

Note on this edition: this edition simplifies the punctuation for the benefit of the modern reader and expands all abbreviations. Originally published in Records of the English Benedictine Nuns at Cambrai 1620-1793, contributed by the Right Reverend Lady Cecilia Heywood, Abbess of Stanbrook, edited with historical notes by Joseph Gillow, Catholic Record Society, Misc. VIII, Vol. 13, 1913. Page numbers correspond to this volume.

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A Brief Narrative of the Seizure of the Benedictine Dames of Cambrai, of their Sufferings while in the hands of the French Republicans, and of their arrival in England. By one of the religious, who was an eyewitness to the events She relates.

[Signed] ANN TERESA PARTINGTON.

In the Summer of the Year 1793, the allied armies being near the gates of Cambrai, the Religious were repeatedly ordered in the most threatening manner by the District of Cambrai to lay in provisions for Six months against the Siege that was then expected to take place. They accordingly provided themselves with such a Stock of Necessaries as their finances would allow them to purchase. From the commencement of the unhappy troubles, they had been constantly alarmed, by the visits, or decrees of the Agents in the Revolution who were no where more outrageous than at Cambrai. But the Nuns not being conscious of having given any offence were willing to flatter themselves that they were in some safety. However on Sunday October 13th 1793 the District of Cambrai sent four of their Creatures to fix the public Seal on the papers and effects belonging to the Nuns. These Commissioners arrived at the Convent about half past eight at night. The Religious were retired to their Cells having to rise at Midnight to perform their Matins Office so that it was some minutes before Lady Abbess Lucy Blyde could open the Inclosure Door; at which they seemed displeased. The Very Reverend Mr. Walker, who out of a motive of charity assisted the Nuns as their Spiritual Director; was only just recovering from a very dangerous illness and was in bed, but on hearing what was going forward got up and came into the Convent.

All the Nuns being assembled, one of the men who seemed the most cruel of the Company read a very long paper the purport of which was that all the Effects belonging to the Nuns were confiscated to the Nation. Mr. Walker began to expostulate with them, but their brutality soon silenced him. They then proceeded to fix the seals on all the Books, papers, &c., belonging to the Lady Abbess and Dame Procuratrix Dame A. T. Partington, threatening them all the while how severely they should be punished in case they concealed the smallest article of their property. Having secured everything, they told the Nuns that they were now prisoners, and then they wrote a long account of their proceeding, at the close of which they added by the desire of the Community that the religious wished to remain prisoners in their Convent under a Guard rather than be removed to any other place of confinement. This paper the Lady Abbess and Procuratrix signed. They went out of the Monastery about Eleven o'clock to put the public Seals on everything in the outward buildings

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and apartments one of which was appointed for the use of the Confessor, this they did with the utmost Severity. They then arrested the Reverend Messrs Walker and Higginson, the last mentioned was a young religious man who in consideration of the age and declining health of the former had been some months before appointed to assist him. To prevent them from having any Conversation with the Nuns they took them away instantly. It was near Twelve when the

Guards conducted them to prison. Mr. Walker was quite broken with age and infirmity. The Nuns had the affliction of seeing all that passed from their adjoining Convent. They thought they were dragging them to prison for immediate execution, but Providence kindly reserved them to be their Support in another place of Suffering. What the religious felt on the occasion may be better imagined than expressed.

That Night they confined them in the Town house. Next morning they were removed to the Bishop's Seminary which formerly belonged to the Jesuits but was then turned into what they called a *Maison de Detention*. There they remained till the 20th of November 1793, deprived of the most common Necessaries. They were once, a day and a half, without any other food than one bit of Bread. They began to suspect that their death was to be effected by their being left to Starve. No one durst serve them with Victuals. They wrote to many Inn keepers and assured them of immediate payment for the scanty Sstinence they asked for, but so hateful was the name of a Priest in Cambray, and the people so terrified at what they saw going on, that no answer was ever returned. They could not prevail even with a Barber to venture to attend them. At length a good woman Marie Demal who had lived Servant with the Nuns, hearing of their distress, had the courage to visit them instantly and in spite of every danger and difficulty provided Victuals for them the best she could get. She continued her charitable assistance till they were removed to Compiègne. Mr. Walker frequently said afterwards that she had saved his life.

But to return to the Nuns. From the moment the Commissioners from the District entered their house on Sunday Night, they found themselves Strictly Guarded, but they were still made to hope that they might remain in their Convent as they had desired, even some of the members of the District assured them in the most *Solemn Manner* that there was no danger of their being (?) from it. That this was all treachery the Nuns were afterwards well assured – for the day after this *Solemn promise* had been made them, Friday the 18th of October 1793, they were seized upon by a body of light horse Guards, part of whom surrounded the Street Door whilst the rest entered into their Convent with a crowd of blackguards at their heels. A very brutal Man sent by the District of Cambray was at their Head. When he came up to the Inclosure Door his first question was, *have you laid in a provision for Six months*. On being assured that that had been done, he seemed for an instant at a loss what to say, but after a short pause he gave orders that the Nuns should be totally out of their house in half a quarter of an hour and that they should take neither Trunk nor Box with them. He only allowed each one of them a small bundle. His figure and manner of speaking appeared so savage

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and insulting that the Nuns were in the Greatest Terror, so that amidst the hurry and Confusion of so sudden a Calamity overwhelmed with sorrow at being thus turned out of their beloved abode, and for want of sufficient time to make up their bundles, many of the Nuns went away with only the Clothes they had on. At this afflicting moment, the future want of every necessary found no place in their Minds – they were Stupified with grief. The Procuratrix, however, petitioned to carry off a small Book where was written a few memorandums very useful to her, but the Ill natured Man to whom she addressed herself wrested the Book from her hands telling her at the same time to fetch Brandy for the Hussars, which she instantly was obliged to do, while the barbarous man was running about the house with a club in his hand ready to make anyone feel the weight of it who did not make haste to be gone. Thus in less than half an hour they were completely turned out of their whole property without being able to learn from anyone what was to be their fate. They thought Death would soon have followed and expected every moment to see the fatal Gullotine.

In the Street they found one coach and two carts, each of them Strongly Guarded by a detachment of Hussars on horseback with Naked Swords. The Nuns were soon hurried away – the Hussars seemed much displeased at this barbarous usage. Some of them Shed Tears, and on the way with the most feeling compassion, They even lent their Cloaks to those of the religious who were in the uncovered Carts to keep them from Starving. Through the whole dismal journey of five days, they did all they could to soften the hardships they saw the Nuns exposed to on all Sides, but it was not in their power to hinder the populace from loading the religious with insulting language wherever they past. Besides when the Nuns arrived in any Town to pass the Night they were guarded by the Soldiers who did duty at the prison in which they happened to be lodged; among them they met with a variety of insults, insomuch that they always dreaded the approach of Night. The Nuns were Twenty in number and a Novice upon probation when they were expelled from their Convent (Viz)

Mary Anselm Ann.	Margaret Burgess.	Teresa Walmesley.
Jane Alexander.	Elizabeth Haggerston.	Louisa Hagan.
Elizabeth Sheldon.	Mary Blyde. Abbess.	Elizabeth Knight
Elizabeth Partington.	Mary Barnwall.	Ann Shepherd.
Mary Partington.	Agnes Robinson.	Helen Shepherd.
	Lay Sisters.	
Ann Pennington.	Magd Kimberley.	Martha Friar.
Louisa Lefebevre.	Ann Cayton.	Jane Miller. Novice.

The Hussars who Conducted them did not at first know whither the Nuns were to be taken. They were Strangers to the Country; had been sent for from some distance for the grand purpose of carrying Prisoners from Cambray. They received orders every Night how they were to proceed the following day. At last the Nuns found that the appointed place of their Captivity was Compiègne where, being at a distance from every friend, they must have little, or no hope of recovering any part of their large property.

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The first Night, Friday, they were lodged in a very ruinous place at Bapaume; it had the appearance of having been a Convent, it was almost destroyed, the Windows all broken &c: The violence of the rabble was so great here, that the Nuns were very happy to be taken out of the Carts into any place like a house. The Mayor of this Town was a native of Cambray and was well known to the Nuns, one of his sisters having had her education among them, but he now knew nothing of them nor showed them any favour. He was highly displeased at their being in the religious dress, and said the people of Cambray had acted against the Law by not making them Shun a dress which the law had prescribed.

The jailor of this prison seemed a quiet man, and his Daughter was so kind as to buy the Nuns two faggots, some very Brown Bread, and a kettle of boiling water. They made Tea but Sugar and milk were *delicates* not to be thought of, or at least not to be had. They were so exhausted with grief, and the fatigue they had gone through that day, that most of them could not eat the Bread. They laid their wearied bodies on the floor, and they spread a few bundels they had brought with them to Stretch their limbs upon, and even in this State they were frequently disturbed by the Guards looking through the broken Windows.

The next night (Saturday) they past at Peronne in the Citidal. Here they were Guarded by the National Troops, whose brutality can hardly be described. Nothing could be more disagreeable than their language and behaviour. A Woman who appeared to belong to one of them molested the Nuns by every means she could. However, amongst all this cruel treatment they had the comfort to meet with some friends. A Woman whose Father in better times had been employed by the Nuns had the courage to make her way to them in the Prison. She and

her Husband bought for them Bread, small Beer and a few Boiled Eggs, which was really a treat. Some of the Nuns had eat nothing for two days. Here they found a few Bed-stocks full of dirty straw, on which the Soldiers had Slept apparently for some months. The Nuns for a time were much afraid of the consequence they might procure by lying down upon it: at last excessive weariness overcame that difficulty, but there was no rest to be found in this place of horror, the Soldiers were passing to and fro the greater part of the Night, even through the room which had been assigned to the Nuns. Next morning by the favour of an Irish Lady, who was there in Arrestation, the Nuns had one cup of Tea before the Hussars came to summon them to continue their tedious Journey.

On Sunday Night they rested at *Ham*. On their arrival there was, as they expected, a great Stir among the rabble, each one crying out *Aristocrates to the Guillotine*, but this Language was become so familiar to the Nuns, that it had lost much of the effect it had at first. The Prison they were lodged in being at the Skirts of the Town they got out of the Carts with fewer of the Mob attending them than *usual*. Not to be insulted to a *great degree* now seemed a favour. The Governor of this place happened to be in Town, an humane Man. He gave orders that the Nuns should have a room to themselves and

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allowed them clean straw, which was Spread all over the floor. They were happy to lye down upon it, and the Night passed without any noise or Interruption. They were also permitted to buy a Candle, and, what was more to their purpose, something to eat. Next morning the Governor called upon them and on parting with them recommended himself to their prayers. They attributed this shew of kindness to the good will of a poor woman, who had the care of the prison. She had lived at Cambray, in the neighbourhood of the Nuns, and she seemed to be much affected on seeing them in their present distress. It gave her particular concern to see them go in Carts, while all the other prisoners (a few men excepted) were carried in Coaches to their several destinations. She thought as everyone did, that the Nuns were exposed in Carts for no other end, than that they might be the more *insulted*.

Monday Night they stopt at *Noyon*. It is impossible to describe the fright they were in on their arrival there: the Carts had no sooner Stop't in the Market place, than thousands of people assembled in the most riotous manner around them. For Nuns to appear in the religious Dress was at that time the worst of crimes. Some talked of tearing them to pieces, others said they would bury them alive with their prescribed Dress. The Hussars repeatedly endeavoured to speak in their favour but so great was the Noise and the tumult among the populace, which in a Short time had increased to a dreadful number, that not a word could be heard. Not only the streets, but the windows and the tops of some houses, were full of Spectators. The Hussars finding it impossible to keep any order, sent for the Soldiers quartered in the Town, by whose assistance the Nuns were at last taken out of the Carts, half dead with fear, after having been detained in the Market place near an hour, amidst a variety of the most outrageous insults and threats. One instance alone may shew the Temper of the people in their regard; one of the Nuns Mary T. Shepherd when she was taken out of the cart being Scarcely able to stand fell against the horse which was at side of her. The Beast immediately Struck her at which the rabble set up the most insulting Shouts, and clap'd their hands for joy.

The Soldiers, who came to assist the Hussars, guarded the Nuns that Night, were extremely civil to them; one of them, a very young man, wept most bitterly out of compassion; they conducted them to a decent Inn instead of the common prison, and they allowed them to call for whatever they could pay for. Two Officers took particular care of them, the younger of whom for a time could not refrain from Tears. The head Officer of the Hussars came twice to the Inn to see them, but Nothing could revive their Spirits. The thought that they must again be

exposed on the Carts, was too distressing to admit of any Comfort. Their kindness, however, was a great alleviation of the pungent grief and distress of the Nuns. It is three Years since these scenes of horror happened, yet the writer of this declares that her Blood Chills whenever she thinks of that dreadful day: Those who have experienced such distress will excuse her for expressing herself so feelingly on this Subject.

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Gratitude to a merciful providence over us in all our distress prompts me to remark here that tho the Mob said everything Shocking – and Surrounded us on every Side, as if to tear us into a thousand pieces, and on one occasion cut off a piece of one of our Veils – Yet not one of them laid a hand upon any of us. And in every place some were found who shed Tears of Compassion over us.

The Nuns left Noyon about Nine on Tuesday morning. They had covered their Veils with coloured Handkerchiefs and disguised themselves as much as they could in order to appear as they sat in the Cart like the French Villagers, who wear no Hats. This precaution was of some service, for on the road the people seemed at a loss what to make of them.

About four in the afternoon, the Nuns arrived at Compiègne and there the Hussars left them, after having said much in their favour to the Mayor, and two other Members of the District, who came attended by the National Guards to receive the Prisoners.

The Hussars were Natives of Normandy, most of them Young Men, about nineteen or twenty Years of age. The Nuns were the more surprised at their civility, as they were giddy and very profane in their Language to one another.

The prisoners brought from Cambray to Compiègne at that time were fifty-two in Number, the Nuns included. They were all confined in one house; it had been a Convent formerly belonging to the Nuns of the Visitation, but was then a common prison. The Gentlemen of the District of Compiègne very frequently Visited the prison; when they called upon the Nuns they asked them a hundred questions, but upon the whole they behaved with civility. The Procurator Sindic, seeing them half Starving, had the goodness to write twice to Cambray to desire the Municipality of that City to return Some part of their wearing apparel, but they sent None. The Nuns had a room assigned to them in the Infirmary of the Convent; the adjoining apartments were occupied by prisoners of all ranks and descriptions, their Number increased daily, they were chiefly from Cambray and its environs. Whole families were sometimes brought up at once. It seems this place had been fixed upon in preference to Cambray because it was more within the reach of the assassins of Paris, who were then deluging the streets of that Capital, with human Blood.

On the 25 of November 1793 a great number of prisoners were brought from Cambray, among whom were The Reverend Mess^{rs} Walker, the Young Priest his Assistant, and the Honourable Thomas Roper. It is not easy to express what the religious felt when Mr Walker appeared as they had not the least reason to hope of ever seeing him again. He also seemed much affected. The pleasure of seeing him, was however greatly allayed by orders which were immediately given that he should by no means come near the Nuns. One of the members of the District

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having observed to his colleagues that if he was allowed to visit the Nuns some part of religious worship might probably be kept up among them, which he said, they were bound to root out entirely. For a time, the Nuns saw him seldom and always with fear and great apprehension. I have reason to think, that it cost him a great deal to be obliged to pass his time with a set of men whose manners and conversation were shocking to common decency.

Soon after this the very man who had with a club in his hand turned the Nuns out of their Convent at Cambray was sent after them to prison. He was removed to Paris soon after, where, it was said, he lost his Head. Such was the fate of many who had been particularly active in promoting the unhappy Revolution.

For a time the gaol allowance was a pound of Bread for each person per day, and one good meal, the expense of which was to be defrayed by the prisoners jointly, the rich paying for the poor, and strict orders were frequently given that EQUALITY should be observed, according to the new Republican law. That no one might escape unnoted the prisoners were called over twice every day.

About the beginning of January 1794 most of the Nuns fell sick. Eight or nine were confined to their beds at the same time, and the rest so much indisposed, as to be scarcely able to help their dying Sisters. A good woman who sold milk to the prisoners took great compassion of them, and came to assist them, but in a short time fell dangerously ill herself: this unfortunate accident made others afraid to come near them. The disorder was a Fever proceeding (as the Doctor said) from great hardships and *chagrin*. They had still only one room for the whole Community (twenty-one in number), several of whom were now drawing near their end. Everyone seemed to pity them, but the fever beginning to spread among the prisoners, each one feared for himself. Upon this it was thought proper to allow the Nuns a small adjoining room, and the prisoners in general, who were about an hundred and sixty, were permitted to walk in the garden, a favour which had not been allowed them before. The windows in the Nuns room were unnailed that they might open them for a little fresh air, but it was the middle of Winter, and the weather so very damp and wet, that this allowance was of no avail to them.

On the 12th of January, about 2 o'clock in the morning, Mr. Walker found himself very ill, but would not disturb Mr. Higginson till the usual hour of rising. Among the prisoners was a Doctor [Dufeuille] from Cambray, which was a fortunate circumstance for all the sick. He was called about 7 o'clock and declared Mr. Walker's case to be dangerous. He grew worse fast, so as to alarm everyone, for the prisoners all esteemed him. He fell into his agony in the evening, and expired near 2 o'clock, having been ill only twenty-four hours. It was thought by some to be the Gout at his Stomach that so suddenly hurried him off, but the Doctor always affirmed, that the many hardships he had undergone, and the want of necessaries requisite to a person of his age and weak health, had not a little contributed to his death. Many of the Nuns were at that time too ill to be informed of this catastrophe, but the distress of the few who were informed of it was great beyond

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expression. The circumstances the religious were then in made his loss to be severely felt, and long deeply regretted by the nuns. He had for some years past been as a Father, and an exemplary friend, to each of them, having remained with them by *choice* in the hardest of times, even when his life was in danger, and when he might have lived comfortably in England. During his long confinement he was never heard to let fall one word of complaint, tho' few had suffered so much as he. He died as he had lived, a good religious man. The writer of this well remembers that sorrowful day. He had lived 73 years, during twenty of these he had resided at Rome, and had received distinguishing tokens of esteem from his present Holyness Pius the VI. The last 17 years of his life he had with great credit to himself held the office of President-General of the English Congregation of the Order of St. Bennet.

Next morning, January 14th, while Mr. Walker's corpse was still in the prison, Dame Anselm Ann died, aged 79. On the 21st of the same month, Dame Walmsley breathed her last, aged 55. About the end of the same month Ann Pinnington, a lay-sister, who till then had been

of the greatest service about the sick, fell dangerously ill. Her disorder was a gangrene in her arm which from the first threatened her life. Nothing could be had in the prison proper to apply to it, nor would the Commissioner who was over them that day, tho' he was in the prison and thoroughly informed of the nature of the disorder, allow anything to be procured from the town, so that twenty four hours had elapsed before anything material was done. In the meantime the mortification had spread prodigiously and her life was despaired of. She expired on the 6th of Feb. about three o'clock in the morning aged 60.

Towards the beginning of March the same year, the surviving Nuns began to recover tho' but very slowly.

The District of Compiegne now began to treat the prisoners with great severity – very many had been sent from Cambay. The District had seized all their property, but would allow nothing towards keeping them from starving. On the 6th of March three of the Members of the District of Compiegne came to the prison escorted by a detachment of the National Guards. The prisoners were all ordered to assemble in one large room, some of the Nuns were still confined by sickness so that only a part of them could attend – all the prisoners stood like condemned criminals. The Procurator-Sindic made a long harangue putting them in mind that they had hitherto been served with one meal per day, but that nothing had been paid for so liberal a treatment (as he called it). That the people of Compiegne were resolved to reimburse themselves one way or other. The prisoners alleged that they had already been stript of everything and their houses plundered, that to think of forcing more from them was cruel in the extreme. These expostulations, true as they really were, had no effect. The Procurator-Sindic again and again told them that if the sum of ... french livres was not collected amongst them and sent to the District before 10 o'clock next morning they should be punished with the greatest severity. The prisoners being by no means able to

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furnish the sum demanded, they were on the 11th of March stinted to coarse brown bread and water. Many of the Nuns were still unwell when this severe order took place, some of them were even confined to their beds. Six red herrings, which they happened to have when this command was given out was all they had for three days, not being allowed to buy anything, not even a little salt. A surgeon of Compiegne, who had attended some of the Nuns, was so compassionate as to go himself to the District when the Members were assembled to beg as a favour they would permit a little broth to be sent to Dame Alexander who was near 80 years old, and had been confined to her bed about 6 weeks of a fever which terminated in an hectic fever and an imposthume. He was refused, on which as they were told tears gushed into his eyes. Be that as it may, all that the Nuns got by the charity of this good man, was a heap of compliments of condolence from the Mayor, and from some of the Magistrates, but they gave us nothing.

Their wants growing every day greater, they applied to some of the inhabitants of Compiegne for needlework, but the windows of the room they occupied being most part blockaded, little could be done materially to mend their condition. In order to raise money to buy bread they contrived privately to sell, tho' at a vast loss, a few gold crosses etc which they happened to have about them when they were taken from Cambay.

The Magistrates of Compiegne, finding that nothing could be got from the District of Cambay, were every day more and more importunate with the prisoners for money, which they had not to give. One day they came to take away their beds, which consisted of each a mattress and one blanket; a charitable friend gave them money to leave the Nuns theirs a month longer, at the expiration of which they came again & made the same bustle, but another friend

promised to pay for them a month longer, and thus they went on, always under the apprehension of being obliged to lye on a few locks of straw.

On the 17 of May, 1794, at 8 o'clock in the morning, about 20 Members of the District of Compiègne, and six or seven of Robespierre's creatures from Arras, came to the prison escorted by 120 Guards. The prisoners were instantly ordered each one to their own quarters, and a Guard posted at every door in the prison. A soldier with a drawn sword was also stationed within the Nuns' room and strictly ordered to take care the Nuns did not open a window nor leave the room for a moment, and above all that they burnt no papers. Some of the Nuns turned pale and almost fainted, which the Mayor observing, he, with his usual good nature towards them, ordered the Guard to sheath his sword. An officer soon after made his round, and asked the Guard in anger, why he had not his sword drawn. He told him, the Nuns were affraid, at which the officer began to scoff and said something about the guillotine, and with horrid imprecations commanded the Guard to draw his. This made the Nuns more affraid. While they were in this situation, from time to time they heard the jailer call the prisoners one at a time, the men first and then the women, to a lower room, but no one returned. The Nuns durst not speak to each other for fear of the Guard. After they had been in the

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most cruel suspense about nine hours, the Nuns were called down, it was then 5 in the evening. Before they got half way down the stairs, counter orders were given, and one of the Nuns, Dame A. Robinson, who could speak French, was ordered down. The Nuns therefore returned with a Guard, and only this young religious was conducted to the room below. The Commissioners immediately began to search her pockets, but the Mayor checked them, so that they were not so insolent to her as they had been to others. Nothing of value being found about them, they were dismissed, and the whole tribe of rough fellows, about thirty in number, came up with them to the room where the Nuns all were. One of them (who was a fallen priest) could speak a little English. He was a busy man on this occasion, and was the orator. He addressed the Nuns in a manner which seemed the most proper to terrify them, innumrating the punishments that would certainly be inflicted upon them if they concealed either writing or anything of value from them. The Procuratrix produced the little paper money they had, and laid it before them. The Nuns in general assured them that all their writings had been taken from them at Cambray. After asking many questions and talking in a low voice to each other, they withdrew, leaving the money upon the table, which however, the Nuns durst not touch. They then proceeded to search all the prisoners beds, men and women, pulling the straw and everything else about the room. They took everything of value, such a trifle as a silver thimble did not escape them. In the course of this examination they pulled the womens caps off their heads (some of them were ladies of quality), unpinned their gowns, and searched them in the most cruel manner. If they found a crucifix or a reliquary of gold or silver they took it, if it was of a baser metal, they broke it and sometimes gave the bits to the owner. From the Hon. Thomas Roper and Reverend James Higginson, who were our companions in prison, they took everything they could find (viz. a metal watch and two beautiful gold repeating watches which had formerly belonged to the Rev Fathers Walker and Welch – this last mentioned gentleman had ended his life with the Nuns at Cambray during the early part of the Revolution. [Aug 20, 1790]

Having stript the other prisoners of everything of value, they were returning to the Nuns' room, when one of the prisoners addressed the Mayor as follows: Surely sir, you are not going to search those poor Nuns a second time. You know how barbarously they were used by the people of Cambray, and at present you are well assured that they live in the greatest poverty, having only the poor pittance which they gain by their needle to maintain them. The Mayor seemed to be pleased with the person who spoke in their favour, and after a short pause

turned off, called the Guard out of the Nuns' room, and soon after went out of the prison attended by the Administrators of the District (as they called themselves) and the Guards. This was one of the most suffering days we ever passed, tho' in those times of universal terror the Nuns experienced many sorrowful ones.

The prisoners from the time I am speaking of were treated with greater severity than they had ever been before. They were in the greatest distress, some of them passed days and weeks with no other

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food than bread & water, and few of the prisoners at Compiègne entertained a hope of escaping a public execution, yet this seemed to have no effect on their morals, for they were for the most part very ill livers, tho' few days passed but one or other of them was taken out of the Compiègne prison & thrown into the dungeon to be ready for execution. Here some of them remained till the death of Robespierre, others were carried to Paris, and an end put to their existence by the fatal guillotine.

About the middle of June, 1794, sixteen Carmelite Nuns were brought to the prison and lodged in a room which faced that which was occupied by us. They were very strictly guarded. They had not been long there before they were, without any previous notice, hurried off to Paris for no other crime than that an emigrant priest, who had been their Confessor, had written to one of them. In this letter a Bishop, who was also an emigrant, had unfortunately desired his Compliments to an old gentleman who was cousin to the Nun to whom the letter was directed. He was a man of great property, a crime not easily overlooked in those days. This Venerable person was carried to Paris with the Nuns. A servant who attended him seemed ready to die of grief, and the good old man shed tears at the parting.

The Carmelite Nuns quitted the Compiègne prison in the most saint-like manner. We saw them embrace each other before they set off, and they took an affectionate leave of us by the motion of their hands & other friendly gestures. On their way to the scaffold, and upon the scaffold itself, as we were told by an eye-witness of credit Monsieur Douai, they shewed a firmness and a cheerful composure which nothing but a spotless conscience and a joyful hope can inspire. It was reported that they sung or said aloud the Litany of the Blessed Virgin until the fatal axe interrupted the voice of the last of them. They suffered on the 16th of July, the feast of their patronness Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 1794. One of this holy community happened to be absent when the rest were taken to Paris. She concealed herself in different places till the death of the tyrant Robespierre, which happened on the 28th of July 1794. When this monster was removed she returned to her friends in Compiègne – & frequently visited us in prison. She gave us the names and the ages of her Sisters who were

Croisi [<i>Croissy</i>]	agee de 49 ans.	de Paris.
Trozelle [<i>Trezel</i>]	51	de Compiègne.
Haunisset [<i>Hanisset</i>]	52	de Reims.
Le Doine [<i>Lidoine</i>]	42	de Paris.
Pellerat [<i>Pelras</i>]	34	de Lazarts. [<i>Cajarc (Lot).</i>]
Tourret [<i>Thouret</i>]	79	de Monij. [<i>Mony (Ois).</i>]
Piedecourt	78	de Paris.
Brudeau [<i>Brideau</i>]		de Bedford. [<i>Belfort.</i>]
Brard	58	de Bourth. [<i>Bourth (Eure).</i>]
Chrétien	52	de Evreux.
Dufour		de Beaune.
Meunier [<i>Maunier</i>]	29	de Franciarde. [<i>St. Denis (Paris).</i>]

Soiron	55	de Compiègne,
Soiron	45	–
Rousset [<i>Roussel</i>]	52	de Compiègne. [<i>Frèsne.</i>]
Vezolat [<i>Verolot</i>]	30	de Compiègne.

One of this community was Novice and two others were portresses or extern Lay-sisters.

On the 28th of July 1794, the same year, the tyranny of Robespierre, eight days after the Carmelites, met its deserved fate at Paris, by his being overthrown and guillotined with 20 of his infamous adherents – the populace insulted them in the most abusive manner.

Two or three days after the Carmelites were taken to Paris, the Mayor and two Members of the District of Compiègne called upon us in the prison, we were still in our religious dress which he had frequently wished us to change, but we always alleged that we really had not money sufficient to furnish ourselves with any other clothes than the ragged habits we then wore. The same day he returned to us again, called two of the Nuns aside, and told them that they must put off that uniform, as he called it, that he durst no longer permit them to wear that prohibited dress, that should the people grow riotous we should be more easily concealed in any other dress than in the religious one. The truth was he expected like the Carmelites we should soon be conducted to Paris for execution, and he was affraid he might be put to trouble if we were found in the religious garb. Being again assured that we had not money to purchase other clothes, he went himself to the room which the good Carmelites had inhabited while in prison and brought some of the poor clothes they had left behind them there. These he gave to us, telling us to put them on as soon as possible. We were in great want of shoes, the Mayor civilly said he would get us what we wanted, but one of the jailers bluntly told the Procuratrix we should not want shoes long. On leaving the room the Mayor turned to Mr. Higginson and said, Take care of your companions – as much as to tell him, Prepare them for death, for he had nothing else in his power as the Mayor well knew.

The next day the news became public that the poor Carmelites had been all guillotined. The old clothes which before appeared of small value were now so much esteemed by us that we thought ourselves unworthy to wear them, but forced by necessity, we put them on, and those clothes constituted the greatest part of the mean apparel which we had on at our return to England. We still keep them – a few articles excepted, which we have given to particular friends.

The prisoners at Compiègne were still importuned to payoff the old debt (as they called it) for the allowance of one meal per day which had formerly been given them but which had long since been withdrawn insomuch that during many months before we had leave to quit this tedious confinement we had not even bread given us unless we could pay for it.

The two last months of the year 1794 and the beginning of the year 1795 being extremely severe, we had a great deal to suffer from wants of various kinds, especially from want of fuel, as no one had

a sufficient quantity of clothes to keep herself (tho' the youngest of us) moderately warm. The room we inhabited was large and very cold, but no entreaties could obtain more than one single blanket for each Nun. The scarcity of provisions also encreased in a dreadful manner. Bread was so hard to be got that no one inhabitant of the town was permitted to purchase more than a certain fixed allowance which made a very scanty portion. Guards were placed at every baker's shop, and in their prescence the bread was weighed out to each one his pittance till the whole poor stock was distributed, but commonly there was not a sufficient quantity of it to supply

more than half the people who were expecting to have a little, so that no day passed without some tumult in the town. The bread for the most part was of the very worst and most disgusting quality, yet we thought ourselves very fortunate when we could buy a sufficient quantity of it. Very frequently when we had finished one poor meal we had not a morsel left for the next.

The English throughout every part of France had more than once petitioned for some mitigation of their sufferings and some of them had, with becoming freedom, pointed out the absurdity of detaining in confinement so many innocent sufferers, for the apprehension of whom there had never existed a pretence of justice. At last it was decreed that all foreigners should have an allowance of two livres paper money per day. Bread was then sold at 3 livres per pound. This allowance besides its being irregularly paid was utterly insufficient to subsist upon in the state in which France then was, paper money being then reduced to a very low rate there. We received this allowance for the first time on the 23rd of Dec. 1794. It was then counted to make the value of twopence halfpenny or at most three pence per day English money.

Some months after this, the prisoners began to be treated with more lenity than they had yet experienced. The Honourable Thomas Roper & the Rev. James Higginson had liberty to go into the town. This was of great service to us. Mr. Roper showed himself indefatigable in using every means possible to procure victuals and fuel for us. He carried the wood himself and ran from shop to shop to buy us bread. But notwithstanding this seeming liberty, the prison was still very disagreeable. Tho' the soldiers had no longer power to command us as formerly, yet the door to the street was open night & day, so that it was scarcely possible to step out of our room without meeting a crowd, one part of the prison being turned into a guard-house all came in & went out as they pleased. The garden too was always taken up by the soldiers and the rabble.

About this time the Convention frequently ordered the prisoners of war to be sent from one town to another to show them to the people. When those bodies of prisoners passed through Compiegne, they were always lodged in our prison, & nothing distressed us more during the whole of our confinement than on such occasions to meet with brave Englishmen in want of the most common necessaries of life & to see them treated with the greatest scorn & contempt by the most despicable of the French Jacobins, who were quite elated

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to have an English soldier under their feet. Whenever these prisoners arrived all was noise & confusion & we expected nothing less than to see the house on fire, the weather being remarkably cold they burnt everything they could lay their hands on.

Seeing no prospect to the end of their miseries in this unhappy country in which we were confined, & provisions growing so scarce and dear that it became quite out of our power to procure them, we at last resolved to apply to Paris for passports to return to our native country. The Mayor of Compiegne privately advised us to take this step & assured us of his assistance. Accordingly a petition was drawn up & signed by the whole Community. The Mayor forwarded it to the Convention at Paris and seconded it by a letter in our favour. About ten days after, our liberty was announced to us by the District of Compiegne. After this we contrived to borrow (the good Carmelite above mentioned assisting us) sacred vessels & ornaments that we might have the happiness of hearing one Mass, the only one we had during our eighteen months confinement, & we were in the greatest fear the whole time of it.

In order to raise the necessary supplies for our journey, we contrived privately to draw money from England, though at a great loss, by the way of Hambourg. A charitable gentleman, the present Edward Constable of Burton, Esq. had two years before given us leave to call upon him for money what we might want in case we came to be in distress which he seemed to foresee would happen. The horses being for the most part taken for the army, we found it very

difficult to get carts to transport us to Calais. After many delays, [and] a great deal of trouble and expense, the whole Community left Compiègne on the 24th of April, 1795 in two carts, four of the eldest Nuns having gone off before in a coach. We were in the prison at Compiègne 18 months & 5 days. In our journey we made Cambrai in our way, but had not courage enough to cast a passing glance at our dear Convent, which from the time we were driven out had been turned into a common gaol, (it was then in a most ruinous condition), out of which very many had been dragged to the guillotine – in one day 25 persons were dragged to the marketplace in Cambrai and there guillotined, among whom was a most pious and learned priest, Mr. Tranchant (who had frequently sung Mass in our church). He was saying Mass in his own house & his niece serving, they were immediately hurried to prison not allowing him time to take off his vestments.

We found that all our houses & effects had been publicly sold, but had not been paid for. We were also informed that our enemies had made the common people believe that the prevailing scarcity was greatly to be attributed to the English Nuns having amassed such quantities of provisions. This was made an accusation against us by the very people who had ordered us to prepare provisions against a siege or to be expelled the town. The Rev. James Higginson went six or seven times to the Town House thinking to expostulate with the District upon their cruel behaviour, and to assure them that one time or other we should call them to

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account, but he was refused entrance. Finding therefore nothing could be done, the Community followed Lady Abbess and three old religious, who as I said before set off from Compiègne a few days before us. We found them at Calais where they had been some days, we rested one night, and the next morning, May 2nd, the whole Community sailed from Calais in a Danish vessel, Captain Johnson. We happily landed at Dover the same evening in number sixteen religious, the Rev. James Higginson & Mr. Roper. The next day being a Sunday, we rested at Dover, and reached London about 10 o'clock on Monday night May 4th. We remained at the Golden Cross, Charing Cross London, till Wednesday 6th, when the charitable Marchioness of Buckingham, hearing that our situation was exceeding unpleasant at a common Inn, sent her chaplain, a clergyman of the Established Church, to inform us that she had provided a house at the West end of the town during our stay in London. Here she was the first to visit us, affording us every comfort in her power; and the respectable clergyman above mentioned copied the example of his noble patroness. We experienced many instances of civility & kindness during our stay in London, for several of which we are indebted to persons unknown to us, but the Blessed Redeemer of man, who has promised to repay a cup of cold water given in alms for His sake, will not suffer their charity to go unrewarded. Gratitude obliges me to mention here one friend in particular, Mr. Coghlan, bookseller, who though a person in business and possessed of no great riches, yet rendered us most substantial services. It was he who first made us known to the Marchioness of Buckingham, and he richly deserves our thanks for many other favours.

The Community remained in London about 12 days, during which time Rev. Mr. Cowley, the President, and Rev. Mr. Brewer decided that we should take the management of a school for the education of young Catholic ladies. Nothing but the great desire we had to maintain ourselves and to be no burden to our friends or to society in general, upon whom Providence has permitted us to be reluctantly thrown, could have prevailed upon any of us to have undertaken such a charge, worn out as we were with past sufferings. Superiors,

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however, informing us that such was their pleasure, we left London in three companies on different days as we could get places in the stage coach. The last company arrived at Woolton

May 21st, 1795, where we experienced every civility & kindness. Mrs. Porter & Dr. Brewer entertained the whole Community for a week at their house, with great good nature and compassion, rendering to each one every solace possible. We got settled in a school which had been for about six years under the superintendance of the Rev. Dr. Brewer, but the management of which he now resigned to the Nuns. Here we have now been near three years, during which time we have found no abatement in the kindness & charitable attention showed to the Community, not by our friends and relations only, but by our countryfolk in general. We are not less grateful for the allowance of a guinea and a half per month, for each religious, which is common with so many of Our fellow sufferers we have received from government ever since our arrival in our native country; & we shall always think ourselves under an additional obligation of praying for the welfare of England.

We had not been long settled at Woolton, before Edward Constable of Burton & Francis Sheldon of Wycliffe, Esquires [nephews of Dame Elizabeth Francis Sheldon], honoured us with a visit. They paid us the kindest attentions. They brought with them a French priest [Abbé Pernéz], whom Mr. Constable allowed 40£ per annum. As we could not hear Mass anywhere nearer than Mr. Brewer's chapel, he offered to leave the French priest at Woolton; of that offer we joyfully accepted, & he has since remained with us. To assist the Community in general Mr. Constable has also made us an allowance of 60£ per annum, which is paid quarterly; & we have reason to hope that it will not be withdrawn, till something falls to enable the Community to live without it.

[...]

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**A Catalogue of the names of the Religious Dames and Sisters professed of this Convent of our Blessed Lady of Consolation in Cambrai who are dead.
Requiescant in pace.**

The first day of Aprill 1631 departed in peace our dear Sister **Jane Martha Martin**, a lay sister & one of the first profes'd of the monastery, in the 43 year of her age & seventh of her profession. Shee had the proffer to marry a gentleman of a good estate in England, but shee rather chose to lead an humble life in Religion, than to appeare great in the world, therefore refused the offer made her & prevailed with the gentleman who would have married her, to bestow his wealth upon a Seminary of English in Flanders, which he did at his death

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oblidging the sayd seminary to provide for her & settle her as she should desire. And she chose out of humility & that shee might not be too chargable to them whom she esteemed her benefactors, (tho' in effect she had been theirs) to be a lay-sister & as she had lived in the world very purely & innocently, so shee lived in religion very painfully & obediently, in both piously & charitably. And after many daily infirmities & eight months sickness suffered with resignation & edification, she died as we have cause to believe most happily. *Requiescat in Pace.* Amen.

In the year 1631 the 22 of September died D. **Francis Ebba Browne**, daughter to Sir Peter Browne of Kiddington in Oxfordshire, in the 2^d year of her profession & 22 of her age, during which three years, her noviceship included, she so much profited in the continual practice of prayer & patience that shee left behind her a good odor of virtue, being so truly

pious & humble that shee could say on her death-bed, being asked therunto, that since shee had profess'd our H. Rule, shee did not remember that ever shee did deliberately desire to please any creature or desire any praise from any. And indeed she lived so wholly abstract of all terrene & humane solace & content and so attentive to God in her soule that neither business in health, nor pains in sickness could divert her thoughts & affections from him, but pass'd on her life like a true pilgrime thus to Jerusalem, to seek & see Jesus, the sum of all her desires & the centre, & the reward of all her sighs & labours. *Requiescat in Pace.*

In the year 1633 the 17 of August, died D. **Gertrude More**, of the noble family of Sir Thomas the famous Martyr of happy memory. Shee it was who erected this Community & was the first that was profess'd in this house where she afterwards lived with a great deal of zeale, prudence & piety, as will appeare in her life writ more at large. Shee left many examples worthy [of] her blood & vocation, particularly in her last grievous sickness (being indeed very terrible) which shee embraced with much patience & conformity to the Will of God, showing such an admirable confidence in his mercy that shee seem'd only to be sensible that shee was so long detain'd from the union & fruition of his divine Majesty to which she had ever tended, desiring truely to be dissolv'd that she might live in Christ Jesus. In fine she fought the good fight & dyed, as we have reason to hope, most happily the 28 of her age, & 10 of her profession. *Requiescat in Pace.*

In the year 1635 the February 24 died Sister **Elizabeth Barbara Smith** daughter naturall of an English Baronet. She lived in her father's house without being known eyther by herself or others to be his daughter though she was maintain'd by him very handsomely, but for a disguise shee was call'd the neece to a gentleman who lived in the house & who 'twas thought gave her the maintainence & education becoming a gentlewoman, till at length her brother the Baronet's eldest son fell deeply in love with her (for she was very beautifull, of a good carriage & of an innocent harmless conversation) the young gentleman

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not dreaming she was so neare related to him; but by good fortune his father discovering his affection for the young lady, soon prevented his son's design of marriage with her & consulting her pretended uncle who was the priest of the family, it was by them judged best to prevent all misfortune & keep her still best unknown, to send her over to a monastery for education, shee being yet young; and accordingly they sent her to this our Convent of our Blessed Lady in Cambray, in which shee took to religion, & lived very edifyingly in her noviceship, so that all had great hopes shee would make a good member of the Community, when accidentally shee got a fall down staires, which shee received such a hurt from, that shee suffer'd very much with a great patience, & at length by her sickness shee was brought to her end. Shee embraced death chearfully & dyed wholly resigned to God's divine will with much internall peace and confidence in her creator who had so mercifully drawn her out of the vanities of the world, before shee had the misfortune to know them. Shee died in the 6th month of her probation, having on her death bed often beg'd the favour of her profession and obtained, being dispensed with. And soon after went to keep, as we hope, the solemnity in Heaven with the Saints & Angels. *Requiescat in Pace.*

On the 16 of August in the year 1637 our dear sister Dame **Margaret Gascoigne** departed this life in the 29 of her age & 8 of her profession. She was daughter to Sir John Gascoigne Baronet of Barnbow in Yorkshire. Shee esteeming that innocence & native goodness shee had derived from her parents to be insufficient, therefore laboured for more purity of

heart & perfection of divine love in Religion, which by means of prayer constantly prosecuted shee obtained. Shee led a most abstract life in religion and having chearfully and courageously trampled under foote all that the world calls great, & forsaken with a generous contempt not only what advantages her birth & education offer'd her in the world, but also forsaken her parents & country, shee applyed herselfe in a profound solitude & silence to religious duties in this Convent as appeares by the story of her life writ in another place. Her natural propension to serve God was of the best, and knowing that al selfe-seeking & propriety was all nature could intend, if it were not reformed by grace, her whole endeavours were to comit herselfe totally to the divine guidance, that shee might truely become virtuous in the sight of God, & conformable to his blessed Will. Her exemplary & most comfortable death gives us great hopes that shee now enjoys that inseparable union with her Spouse our Saviour which with all her heart shee incessantly sought after. *Requiescat in Pace.*

On the 18 of April in the year 1640 our dear Sister D. **Bennet Morgan**, daughter to Mr Morgan of Weston in Warwickshire departed this life in the 36 year of her age & 17 of her profession. Shee was one of the first nine that entered this monastery & were the beginners of it, wherein shee lived with edification to all, ever continuing in her primitive zeale, still striving by the helps of religion to perfect her soule. Her life was free from offence to her sisters, & her conversation very

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innocent, and her endeavours to please God very great whilst sense remained which allmighty God permitted should faile her some years before her death, which it is believed she had some kind of foresight of; for the night before her infirmity seized her, shee was heard by one of the religious that was very neare her, to rise several times from her bed, in the night time, and casting herselfe on her knees, to pray very devoutly to Allmighty God. Particularly shee was heard to make in a moderate voice many acts of resignation to God's will, leaveing herselfe to be disposed of as he knew most for his own honor & the good of her soule. In the time of her indisposition as well as before, she lived inoffensively to her religious Sisters & evidenc'd in all occasions that shee was naturally of a devout spirit; on a time when one of the religious was speaking to a person newly enter'd the house in order to be religious (D. Benet being present) and giving a relation in obscure terms how & at what time shee fell into her distemper, D. Bennet who till then had satt silent presently answered saying: yes indeed the night you mention was the very night I died & I have been dead ever since: words very remarkable. In fine the day come when Allmighty God was pleased to take her out of this world by a natural death, she call'd to the religious who had care to tend her & desir'd very earnestly shee would permit her to put on her cowl, for says shee, this day I am to appeare before a great King, as indeed shee did, for a very slight indisposition to all others sight, took her out of this world, on that very day to make her appearance before the King of Kings, & we have all reason to hope her death was *pretiosa in conspectu Domini* &c. *Requiescat in Pace.*

In the year 1640 on the 7 of May, departed this life, Reverend Mother **Francis Gawen**, in the 64 year of her age, & 40 of her profession. She was professed in the English monastery at Bruxelles of the order of our H. Father St Benet & one of the first companie who began that monastery, in which shee lived 23 years after her profession, & from thence shee came hither to Cambray to begin this of the same order & of the English Congregation, which with much zeale of regular observance & with great care & motherly affection to everyone she govern'd in the office of Abbesse for the space of 6 years, ever more earnestly desiring & labouring to advance the progress of the Community in all respects. Afterwards resigning her office she betook

herselfe to a private life wherein for the remainder of her days shee much edified her religious Sisters with good examples of humility and obedience practising amongst them in her life & conversation what she had before taught them with great zeale, & being overtaken with old age & infirmity when shee had patiently endured the difficulties & pains of long sickness, shee died as we have cause to hope happily in our Lord. *Requiescat in Pace.* Amen.

On the 13 of June in the year 1640 our dear sister D. **Anne Scholastica Timperley**, daughter to Sir Thomas Timperley in Suffolk. Shee endur'd with much patience & a wonderfull resignation a long & terrible sickness which continued for the most part of a whole year,

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that shee might by many tribulations enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; for by God's Providence shee was brought into so great inward desolation (being full of most grievous pains & voyed of all comfort) as made her say: "Deus meus ut quid dereliquiste me?" & so was led through fire & water unto Eternall rest. Shee lived very laudably in religion wherein shee was an honor to her family, an example & comfort to her religious Sisters to whom her life would have been most gratefull as her death was precious in the sight of our Lord who had bestowed on her great talents both of nature & grace with which shee faithfully cooperating & diligently corresponding to, hath inevited (as we may justly hope) to be of their number of whom it is sayd that *inter [sanctos] sors illorum est*. Shee was a true pattern of prudence zeale & constancy in all the duties of religion. God grant that we who shee has left behind her in that miserable world, may imitate her virtues. *Requiescat in Pace.* Amen. Shee died in the 35 of her age & 16 of Religion.

On the 25 of January in the year 1641 our dear Sister D. **Francisca Lucy** departed this life in the 20 year of her age & first of her profession. In that short time after her entry in religion, shee profited much in the virtues of humility, patience & resignation, which two last, her much weak[en]ing & frequent sickness gave her much occasion to practice, as shee did with true devotion, not permitting the infirmity of her body to depress her mind, but raising to God by a careful prosecution of prayer & exteriorly comporting herselfe according to a charitable & sweet conversation, thereby meriting the same from all her religious sisters of whom shee was well beloved, & her death regretted. *Requiescat in Pace.* Amen.

On the 6th day of December in the year 1641 departed this life our dear Sister **Isette Angela Mullins**, a converse sister. It is credibly reported of her that whilst a secular person shee led a very devout life & had a vision of the soules in Purgatory & of what they suffered, after which shee grew (as the world calls it) pensive and thoughtfull; addicted herselfe to prayer & devotion & having a vocation to dedicate herselfe to God in religion, shee came to this our Convent in which the short time shee lived a religious woman shee gave good testimonys of a most fervent devotion & much purity of heart truely seeking & intending God, who to make her more pleasing to himselfe permitted her to bear the crosses of affliction, in particular of a tedious sickness in which & in many occasions shee showed much patience & true resignation, giving us, by her virtue & innocent life, cause to hope her death was but an entry into the true life so earnestly desired by her. *Requiescat in Pace.* Amen. Shee died in the 25 of her age & first of her profession.

The 21 of December in the year 1645 departed this life, our Reverend Mother **Pudentiana Deacon**, first religious in the English monastery at Bruxelles, where shee lived 15 years to the edification of her Sisters carefully observing regular discipline from whence obedience sent her with two more to begin this our convent of our blessed Lady of Consolation

at Cambray. Shee being a woman of a very good witt, judgment & understanding, was thought fitt by her superiors & others to give help in a business of that consequence as the beginning of a monastery which shee diligently performed, joyning a great zeal of regular observance with a motherly affection to all & care of all, as our H. Rule ordains for the cellerier which office, as also Mistress of the novices shee laudably performed for divers years together after the beginning of this monastery. And having also executed the office of Prioress very religiously & humbly for ten years together, at length shee felle into great bodily infirmities which shee suffered with a remarkable patience & also had an unwearied desire of doing good to all & serving the community to her power which shee did perseverantly to the very last in the office of Prioress. Her end was pious & peaceable in the 64 of her age. *Requiescat in Pace.* Amen.

On the 6th of March 1648 Sister **Benedicta Roper** departed this life in the 11 month of her Noviceship & in the 17 of her age, haveing lived allmost two years in this community an innocent sweet humble life, pleasing to God, with much edification & content of all that saw her & convers'ed with her. In time of health shee was harmless cheerfull & very regular; in time of sickness she had an unshaken patience, in both, resigned to God & at all times obedient humble & submissive to her superiors. Some few days before her pious death shee supplicated to this Holy Community for her profession, which obtained, shee made it conditionally to the great content of her mind, and as we have just cause to believe to the great benefit of her soule. And having render'd her vows to God, shee most willingly & resignedly render'd up her soule into his hands, whome shee sought & sighed after. Shee was daughter to a younger brother of the Ropers of Elltham. *Requiescat in Pace.* Amen.

On the 18 of April 1650 died our dearest sister Dame **Catherine Sheldon**, daughter to Mr Sheldon of Beoly in Warwickshire, whose life, even before shee enter'd into religion was very exemplar. Shee seemed to show a disgust of the vaine pleasures & transitory pastimes of the world, even in the midst of them, & her grave sober & discreet comportment, gained her the love & esteem of all that convers'd with her. Shee might have had a very considerable portion in the world if shee would have stayed with her parents, who designed to have settled her in it very advantagiously, but Allmighty God who designed her wholly for himselfe permitted that all the treaties made by her parents to engage her in the world were strangly & sometimes surprisngly broken off[f], & came to nothing. And at length by the forceable & sweet conduct of the spirit of God, she enter'd this holy state of religion with great courage. And after her profession shee lived the life of a true child of our H. Father St Benedict, humble, obedient, solitary & quiet; her interior solidly settled in God, her exterior modest, sober, pleasing & gratefull to all especially such as knew her more intimely. Shee had always a great love for regular observances, particularly the office of the quire, & a true & exact observer of 'em as far as her health would

permit. And tho' Allmighty God tryed her with many interior conflicts & temptations yet shee constantly adhear'd to him & became victorious by her great confidence in God her maker whom she loved and faithfully served, practising true & solid virtue in her life time, & at her death became a perfect holocaust wholly offer'd up to her beloved to whom shee most peaceably & intirely resignedly render'd up her soule to him whom shee so seriously had sought during her abode in this vaile of tears. *Requiescat in Pace.*

On the first of November 1650 our dear sister Dame **Lucy Magdalene Cary** (departed this life) daughter to the Lord Henry Vicount Falkland, sometime Vice Roy of Ireland. Shee had been some years brought up & liv'd in heresy during which time she was carried away with the vanities of the world, but we have reason to believe that Almighty God had regard to the prayers & tears of the lady her mother, who never ceas'd to implore Heaven for the conversion of her children, being a woman of an extraordinary piety as will appear in the relation of her life written by a person who knew her very well. In fine our D. Magdalena cheerfully abjured her heresy after shee had been convinced of her errors by a Reverend Father of our Holy Congregation, a great friend of the Lady her mother and cast herself into the lapp of the Holy Catholic Church, wherein she liv'd even during her secular state, a very obedient, pious & zealous member, quitting the vanities of the world to exercise in her mother's house more than ordinary mortifications & such as indeed were rather to be admired than imitated in such a state. But as for her obedience to her mother after her conversion, shee may be a pattern to all children towards parents which shewes the efficacy of Divine Grace in her soule, for of an obstinate, haughty disdainfull sneering Lady (her own mother 'scaped not her affronts) she became as soon as a convert to our Holy faith, a dutifull, obedient child to her who was the best of mothers, & the most charitable of Ladies to her neighbours. Shee was accustomed to frequent the Court both of K. James the first tho' shee was then very young and likewise in the time of K. Charles the first. Shee was much regarded in his court, but immediately after her conversion she retired herself from thence to live with the Lady her mother, where she contemned what the world might think of her suddain and extraordinary change, & leaving her vaine attire & dressing, about which shee had been accustomed to spend dayly several howers, shee now cloathed herself in decent, but very homely dresse, giving herself to the practice of very many virtues. At length Almighty God very forcibly inviting her to seek & labour for perfection, shee enter'd into religion, wherein for the space of 11 years, shee lived an infirme, sickly & suffring life, God leading her by the way of the crosse to the end of her life, which shee concluded with a most truely, humble & sincere acknowledgment of her own nothing, & of God's infinite goodness & providence to her as also with an abandonment & total resignation of herself into the arms of his fatherly piety, having lead an obedient humble life, all the time shee had been in religion without any regard to what shee had been or might have been in the world, which she would never speak of except of such passages

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as would humble & confound her, being in a particular manner very sensible of the many faults her jeering witt had made her fall into before her conversion, which afterwards shee did endeavour to satisfy for. In fine, worn out with infirmity, patiently supported for the love of God, by which we have cause to hope shee has through God's mercy purchased a great crown, she peaceably departed this life leaving us her religious sisters a good example of humility, patience & obedience. *Requiescat in Pace.* Amen.

The 13 of march 1651 departed this life our dear sister Dame **Cæcilia Hall**, daughter of Mr Hall of High Meadow in Gloucestershire. Shee was called very young by Almighty God to the holy state of religion, which vocation of hers, she was permitted by her pious parents to comply with (her honorable mother's dayly prayer & request to Almighty God was that shee might not be the mother of a lost soule) & in order thereto she left her country and parents to whom shee was truly dear, & came to this our monastery. But shee stayed not long because her health was so bad shee could not comply with regular duties, which was the reason why shee returned to England for the recovery of her strength in her natural ayre, where she remained some years in which time she had a full view as well of the miseries, as of the pleasures of the world. For her

abode in England was in the time of the civil wars, so that shee saw much misery, yet being young & her father having a plentiful estate & all things corresponding, shee was in the occasions of being drawn to vanity, being in a crowd of company where shee wanted not admirers, which to a person less steadfast in devotion, might have shok'd a vocation, but shee had a right judgment of things & considered well how transitory & fading worldly pleasures are & how little content such things as the world calls great and hunts so much after can give the soule at the hour of death. Penetrated with these & the like considerations & moved with the love of God & a great desire to please him in the most perfect manner shee was able, shee took a generous resolution to forsake & bid adieu for ever to friends, relations & country & make an intire sacrifice of herselfe to God her maker who as shee most rationally esteemed had the justest claim to her. To effect this, having now recovered in some sort her health, she again with much earnestness supplicated to be received into this community. And being admitted, shee did with much fervor goe through her noviceship & made her profession, to the content of the convent & to her own great comfort; after which shee immediately fell sick & continued in an infirme & suffering condition neere three years which shee made good use of to the benefit of her soule, still praising God in her corporal infirmities. At length by a violent defluxion shee was cast into her bed & suffered great pains for some weekes; in fine being advertised by the physicians of her approaching death shee received the news with great cheerfullness & embraced death with a contented mind which, as we have cause to hope was but a translation into a better world, the reward of such as have courage to contemn this for the love of God who never failes to recompense those that leave father & mother & adhere to him with all their heart.

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The 18 of February 1654 [*apparently the date upon which the foregoing obituaries were written*].

In the year of our Lord 1726, on the 2nd Day of August, in the Monastery of Our Blessed Lady of Consolation, of the English Congregation of Benedictines at Cambray, having previously received all the accustomed rites of the Church, died the Very Reverend Lady Abbess, Dame **Scholastica Houghton**, of Parke Hall, in the 70th year of her age, 52 of her religious profession, and the 3rd of her jubilee. She was a Lady highly distinguished in the World by her descent from an Antient and good family, but still more highly distinguished by the many virtuous actions which she herself had performed. The exalted qualities, which she had abundantly received from the partial kindness of Nature & grace, it was her constant study and business through every period of her Life to employ in advancing the Interests of religion and the happiness & edification of her Sisters. Under circumstances peculiarly unfavourable & difficult, it was her Lot to discharge the office of Procuratrix for the space of thirteen years, afterwards that of Prioress for the space of 11, & lastly that of Abbess for 8; and she discharged them all with equal integrity and credit. Sinking at length under the continual cares & Labours of her charge, shee calmly closed her eyes on this world, and passed into Eternity amidst the supplications & tears of her disconsolate Sisters. We earnestly request the assistance of your charitable sacrifices and prayers for the repose of her soul. R.I.P.