader has no need to be informed. On the site, however, of one of the most interesting of the monastic remains of London, now stands one of the demurest of alleys in S. Helen's Place, and incomparably the ugliest of civic edifices in Leathersellers' Hall.

THOMAS HUGO.

APPENDIX.

THE Constitutions of the Dean and Chapter of S. Paul's for the Nuns of S. Helen's are so interesting in themselves, and so valuable an addition to this class of documents, that my reader will probably be glad to possess a more exact transcript of them

* Malcolm, Lond. Rediv. iii. 562, 563.

than that which is furnished by any of the copies already printed. So far as the press can represent its peculiarities, the original runs as follows:

“Reynold Kentwode Dean and Chapeter’ of the church of Poules to the Religious Women Prioress and Couent of the Priory of Seynt Eleyens of owre Patronage and Jurysdiccyon in immediat and euery Nunne of the sayde Pryory gretying in god with desyre of Relygious obfuaunce and deuocyon ffor as moche as in owre Visitacyon ordinarye in 3owr’ Priorye boothe in the hedde and in the membris late actualy excersyd we have founden many defautes and excesses the wiche nedyth notory correccyon and reformacyon We wylling vertu to be cherysshed and holy Relygion for to be kepte as in the rulee of 3owre ordyrr We ordeyn and make certeyn ordenauns and Jniuncyons weche we sende 3ow Jwrete and seelyd vndir owr’ comonne seele for to be kepte in forme as thei ben articled and wretyn vn to 3ow

ffirste we ordeyne and Jnioyne 3ow that devyne fuyce be don by 3ow duly nyth and day and silence duly kepte in due Tyme and Place aftir’ the obfuaunce of 3owr’ religion

Also we ordeyne an Jnioyne 3ow Prioress and Couente and eche of 3ow synglerly that 3e make due and hole confession to the coffessor assigned be vs

Also we Jnioyne 3ow Pryoresse and Couent that 3e ordeyne conuenient place of firmarye in the wiche 3owre seeke sustres may be honestly kepte and relevyd with the costes and expenses of 3owre house acustomed in the relygion duryng the tyme of heere sekenesse

Also we Jnioyne 3ow Prioress that 3e kepe 3owr’ Dortor and ly ther’ Jnne by nyth aftyr obfuaunce of 3owre religion with owt that the case be suche that pe lawe and the obfuaunce of 3owre religion suffreth 3ow to do the contrarye

Also we ordeyne and Jnionne 3ow Prioress and Couent that noo secular’ be lokkyd with Jnne the boundes of the cloyster’ ne noo secular’ psones come with Jnne aftyr the belle of complyn except wymment seruauntes and mayde childeryn lerners Also admitte noone soio’nauntes wymment with owte lycense of vs

Also we ordeyne and Jnioyne 3ow Prioress and Couent that 3e ne noone of 3owre sustres vse nor haunte any place with Jnne the Priory thorowgh the wich euel suspeccyōn or sclauder' myth aryse wech places for certeyn causes that move vs we wryte not here Jnne in owr' p̄sent Jniūccyoñ but wole notyfie to 3ow Prioress nor have no lokyng nor spectacles owte warde thorgh̄t þe wiche 3e myth falle in wordly dilectacyōn

Also We ordeyne and Jnioyne 3ow Prioress and Couent that somme sadde woman and discrete of the seyde Religioñ honest wele named be assigned to the shittying of the Cloysters dorys and keypyng of the keyeys that non psone have entre ne issu in to the place aftyr complyñ belle nethir in noo other tyme be the wiche the place may be disclaunderid in tyme comyng

Also We ordeyn and Jnioyne 3ow Prioress and Couent that noo seculer' wymmeñ slepe be nyth with Jnne the Dorto' with oute speciatt graunte had in the Chapet^h house among 3ow alle

Also We ordeyne and Jnioyne 3ow that noone of 3ow speke ne comon with no seculer' psone ne sende ne reseve lettes myssyves or 3eftes of any seculer' psone with oute lycence of the Prioress and that there be an other' of 3owr' sustres p̄sent assigned be the Prioress to here and recorde the honeste of bothe ptyes in suche cōmynicacion And suche letters or 3eftes sent or resevyd may turne in to honeste and wurchepe and none in to velanye ne disclaunderid of 3owre honeste and religioñ

Also We ordeyne and Jnion 3ow Prioress and Couent that non of 3owre susters be admitted to noon office butt they that be of gode name 7 fame

Also we ordeyne and Jnioyne 3ow that 3e ordeyne and chese on of 3owre susters honest abille and Cunnyng of discrecyōn the which can may and schaff have þe charge of techyng and informacyōn of 3owre susters that ben vnkunnyng for to teche hem here fūice and the rule of here religioñ

Also for as moche that diuce fees ppetuell corrodies and lyuers have be grauntyd be for this tyme to diuerce officers of 3owre house and other' psones wech have hurt the house and be cause of delapidacyōn of the godys of 3owre seyde house we

ordeyne and Jnioyne 3ow that 3e reseyyve noon officer' to noo ppetueff ffee of office ne graunte noo annuete corody ne lyuery with out speciaff assent of vs

Also we Jnioyne 3ow that aff daunsyng and reuelyng be vtterely for borne among 3ow except Cristmasse and other honest tymys of recreacyon among 3owre selfe vsid in absence of seculers in aff wyse

Also we Jnioyne 3ow P^oressse that þere may be a doore at þe Nonnes quere that noo straungers may loke on them nor they on þe straungers wanne þei beñ at diuynes service Also we ordene and Jnion 3ow Prioressse þt þere be made a hack of conabyff heyth crestyd wt pykys of herne to fore þe entre of 3owr' kechyñ þt noo straunge pepiff may entr' wt certeyne Clekette avysid be 3ow and be 3owr' Stward to suche psonys as 3ow and hym thynk onest and conabyff

Also we Jnioyne 3ow Prioressse that non Nonnes have noo keyes of þe posterne doore that goth owte of the cloyster' in to the church3erd but the Prioressse for þere is moche comyng in and owte vn lefuff tymys

Also we ordeyne and Jnioyne that no Nonne have ne receyve noo Schuldryñ wyth hem in to the howse forseyyde but 3yf that þe pfite of þe comonys turne to þe vayle of þe same howse

Thes ordenauns and Jniuncyons and iche of them as thei be rehersed aboue We sende vnto 3ow Prioressse and Couent chardyng and cōmaundyng 3ow and iche of 3ow alle to kepe hem truly and holy in vertu of obedience and vp on peyn of contempte And that 3e doo them be redde and declared iiij^{or} tymes of the 3eere in 3owre Chapet^l [house] be fore 3ow that thei may be hadde in mynde and kepte vndir peyne of excōicacyon and other lawfuff peynes to be 3ove in to the psone of 3ow Prioressse and in to singuler psones of the couent whech we purpose to vse azens 3ow in case þt 3e dissobeye vs Reseruyng to vs and owre successo'res powr' thes forsayde ordinnaunces and Jniūccyoñs to chaunge declare adde and diminue and with hem despense as ofte as þe case requirith and it is nedfuff Jn to which witte- nesse we sette owre comon seele 3ovyñ in owre Chapit^l house the xxj day of the Monyth of June the 3ere of owre lord Millimo

cccc^{mo}xxxix^{no} Et Anno r̄r' henrici sexti post conq̄m decimo septimo *"

A fragment of the seal is appendant, of dark brown wax.

The document is of parchment, measuring 20½ inc. by 15 inc. and is endorsed "Seint Pout," "sub altare x^o," "Jniunccōes S̄e Helene," and, in a much later hand, "Ordinances for regulation of the Nunnes of S^t Helens, neere Bishopsgate, in London."

Fastened to the upper left-hand corner is a small piece of the same material, on which is written, in a hand of the thirteenth century, a petition of the Prioress and Convent to the Dean, Archdeacon, and others, in defence of some contested property belonging to the Priory. The Prioress "D" was, I believe, the first of those dignitaries; and the dean and archdeacon were respectively Alardus de Burnham, dean of S. Paul's, 1204—1216; and Walter Fitzwalter, Archdeacon of London. The left edge is injured, but the following will be found a not inaccurate copy of a document, which, though hitherto unpublished, is of special interest and importance to an historian of the earlier years of the House:

"Viris Ven^oablibz. ⁊ dñis. A. dec'. W. Archid'. Lundoñ. ⁊ Ceñis coarbiñs D. Humit. P^oorissa. ⁊ Conuent^o Eccie S̄e Helene Sal̄ ⁊ obedienc̄. Ditci noñ in dño W. fundatoris n̄ri laboribz ⁊ angustiis quas p̄ q̄t^ouersia coram voñ mota. M. fila syñ. sup̄ t̄ra. W. Wrhot dem irrogauit injuste. debita compassione deferentes tam ap̄llōi. q̄ā phibicōi. p̄ iure ⁊ pos[sessio]ne n̄ra a. noñ in t̄pōitis renūciam^o. volentes. ⁊ concedñtes. vt jux^a formā q̄pmissi. in t̄ ptes p̄cedet arbiñū. Malum^o. q^d si oportūit carere fundo. q̄ā amico. spantes. nichomin^o. de justicia [v̄r]a q' indempnitati Eccie n̄re q^antū scđm̄ dñi poñitis. eritis puisuri. Vatt."

T. H.

* Rot. Cott. v. 6.