

**Note on this edition:**

abbreviations have been expanded without comment. Commentary in Roman type in square brackets is in the original text; commentary in italics has been added by the CRS editor or Project. To facilitate understanding by a modern audience, the text has been re-punctuated; occasionally an extra letter has been supplied in square brackets to make the meaning more immediately obvious. The original spellings are retained, except that 'i' is replaced as appropriate by modern 'j', and 'u' by 'v'. Originally published as 'Abbess Neville's Annals of Five Communities of English Benedictine Nuns in Flanders 1598-1687', ed. M J Rumsey, in Catholic Record Society, Misc. V, Vol. 6, 1909. Page numbers correspond to this volume.

**ENGLISH BENEDICTINE NUNS IN FLANDERS, 1598-1687 ANNALS OF THEIR FIVE COMMUNITIES**

By Lady Abbess Anne Neville

The following Annals are in the handwriting of their authoress the fourth Abbess of a community which was founded from that of Ghent about the middle of the seventeenth century, and finally settled at Pontoise in 1658. This Abbess was Mary Neville, daughter to Henry, Baron Abergavenny, by his first wife, the Lady Mary Sackville, whose father was Thomas, Earl of Dorset. Mary Neville was born in 1605; she made her profession as Dame Anne in 1634 in the Benedictine Abbey of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at Ghent, which had been founded eleven years previously from the first Post-Reformation Monastery at Brussels.

Dame Anne filled in succession the offices of chief importance in the House of her profession, during some thirty years, after which she joined its daughter community at Pontoise, of which she was elected Abbess within a year, on the death of the third Abbess, having reached the age of 62. She governed for 22 years, and died in 1689 at the age of 84. The annals break off abruptly at the date of 1687.

After her death her Religious daughters wrote of her that "her humility, charity and motherly hart, was soe remarkable that it extend'd to every one in perticular, as if she had had no other or greater business, then to comfort and assist those who address'd themselves to her in theyre necessityes, and this even in the midst & height of those many heavy crosses, which god was pleas'd to favour her with, having given her an invinsible Courage & vertue above the ordinary to suport them, not only patiently, but with allacritye & cheerfulness. She was endowed with a great & generous spirit, & all her actions were accompany'd with Justice, worth & affability which gave that Luster to them as became the noblenes of her mind and birth; the love of god incessently inflam'd her hart, with zeale & devotion, & she had soe familiar a conversation and strict union which Almighty god that what she spoke in edification to her community she generally drew from the intertainements she had which him interiourly." These words are sufficient introduction to the person of our authoress.

But the connection between her community and that of St Scholastica's Abbey, Teignmouth, where the Pontoise Records are now preserved, remains to be traced.

Ten years after the Ghent Abbey sent out the filiation which eventually settled at Pontoise, that Mother-house again overflowed, and made a second foundation at Dunkerque in 1663, where it flourished with a large school for the daughters of English Catholics who could no longer be trained in the ancient faith in their own land.

During the eighteenth century the Pontoise community dwindled in numbers, and notwithstanding a school in which were educated many children of the nobility of England, Scotland and Ireland, it sank deeper and deeper into poverty, until in 1786 the Archbishop of Rouen, as their superior, decided that a longer struggle was useless, and that the dissolution of the monastery was inevitable.

The Abbess, Anne Claving, with the larger number of her Religious were received into the community at Dunkerque, only to be expelled with

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them seven years later, in October, 1793, by the French Revolutionists, who imprisoned them at Gravelines during eighteen months, with two communities of English Poor Clares. In May, 1795, they were released and returned to London; they reopened a school at Hammersmith until 1863, when again a move was made to Teignmouth, and before long the school gave place to the work of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The original marginal notes are here inserted in the text.

1908.

M. J. R., Archivist,  
St Scholastica's Abbey, Teignmouth.

Jesus Maria, Joseph;  
ad maiorem Dei Gloria  
sancti patris Benedicti  
adiuva me;  
Anno Domini  
1597

The beginning of the Congregation of the English Benedictin Dames, dedicated to our Blessed lady's all Glorious Assumption, at Bruselles, and since extended, into several other howses of the same Rule & Constitutions, all of them dedicated to the Honor of our Blessed lady under some title or mistery appertayning to the Queene of Heaven; who hath ever shewed her selfe a loving Mother and favourable protecttrice to them.

Anno Domini  
1597

[To the lord Thomas Percy] The persecution beeing then great against the Roman Catholicks in England The lady Mary Percy, Daughter to the great earle of Northumberland, with many other persons of quality, leaving theyr owne country retyred into Flaunders living ther at Brussells in much retreat and Devotion. They began to think of leading a Religious life, and erecting a Monastery, and conferring thes theyr good desires with very Reverend father Holt of the Society of Jesus; and by his advise they soone resolved uppon the great worke, and to undertake St Benedict his Rule & Holy order, which of all others had heertofore most flourished in the now hereticall kingdome, confiding it might happily in future times be agayn a fit reception for them.

1598

Very Reverend Father Holt writt to Rome to the very Reverend Father Robert Persons of the same Society of Jesus to procure such permissions and Breves from his Holiness as were thought requisit; in the meane time father Holt himself procured all other graunts, from the Bishop, Arch Duch & Dutchess, with necessary approbation for my Lady Jean Barkley to come from the great monastery of St Peeters in the City of Reymes in France, with Mother Noelle and tow or three other French Religious of the hows to come to assist and setle that new establishment at Brusselles in Brabant; and all things that concerned this and divers other perticulars advaunst very prosperously and with great approbation and success; and father Holt sayd theyr first Mass, uppon the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, in the great hall desighnd to be theyr church in the hows Father Holt had taken.

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Anno Domini  
1599

[By Pope Clement the 8th participation of merits with this order; on condition of remaining under the ordinary.] The 31 of March the Breve and order from his Holiness was sighnd and sent down from Roome. Theyr hows was bought and payd for out of the breve; this order was given: To give

them the monasticall habit under the Rule of St Benedict & to admit them to profession; which after they have made, give them joy in the participation in all the graces, privileges, and indulgences which are enjoyed by all the moniales of the order, always upon condition they remain under the obedience of the ordinary.

Anno

1599

[my Lady Barkly was blest the first Abesse at Brussells] On the 14 of November my lady Jean Hartley was blest Abbess by my lord Arch Bishop of Macklin and 8 young English ladies offered themselves to be her subjects. On the 21 of November the same month and yeare, being the feast of the presentation[n] of the ever Glorious Virgin Mary, these 8 ladies, of which number my lady Mary Percy was the first and chiefe, received the holy habit at the hands of my Lord Mathias Hovius, Arch Bishop of Macklin, in presence of their Highnesses the Arch Duke Albertus and his Duchess the lady Isabella Clara Eugenia, the Infanta of Spayne; and all the chiefe of that Towne of Brusselles.

Anno

1600

The 21 of November, my lady Mary Percy with the other 7 devout ladies, being the same feast on which the yeare precedent they had received the holy habit of our Glorious father St Benedict, they made their sacred vows and profession in the hands of the most illustrious Lord Mathias Hovius, Arch Bishop of Macklin, and the lady Jean Barckley, Abbess, in presence of the affor sayd Alltesses. All the princes and magistrates of that town expressing great joy, as believing that by this monastery of holy virgines, dedicated to Almighty God, they and their City should receive many blessings.

1601

Rev Father Holt was sent to Rome & in his place very Reverend Father William Baldwin of the same Society, came to Brusselles. A person of great vertu and veneration, who had been prisoner long in the Tower of London, and was there put to the wrack, for not discovering the Confessions he had heard of some of those that were put to death for the gunpowder treason plot, a real plot by the heretics against the catholics, to destroy them, but without any intended design on their parts of any treason or want of duty to the King.

1603

Under the spirituall conduct of the holy man, the first hours of our Congregation advanced much in vertu, living in great esteeme and veneration; nor was he less of advantage to them in order to their temporals.

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1610

[By many Abbots and others of learning and sanctity] The lady Abbess and her Community desiring some constitutions should be given them by my lord Arch Bishop, proper and proportioned to the Rule of St Benedict; his lordship, taking into his consideration the dispatch of so great a work, calling to council and advising with many learned persons, compiled the Statutes and gave them to be observed upon tryall for a yeare, which they did with much zeale and exactness.

1612

The lady Barckley and her Religious, finding the constitutions to their satisfaction, as of true advantage to perfection, and not above their ability to comply with, requested the confirmation of them. So his lordship, by a particular power delegated to him from his Holiness, confirmed the statutes.

And to render them less subject to the changable accidents under severall Bishops and states, they were agayn confirmde at Roome, in the yeare 1658, June the 8, by Pope Alexander the VII.

The pope's Nuntio that lived divers years at Brussels and dealt many cheafe affairs for our Religious Dames at Brussels, when he returnd for Italy desired to have a copy of them with intention to introduce them in his jurisdiction wher ther were monasterys of Religious women. That was in the yeare 1631. And severall other Bishops that uppon occasion of coming to the knowledge of them by reason of some troubles that were for a time in the holy hows, examining and finding the tru valu of them, took them to reforme some monasterys in theyr owne Dyocesses.

This following letter was sent to me:-

1614

[from the Lady Vavousir, then Abbess in Brussels] This holy hows had both blessings and Crosses which are often times the greatest blessings. As I esteeme this was that befell thos good Religious in theyr very first beginnings, for in the yeare 1609, it pleased God to permit that a very devout good man fell into so great a disgust agaynst the monastery, and so ill an oppinion agaynst them, as he determined some great mischeefe to the hows. And beeing full of perplexity, disturbance, and ill intentions, he went to bed. It was in February, and not so hott as to distemper his rest, yet he could take non. But whither sleeping or awake - it is uncertayn - it seemde to him our Blessed lady, having all the Religious of the monastery under her mantle, warnd him with threats to desist from his ill intentions, adding that her sweete Sonn Jesus & her selfe had taken this monastery under theyr protection, and wold take, as to them selves, what soe ever shold be acted to the prejudice of the hows. Very Reverend Father Chambers was then Confessarius to the Community, a most wyse and worthy learned and sayntly man; to him this mane, who was of that Country came the next morning to Confession, willing him to impart this to the Religious, only concealing his name that it might increas theyr devotion to our deare Saviour and his Blessed mother. This relation was sent me by my Lady Mary Vavouser when I began our chronicle, and she affirmd she had it from father Chambers

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his owne mouth and very often from divers of the other auntient Religious.

[Lady Vavouser]God's providence raysed great frends to the Community in theyr beginning and, as my lady Mary Vavouser declars, cheefely by the mediation and assistance of the fathers of the Society of Jesus. Very Reverend father Holt and father Baldwene procured for them by the liberallity of some Collonells & soldiers, partly English, the summe of 12000 florens. Severall Abbots of our holy order gave us some assisting helps and summes towards our building. By the wisdom & industry of father Holt & father Baldwin other good summes of mony du to the lady Mary Percy were recovered in England & made good to the monastery. Reverend father Baldwin procured for us of the King of Spayne, Phillip the 3<sup>d</sup>, a pension of 50 Crownes a month which the hows enjoyed till the yeare 1624 then it was with drawne.

In fine, all good success came by the fathers of the Society, for father Baldwen and father Holt prevayled so with the Magistrates as they were free from all taxes, as much as the poore Clares and other mendicant orders; and they had also then granted to them all other privileges and freedoms granted to any Religious or monastery whatsoever. Many frends from England contributed for ornaments for the church and plate for the Aulter, good summes. The lady Jane Barkly, by monys sent to her, gave a fayre Image in silveer that cost (florins); the lady Mary Percy, a chalis double guilt; [Lady Anne Winter, C. Lovell, Mrs Vaux, Lady Digby] (767 — 0 florins) a payre of handsome silver candlesticks 512—0; a silver Image of St Anne — on[e] of St Scholastica - of our holy father St Benedict — on[e] of St Maure. Thes images cost 706.

The lady Peters, The lady Mary Neville, 320. Divers other ladys of Worster hows and persons of quality sent both mony and gifts.

#### For Reliques

Sir William Vavousor of Hassellwoode bestowed a goodly fayre Relique of the Holy Cross uppon the monastery which was receavde with great veneration & solemnity uppon Passion Sunday the 21 of March 1623.

At the foote of the silver Image of our Blessed Lady is placed a little glas vyolle, of our Blessed ladys milke. Ther is also part of her vayne and garment, very authentically tru. This monastery hath also severall heads of the 11000 virgins, with a larg Relique of St Ursula, and many other great Reliques.

#### For spirituall Benefactors

[The Lady Vauvosir] The Society hath binn the cheefe, and in the first place Reverend father Holt, whom as you see acted with so much success for us in our beginning establishment; very Reverend father Robert Parsons at Rome, procuring the Pope his Breve in so favourable and paternall terms as nothing could be more obliging;

Father William Baldwin who, from the beginning, for 12 years assisted and instructed the Religious of this monastery in all spirituall

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dutyes, laying a most excellent foundation in this monastery of all solide vertu and perfection according to the Rule of our Holy Father, St Benedict. Wherin most happily concurd Reverend father Robert Chambers then Confessarious of this holy hows, a most grave and prudent personn, singularly knowing in church cerimonys and dutyes, a man of a gallant presence and generous nature, most devout to our Blessed father St Benedict, skilfull in the rule and antiquities of the order, which he had studdied for many years, and was to the monastery at Brusselles Confessarious, for 20 years.

Very Reverend father Charles Manners of the Holy Society of Jesus may well be counted a tru frend & Benefactor, who when the Bishope wold have sold that hows and disperst the Community to other monastereys, diverted the blowe, and soe wisely and pyously accorded all things both within and without the monastery as settled much peace and satisfactionn between the Bishope and the Community, and with the Religious amongst themselves, to the singular comfort and edification of all both at home and abroad. This Community hath binn always very zealous in the pursuite of vertu and ambitious to pertake of the participation of merits, with the most eminent monastereys of our holy order.

[The lady Vavesir] First they enjoy the happines of a spetiall participation of merits with Mount Cassin, and for Masses and prayrs after theyr death which very justly they much esteeme, and some years since procurde a confirmation of it. And the same advauntage they have allso from Montserat, And wold gladly procure the same benifit and favour from the Congregation of St Maure.

Thus you may see in what a flourishing condition this holy hows was establishd in both for temporall and spirituall blessings. And when it was uppon the eve of dissolving by the Arch Bishope, Almighty God mercifully prevented that misfortune, and by the favour of our Blessed Lady will I hope ever protect and assist them and rays them frends from time to time, still to support them till ether England be converted or heaven be ready for them.

#### A letter

[Lady Mary Vavaser] from my lady Mary Vavouser, from whos penn I had all thes intelligences concerning Brussells and what els I shall heerafter sett downe:

I have endeavoured to amass together all the memorialls I can collect concerning this our monastery. I have binn about 60 years in the monastery and have had the happines to know all the Religious profest heere from the beginning, who were all truly vertuous good soules; but as amongst saynts contradictions will some times ryse, so in this holy Community some differences arysing, ther

was some opposition made agaynst the statutes: but the greatest part of the community stooode for them, and wee then made our humble recourse to his Holiness and the sacred Congregation for the deffense of o[u]r statutes. And God be prayed the Holy See allways protected us, but yet in that time wee suffered much but God assisted us, and all concluded happily.

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Ther is nothing I more desire than the continuance of a most cordiall correspondence between our tow howses, so much as I hope devoted to the love and practis of our constitutions, and constant dependance on the dirrection and assistance of the Society of Jesus, wher uppon certaynly depends both our temporell and spirituall good. I now send you the copy of the first confirmation of our statutes which sufficiently proves the honnor and obligation we owe unto thos sacredd lawse; and which will ever be best observde, under the guidance and dirrection of the fathers of the Society of Jesus; experience having taught us what damage wee sustayned when deprived of that benefitt and the happiness we now injoy by our return to that advauntage agayne. Soe as I trust in God we shall ever remayn constant to both and not admitt of changes,

Mary Vavousore  
Abbesse

I thought it necessary to make known from what hand I had my information to render it the more acceptable to thos that may peruse this litle abridgment of our Congregation: and as certaynly this worthy Abbess was a person of great vertu and integrity, and knew all passages and persons from the beginning, her words can not but carry full authority with them in all respects, and what I have or shall wright of the first Monastery of our Congregation I had my intelligence from the worthy lady, and shall accordingly deppend uppon it and esteem it, as I desire and wish others may doe the same. Heere followeth what Reverend father Sub Pryor, that writ our French chronicle, sayd about Brussells:-

[The opinion of Reverend father Subpryor in wrighting of this lady in the French chronicle] The family of Barckley, of which our first Abbesse of Brussells monastery was descended, is as illustrious and auntient as any of the English nation.

But for that illustrious birth is not considerable in it selfe, unless joynd with vertu, this is the foundation uppon which we are to establish what is prays worthy in this first Abbesse, rather uppon the excelency of her spirituall part, than the Nobleness of her family.

[Father Sub Pryor] This pyous lady, leaving the Kingdome of England, then flaming with herisy, retyred into France, taking the holy habit of St Benedict in the great monastery of St Peter in Rheimes, founded by St Bone in the sixth age of the Church; and having ended her compleate year of Noviship was ther profest; living with such prudence, and pyety, as she was judgde capable to be the first Superiour of a beginning Congregation and was sent to Brusselles to be ther made Abbesse of that monastery of English Benedictin Dames, which was ther to be founded.

[Father Sub Pryor] And though wee have no perticuler knoledge of the life of this worthy Abbesse, yet her having binn chosen by Divin providence to be the first of a Congregation, we are therby obliged to conceive a high esteeme of

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her person, becaus the adorable providence, who as much as possible brings all things to a unity, gives to the heads the Institutours of orders and beginners of Congregations, lights and perticuler graces, which by them he also intends shale discend to thos who shale succede them, and make profession of the same institute.

[Father Sub Prior] This divin goodness replenished our Holy Father St Father Benedict, our founder and law giver, with the spirit of all the just, in that moment in which he chose and desighnd him to establish an order in the church, in which his children ought to flourish in all sanctity and iustice, giving them a Rule caled in the Councells for its excellency the Holy Rule.

The wisdom of Almighty God observeth the same manner in order to such as he is pleased to chuse for founders of Religious orders and Congregations. Soe as we may probably confide that his holy providens had espetiall regard to the first Superiour of this our Congregation, which she governed 17 years, in the spirit of peace and charity, no hows beeing esteemde more regular or exemplar in vertu and zeale.

She was summoned by her heavenly spouse to receive, as we hope, a glorious Crowne as the reward of her pyety and good life.

She was buried in the church of her owne monastery and hath ther engraven on her Tombe, in Lattin, This following Epitaph:-

Heer lyeth

The Lady Jane Barckley, Daughter to Jhon Barckley, Knight Baronett.

She was brought from the Monastery of St Peeter at Reimes, to be the first Abbesse in the Monastery, in the yeare 1699 [*sic*] worthily discharging the office for the space of 17 years and dyed holily the 2<sup>d</sup> of August, 1616 - her age was 61 - her profession 35  
Requiescat in pace.

My Lady Mary Percy succeeded Abbesse to my Lady Jane Barckley and was ellected by all the votes of the Community upon [...] she was blest Abbess on the 14 of November 1616. As she was a person of honor by birth so was she much esteemde for her pyety and vertu. And as many remarckable things of divers kynds hapned in the time of her prelature, so I shall briefly touch the most considerable of them. But as this is no chronicle, but a litle abstract and compendium of the most noted years and accidents, I must ommit many things which may be better elswher enlargd, this only serving to retayn this out of the blank of oblivion. Many persons of quality and other good abillities came to setle in the monastery of Brussells, non[e] surpassing it in reputation both for vertu and all other excellencies proper to a Religious life. This probably drew the thoughts of the English Missioners, the monks of our holy order, to address themselves

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to this Community for some Religious to beginn a hows of Moniales under them, as my lady Vavouser gives account:

1623

[The lady Vavuser] The very Reverend father Rosendus Barlow, then president of the Congregation of the English Benedictins and Superiour of theyr hows at Doway, came to require the Bishops favour and approbation, with the lady Abbesse and Communityes consent, for some of theyr Religious to begin a hows of English of our Holy Order at Cambray. Having the lord Arch Bishope of Macklin his approbation, with the consent of my lady Mary Percy and her Community, to treat privatly with each Religious and sound theyr inclinations for such a desighn; after 4 days com[m]ending the matter to Almighty God, and treeting with all apart, there was only 3 that declard themselves ready to undergoe this great work, and willing to imbrace such hardship as can not be avoyded in thes occasions.

[Lady Vavassur] Dame Francis Gowen, on[e] of the first 8 that began this monastery, was the most Auntient of thos that went to that new beginning. She was the first Abbesse at Cambray, as her zeale and good abillities for the quire and application to all vertu well deserved.

[Lady Vavouser] Dame Pudentianna Deacon and Dame Vivina Yaxly went to assist in that establishment. They were eminently regular persons, espetially Dame Yaxly, who, after some years when our English monks had the Superintendancy in spirituall dirrection and were Confessors at Brussels monastery, Dame Yaxly, beeing then Mrs of Novices at Cambray, was brought by the monks

back to Brussels monastery with all her Novices. Sister Blunt stayd and profest in Brussels Monastery, so did Dame Yaxly remayn and never returnd any more, but livde and dyed most Religiously with much content in her owne Mother monastery.

[Lady Vauvsir] Reverend father Barlow, during his tow or 3 days stay at Brussels, perusing and considering our statutes, gave to our constitutions a most high prayse, affirming the fingar of God, the Holy Ghost, was in the composing them and that they were more conforme to the Rule than theyrs.

Thes good Religious, with very Reverend father president, tooke leave of the monastery of Brussels and began their journey towards Cambray the 3d of December 1623.

This monastery of Cambray is subject to the order, but still retayns a du affection and refers much to theyr Mother Monastery at Brussels. God preserve that spirit in all good Religious howses and grant a perfect union amongst all Religious orders. And though I have many other greater faults to blush for, yet I can affirme: [Anne Nevill abs. unworthy] I have allways made it my endeavoure, both with my owne Community and externs, to express my affection and du esteeme for all; and though I have not found the same return from some, yet I shal still continu to pursu that better practis, as having more of honnor and vertu in it, and mor conforme to a good religious spirit and conciens. This hows of Cambray are very strict observors of Silence and retreats

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and are not seen at Grates. They ar worthy good Religious persons and were for 41 years governed by a very peasible holy person that was theyr Abbesse, very Reverend Mother Catherin Gascoygne who ended her life with much repute of sanctity.

Brussels monastery being the first of the English Nation established since the fall of Religion, except that of Lisborn in Portugall, it soone grew numerous with persons of a great reputation and vertu. This made some of the wysest of theyr friends cast theyr thoughts uppon a transplantation of some of the Branches of this flourishing Cedare into another soyle.

Thos of Cambray being much com[m]ended for theyr zeale in propagating God's Honnore and the good of Religion gave incouragement to others to be willing to undertake the like ingagement, if God shold call them to it.

Very Reverend father Jhon Norton of the Society of Jesus, alias Knatchbull, and brother to Dame Lucy Knatchbull, then a profest Religious at Brussels and afterwards the first Abbess at Gant, this worthy father of that Society, beeing then actually at Brussels and In some perticuler manner dirrector at that monastery, and finding then some litle difficultyes begin to appeare and to easy a parting with theyr worthy ghostly father Mr Chambers, first by introducing an other and dividing the Community and nextly by intirly dismissing Mr Chambers.

Reverend father Norton, beeing a wyse man, discerning somme less deppendance then formerly uppon the fathers of the Society, which divers of the Religious much lamented and spoke freely to him of, but observing ther was litle or noe probabillity of redress, but by some seperation, recommending this great affayre to Almighty God. Industries were used, both at home and abroade, to bring this good desighne to a happy effect, as by the helpe of holy providence soone came to pass.

Reverend father Norton knowing that to work contrary to Gods will is to row agaynst the streame, he and the Religious made theyr first address to my Lord Arch Bishope of Macklin, the superiour of Brussels Monastery; his Lordship much approving this desighn gave them his blessing and approbation to act fully in it, but with all the privacy that could be.

It fell out very happily for the advauntage of this concern that Reverend father Norton had the Spanish tounge and many powrefull frends both in Spayn and Flaunders that were very capable to promote this affayre, and so accordingly it most prosperously and effectually succeeded. Nothing seeming harder in this Iron age than the establishing of Religious howses, so cold is grown both pyety and charity as scarsly all thos all ready founded can subsist, and



much less probabillity how to increas the number. And yet when God desighns a new establishment shall take, tis strange to see how all things fals out prosperous, and proper for it; and how sweetly Almighty God disposeth all persons necessary to this affayre to concur with it, as in a most especiall manner he did in this of Gaunt.

Theyr letters and patents from Spayne were very ample and compleate, with all the orders grants and priviledges that could be given

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in theyr behalvs to the Arch Bishope or Bishopes, Princes and Magistrates, to protect and assist them in this great work; and that with all the kynd expressions of esteeme and preference that could be wisht or desired, and soe seald and sighnde for them on the 24 day of Septem-ber, in the yeare 1623.

Thus all things went prosperously on, in a silent quyet with out noys, whilst in the interim, Reverend father Norton and others of the Society writt to frends in England to dispose and prepare them for such a work, which divers ingagd in.

The consent and approval of my lord Bishope of Gaunt, the governor and magistrates, was also procured, a hows taken and prepard in readiness for them, and all seeming now compleate.

My lord Arch Bishope of Mackline declaring it his will and pleasure that Dame Lucy Knatchbull, as Superiour by his Lordships appoyntment, shold goe with Dame Eugenia Pulton, Dame Magdilin Digby and Dame Mary Roper with tow novices, Sister Elizabeth Bradberry for the Quire and sister Lucy Bacon for a Convers Sister, to transplant themselves to the city of Gant, ther to found a new monastery. Acquitting the sayd appointed Superiour Dame Lucy Knatchbull and the rest of theyr obedience du to us, uppon express condition, by her and the other profest Religious, accepted:

That they shale carry nothing with them what soe ever out of the sayd Cloyster of Our Lady, ether in pensions, rents or process of pursuance for them any other way, then as the Right Honorable Lady Abbesse and the Community will freely give them, in witnes wher of wee have sighnd this with our own hand, and causde our seale to be fixed uppon them, in the town of Brussells, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, and in the yeare of our lord 1624.

This is the tennor of the cheefe poynts of my lord Arch Bishope his grant, and dismissal of thes Religious from under his jurisdiction and remayning in the monastery at Brusselles.

The authority of my lord Bishope and his com[m]and that no disputes or difficultys or any kynd of exceptions shold be obiected, on the on[e] side or the other, but that they shold part with all love and kyndness, to which they owne good natures easily disposed them, and ther was nothing but embracings and tears of sisterly love amongst them. But as theyr time was but short after my lord Arch Bishope had declared his orders for theyr remove, so the dispatch of so great an affayr requirde theyr whole attendance for preparing for theyr journey agaynst the appoynted day.

The lady Vavousir

1624

uppon the 16 of January, Dame Eugenia Pulton, then pryores, Dame Magdilin Digby, Dame Lucy Knatchbull, Dame Mary Roper with Sister Elizabeth Bradberry a Novice for the quire, and Sister Lucy Bacon a Novice for the convers Sisters, departed this our monastery at Brussells. I must not ommit the Justice to give testimony they were all most worthy Religious, truly vertuous, endowed by Almighty God with great abillities. Noble by birth and eminent in perfection, 3 of them were the first 3 Abbesses at Gant.

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One of my Lady M. Vavasirs letters:

“My lady Lucy Knatchbull, who was the first Abbess of thos that went to Gant, was esteemde by all for her sanctity, and belovde for the sweetnes of her charity, no passion ever appearing in her, rather an intire tranquillity; in all probations she was on highly favoured by Almighty God in prayer of an admirable temper and wisdom.

Dame Eugenia Pulton, the 2<sup>d</sup> Abbess of Gant monastery, was of holy conversation, Motherly and fitt for Government so as we parted with her with great regret, for the great esteeme we had of her prudence and vertu.

Dame Mary Roper parted young from Brussells, but with good proofs of her great sufficiency and pyety. Our Lord Arch Bishope cast his eyes on her as a personn likly to be fitt for superiority. Our Community of Brussells lovde her much. Dame Magdilin Digby was truly vertuous, sweete, compassionate and of a Noble, generous, charitable nature and very zealous for Regularity: tis probable her deafenes might hinder her beeing made Abbess at Gant.

After thes Dames ther went from us at Brussells to Gant an auntient Convers Sister, Sister Cicily Price, of a good family and truly Religious, favoured by Allmighty God with many spirituall graces, visitations, and some visions of our Blessed Lady who called her to the monastery of Gant, where she dyed with great oppinion of sanctity. She was very humble and seeking her own contempt, full of charity. I was intimate with this good sister and do deservedly venerate her for a saynt.

We have had also in this Monastery divers others highly favoured by Allmighty God, with extraordinary graces and I lament [the] neglect of recordes.

[1624] The good Religious that were dismiss from our monastery to begin a new foundation at Gant left Brussells upon the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, arriving the next day at that greate citty w[h]ere the[y] happily settled. And we that remaynd behind [were] extreemly sensible of theyre loss. Heere ends thos letters of my lady Vavousor.

[Janu 18] Beeing the feast of Saint Peetr's Chayns at Rome, the first Mas was sayd in theyr chappell. Sister Elizabeth Bradbery's portion shold have been some 3000 pound; that was the fond uppon which they begun this hows but when it came to be payd fell short the on[e] halfe, which was much to theyr prejudice and dissatisfaction.

[Lady Vavoser] Ther was also an other Novice for a Convers sister that went after the rest to Gant Monastery. Sister Teresa Matlocke, a most zealous labourious good soule, skilfull in many arts, the mistress of making and teaching the silke flowers in both the monasterys and she who first found out the art of printing leaves. And though she was much engaged in this affayre, yet did she not for this neglect thos other humble imployments of her state, [such] as beeing in the kitchen, infirmery [or] stilhowes,

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and other imployments of labour. Frequently rysing at 3 in the morning, to weede in the garden, set on her silks, and when she was cooke her porridge pot and beefe was all ways early uppon the fire. So that on[e] duty did not obstruct the other but beeing both a good cooke, surgeon and Apothicary, all went well one together. Nor was she less knowing in phisick, but beeing humble, pyous and wise she made more use then noys of it and it succeeded better. Thus you may see ther went 3 from Brussels to Gant - first Sister Lucy Bacon with sister Elizabeth Bradberr, Novice for the quire. Sister Lucy had been her servant in the world, a very pyous good soule and of much service to them in that thyr beginning, with the other tow before namde, and justly comended. Sister Ciscely Price, before mentioned, was the 3<sup>d</sup>, and the only con[v]ers sister that was profest of thos 3 at Brussells.

After this foundation was begun from Brussells, both the howses continued a Religious union and charity for each other, though in Brusselles howse ther began some difficultyes to spreade abroade as well as to increas at home. But that not beeing my business nor what I so clearly understand as that I will ingage to declare them, I shall pass them over and only touch

thos perticulers of noate that may concern the satisfaction of other howses of the Congregation as well as that of Brussells.

1636

In this yeare the lady Mary Percy, then Abbesse of Brussells, was very solicitous to put her selfe and her Religious under the congregation of the English Benedictin Munks or some other, different to what they had hitherto made use of. She and her Religious were very much divided in this perticuler.

My Lord Arch Bishope of Macklin informde of this division and disputes gave them to understand that in this affayre, which he esteemde of so much consequence, they ought to have recourse to the Holy Apostolicall Sea and know theyr sentiment. He therefore writt to the Cardinalls, to whom his Holiness the Pope had recom[m]ended the ordering the concerns of the Regulars, and his lordship received this answere;

To the most illustrious, the very Reverend Lord Arch Bishope of Macklin,

The most eminent fathers to whom his Holines hath committed the regulating the affayres of Regulars, are informed of the great payne & care wher with your greatness hath laboured to conserve union amongst thos English Benedictin Religious women at Brussells. As we have all ready often by our letters made known how much we were satisfyed and edified by your lordship's conduct and now again, by this, repeate the same sentiments, soe as nothing is to be added to the preecedent. But that after having seariously examined if it wold be advauntagious to that monastery, to submit them to the conduct and direction of the English Benedictin Fathers, or some other Congregation of Religious, it hath bin concluded, by the unanimous suffrages, of all uppon whom this union depends, that it is no ways proper to be donn nor wold it prove any benefit to thos Religious to have it soe.

Your Greatnes therefore must take care to dissipate this affayre and to do it in such sorte as that noe more be spoken of it.

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And as you shale judge most to the purpose, you shale advertis the Abbesse and her Religious, that they continu under the same conduct, which they have had from the beginning of theyr beeing founded. And that they seek not after novel tyes or love changing, but that they keepe them selves in a holy peace and union, by which they will deserve the prays and approbation of the holy sea, producing great frutt and receive many Benedictions from Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, and so crown their labours, by the recompence of most happy success.

I shale not at all dispute this proceeding or in any was give sentence, on the on[e] side or the other, beeing not to render an account of others proceedings, yet certainly thos howses that are begun under a good conduct ar[e] happy if they persever in it.

But it seems the Lady Abbess with her party, the Bishope beeing inclind for it, found reasons and means to affect the change they desired, at least to such a proportion as that the Munks were settled with them, but whether independant of the Bishope or noe I can not tell, nor will I any ways mention heere such difficultyes of that holy hows as came to bee too much blowne abroad. For certainly though ther were some disunion and disturbances yet the world can not deny but ther was much pyety and tru solide vertu ever practised amongst the; and thos troubles were but as the greater tryalls of theyre most eminent vertues. Sufferings and persecution is the tru touch stonn of our perfection, as I hope it proved with them, since all was so happily ended & settled according to theyr first beginning in time of my lady Vauousor. But we must first discharge all due respect to my lady Mary Percy, yet much can not be expected from my penn. But as when we see deepe foundations and great extent of building in the out side appearing to the eye, we easily conceave the inward appartements are answerable. So this Noble lady, beeing brought from a depravd Nation, and made the first stonn in this spirituelle building, hath by that preheminece a veneration du, & which she may justly challeng

from all that shal succede her in this Congregation. She Governed the monastery 26 years. She was of a grave sober spirit, much addicted to prayre and pyety. When she dyed she was burried in the Church of her owne monastery and had this following Epitape uppon her Thombe;

1642

**Heere Lyeth the most excellent In birth and vertue, The Lady Mary Percy. Daughter to Thomas Percy, Earle of Northumberland and Knight of the Garter who for Confession of the Catholicke faith suffered long time imprisonment, in England; and afterwards been refugde in Flaunders, she caused to be founded in the Town of Brussells A Monastery, under the Rule of Saint Benedict, in Honnore of the Assumption of the ever Immaculate, Glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, therein to receave the daughters of the gentry and Nobillity of England. Inritching it with the temporall goods which she brought and procured from her frends**

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**& allyes, she therein took the holy habit, and was the first that made ther solemnly the vowes of holy Religion. And was afterwards Ellected Abbesse, by the votes of all the Religious, comorting her selfe in this charge with much modesty and egallity, both in prosperity and adversity. And after having worthily acquitted her selfe of this imployment, she happily departed this life the 15 of September 1642, the 74 of her age, and the 26 of her prelature. Requiescat in pace.**

After my lady Mary Percy her death, my lord Arch Bishope of Macklin came to take the votes of the Religious for the Ellection of her Successor; and ther was chosen for Abbess The lady Agnes Lenthalle. She was of illustrious birth; and in the flourishing years of her youth, forsaking the world, entring the monastery at Brussells, was ther at 21 years of age solemnly profest; and according to the extreaordinary pyety ever remarked in her ever imployed in the most considerable offices and after the death of my lady Mary Percy was ellected Abbess.

And blest by the Arch Bishope of Macklin; blest on the 13 of November 1642.

She was of very worthy extraction, of a most vertuous and exemplar life, fauoured by Almighty God with extreaordinary Graces and spirituall visitations. She was very humble and of an affable mild spirit, yet vigourous and full of zeale for the mayntayning [of] regular disciplin and the observance of the Rule. She rendred her soule to God uppon the 30 of January 1651 and tho ther is no other epitaph yet made of her, yet the impress of her vertues uppon thos that livde with her, hath given so good a reputation to her, as will live to eternity.

[Jannu 13]

1651

What follows was taken out of *my lady Vavosors letters*

Dame Alexia Blanchard was of auntient extraction for Gentry both by father and mother. Her father Judg Blancharde was a person of eminent wisdom and Justice and his good Daughter inherited his perfections. She had her education under the vertuous mother the Lady Mary Neville, and was especially entrusted by her when in her long time of sickness all thos helps this lady had for her soule, was in so private a way brought to her, though in her owne father's hows, yet he beeing a protestant and Treasurer, few or non[e] was to know it, in which service Dame Blanchard's prudence was very assisting. From this lady she went to Brussells. She was profest at the age of 30, [in] 1612, and lived in the monastery with that temper and equallity as she was truly beloved by all. Her life and government was most pyous and they lamented the shortness of her prelature, lasting but on[e] yeare, for she dyed uppon the 28 of August 1652 and her death was much regretted by all.

Requiescat in pace

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[the XI]

1652

On the ii of September following, Dame Mary Vavosor was to the joy and singular satisfaction of all that knew her ellected Abbess of Brussells monastery and was blest by the Arch Bishope of Macklin. She was a person very eminent for vertu and prudence. Having past through all thos troubles and difficultyes which though I rather decline then treat of, yet all that were acquaynted with her in thos days highly com[m]ended her prudent conduct in thos troubles and disputes, which were but too much known abroade. Yet she very happily came before her death whilst she was Superiour to clos them all up and setle the hows in much peace and union under the du observaunce of our holy Rule & Constitutions, according to the first spirit in which that hows begann, under the spirituall direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, uppon whom she much depended and with a most unanimous approbation brought the whole Community to do the same.

The parants of this worthy lady were persons of vertu and quality. Her mother was daughter to Sir Thomas Manners, sonne to the Earle of Rutland. Her father Squire Williame Vavouser of Hasselwoode, a family very auntient and of much esteeme in the North but more illustrious by his pyety, sufferance and glorious Confession of the Roman Catholicke faith, for which he suffered 5 years imprisonment with loss of a great part of his estate, his howses seased and posed by heriticke Lords, all which he joyfully and patiently suffered for the love of Christ. Nor was his lady exempt from her share in thes sufferings. The example of the parants wrought so much uppon the children, as most of them tooke to be Religious, and on[e] of them, a secular priest who dyed at Antwerp on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Aprille 1660, with great oppinion of sanctity. The pyous father many years before his death obligde him selfe to the 3rd Order of Saint Francis, wearing publickly the habit and cord. And having long laboured in the vineyard of Our Lord was in a good old age, about 70, called as we hope to receive the reward of his patience & pyous sufferings.

Requiescat in pace

My lady Mary Vavouser for severall years was a great sufferer both by sickness and other great Crosses, by which it seemes Allmighty God preparde her for this great worke of setling the hows of Brussells in its first spirit and way of conduct, which she performde with efficacy and zeale but yet with much sweetness and peace.

In the yeare 1666 uppon 5<sup>th</sup> of October, she made her Jubely with great solemnity and satisfaction to all. She had then governed the monastery in quallity of Abbess 22 years and was still vigorous and able in all respects and all that knoweth her prayeth that her life may be long and happy.

But as her age was great, soe many years could not be expected; though she continued vigorous and strong for on[e] of her

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years till the winter before she dyed, then she was much exhosted; yet held out till the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1676 when she rendered her pyous soule into the hands of her Creator and was much regretted by all her Community, as well as all others that had the benefit to be acquaynted with her.

She was buried in the church of her own monastery from whence I have not yet receavde the epitaph, but shale leave place for it.

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My lady Mary Vauouser beeing deade, the next day beeing the 5th of December 1676 my lady Anne Forster was ellected Abbesse. Her Benediction day was uppon the 6th of January 1677.

Her time of government was but short, for being in hard times and the renew and temporall state low, with some other litle occurring diffcultyes that then happened to fall out. She being of a timide sensible nature and apt to malencholly past her time of government, with much sufferance to her selfe, but with out trouble to her Community by any other way but theyr discernment of her dissatisfaction in her selfe, which they labored by all the ways imaginable to divert, but could not.

I do not wonder at her sence of want of temporalls, for certaynly it is a weight that can not but lye heauy upon the hart of any Superior, let her courage be never so great & with all highly assisted by divin grace and supernaturall helps from Allmighty God. Of which I make no question, but she had a very assisting share which inabled her at least for 5 yeares with necessary resignation and exterior cheerfullness to bear it out. But then finding her hart still much opprest with deepe apprehensions by her owne great emportunity, she obtayned the Bishope and Communitys consent to lay it down, resigning it up on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October in the yeare 1682. The Bishope, with much expression of respect to her, ordayned all thos necessary considerations to be allowed to her, which are usuall in our Congregation and practis of Religion, appoynting her a chamber with a fire and a Sister to attend her and that all shold shew her the respect which was proper to the vertu she had exprest in this, her humility.

After her deposing she was most free from thos malencholly fancyes and came to be so well as to come constantly to the Quire to all but matins and so to the Sacraments as the rest. Which is a great comfort to that Community.

On the 17 of october, in the same yeare, 1682, Dame Dorothy Blundell was ellected Abbesse. A personn of very eminent vertu, a sober stayd discreete lady, and one who gave great proofes of vertu before her promotion to that dignity and on[e] that with sweetnes and charity carryeth on the weight of that charge with satisfaction to her Community and edification to all.

When our now glorious King James the 2<sup>nd</sup> was Duke of York and with his now Royall Consort, livde at Brusse[lles] in time of theyr exclusion from England, His Maiesty and the Queene exprest much favoure to this our mother monastery and still retayneth the same as by severall

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occations they have made apparant and it is beleevde, and ther is just reasons for it, that our Royall Queene will not ommitt to minde his Maiesty, when time may be proper, for monasteryes of woemen to setle in our Nation, to have that holy Community in du season cald in; which tho I do not expect to live to see, yet non more heartily desirs that they may have all the preference of honour and esteeme than I do, as bearing to that mother hows of our congregation a most sinceare affection. Nor do I want it for any of our monasterys thos espetically of our Combination, which I account so necessary a spirit for all to have, that are of a congregation as it can not be mayntaynd or held out long without that love and esteeme Brusselles hath certaynly had, as many eminent persones in it, as most howses of our holy Order hath produced. And this last weeke I had letters from my lady Abbess, very sensible of theyr great loss by the death of deere Dame M Bedingfield upon a short sickness of 3 howrs; [she] dyed pryress, and her death much lamented and regretted by the lad[y] Abbesse, and all the Religious. She was educated at Gant, ther entred the Novishipe, and was profest, and tho very sickly and for severall yeares not able to goe through with the duties of Religion, which was the occation of her remove From Gaunt, to change ayre for the recovery of her health. Her worthy father, having maryed a Duch Damoisell, livde at Brussells which caused his daughter's remove thither, and for the benefit of a good ayre, [she] was first placed in a Duch monastery of our Holy Order a litle out the Towne, but wanting Language stayd not long ther. But Conditions were made, between her father and the 2 howses of Gant and Brussells, for the resigning theyr interest in her yearly pension to Brussells, with all other necessary and requisit

agreements and free approve and consent for her entring and persevering in our first monastery at Brussels, where to Gods honore she became soe healthy and strong as she went constantly through with all the duties of Religion, rying to matins at 3 in the morning, ringing the rying belle, calling the Religious, keeping Quire with constancy and zeale. She was allways a very spirituall person and more then a litle faouored by Allmighty God b y especiall lights and graces very deppendant uppon holy obbedience and superiours by whom, and by her dirrectors, she was allways both belovde and esteemde.

I was her Superiour at Gant, in all the degrees she passed through, in the Convict, Novishipe, and profest Religious, and allsways had a perticuler frendshipe and intimacy with her. Not only to my great satisfaction and edification, but advauntage in severall occasions: and as she still continued that good spirit of love and reverence where she owed duty, so Allmighty God still increast her stock of vertu by it. For when I past by Brussels to come to Pontoys my lady Vauouser, who was then Abbesse ther, told me Dame Bedingfield was one, if not the cheefe comforts, support, and assistance she had in all occasions and continued soe till that good lady dyed. And then not to fall from the good custome she all ways had of bearing a high respect to all superiours, she fully as much applyed her selfe with an indefatigable zeale to serve the Community, and as pryoresse to assist the Lady Abbes that succeeded Dame Vauouser, which she

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did with soe much affection and duty as her death was much regretted by both the Lady Abbesse and community.

Requiescat in pace

**What of cheefe remark hath past in the monastery of Gant;  
since the first foundation in the year 1624**

The monastery of Cambray went out from Brussels to that new beginning with father Rudesin Barlow, then president of the English Benedictine Munks, on the 3<sup>d</sup> of December 1623.

[September 24] The same yeare the patents from Phillip King of Spayn were sighnde and sent downe for the beginning of Gant monastery. What past in the dispatch of thos Religious from their own monastery of Brussels to that of Gant, is already set downe.

[January 16 1624] In what belongs to the concerns of Brussels, as you may see folio 39 to folio 53, where we left them in their hyrde hows, with litle grates & accommodations as proper as that place and theyr smale purs could provide them. You may remember my Lord Arch Bishope of Mackline gave his permission to thes good Religious to go to Gant to establish ther, on condition they sholde lay no clayme or right to any thing but what the Lady Abbess & her Community of Brussels shold freely give them, and this monastery not beeing then in a condition the most flowing in temporells, so they had only theyr owne litle furnitur for theyr persons and cells, with some smale parcell of Church stuffe & howshold stuffe, that my lady Mary Percy and that Community bestowed uppon them. Thus without on[e] penny in theyr pockets they, intirly depending on providence with my lord Arch Bishope, his blessing, and that of theyr Abbess, they tooke leave of that worthy Community, not with out many tears beeing shed on both sides.

Mr Colforde, an English gentleman that with his whole family resided at Brusells, had often made journys for them to hire theyr hows and make it fitt for theyr service, but at theyr charge. This expens, with many other occurring disbursmints, in procuring the Bishope and magistrates grants with other dispatches cost them 1500 florence in debt before ever they entred the town, without any such secure way of repayment or of theyr subsisting, but only by theyr totall dependance uppon God's providence.

For though theyr hopes was on sister Bradbery's portion, 3000 pound, yet of certaynty theyr could be no assurance, in regard both of mortality and the casuality of other reasons, that might be

incident to work a change in a Novice. But they cast themselves totally upon Almighty God and his holy providence, were not dismayd with any apprehension[n] or difficulty, but with all cheerfullness settled themselves in the hows taken for them, and were most kyndly welcommed by the Bishope Magistrates and all the towne, who then seemde much joyed at theyr setting ther and hath ever since continued to express much respect and esteeme for this monastery.

Mr Chamberline, an English gentleman and of good family, beeing retyred into Flaunders with his sisters and other relations, livde ther with much pyety, and beeing cald to an exclesiaistical state

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by Almighty God & living with much exemplar vertu, was by my Lord Antony Tryst, then Bishope of Gant, made Deane in that Cathedrall; and so well demaend himselfe in that charge, as in few years after, he was made Bishope of Ipers, but enjoyed it but few years.

When our Religious arrived at Gant, my lord Bishope sent Mr Chamberlin to give them his Benediction & welcome, and they overjoyed to find so worthy a person of theyr own Nation ther, to whom they could com[m]unicate theyr affairs and confide a good dispatch as they always found by him.

For the Bishope, who had a singular kyndness and esteerne for Mr Chamberlin, made him visitor and superiour under himselfe of the new beginning, which his lordship cherished with much favoure and benevolence.

My lord Bishope of Gant finding, by my Lord Arch Bishope of Macklin his dismissin letters, that my lady Lucy Knatchbull was ordered to be Superiouris till an ellection or other appoyntment shold be mad[e], his lordship confirmed that prerogative upon her, till his lordship could have time to send to make a new ellection and that they were more in number to do it.

This litle Collonny went on very prosperously, having in the Town a Colledge of English Jesuits that much conduced both to their spirituall and temporell benefitt. For thes good fathers dealt with severall familyes in England to send theyr children and relations to this new plantatione, so as it began much to flourish with a good reputation both at home and abroad, which invited many to setle ther.

The first that offered herselfe was Mrs Mary Knatchbull, Niece to my lady Lucy, and of a most exemplar vertu and sweet humor. With her came Mrs Elizabeth Wigmore, a person of greate prudence and pyety.

Worthy Mr Vincent, a secular priest brought them over; a kinsman to my Lady Lucy Knatchbull and partner in that stock of vertu and naturall goodness with which that happy family is endowed. He was then settled Ghostly Father and continued so above 30 years with much satisfaction and edification to all.

1624

[March 21–25] Dame Elizabeth Bradbery was profest. Soone after the same yeare and month sister Lucy Bacon was profest;

Now divers came over to setle in this new plantatione. Dame Gertrude Lawson and on[e] Mrs Mary Pease, both discrete and vertuous persons very proper for this new plantation. Mrs Mary Southcott and Mrs Walgrave came, both very young but theyr discretion & vertu made it out to a great supply.

Mrs Margaret Knatchbull, sister to Mrs Mary, that first entred with an other of her Cossen Knatchbulls, came about the same time; so as ther was now a full Novishipe.

My Lord Bishope finding the hows increas so fast was now fully persuaded that all wold advauns prosperously and that he might now setle them with an Abbess.

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1626



She [i.e. Lucy Knatchbull] was elected by all the votes of her Community for their Lady Abbess and mother; the day and year she was blessed in her own church upon [March 21].

In the first design of erecting this monastery it was determined to be dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the ever Glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and to be of the Benedictine order. For that the children of our holy father Saint Benedict had been the zealous promoters of that singular grace and privilege, especially Saint Anselm, who in the year 1109 first ordained the serving of this feast. This Saint was a glorious ornament of our holy order and of the Church of England & gave us that first grounded authority of solemnizing this festivity.

My Lady Lucy caused the picture of the Immaculate Conception to be drawn as described in the Apocalypse.

A virgin, clothed with the Sun, crowned with 12 stars, having for support the moon & her foot crushing the head of a serpent; our Holy Father, Saint Benedict on the right hand and Saint Ignatius, the founder of that society whose order hath all ways strongly defended this her privilege and title - on the left hand - supports her Throne.

This afterwards was designed to be the dedication and alterpiece of all the monasteries issuing out of Gaunt; at least desired it should be so; -

This monastery increasing much both in virtue and good subjects, all went on with much improvement and advantage in all respects.

1628

Mrs Roper, sister to Dame Mary Roper, that came from Brussels following her sister's good example, entered and was professed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 1628. Another of my lady Lucy, her Niece, sister to Dame Paula Knatchbull, was professed this year 1628 on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December. She is now Abbess of the monastery of Gaunt, which with great wisdom and piety she hath governed above 30 years and still lives in perfect health, and highly esteemed by all as well for her great parts as virtue.

1629

The last that my lady Lucy received and professed was Dame Mary Trivelian on the 30 of January 1630. She was a most eminent person in this practice of humility, shrinking at no difficulty, but with much zeal and courage passing through all degrees of suffering both in sickness, and all other trials and crosses.

Out of the portions of the Dames, which my lady Lucy procured for the Quire, she purchased several houses & gardens on Mount Blandin within the Jurisdiction of Saint Peter's Abbey, with the good approbation of the prince, Abbot and City of Gaunt; who all afterwards accorded to that allotment of the said ground as amply appears by the patents granted for it.

In this purchase my lady Lucy laid out 13516 Florentine;

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and in building a small residence, chapel and quire for present use, 12000 Florentine.

If the health and long life of this worthy lady had been answerable to her zeal and courage she would have left us admirable proofs of her eminent wisdom & sanctity. But God permitted for her greater merit that her life was but short and by continual sickness much disabled to make those great abilities she had appear with so much evidence to the world, as otherwise they would have done. Notwithstanding there are still extant in Gaunt monastery many of her own writings discovering that as her endeavour was only to love, serve and please Almighty God, so his immense goodness imparted many graces and favours to her, very advantageous to her self and her Community.

Sir Toby Mathew, in the year 1652, wrote a short compendium of the lady's life and dedicated it to her Niece, then Abbess, the Lady Mary Knatchbull. In this book there are divers letters very spiritual and sublime, with many other things of great remark, both of my Lady Lucy and some of the other dead Religious of that monastery. And if God gives me life by his assistance I purpose to have it written fair and kept with veneration to the virtue and happy memory;

Anne Neville Abbesse

My Lady Lucy Knatchbull was a profest Religious in the monastery of Brusells, on the ii of January 1610. She past ther through severalle offices with much edification & esteeme of sanctity. In the yeare 1624 she, with three more profest of that same monastery, by a dismissive letter from my lord Arch Bishope of Macklin, were sent to begin a new monastery at Gaunt; where she with incomparable prudence and vertu governd that Community, and dyeing, was buried in the church of her own monastery having the inscription uppon her tombe:

The venerable Abbesse,

**The Lady Lucy, in the world called Mr[s] Elizabeth Knatchbull, dyed at Gaunt, 1629 on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, the 45 yeare of her age, the 19<sup>th</sup> of her profession, the 6<sup>th</sup> of her prelature and Superiority, in the monastery of the Im[m]aculate Conception of the ever Glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God; and of the holy order Saint Benedict; of the English Nation;**

Then followeth 6 - verses In latin; -

**Domina Lucia Knatchbull**

**Anagramate; -**

**which in English are as followeth:**

**The name of Mother clayms tears by right,  
in this sad and shadowed monument;  
She Lucy was and by her light;  
the world recavde all tru content  
but whilst on earth her rays were cast**

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**The heavens grew envious of our bliss,  
And drew her to themselves in hast;  
we to theyr wills must be submiss,  
Ther like the moone in full, she shines in glory  
and will on earth assist and ayd us in our story**

This worthy Abbesse was most sincerly belovde by her Community and highly esteemde and revered by them and by externes. For the great sanctity of her life, wisdome in management of affayres, with suavity in gvernment, joynd with a most admirable humility, Solicitude, retyrement & prayre, in which Allmighty God did her many singular and extraordinary favours;

her death was much lamented by all especially her Religious. She profest in her time of prelature in Gaunt as Dames—ii Convers Sisters: 3

The grandfather of the lady Knatchbull, was in great esteeme with Queene Mary and her successor also, Queene Elizabeth, beeing then Governor of Dover Castle. And wold he have forfitted his faith & gonn to church, shold have continued that charge and binn soone rayde to many higger dignities, but he humbly besaught her Royal Majesty to permit him to lay down his employment & retyr into Irland with his family and relations, ther to serve God more freely, the penall laws not being yet ther in force.

This family flourisheth both for ritches and antiquity still in Kent. Ther cheefe hows bears the name of Mersam Hatch, or the Hatch of Mercy from an auntient custome which they had in Catholicke times (the hows standing betweene Canterbury and Dover) to releev devot pilgrimes and poore passengers with beere breade & cheese, which stodee allways ready ther uppon a hatch at the lowere gate, at all howrs, both day & night.

This family have not only binne auntient good Catholicks, but many of them also have binn Religious, to the great edification and advauntage of thos Religious families where they have binn profest; so wee may say of this, as of that of Saynt Basill, a family of saints.

This worthy Abbesse profest in her time of prelature in Gant;

Dames for the Quire – ii

Converse Sisters – 3

1629

My lady Eugenia Pulton

2<sup>nd</sup> Abbesse at Gant.

After the death of my lady Lucy Knatchbull, my lady Eugenia Pulton, beeing canonically elected by all the votes of the Community on Saint Lawens his day the 11<sup>th</sup> of August. And upon the 17<sup>th</sup> of September the same yeare, 1629, was blest Abbesse, by my lord Antony Tryst then Bishope of Gaunt. She was descended of an auntient Catholick family but most eminently Glorious by the faithfull practis of her holy Rule.

She tooke the habit of holy Religion in the yeare of our lord 1604 on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May. She was one of thos 4 that came from Brussells

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for the beginning of this monastery of Gaunt. She was very much esteemde at this monastery at Brussells, from whence she was dismist to this beginning, and was then actually pryress, to the great satisfaction of that Community, and regret to part with her.

She was both eminent in pyety and not less servisable in Domestick affayrs. Her first care was to improve the Quire, both in saying and singing, and all other dutyes of prayre and spirituall exercyses. And nextly, like a good steward and Mistress of that Community, she was warry and frugall in all expences, vigilant over all the occasions that might advaunce the temporallityes of her young, but yet unfounded, hows.

Many things in her time were agitated of great importance & carryed on prosperously, as farr as humayn prudence and industry could extend, though it pleased God that nothing tooke the desired effect.

Her Sacred Majesty, Donna Maria, Infanta of Spayne, at her departure from that Kingdome to the Empire, out of her singular affection to the English Nation and to Reverend Father John Norton, alias Knatchbull, Brother to my lady Lucy - who was then resident in Spayn and procurator for his order at Madride, and had often opportunity to wayt uppon this Lady, at his request both undertooke & obtaynd of her father-in-law, that was then Emperor, a foundation for the Dames of Gaunt of 12000 florence a yeare. In the lower Austria, the Prince of Osnaburge was appoynted overseere & comissary in this affayre.

Alferius Crips, a kinsman to the lady Knatchbull, a man of great experience in affayrs and who had language, was sent into Germany 1631 to take possession and agitate the full settlement of this concerne.

But the same year the bloody wars broake out in Germany by the vyolent invasion of Gustavus, King of *Swethland*, who with the other confederate heritike princes took & possest themselves amongst other places in Germany with thos that were assignd for us. And at the tryst at Munster, when peace was accorded, thos were left in theyr hands so as we can only say this foundation was given us but we never injoyd it. God desighning our lot to be that of his Saynts an intire dependance on his fatherly providence.

This lady Pulton, what she first tooke up the Government, found the hows incumburd with many litle troublesome debts which she, of a frend, bowrrowed 100 pound to pay of[f], Allmighty God blessing the endeavours of the wyse Lady & the zeal of the Community in concurring with her frugallity and parsimony in all things. As far as possible theyr health wold permitt, nay even beyond

it, for of 3 things they vsed to have at dinner they tooke of[f] the last the offering dish and non but the sick had any thing in the morning; & for a yeare nothing was eaten by any between meals, but in case of sickness, and on Tuesday nights; for a yeare also, no flesh or any other thing for thos in the Refectory but bread & butter. All other things were answerably stated, advauncing the howre of prayre & prime at the halfe howre and as soon as evere mass & reading was donn, all sitting down to work. Two howres of the Canonical Office were sayd before

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the Communitye masse, and sext and 9th just before dinner. The 2nd halfe howre of recreation all settled to worke and when it rung to 9<sup>th</sup> howre silence began and on[e] redd for half and howre and sayd other devotions alowd the last part. At two o'clock it rung as usuall to reading at which all mett & disperst imediatly when it was ended with great recollection & silence, it not beeing permitted for any to speak to others or devert the time but, with much zeale, to return every on[e] to theyr owne affayres. And this was the constant practis at all other times when the Community was to meete and disperse after every duty.

Thos days that were not talking severall things were redd of history, or according to seasons or times proper. In work times, espetially in times of Soverayn Silence, ther was allways ether reading or praying. Thos that were workers by weeks, made but halfe an howre of meditation in the morning and then came to work after mass till the first peale to dinner - agayn from the time of recreation beeing halfe ended till the first peale to supper. All saying theyr beads together as they sat at work. So that generally thos that were zealous persons and made a scruple of loosing theyr time sat some 4 howrs before dinner, with the intervall of mass only, and after dinner, with out removing; they sat about 4 howrs also in the afternoone, which could not, as many feared, but much prejudise theyr health. But it was for God and good of a Community which stode then in neede of theyr assistance and service and they very cheerfully embrased the opportunity. Having then, by severall marchants, very good vent for theyr silke flowres, some times 30 pound at a time, they preferd the generall good before themselves. Thus by theyr good complyans with the desighne & endeavours of theyr worthy Abbess, and advis and assistance of the fathers of the Society & other frends, many persons of quallity and fortune came to be Religious in the monastery and by degrees severall portions were put out and all debts payd. In acknowledgment and thanksgiving to Almighty God for this great mercy and bounty from his fatherly providence; the whole Community mett in the chappell of Loretto, ther to sing a Te Deum, as well to owne our Blessed Ladys most faourable concurrance to this greate worke, as to implore her assistance for the future in all that might concern the temporall or spirituall good of this Community, she beeing theyr mother and protectris.

The hows was now full, yet many still desiring to adde to the number it was thought fitt that we shold enlarge and build what might be proper for a monastery. And we were the rather perswaded to this by reason, many of our ablest Religious unexpectedly fell into caughes and dyed, wanting ayre & conveniency of loging.

Severall frends were advise with all about this matter, and all were of oppinion that build we must and the sooner we went about it the better it wold prove.

My lady Eugenia, perceaving that building was to bee sett uppon out of hand, cast about to see what stock she could make to begin the work withal. And having some 5 or 6 thousand Pound sterli - or rather more, out at rent in England, and 1000 in Irland, with other

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mony out in Flaunders & 800 pound then to be received now, myLady reservd out of these last portions payd in 2000<sup>lb</sup> sterling to begin theyr building .

Ther was a Duch marchant on[e] Mr Hobroocke who, having livde some time in England spoke English as well as any stranger could doe. He had a great affection for the Nation and in perticuler for this Community. We came to have a correspondance with him by reaso our monys

were remitted out of England by his father, and this 2000<sup>l</sup> sterling, designed for the building, was put into his hands to bargain and pay the workmen. Other knowing persons were called to advise with about the affair.

On[e] Mr Durnass, a grave and well experienced person, of Whom we had bought that hows and grounds, which standing upon the rise of a great hill, was very hard to build upon. This gentleman, entering with Mr Hobrook and the workmen to survey the ground and measure it after he had seen the platforme & considered the situation of the place, offered to exchange and let us have another hows, in which he lived, just opposite to this on the other side the streete, on the top of the hill, with gardens and grounds very proper for building. Declaring that according to the experience he had in building this upon the hill, if carried on by the platforme, would before it was ended cost at least 7000 pounds, at which the workmen & Mr Hobrooke smiled and offered to make out the whole design for 2500 pound.

The first ston of this building was laid in the year 1639 and all when it had lay to settle, that was necessary being dispatched, advanced very prosperously but as the height of the building was to be very high, and the foundation upon the side of a hill they were accordingly to descend in laying a deeper foundation under ground. So that before the walls were a yard high above ground the whole 2500<sup>l</sup> was dispatched and there was nothing left to conclude all with. But new supplies were to be found out to go on with the building. We had then, or a little after, several in the Noviship whose portions were very probable to discharge the work, so as there was little apprehension of any difficulty in taking up monies which Mr Hobrooke showed him self very willing to lend, at 6 and a quarter. This was a high rate and lay heavy upon that hows a long time. But those persons and portions they had then in the hows, and others in prospect abroad, made them sigh to the conditions. Mr Hobrooke promising to pay the workmen as he did every weeke, the work went on a mayne.

1640

Times were in a very promising prosperity when we began our building but in 40 and 41 the troubles were grown high, and as our friends and relations were both Catholics and of the Royall party so our interest in them and the monies we had in their hand so fell to the ground. As that from the year 1642 we never received any penny of rent for what we had in England and but little of the principal many years after. And those that were both in the convict & Noviship were first away, by want of ability in their friends to pay either they

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pensions or portions. So you may conceive to what a condition this poor Community was reduced unto, and what a change this made in all things and how heavy it lay upon the thoughts & hearts of my Lady Eugenia Pulton, who had a vast building in hand, a great Community to maintain, and all temporal probabilities in so low an ebb as there was little ground for any promising hopes to build upon and it could not but shake a great heart; yet this worthy Abbess held fast upon that never failing Anchor of God, his Holy will and providence, into the depth of whose Secrets we must not search into.

If you cast your eyes upon the good success the temporal affairs had in the beginning of the Superiours time, you will see no human prudence or forecast was wanting: parcimony & economy in household affairs was very well adjusted, promising hopes and expectations ready at hand. When at an instant all fail, even necessary subsistence, for upon such a cessation of rents and all other monies and the weight of the building upon them, difficulties and debts could not but ensue to a great proportion, to make God's mercy & holy providence, the more apparently propitious to this holy hows afterwards. Yet not by that first overture of his favour which was then very promising, my Lord Marquiss of Worcester had still my lady Ann, his youngest daughter, to dispose of. My lady Elizabeth, the older, was married to my lord Viscount Montague. My lady Anne having some thoughts of Religion, which, declaring to my lord her father he encouraged her much in

them; and Gaunt monastery, beeing the hows pitcht uppon for her retreat, all things were accordingly proposed and prepared for her Journy.

We had a litle garden hows which was some times out of the enclosurr, as our extern frends might have occasion for it. This was taken by my Lord of Worster, his order and 12 young youths of the Welch nation, with a good grave priest, and a rent payd us for it, and the hows furnisht with proper movables, for theyr use. And wee were to dress theyr meate and provid them with all things necessary for 20 pound a year for the present; but if my lady Ann shold persever to be profest with us then wee were to have for portion with that lady 10000 pound in mony, besids jewells and many other advauntages, with 5000 pound land a yeare of inheritance, uppon which we were to be obliged to mayntayn that Welch colledge in the same way it was begun but without any pensions, which were to be involvd in the 5000 pound land a yeare.

1641

Thus crosses and comforts go hand in hand. But alass this was no lasting satisfaction, for though my Lord of Worster setled all with as much security and kyndness for us as was in his powre, yet his daughter, comming but not persevering with us, all this fortun and great hopes soone vanisht, & this lady went with 3 that came with her to the Carmelets at Antwerp where, in a sharpe fitt of sickness soone after, she dyed; but was profest more then a yeare, with 5000 pound portion taking in several upon it. This really was a blowe that fell heavy uppon the whole Comunity, but was certaynly most felt by my Deere lady Eugenia, for though she bore it out with a Religious courage and

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cheerfullness, yet soone after we began to find a great change in her. By a decay of memory which returned her to a state of innocency, for even then she was capable of the practis of pyety, so far as frequently to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Aultar with sighnes of tru devotion, but wholly insufficient in all things of government and domesticall affayres. All tryalls and remedies by phisick for some monthes were applyed but no alteration appearing probable, the phisitians declaring ther was no hopes of her recovery, the Comunity made theyr addresse to the Bishope for theyr ellecting an other Superiour.

At first his lordship seemde unwilling for any change and secondly he wisht us only to take a Co-adiutriser but the Community persisting in the positive demaund of an other Superiour, his Lordship sent the cheefe pastor of the Cathedrall to come and examine the affayre, both by speaking with the Abbess and others, as he did. And it is strang with what a Religious temper my lady Eugenia comported her selfe, declaring how unworthy she was to governe such a Community of Saynts and how much she desired to be deposed and render it to a better hand, & this so rationally as the good priest began to thinke it was rather our inclination, then any just caus for it on her side. But by degrees finding a sufficient caus to prosecut the matter, he began to tell us that the Bishope wold be with us the next morning and that he had appoynted him his interpretor, speaking some litle English. This very much surprizd us, beeing a short warning and a positive appoyntment of an interpretor, which was rather to be at the Comunityes choyce, the by any other way of ordering.

The Religious civilly objecting, his not having sufficient knowledg of the language for that affayre, he returned to my lord Bishope to give account how all had past, and our refusing him. Uppon this my lord Bishope sent Mr Hobrooke to be interpretor but his beeing no priest or Religious man soone cut off that pretence. Then his lordshipe sent an Irish priest, Mr Dalton, the pastor of the great hospitall, a freind to the Community and a man without exception for abillily. Yet the Community remaind constant to the refusall, alleaging that they wold not quitt theyr priviledg of making theyr owne choyce, for no person living. Mr Daldton, returning to the Bishope, he sent the Deane and 4 more of the chapter to examin our Rules and constitutions to see uppon what title we made so strong a plea for our selvs, to refuse whom his lordship namde.

Wee imediatly gave them the Latin statutes to peruse, and poynted out the place where it gives the Community the choyce of tow Religious men to be present with the Bishope and assist in

theyr behalfe in thes concerns. They also showde the Deane that the Statutes were confirmde by the Popes authority, and so were not lyable to those frequent changes, as other Constitutions are, that are made by the single authority of the Bishops only approbation. They tooke the statutes with them and went to the Bishope, where ther was assembled all the greatest Divins to consult this affayre. In the meane time our Community, meeting in chapter, concluded to wright a petition to the Bishope to request that in granting them theyr priviledge to chues the assistants that were to attend

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his lordshipe in this affayre, he wold also approve the choice they made of tow of the Society - very Reverend Father John Faulkner & fathere George Duckett, both then resident at Gaunt; and father Faulkne, the only man that beeing a Jesuit the Bishope admitted to visit and discourse with him. For though in former times his lordship had binn very obliging to the fathers of the Society, yet of late that was growhen cold, and rather a distance on my Lords side, which some conceaved might haue proceeded from some perticuler accidentall occasion that had raysde some difficultyes on all sides. And it is probable enough, and to this may be added that Jansenius, that was promoted from beeing Deane of the Cathedrall at Gaunt to be Bishope of Ipers, was entirly mayntaynd, he and his Doctrin, by my Lord Bishope of Gant, and his Clergy, as also by my lord Archbishope of Macklin, who joyntly with the Bishope of Gant, writt to Rome or in some perticuler manner soe declarde for ]ansenius and his wrightings. As they were both excomunicated and exempted, at least in a perticuler manner, from all publick appearance and acting whilst theyr caus was in tryall at Rome; in which intervall of things beeing decided, our affayr fell out to be acted, which made the Bishope, as wee conceavd, willing- to declin the having the Jesuits to attend uppon him.

The petition beeing written & sighnd by every perticuler person of the Dames, it was sent away to the Bishope. And his lordship was much satisfyed with it and that assembly of divins and priests all concluded that we had just reason to mayntayn our right. And so the Deane, comming back, brought the Statutes to us, much commending the zeale and union of the Community and assuring us that my lord Bishope was much better satisfyed with our refusall than had wee binn less zealous of our obligation, and that wee might take the tow fathers wee had namde to his lordship in our petition, which he very willingly granted.

This poynt of chusing thos that are to attend and assist the Bishope at visits and ellection of the Abbesse is of so great importance to be mayntayned in vigor. As shold it ons come to be at the Bishops appoyntment you wold hardly find it restord agayn to its former latitude. And though at visits it may seeme rather a restraynt then advantage, yet certaynly it is very emporting. And considering the freedome all may have of wrighting theyr mind to the Bishope when they please. They were better in private cases that they wold not have known to come from them, raheer to make use of theyr penn, than exclude that benefit from the generall of having tow present, which can not but ballance all sides with much equity and prudence, as experiens will best make appeare in this occurrancess.

The day and howre beeing come that was desighned for this great action, the Community hauing made 3 days retyrment to prepare for a new ellection.

All being assembled in chapter, my lady Eugenia very humbly presented herselfe before my lord Bishope uppon her knees, and ther made her resignation, delivering up her pastorall stafe, and with much cheerfullness and respect receavd my lord Bishope's blessing. His lordship, much commending her vertu in this great act and giving her thanks for the well governing her charg, with a command that she shold

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be attended and treated with all respect, as the statuts appoynts. She went forth of the chapter to her chamber, as not beeing judged capable to give her voyce for her successor. Her surrender caused tears in many eyes, but the edification her religious comportment gave to

all was of much comfort and satisfaction. Having thus sweetly layd down the stonn of Governmen she now seemed to be retyred into the lland of peace, injoying the pleasing calme of a disingaged life, free from all cares, but how to dispose her soule for the sweet embraces of her heavenly spows, when he shold pleas to call her from a temporall to an eternall life. She still retayned her owne loging chamber, with the same Sister to attend her, and on[e] of thos Dames that formerly had belonged to her service to be still with her to serve and assist her. The Community, continuing the same duty and respect as to theyr mother, visiting of her and demanding her blessing, everyon[e] striving who shold express most duty and affection to her, watching with her tow and tow a night, for aboue a yeare together. When my lady Mary Roper was blest, the whole time of the cerimony my lady Eugenia remaynd uppon her knees before the Quire grate, with such a modest humble sweet compartment as Collonell Gage, and some other English of quality then in the church, who had binn well acquaynted with her in time of her beeing Superiour, with whom she had dealt many affayrs of consequence with much conduct and discretion, could scars forbear tears to see her so inconcernd in what so nearly related to her.

And she was the first that decended to the quire dore, ther to meete my lady Mary Roper, and offer her obedience to her, which she did uppon her knees with so much cheerfulnes and humillity, as made all ther admire her vertu, & from that howre she rendred all imaginable testimonys of love and duty to her, as beholding God in her, for whose love she took delight to become again a subject, and live and dye under obedience, and pay respect to a Superiour.

1642 the 11<sup>th</sup> of Decem

The Mass of the Holy Ghost, according to custome, having binn sung and all things in the usuall forme dispatcht, they came to the giving [of] theyr votes for the nu ellectcd Abbesse. And at the first scrutiny the lady Mary Roper was chosen mother and Abbess to this Community. My lord Bishope gave her his blessing and seemde much satisfyed with all that past in this great action, encouraging the lady ellect and promising his fatherli assistans & protecting favour on all occations.

Ther was nothing wanting to have completed our happines in this lady, had Religion only depended uppon naturall abillityes or interiour graces. For in thes she was incomparable. But alas ther must be a sufficient fund to subsist by or all the rest will come short of what we most desire. For perfection itselve is prejudist where necessarys are wanting and, though we vow poverty, yet Religion it selfe can not subsist with out such a proportion of temporalls, as may mayntayn a Community, o ut of such distresses, as must both distract and destroy them if not releavd in time. The worthy Abbesse was of a most Noble and generous spirit; she had a large hart and propens

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desirs to doe great things for the Glory of God and good of the Community. And the more intently she suffered, the more streight the prison of impossibility seemed to her to accomplish even what was decently necessary for the service of God and Religion. She was a person most accomplit, in all thos gracefull quallitys which could possibly give luster to her Noble birth or Abatiall title, which gave her a great reputation in the world abroad, and much esteeme at home, but she had the misfortune to begin her government uppon infinitt disadvantages. For besides thos resulting difficultys from so great debts, and great number of Religious with litle or noe revenews to mayntayn them, rebellion in England with civill ware, with that horrible sacrilegious murder of the King himselfe, had so disordered that poore Nation and involvde all our frends and relations in such a sea of suffering, both theyr persons and estates, as wee became victimes in the same sacrifice; for they became incapable to pay ether rent or principall, so that for about 7 years and some few



months, which was the full time of her government, she had nothing but the portions of thos she profest to subsist by. Her owne hart was not less sensible of the Cross, though she carryed it with much cheerfullness and allacrity. So as, some conceavd, she did not feele it to that degree as but too late we found she did. For she wold often say her harte was girded round with Iron and nothing could give her ease, yet still she bore it out with courage and conformity to Gods best will.

The disturbance of thos times drew many of quality out of England, both Catholicks and Heretickes, and as they came often to the grate, so answerable to theyr concerns my lady had often occation to treat with them. Now amongst other gifts that God had bestowed uppon her, that of convinsing & converting hereticks was remarkable in her. To this advauntage, the modesty and gravity of her Religious behaiour and thos convincing reasons, which with such an humble majesty she would dilever, wrought more effectually uppon theyr minds than her elloquence, yet she was not wanting in that art but was as well verst in all poyns of conversation as anyone wold be.

My lady Duchess of Buckhingame was forced by the trouble to fly both from Irland and England, retyring into our monastery for 15 monthes, living with much pyety in a solitary life, taking soe much content in the monastery, that had not the necessity of her maryed condition forst her away, she wold ther have ended her dayes. And this lady layd then the dissighne of beginning a hows in Irland, imparting thes thoughts to Reverend father Duckett who, I suppose, gave her permission to aske 3 or 4 whither or no, if God shold enable her to establish a monastery they wold be contented that she shold demaunde them of the Superiours, they wold submit; to which they consented.

1650

King Charles the 2nd in his journey to Scotland, the 2nd yeare of his Raygne, sent word he wold visit her ladyship and her Community, as he did uppon the 18 of March 1650. And His Majesty was pleased to express so much veneration for her vertu, and esteeme of her prudence, as to comunicate with her some affayrs of importance and

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recommend him selfe and theyr success, most earnestly to hers and the Cornunityes prayres.

His Majesty was pleased to express him selfe much satisfyed with *the* comportment of the Community. Inlarging him selfe much in theyr comendation to my lord Bishope of Gaunt, then in the monastery to attend uppon his maiesty. Assuring the Bishope, and others of the Spanish, then ther with his maiesty, that if ever God restorde him to his kingdome this Community shold ever find the effects of his favour.

Wee must now divert a litle from going on with my lady Mary Ropers time of prelature and returne to lay my lady Eugenia in her Tombe. I have already told you how weak this good lady was growne, so as to be watcht by tow a night, yet she continued like an innocent lambe only capable of the Sacraments and spirituall things. But as she grew more languishing so she seeming les sensible. She comunicated seldome, yet when the day and howre of her death aproched, she seemde rousde up to receive, with much pyety, her holy viaticum. All beeing assembled and assisting her then with theyr prayres, and performing all other dutyes to her with great respect and affection. After she had binn annealled she peasibly and happily rendred her pyous soule into the hands of her Creator, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Nouember 1645.

All thos dutyes belonging to her death and buriall, with what so ever other obligations du to an Abbess, were exactly dischargde for her.

Thus having governed 13 years & and some 3 months-laying then downe her Crozier and surrendring it in Chapter, she livde some 3 years more in a more privat way till she was summoned to the way of Eternity;

she profest Dames 31

Convers Sisters 11

she was buried in her own Church with this Epitaph upon her grave:

**Requiescat in pace:**

**Heere lyeth buried, the most Reverend Dame the Lady Eugenia Pulton – 2<sup>nd</sup> Abbesse of this monastery, who happily dyed in our lord 1644 the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, the 65 yeare of her age, the 41 - of her profession & 16 of her prelature;**

**Heaven gave her as a starr to preside and illustrate; in the conduct of others-  
A Virgin, noble by her birth, but more noble by her vertu. A saint by her Religion and pyety,  
venerable by her dignity;**

**Amiable for her Candor, and sincerity of hart;**

**Admirable for her zeale in observing the Rule & customes of Religion;**

**By thes she triumpht over death, and by her vertu gaynd  
heaven;**

**Her chaest pure soule, leaving to us the spoyles of her innocent dust, inched in this  
Tombe;**

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She governed 13 years 3 months

she profest Dames for the Quire 31; convers sisters 11

The memory of my lady Eugenia's vertues did not dy with her, nor the affection of the Community which they still retayn to that maternail care and kyndness they ever found from her.

My Lady Mary Roper, finding dayly the weight of many occurring difficultis, by want of supplyes of monys from England, the Bishope very severly opposing, as he had reason, the professing any with out theyr portion. 4 novices went out all to gether and divers others stayd some 3-yeares. Some seaven befor they were or could be profest. This gave much affliction to my ladys sensible and generous nature. But she supported all with much sweetnes and patience but yet grew dayly much indisposed in her health.

The Duchess of Lorryn, then resident at Gaunt, whilst her procee was handled at Roome and she, by the Popes order, confinde to remayn in so many leagues distant from the Duke, procurde leave of his holiness for 12 times a yeare to enter with 3 or 4 to attend her into our inclosure. And she fayld not, to make use of this priviledge, and as no person was better verst, both in the civill and Religious way of entertayning persons of that quallity, than my lady Mary Roper, so no person could better discharg them selves of such a cerimony than her ladyship could do, and that to so great a degree of satisfaction to the Duchess, as she declarede her selfe incomparably pleased with my ladys way of treating of her, and as highly edified with the Community and theyr Religious comportment.

Dame Christine Forster, Daughter to Sir Richard Forster, was then a young Religious and spoke French excellently well and was my ladys interpret[er], which she dischargd soe well and soe much to the Duchesses content, as proved of advauntage afterwards, when my lady Christina was sent to Bullogne.

My lady was all ways very zealous of all the dutyes that belonged to the Divine service and though her health was but weake, having binn ill all winter, yet now in holy week, upon Palme Sunday, coming to Evensong, she sung with much alacrity the magnificate antiphon. The words of it were: I will strike the pastor and dispers the sheepe.

The next day she was taken with a shaking agu, which soone tooke her out of this life; and the yeare following the Community was divided & some of the Religious sent to Bullogne.

All sorts of endeavours were applied to prevent death and restore this worthy lady to her health, but with out affect, for each moment the approaches of death seemde to be so neere at hand. This holy weeke was the last of a preparation for the Jubily, which fell very advauntagious for my ladys satisfaction. She made a generall confession and most pyously disposd her selfe to gayn that great pardon. On Easter eve she comunicated at 12 at night, not beeing able to fast till morning to gayn the Jubily. Next day, she lay very quyet till the consult of physitians came to give theyr orders to her. They & the Community were much amazed to find so great a chang to the wors, so that now all hopes of recovery was layd aside, and theyr

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endeavours applyed to have her take the last Sacraments, as she did imediately with much devotion.

The court of England was just removde into Holland to attend his Maiesty for his Coronation in Scotland. Some of the Nobillity that past by Gaunt and rid post, gave the King notice of my ladys desperat condition. His Maiesty imediately sent away Doctor Frazer, with a command to employ all his skill to save the life of so wise & worthy a lady and that he shold take no recompence for it but from his owne Royall hand, assuring him a larg reward if he shold bring him the good newes of this ladys recovery. Doctor Frazer came uppon Thursday in Easter weeke, but my lady dyed the night before his arrivall and was layd out in the Quire. He lookt seriously uppon her and sayd ther appeared so much wisdom and majesty uppon her dead brow as sufficiently witnest what great treasurs lay hid with in when she was alive.

This lady was allways extreamly apprehensive of death and when she first fell ill we were in much payn how to divert all things from her sight or hearing that might make her reflect of beeing daungerously sick or dying. But Allmighty God, so disposd, as that after the first day she seemd unconcernd for all things but God, and how to love & pleas him. The transports she had were only in restles sleeps and some expressions not corresponding to the sence but nether any thing appeared in her that was extravagant or vyolent.

As my lady, her selfe and her whol family, had ever showde a great respect and dependance on the Reverend Fathers of the Society, soe now at her last howre she exprest a great desire to be assisted by them. And the fathers fayld not to comply with thi, her inclination so far as that day and night tow of them were by turns watching and praying by her. From the time she tooke the Sacrament to the moment of her death, which was from Sunday till Wensday; in all which time the Community was not less watchful and attendant uppon her by day and by night, extreamly sensible to loose so good a mother and gallant Superiour. But what God hath determined can not be prevented. So when her howre was come she most peasibly, and with all the evidences of a happy death, tooke leave of this fading world, surrounded by all her children who, in sighes and tears, payd theyr last dutys to her and fayld not with theyr pyous prayres in that last moment to serve her. She profest for the Quire Dames 13; Convers Sisters 4.

She dyed on *the* 21 of Aprill 1650

And was buried in the Church of her owen monastery.

My lord Christopher Roper, her Nephew, beeing then at Gaunt, caused a black marble stone to be provided to lay uppon her grave and the following Epitaph to be ingrauen uppon it in Lattin.

Requiescat in pace

**The Lady Mary Roper**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Abbesse of Gaunt Monastery**  
**The ornament and delight of the Noble Englis Virgins of this Religious Convent;**  
**She was Daughter, Sister and Aunt to 3 Noble**

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**Barrones of Tenham, Peeres of England. Her youth, birth, beauty, naturall goodness &**

**sweetness of conversation**  
**made many Lords & persons of quallity ambitious To match with her**  
**But she dispysing all the world Holds Glorious Wold love nothing but Jesus Christ**  
**And to Him she consecrated Her selfe in a Religious Cloyster**  
**living in that holy profession 31 years Obeying with Humillity and comanding with modesty**  
**Heaven and the Cloyster grew emulous to have her I salute you o most holy and Noble virginall**  
**Dust;**  
**Be you in eternall peace;**  
**This is the desire of him who hath learnt by your example The way of peace and saluation**  
**Christopher Roper & Barron of Tenham, Peere of England And Nephew to this worthy Abbess**  
**dedicates this to her Memory**  
**Requiescat in pace,**

1650

After the funerall was past and all duties to the dead dischargd and that my Lord Bishop could tend to take the votes, the 3 recollection dayes ordayned by the Constitutions, the Mass of this Holy Ghost, beeing dispatcht and all having comunicated expecting the summon to the ellection. His lordship comming into the Church & tow fathers of the Society chosen by the Religious to assist my lord, ther ready to attend him, with his lordships chaplin, secretary and on[e] or tow of the cheefe clergy. With our ghostly father and on[e] or tow English, which was winkt at in that circumstans.

The votes were given & my lady Mary Knatchbull, by all the voyces but 4, which was given to my lady Catherin Wigmore, my lady Knatchbull was ellected Abbesse, to the great joy and satisfaction of all. Her ladyship very humbly desired not to be burthened with such a weight, but my Lord Bishop, incouraging her, gave her his blessing and took leave. The lady Ellect and her Community, retiring to the chapter hows, ther performing all ordayned by the statutes, and then went to sing the *Te Deum* in the Quire. [1650] On the 15 of May she was blest Abbes in her owne Church with much solemnity and joy to all that had the honnor to know her worth and merits. And as the fame of her vertu and wisdom, as well as the excellency and elloquence of her penn, which she had employed as the chaplin to the tow preceeding Ladys in serving this Community, had rendred her famous and known in all parts of Europe, so did ther many congratulacions come to give her joy from all places, which she received with her accustomed humillity.

1654

This wyse lady soone found out that the most pressing affayr of her Comunity was theyr temporall distresses. Therefore next to the service of God and advauncing his honnore by the du observance of

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Religion she was perswaded that if she began with the discharg of her duty to God & Religion he wold not fayle to assist her in what must cost her soe much care. So that, in the first place, she establisht the keeping of all Rules most exactly. Thos of the Quire and other spirituall exercyses had the precedence. Then finding that many sickly & weak persons could not pass without some consideration, she at least endeavoured to bring it into as strict a compass as could stand with charity and theyr necessity. To which end a strict law was made that for on[e] whole yeare leave shold not be granted to any to eate any thing betweene meals, but for theyr health, and even this was tyed to certayn places, as the refectory, the Infirmary and the Lady Abbess, her Chamber. I [Anne Neville] was then thow unworthy pryoreess and I can affirm it was soe invyolably observd, as I can say with truoth, there was not an aple or a nut eaten out of order, but was acknowleged with as much humillity and sincerity, as if it had binn some great fault; and this years exactnes and good practis of regularity & mortification setled so good a custom in the Community as

gave great edification to all and true advancement in virtue. Taking of the least liberty in that kind, thus from time to time and every year, when she and the Community took the spiritual exercises, she laid hold of some one especial Rule to take to heart, to improve the Community's virtue by.

The King of England often entered the monastery and expressed much esteem and respect to this worthy lady, conferring with her and intrusting her with many affairs of great concern & consequence in the transport of his letters and the dispatch of much business that most imported his Majesty and that then afflicted Nation. In which it pleased God to bless her with such good success as never any of those affairs she had the conduct of in sending letters or the like, ever came to miscarry.

This was the time in which this worthy lady expressed how great a concern she had for His Majesty, who then wanting money & supplies in that kind. She, with the consent of her Community, engaged her monastery to those persons that upon that condition promised to lend the King money. My lord Chancellor Hyde, giving caution to save her and her Religious harmless, if it should please God to preserve His Majesty & restore him to his own. But for the present, many rather blamed her loyal generosity than commended it. But she went on in her own accustomed sweetness without disputing their disapprobation or justifying her own action, leaving all to God.

When the prince had nothing in his power but honors to bestow, and express kindness and favor to those that serve and express love & duty to him, those that are not then contented with what is in the prince's power deserves not to taste his bounty when his ability may be more complete. But this generous minded lady was so far from expecting any other recompense than the King's acceptance of what service she could do His Majesty or any of his Royal party, as she still added her own daily endeavours to serve him and his, and employed all the friends she could make to assist him;

Thus true, this did not increase her revenue or give any present

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ease or assistance to support that debt contracted by the building or help her to maintain a numerous family. So as she began to cast about what relief could be had from any other way, as we owe Mr Hobrooke more than 6000 pounds, and payed him 200 pounds a year interest. And as that year came above & we failed the payment, the interest was joined to the principal. The security he had thus was the house itself with all the ground, goods and movables and what so ever the Community should be worth till that debt was fully discharged.

This lay heavy upon the house, besides other debts for house hold expenses and little or nothing received from England, so as all the world declared we should be ruined without relief unless there was a stop put to the interest. Upon this, her Ladyship made her address to the Bishop and the Cathedral chapter to treat with Mr Hobrooke and bring him to some more easy conditions. After many meetings and proposals, the last agreement was that from this time the yearly rent of interest should cease and no payment of it expected, till the monastery was out of debt, all entirely built and had a good foundation and revenue, so as that without prejudice they could pay the arrears of the interest money; nextly that every one that was for the future professed a Dame of the Quire, Mr Hobrooke should have 200 pound of their portion, and that what so ever summe they received less or more. Upon these conditions writings were drawn, signed and sealed on all sides and inviolably observed by the Religious and their worthy Abbess. Though it was many years after before the whole debt was payed, not withstanding this gave them a capacity to compass it in time, as through God's assistance they did. But the arrears of the interest money is not yet paid which gives them prejudice sometimes, for Mr Hobrooke, his heirs, do much pursue the house for it. And when they can hear or know of any monies belonging to the monastery if they can come at, they presently seize upon it, and take all the advantages they can against the monastery; but all that conscience could exact was discharged.

1652

Though this put a stop to the great increasing weighty debt yet it gave no despatch of payment or bringing any monys into purs, for which this discreet Lady tryed all the ways in the world; and at last by the help of friends, my lord of Bristow in particuler, who had then a great powre in France, and was Highly in favoure with [the] Queen Regent, and had procured of her a grant for an establishment for some of our Religious at Bullogne. This history is so excellently pend and set down by my lady Mary Knatchbull as I shall mention no particulers of it heere. The personnes that went first for this great work was Dame Catherin Wigmore, pryoresse; Dame Paula Knatchbull, Celleriere; Dame Margaret Markhame, Guardrobe; Dame Eugenia Thorold, Thoughrier; Sister Agnes Pickering, Convers.

Dame Christina Forster was not accounted as of the Number though she was sent to assist them as interpreter for a time.

Upon the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, in a most bitter cold season the river all frozen and they in a pleasur boate, exposde to wind and weather, began theyr journey, logging the night at the English monastery at Bruges, and then at Nieport and Gravelin passing by many sad incounters, by

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the way. At Calis they lay in a French hows, and the next day arriving at Bullon at that towne gate they met a command from my lord Bishop that they shold not enter that towne; under excommunication. This so much frightened them as they knew not what to do, but that good priest that came with them, going to the Bishope and assuring his lordship that what had binn omitted in order to his lordships having not been made fully acquaynted with the affayre, nor sufficient mayntenance for them made out to his lordship, shold be amply supplied or els they shold return again and not remayn a burthen upon the town. Upon this condition they were permitted to enter but were to lye private and go early to Mas in the morning, as they did the next day beeing the 18 of January. Theyr arrival the night before, on the 17, the feast of great saint Antony, was just the same with the first beginners of Gaunt hows which was a great encouragement to them to hope that theyr success wold prove as happy. Many rubs and difficultyes dayly occurring held them more then a litle time unsettled. At last Sir Richard Forster sent them 2000 pistols to begin theyr foundation. upon which my lord Bishope of Bullogne permitted them to proceede to elect an Abbess. His lordship demaunded tow more to make theyr number more compleate and then Dame Lucy Perkins and Dame Francisca Carrington was sent to them. When they were all met together and had made theyr 3 days of retreat to prepare themselves, Reverend father Jhon, Clerk of the Society of Jesus beeing chosen by them, with another assistant, the Bishope with his secretary etc having sayd Mass of the Holy Ghost and the veni Creator, breefly exhorted them to a du discharge of theyr duty in this great action. The votes were given and by all the voyces but her owne Dame Catherin Wigmor was elected Abbesse, August 18, 1653.

The Bishope with all the assembly gave theyre applaus to this action and giving them his blessing took leave, returning to his pallas and they to theyr chapter hows to perform the usuall cerimonies. By the last tow Dames that came from Gaunt, my lady sent all things necessary in the compleatest manner for the installment of theyr new Abbesse. The Duches of Lorryn sent the Crozier and tow Rings, my lady Knatchbull supplying the rest.

The Benediction of the Abbesse was upon the 18 of October in the Bishops pallas with all du devotion and solemnity, his lordship continuing his paternall kyndnes for them . All went on very prosperously and the tow Dame Ropers, with severall others, came to the Convict and noviship. My lady Abbesse, whos vertu was compleate, made it still more and more to appeare the higher she was raysd the lower she cast her selfe at the Feete of all, imploying her self in the humblest actions, and attending with infinit zeale to ground the hows in the tru practise of all regularity, both for Quire and disciplin in all places and times; in which she her selfe held all ways the first rank. This hows of Bullogne beeing sent out by my lady Mary Knatchbull from Gant, and till the ellection and Benediction of my lady Wigmore, depending entirly upon her and that Community. I have not in

the first settlement made any division between the tow howses, but for the future; as Bullogn came to be independent on Gant hows. so we will divide the concernes of both places and first go on with Gant.

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This great work and new establishment being so happily settled my lady Knatchbull then made the Election of Officers which, with the Bishops leave, was transferd till Bullogn hows was out of danger to return. Tis strange with what fervour the Community began anew upon the renown of some that were gonn to grow emulaus to imitate theyr vertu and supply theyr places not only personally but even spiritually to, soe that it was – *ecce novo facio omnia*, all concurring in a most espetiall maner to advaunce perfection in them selves and the Comunity. The Duke of York and Gloster with all the other Nobillity, before they left Flaunders, came by degrees as the King himselfe had to take leave of my lady Knatchbull and give to her and hers severall testimonyes of theyr esteeme and good wishes, hartily desiring prayres: which was indeede our dayly task to pray for them. His Maiesty beeing now upon the eve as it were of that happy day assignd for his return to England, sent away Mr William Roper of Tenham with 500 gold pistols in a purs, with a letter in his owne hand to my lady and her Community. The letter was:

My Lady Abbess, I have received yours of the 25<sup>th</sup> and I do assure you that as I have ever since my beeing in thes parts received many evidences of your good affection to me, so I shall never forget it but shall all wais have a perticuler kyndness for you and care of your Community, as you shall find by my taking all occastions to oblige you. For the present, I have ordered the chancelour to send you 400 English pecies in gold for the supply of your present distresses, and then shale find that hereafter I will do all I can to make the condition more easy, and to approve my selfe,

Your affectionet frend

C Rex.

This gave much satisfaction to all persons, and great reliefe to the hows. You may imagin noe joy was wanting or care to provide to solemize his birthday and Coronation. First with donations for which the Bishope sung high mass, the Trumpets playing the bottom of the Church before he began; and agayn after Mass, before and after the *Te Deum*. At night great Bonfires that in the street consisting of as many Tubs set on a high piramid which the coaches could pass through: the number of the tubs were the years of his age: The Trumpets and weights as well as the vyolins playing in the streets at severall windows by turns. Bonfiring and drinking the kings health by frequent companyes of the Nobillity and gentry that came and sent presents. This lasted but on[e] night, but the bon firs within wer not kindled till the other was extinct; where my lady and the Religious sung catches and spent some howrs ther: and 3 days of feasting with something extraordinary, and the whole week recreation.

In the yeare

1661

His Majesty, beeing now peasibly settled in his kingdome and Throne, my lady, finding noe evidence of the Kings bounty yet appeare and theyr debts and wants crying aloude, taking councill of the wisest and best of her frends she desighned to surprize the King not by

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letters but a personall visit, which, not with standing, she carryed the affayre with much secrecy. Ther was at that time a whisper in the hows and in reallity a proposition from some to make a new beginning hows, some sayd at Saint Omers where the Abbot of Saint Bertin's wold give them a hows, and contribute other provisions of woode, corn, butter and the like. And though the Society, at least the cheefe of them were much agaynst it, yet this rumour was not quasht, but another added to it about Dunkirk, which was the subiect upon which my lady proposed her journey, and

having the Bishops leave, and the Communityes. The Communityes consent[ing] in the latter end of October, her ladyship, with Mr Gerrard, Dame Mary Carrille and Sister Elizabeth Tovey began theyr journey for Saint Omers and so by Callis for England. From Saint Omers she writt the community word of her further journey for England and hopes of som considerable bounty from the King, requesting theyre prayers for good success. She found a most kynd reception from his majesty with all favour possible. My lord chancellor Hyd was then high in favour, much for her advauntage for his majesty assignning her 3000 pound sterling, my lord chancellor hastning the dispatch of at least 1000 which was a great favour. The Duchess of York presented her with a payre of fayre gilded silver candlesticks, divers others gave her very noble presents. Mr Carrille of Harting, Dame Mary Carrille her father, both entertaynd and mayntayned her and her company during theyr stay ther.

1662

About the latter end of March my lady came back by Dunkirk wher she found the governor and all the commanders civill and obliging to her. This made her soe deale with frends in England to procure leave of his Majesty for our setling ther, which he made no difficulty to grant, uppon condition that the poore Clares wold let us have theyr hows and setle in some other p'mes [?personnes], which they were then labouring to do at Gant. And ther wanted nothing but the sighning of the patents by the King & Councell, all the rest from the Bishope and Magistrates beeing by my ladys mediation dispatcht, and this also from the King in a fayr way for it, so as my lady doubted not of the Nuns consent, but they refusse it;

however, my lady, having the Bishop of Gant, his leave and that of my lord of Ipers under whom Dunkirk is, a secret permission from England and the incouragement of her best frends ther. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of May last, with Mr Gerard our Confessor; Dame Ignatia Fortescu, Dame Ursula Butler, Dame Mary Carrill and myselve, the most unworthy, with a man and mayde servant went in a private coach to Dunkirk where we arrived uppon the 8<sup>th</sup> of May before dinner. My lady, sending for some of the officers to informe the Governor, his lordship came with divers other Collonells and taking us out of the boate carryed us to dine at the Governors hows, his lordship, appoynting the private magistrate to lodge and entertayn us till things shold be otherways disposd: but after 2 or 3 days my lady removde to an other magistrates hows, larg & commod for us. Heere we drest our owne dyet, the Governor lending us excellent new bedding out of the magazin. His lordship also made a bargayn with on[e] of the King of Spayns officers

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that had a new build haws just out of the gates near the town, walled round about. He obligde him to let my lady have the hows addicuit for 12000 florence, paying down then 500 florence and the other 500 at Christmas. This was a most excellent Bargayn and all beeing compleated, uppon the first of July, wee took possession and loged ther; thus beginning that foundation. He that was then Bishop of Ipers was not yet admitted by his clergy so, as without theyr permission, we could not have Mass in our litle chappell, but sending Mr Gerard to the Vicariat, and had then all necessary grants from them for Mass and all things proper to our dependans on them. The same day my lady Knatchbull settled us in this new hows she returned by boate to Gant, ther to profess Dame Midlemore and dispatch away the rest of the company for Dunkirk; whom she sent with Sister Hellen to be with us by the 12th of August that we might all together have our first Mass and devoutly celebrate the feast of our Blessed Ladys assumption as we endeavoured to do on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Dame Ursula Butler was then to return with Sister Hellen to Gaunt. She had binn a very powerfull instrument to engage the Irish regiment to show us much kyndness as, really and effectually, they did. From this time we kept quire and all other observances with exactnes. As soon as things could be accommodated we chose a pryress, for that hows, having yet no foundation, was still dependant on my lady Knatchbull who payd them 100 pound a quarter to mayntayn them. Mr Peeter Carrill had all ways a great kyndness for this Sister and now exprest it as much by letters as was possible. Dunkirk beeing sold by the King of England to the King of France, the establishment of



our Monastery was very honorably invold in the conditions of that surrender, with all the privileges of a Royall Monastery & the consent sighnde & seald by all the Magistrates and religious howses in towne. My lady of Gant fayld not to be with us at All Saints, which was the time desighned for the King of France, his coming, to take possession as he did and behavd himselfe very bravly and obligingly to all. My lady Knatchbull returned not to Gaunt till the beginning of Lent. At Easter Mr Peeter Carrill came to stay a while with his sister. Finding noe settlement of temporalls he went to advise with my lady of Gant and they concluded that my lady Carrill, then pryoresse, shold with on[e] more of her Hows, goe for England and act ther for themselves. I, though least fit for such a mission, was nominated by my lady Knatchbull and Mr Carrill, & so uppon the 11 of June my lady Carrill, my selfe and a schollar, with Mr Gerard, took our journey ,comming to London Fryday before Whitsuntide. My lady Carrils parants were not so well satisfied with casting this weighty charg on theyr daughter, she seeming sickly and without all supplyes of mony but from them, but beeing pyous & worthy persons came very obligingly off with this affayre for Gods honor and their daughters content. The succeeding November she was ellected Abbesse: and that hows oweth much to her ladyship and her relations for that assistance & advancement they have had from them.

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1663

My lady Knatchbull came soone after my lady Carrill and my beeing in England, to us. And acting for that 2000 pounds formerly promised her, found monys hard to be had in such a bulk. And advising with some frends who promoted her business with his Majesty, he gave her a promis of 500 pound yearly out of the privy purs, till he was able to setle her a foundation. Now she was advised to keep some of hers in England to receive this revenew, and I beeing actually ther She left me and sent soon after her own Sister, Dame Paula Knatchbull, whom she fetcht from Pontoys, to place her in England wher we had this pension to receive every six months. and it was constantly payde, as long as my lord Falmout livde, some 4 yeares, but after that never came ther any penny from the privy purs to Gant hows: soe that fayling and severall other businesses dispatcht for which we were imployed in England, my lady Knatchbull cald us away. My lady Carrill was importun with me to goe with her to Dunkerk, to which my lady Knatchbull at first consented but afterwards declind, as well as I; and so to take of all exceptions, I having had a kynd invitation from my lady Eugenia at Pontoys, past only by Gant to Pontoys, where I arrived uppon the Conversion of Saint Paule 1667. All concerning my entrance and settlement in the holy hows being largely exprest in other places shale not heere be repeated.

1665

### **The establishment of a Monastery of our Congregation at Ipers 1665**

The Right Reverend and most illustrious Lord Martin Le Prats, beeing made Bishope of Ipers and having had for some years much affection and kyndness for the Monastery of Gaunt and in perticuler for Dame Marina Beaumont, by whom, by reason of her language, speaking both Latin and French he had most acquayntance, his lordship demaunded her by name, of my lady Mary Knatchbull and the Community of Gaunt, to begin a new Monastery in his dyocesse & in Ipers towne; towards which foundation he promised to contribute liberally. Soe all things beeing agreede uppon, my lady Mary Knatchbull went with her by Dunkerk to see her and her Religious happily settled in theyr new plantation.

The Religious desighned for that foundation were; which went from Gant:

Dame Aloisia Gorman, Dame Aldigund Finch, Dame Mary Lucy, Sister Martha, a convers sister [Sister Jenison then a Nouice at Dunkirk went also with them].

In this beginning ther was soe favourable a concurrance in all thos circumstances which useth to render new plantations hard and thorny, as may well be admired and taken for a happy Augure of its

future progress. For whereas the princes Grant the Townes admittance and the Bishops Satisfaction in temporalls useth to be even masterless, by our best contrivances in all other beginnings. heere though nothing but the Bishops favour supported the caus, ther was not in anything the least

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single opposition. It is strange that so promising expectations shold so soone dissipate and come to nothing yet soe it fell out. Nor can any say or think ther was such want of vertu in the persons as to be the caus of it; for they were all sinceare good Religious persons; and for my lady her selfe, certainly she had as many naturall abillities as could be found in any of our sex; nor did she want pyety. What then could be the over waying ballance that over powrde soe much good in her or them? All that I can alleadge to have receavde light by, is in this and the like circumstances, to consider and examine how providence hath swaid this affair. I must say, with out bitternes or animosity, thos natural deffects and propensions to which all ar subject, more or less, may some times hinder what is desired. And obseve how they ether guide themselvs by prudence, mortification and recourse to God in the overcoming thos deffects which may be apt to sway them, and whether they discern them in them selves or noe, & take it well to be admonisht of what may be deffective in them: and will give the preferrance to counsell and good advise and not rather leave theyre frend than lay downe theyr own desighn, or following theyr passion or humore, and so having ons brought them selves uppon the stage, will rather mayntayn theyr own errors by vyolence than yeald to draw off[f] with out crying victory, which few allow them but themselves. Thus, bringing themselves into a laborinth, they meet with thorns on all sides: and if patience and humility be wanting all comes to be lost.

I do not apply this to my lady Marina or hers: or to any more than to my selfe, and all that are or may be Superiours or joynt actors with them in the setling or governing a Community. For unless all such persons as are chosen by Almighty God for such employments resolv with themselves to observe the different motions of natur & grace and to tak up the weapons of mortification, and fight couragiously agaynst them selves, and both to implore God's assistance to becom victorious, and to make use of counsell and advis how to manage such a warefare, litle advauntage will be made. Certainly ther ar some things which when we obtayn of God Almighty by importunity he grants us, but maks us pay deere for it, and it is a mercy in him to do it. Many times devout soules perswads them selves that if they were in such or such an office, or had such or such an employment or dignity, they wold employ it much to God's honnore and service and really intend it; and many times God taks them at theyr word and gives them theyr asking; and when they come to find how smale a stock they have of vertu and the great expens they must be dayly at in all incounters to render what is du to every on[e], they soon discover theyr own indigence, and find that a sinceare intention, though it carryeth farr in the way of vertu, yet it is not that aloan that can dispatch the busines nor will thos other naturall parts do much. Humillity, patience and a tru indifferency, or rather a contempt of all the world esteems great, will avayle more to advauns our interest, both uppon earth and for heaven, than all the naturall and acquired parts what soe ever; and generally Almighty God doth so dispose that thos that are great in theyr owne or in others eyes so often fals short of giving themselves or others satisfaction; for as the way to heaven is strait and narrow.

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we must draw our selves into as litle and low a compass as we can; and when we can not stoope to this, no wonder if we fall short of giving and receaving satisfaction; for we must first studdy to pleas God and for his sake endeavoure not to disoblige our nabours: for when ons difficultyes arise within doors and with out it is impossible it shold not destroy the strongest building, and unless our Lord builds the hows, he labours in vayn that builds it; and even when it is built yet unless our Lord keeps the hows, he labours in vayn that keeps it. So oftentimes Almighty God carryeth on our endeavours for his service with a probable prosperity, and yet when we think the work well advanst

he is pleas'd to let it fall to the grawnd that we may learn to love and sevre him as well in adversity as in prosperity, and so know all things depends more uppon his will and providence then any humayn industry or abillity, and least any shold too much count thos naturall parts, or to[o] much prize them in them selves or others, Almighty God often permits them to be less successfull in great affayrs, than other less gifted persons are, chusing thos that are weake and humble, as fittest instruments to advance his honnor and Glory.

The Bishops death, and some other things occurring in this settlement brought it into hazard of utter ruin, but not with out some signall marks of God's favouring providence. Within a yeare thos 3 formentioned Dames that went with Dame Beaumont to the new beginning, came bake. Finding smale hopes of a wished settlement they returned to theyr Mother Monastery at Gaunt.

And 3 Novices, admitted for the Quire, also left that place and went to other Monasteryes, wherby in an instant so hopefull a plantation seemde to be quite dissipated. But at the same time, the plague raging much at Dunkerk, 3 of thos Dames that had gon from Gaunt to that foundation to avoyd the daunger, wer content to remove to Ipers and assist the lady Marina in her enterprize. They continued with her some years, buckling through many great difficultyes, but finding no probable ground to expect any increas or hopes of other advantage by theyr Suffering than what heaven had in store for them, they resolved to lay down the acting any longer in that establishment: and to provide for theyr owne peace and content: and soe, In the yeare [...] Dame Ignatia Fortiscu and Dame Viuina Eyre with Sister Martha, a Convers Sister, returned to Gaunt; Dame Hellen Wayte to Dunkerke. And ther remaynd with my lady Beaumont, only Dame Flauia Cary, a most excellent regular good Religious woman, that was sent to the neu establishment at Dunkirk and from thence summoned by my lord Bishop Prats to assist my lady Marina at Ipers, he being Superior both to Dunkerk & Ipers; she was obliged to obey, and was a great support to My lady Marina. Ther was also tow young Dames that had binn profest ther with a convers sister that came Novice from Dunkirk; but Dame Beazare went to Gravlín; the other Dame dyed a yeare or tow after and the Convers Sister was put to the black Sisters. Thus non beeing left to make up a Community,

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in the yeare 1680 and 81, my lady Marina writ to the Abbess at Pontoys [Anne Neville unworthy] offering to her & that Community, hers at Ipers, to be supplied by Subiects from them; and so by consequence to be by consent of all for futur times to be dependant on that of Pontoys. Severall letters past but nothing was effected and in the yeare 1681 my lady Marina came privatly to Paris; and it fell out that, at the same time, the Abbess of Pontoys had an affaire that Cald her to Paris wher they both mett and conferde uppon the proposall, but not agreeing about it. My lady Marina made conditions with the Benedictin Dames at Paris and tooke tow of theyrs away with her. The tow Dame Conniers, with severall others that desighned to be Religious, Secular persons but of noe considerable rancke or fortune; not with standing by the favour of friends, my Lady Marina procured some good charityes and a yearly pension from the King of France: she and her company returned home with much joy.

About the same time my Lady Mary Carrill, Abbess at Dunquerk, finding most of the Community sickly by reason of the sea and other inconveniences, were determined to make tryall of removing from thence to some other part of France; but the tow Irish Religious, Dame Legge and Dame Mull Ryan was sensible of parting with so advantagious a place with a fine convenient monastery, new built, at a less rate than they thought it worth and so proposed to the Vicariat, and my Lady Carrill, that if they wold permit them to goe into Irland and try theyre friends and relations to see whether they wold not make up such a summe as might purchas that hows at Dunquerke for that Irish Nation, and send theyr children thither both for Religion and Education. To this proposall the Vicariate gave a very satisfactory eare, and so my lady, finding them disposed for it, gave them also her consent. And though winter yet they immediately began theyr journey and were to pass by Ipers soe to goe to Ostend, and ther to take shipe for Irland. My lady Marina was very kynd to thes tow

Dames & made them great offers if they would come at their return from Ireland with what company or fortunes they might bring & settle with her. The vicariat was very kind to them and made them all proper offers for their advantage, which was very much to their comfort. But as to their passing to Ireland by Nieport, all dissuaded them from it in that ill season, so they past privately to Mardycke where, taking ship, they went to England and so from thence to Ireland, which my lady Carrill did not take well of them; but they excused it as being necessitated to it. They had so good success there as in 7 or 8 months they returned with very good assurance, and bills for considerable summes put into Mr Bertine his hands. Supposing that hows and establishment should be made good unto them and that they might send their daughters and friends to it; Now they finding my lady Marina as it were entered into a Settlement with those two Dames from Paris & my lady Carrill at Dunquerk not fully resolved upon selling that hows, they went to Paris to negotiate their affairs in that Court, but with out effect, though that Queene

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by means of her Confessor, was very gracious to them, and many other friends, especially Irish, that did endeavour to promote the work, and my lady M Knatchbull, Abbess at Gaunt with their own Superiour, my lady Mary Carrill, but nothing was done in it. In the interim, my lady Marina dying. And Dame Conniers the Eldre, went into England before her death, and there was only the younger with Dame Flavia Cary and a convers sister. Dunkerk and Ipers being on[e] Bishoprick, that vicariat with Dame Flavia desired some of my lady Carrills Religious to come to Ipers and some time before this, Dame Leg being dead at Paris, by advice from my lady Knatchbull and my lady Carrill our Bishoppe approving of it, with the advice of our indifferent man, by consent of the community, and request of the best of the Irish Nation here in France, two of our Religious, Dame Butler, a cossene to my lord Duke of Ormone, and Count d' Albie, his daughter Dame Christina Whight, were sent first on[e], and then the others to Paris, to Dame Ryan. And at last Dame Ryan and Dame Christina went away to Ipers, but did not enter that Monastery. In regard that Dame Conniers with company from England being arrived, stole first into the monastery, disputing and making great clamours but at last, by the authority of very Reverend Father Shirborn, then president of the English Monks, conditions were agreed upon and the two Dame Conniers were returned to Paris, Dame Ryan and Dame Christina entered that monastery, my lady Carrill bringing with her thither 3 or 4 of her young Religious. The Election past for the choosing an Abbess & Dame Flavia Cary was elected; and after some little time, my lady of Gant, as well as my lady Carrill with my lady Flavia agreed upon having Dame Ursula Butler from Gaunt and our Dame M Butlere from Pontoys and accordingly they went back to Ipers. Poore Dame Christina Whight soone tooke leave of this world and dying of a violent fever left them to deplore that loss they had in her, which certainly was great, for she was a person of very good parts, true piety and vertu. Dame Ursula Butler with Dame Ryan went for Ireland to procure those monys formerly promised, and some fitt subjects for that new beginning monastery and had very good success; Dame Ryan returning to Ipers 1684, there came with her 5 or 6 for the convent but on[e] or two of them were for the novitiate. A little before their arrivall my lady Knatchbull and my lady Cary were very importune to have Dame Laurance Lawson to be sent to them to assist Dame Butler in the teaching and other affairs of that hows, which was granted, though with much unwillingness on our side, to part with her, but they much importunity prevailed. Dame Ursula stayed behind in England for the dispatch of some affairs, and is there still, and will not, I presume, retire from thence till the Coronation of our Soverain King James is past, assigned to be on Saint Georg, his day this 1685; But death surprisde Dame Ursula Butler by a violent favour in England and not long since this year 1686 Dame Flavia, their last elected Abbess, dyed suddenly of an Apoplex. Dame Ryan being in Ireland, there is only Dame M Joseph Butler, and Dame Mary Laurance Lawson, both of our hows, now remaining there. And till some news or the return of Dame Ryan from Ireland no positive determination can be taken, we pray daily for a happy conclusion for the glory of God, and good of Religion.

1652

**The beginning of the establishment at Bullogne**

is all ready toucht in the course of Gant monastery, how that grant was obtayned of the Queene Regent by my lord of Bristow; and 4 Dames and a Sister were sent on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January from Gant to this foundation; how they arrived at Bullon on the 17 of Janury; how unwelcome they were to that Bishop, not having any foundation, with out which he wold not receive them. They past more then a yeare in great sufferance and uncertaynty of theyr setling, but the Bishope was grow kynd and well satisfied with them, if they could procure a foundation. Uppon Saint Anns day, the 26 of July, in that yeare [1652] they made that promis of a devotion to her and glorious Saint Joseph, which is extant in theyr annalls.

1653

In passion week by Sir Richard Forster ther was put into Reverend Father Barton of the Society 2000 pistols to begin this foundation of Bullogn, which satesfyed the Bishope; Dame Lucy Perkins & Dame Francisca Carington, by the desire and request of the Religious at Bullon mad[e] to that Bishop they were sent to make up a competent number for this new beginning. [August 9] My lady Duches of Lorayn sent the ring and Crozier, as a kyndness, to Dame Christina Forster. My lady Knatchbull, all other things compleat for the benediction of the Abbess, the tow Dames, beeing arived, they all took from the feast [of] our Blessed Ladys Assumption theyr 3 days of retreat to prepare for this great action, & on the 18 of August [1653] with all du ceremony and exactness, according to the Cannons and theyr own constitutions, was chosen by all the votes but her owne, Dame Catherin Wigmore, first Abbess at Bullogne, on the 18 of August 1653. She was blest at the Bishops Pallace on the 18 of October 1653. The Bishop and all the whole town had a great esteem and veneration for the extraordinary humillity and tru solid vertu that shinghd in all the actions of this worthy Lady. Her owne Community had noe less respect and affection for her. Theyr only cross was to be so soone deprivde of her: for she lived but a short time, professing only Dames - 3      convers Sisters - 1  
She dyed [28 October 1656] and her body ther kept in hallowed ground, was in that yeare transported to Pontoys; as was also my lady Christina Forster, at that same time brought from Paris; and after a solemn requiem Mass were both buried in our litle church heere at Pontoys [July 10 1671]. Reverend Father sub pryor, that writ our French Chronicle, made theyr epitaphs which are noted in the Annalls. The loss of such a Superiour in a new beginning was a great blow, and they were all sensibly toucht with this Cross; and having payd her all thos dutyes that Religion and gratitude could exat of them, they disposde them selves by the usuall 3 days retyrment to prepare for the ellection of her successor. All things was carryed on as

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conforme to the statuts as was possible in theyr smale company and compasse: and becaus my lady Christina Forster was not fuly 40 years of age the Community sent to desir the Bishope that she might have his lordship dispens to be in that ellection which was as easily granted as it was requisit for ther smale number than that were of age, and her great abillitys considered. The Superiour of the minames was chosen by the Community with an other companion, to keepe the priviledg of theyr statutes. My Lord Bishope brought some on[e] or tow of his Clergy with his chaplin and secretary. The Mass of the holy Ghost beeing sayd, and all dutyes dischargde according to the holy Canons and ther own constitutiens, Dame Christina Forster, by all the votes, was ellected Abbesse [November 11 1656], to the Bishops perticuler satisfaction who had a great esteeme and kyndness for her. Never did ellection pass with more tru evidences of univorsall joy then did this. All beheld her as a new rysing Sunn, resplendant in all thos vertues proper to the dignity of prelature. The esteeme and affection all that knew her had for her, especially her Community,

gave her much advantage in the way of Gouvernement and the continuance and increase of it still augmented their happiness and hers.

All things went on with much satisfaction, but by reason the Bishop of Bullogne went soon after the election to Paris, to the Assembly there, the Benediction was deferred till Trinity Sunday [1657 May 27] which was performed at the Bishop's palace.

Divers were clothed and professed; and all other proper occurrences went on very prosperously. Providence, which sweetly orders and disposes all things for the greater good of his servants, had permitted that though they had made use of several good priests yet none was yet settled with them for a Ghostly father, God reserving this for Mr Thomas Claverin, one most proper for them. He was made priest at the Romayne Collidge under the Jesuits there, whom he much respected, and they again gave a high commendation of him to my lady Christina whose kinsman he also was [1657 May 22]. His arrival fell out very happily on the 22 of May, just before the Benediction of my lady Christina, to attend her at that ceremony and assist in those many pressing affairs which fall out every where in a new beginning settlement.

Though they had bought timber, stone and other materials for building, yet finding the sea ayre to give them all agues, and being a frontier town was not only subject to surprises of war and many other casualties, and that year Dunkirk being taken by Cromwell, and he assisted by the French, drew much numbers of soldiers and many difficulties and distractions upon our Religious. My lady Christina writ to Sir Richard, her worthy father, and other friends, who advise them to pursue that endeavor, assuring them of what assistance they could in it; her ladyship communicated the affair with my lord Bishop of Bullogne, to which he could not but assent for their good, yet most unwilling that they should leave his diocese. But preferring their interest before his own satisfaction, he gave them his approbation. All dispatches from Paris, Roane and other places being completed

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[1658] the appointed day for their leaving Bullogne being come my Lord Bishop, with all his Clergy and chief persons of quality in that Towne, brought my lady Christina and her Religious to the sea side; my lord giving them his Blessing, all took leave and the ships being put under saile; his lordship, looking after it till out of sight, declared to all then present the resentment he had to part with such pious deserving children.

They landed at Diepe and staid a day at Roane. My lady Christina and all the professed Religious entered that Monaster, they receiving my lady as the daughter to their founder, Sir Richard Forster, her worthy father, having given these poore Clares at their first settlement 1500 pistolls for a foundation and to build with.

This journey was both very laborious and expensive: most of them, being sick of agues, were much incommoded. They arrived at Pontoys and remained some time in a great inn which cost them 100 pound. My lord Abbot Montagu was most obliging and industrious, both with the Bishop and Magistrats for their establishment. But whilst they remained at the Grand Goodde [*Grand Godet – name of the inn*] by a permission granted them by my lord, Arch Bishop of Roan, signed on the 20 of May 1658, they were visited by Queene Mother of England, Madame her daughter, and many others of quality.

July the 27 that same yeare the purchase was made of the farme of Maudestaur of Pontoys, bought of Monsieur Brussell for the summe of 30 thousand livers - part of it given them by Sir Richard Forster, and the rest was out of the portions of several Novices then to be professed.

[1659 July] In that yeare, his Majesty of France signed their letters patent for their establishment at Pontoys; my lord Arch Bishop gave his permission for our establishment at Pontoys [2nd October 1659]. Upon the 1 of November the same yeare, he came to see the place we had chosen and made a proce verbal [*procés verbal*] of the state he found it in, and upon the 7th of that same month caused the letters patents from the King to be registred [November], but upon condition

that wee shold tak non[e] of the French Nation. My lord Arch Bishop of Roan came with his clergy, and fixt his Cros at the entry of the great gates, as taking over that hows and that Community, that full authority which beeing our Superiour gave him.

In that first yeare of our arrivall at Pontoys, affayrs still multiplying and the Community increasing, a pryores was chosen, Dame Paula Knatchbull. After they were establisht and could accommodate a litle chappell and set up an Aulter, the Blessed Sacrament was plast ther, to theyr unspeakable comfort;

[March 7 1659-60] In the beginning of this yeare, Queene Regent of France, Anne d'Austrich, coming to the Abbey of Saint Martins, caused her coach to stay at the gates of our Monastery wher my lady Abbess, with all her Religious, attended to kis her hands; my lady who spoke the French language excellently well and had a very gayning behaviour and alloquence, sufficient to charme a less obliging princess, gayned soe much uppon that Queene, what with

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her litle present of silk flowers, cariage and discours, as her Majesty seemde much satisfied with all and told her, that if ther were anything in which she could advaunce the good of that hows, let her but intimate it to my lord Abbot M, to give her notice of it, and it shold be donn. [1659 January 22] Conformed to the statuts, very Reverend Father William Wigmore was chosen indifferent man.

Sir Richard Forster, finding my lady Christina's health much to decay and but litle help or advis heere to be had of doctors, intended to have her to Pariss, both for her cure and to wayte uppon [the] Queene Mother of England, who was very gracious and obliging to my lady, and extreamly well satisfied with all things but the playted gimpe we brought from Gaunt. This part of the habit her Maiesty persuaded my lady to change, as they were at my ladys return home to Pontoys in the yeare 1659.

My deere lady Christina, finding but litle advantag by the cours she tooke of phisick under Doctor Frazer at Paris returned hom full of care, how to procure a sufficient stock to build with. For with out inlarging it was impossible to carry on this great work.

At last imploying some of thos portions she had and were to receive: and taking up other monys, though at a high rate, the building was begun about the 8 of October

[1660] Mr Walsinghame, then Secretary to my lord Abbot Montagu and a great frend to this Community, was made a priest and Curé of D'Aronville; fayld not on all occasions to promote theyr interest with my lord Abbot & do them all the good offices in his powre; and so did good Mr Slaughter. Mr Jhon Digby, brother to my lord of Bristow, was also made priest a most holy devout person, and truly obliging to my lady and her Community.

His Majesty of England, with all his Court, came to visit my lady and her Religious when he was entertaynede by my lord Abbot Montagu at Saint Martins, and the King was very gracious to her Ladyship and her Community.

My lord of Bristow though he past incognito through France, yet when he came to Pontoys my lady, with all her Community, with her Crosier went to meet and receive him at the great gates; paying all all possible respect and gratitude, as to theyr great Benefactor who had procured theyr establishment, heere in France; and as my lord receavde theyr acknowledgment with great civillity, and shewed him selfe an excellent courtier, returning back the honor they rendred, My lady and he made a very pretty passage of very solide testimoneys of the du sinsibillity that each of them had of theyr obligations on both sides. God had binn very liberall to both in the tallents he had given them, both in wrighting & speaking and it was a strong prevelancy this lady had over her auditors when she desighnd to work uppon them by her words; and that it was Gods caus she was to promote, she wold speak so admirably well as moved theyr harts so to devotion and readines to comply with [what] God shold pleas to exact of them, and this even when she had so ill health that she kept her chamber and was very much indisposed, as severall of the Religious hath often told me.

1661

Sir Richard Forster still continued his bounty and kyndnes to his daughter: and as long as his strenth and health wold permit came often down to visit her and assist her with his purs and advis.

But now old age and a palsy humore detayned him from giving or taking the satisfaction of such a visit; and cald uppon him to prepar himselfe as he did most pyously for his happy end; making his will, giving and assignning many great debts du to him to his daughter and her Community. With all he was worth in all kynds and though thos debts never were or ar likly to be recovered yet wee esteeme our selves not less obliged for having giuen us in his life time to the valu of 41000 liu. we performe all for him as for a benefactor saying his anniversary office and singing his Mass.

1661

Sir Richard having donn all that became the duty of a good Christian, assisted by Reverend Father Wigmore, most pyously rendred his soule into the hands of his Creator. His body was imbalmed and in a leaden Coffin brought to Pontoys, enterd and depositated in the Abbey of Saint Martins till we have a church fit to erect a Tombe for him.

Uppon his grave ston at Saint Martins thes words are written

**Heer Iyes messier Richard Forster Knight Barronett; Baron of Stockley, Treasurer General to the Queene of Great Britany;  
He dyed the 27 of January 1661**

Nature could not but worke uppon soe tender and pyous a hart as was that of my lady Christina, yet she comported herselfe in the occasion with much vertu and discretion. As the body past to Saint Martins by her ladyships appoyntment, contrary to the advise of other frends it was brought in to our court and she herselfe came down and prayd by it: when all things was ready at Saint Martins it was conveyed thither and our Community did theyr parts most compleatly in all respects for what they stood obliged as to a benefactor:

The building in its advaunce still increast my ladys care to find mony to satisfy the workmen and dispatch the work. Her hart was larg had her purs binn answerable and wold willingly have had the building Noble and proper for a great Community; but finding she was to borrow a great part, and at a high rate, what she was to imploy in it she was contented to be swayed by the advis of thos that assisted in this affayre, though much agaynst her inclination and judgment. My lady Christina grew very sickly and finding the distance of the director some times obstructed the satisfaction of perticuler persons that oftener desirde it. By proposall of frends, Mr Walsingham was thought fit to be admitted in extraordinary occasions for the satisfaction of such as might desir it; but that which made it more considerable was in his pattent for Beeing Curé of D'Arannuille, ther namde to be

a supply to my lord Abbot Montagu, in his lordships absence, but was never made use on in order to Superiority either by my lord or the Community, but only for heering Confessions. Sometimes he supplied the ghostly father if absent; or at other times some particular persons that desird it; though all had a perticuler respect and esteem for him. My Deere lady Christina grew now so much indisposde by her increas of new iInfirmityes, as an agu beeing added, she took her bed and living only a month or 6 weeks she gave admirable proofes of her eminent vertu. And as she ever had a charming way of speach when she discourst of vertu so, now more then ever, in the time of her last



sickness and espetically ons when she thought her selfe neere death, she made them an excellent exhortation, forcibly perswading to all vertu: and most of all to charity and union.

All humayn and Divin helps wer applyed for her recovery but nothing prevayld; ther was a famous Doctor at Paris but his ingagements ther allowed him not to quit the town. Some made proposall for her going thither to make tryall of his skill, which beeing ons fixt in her imagination, was not easily movde; leave therefore beeing procured and tow Religious sent before to provide all things in readines for her reception ther; she had all ready receavde her viaticum and the holy oyles at which all the Community attending uppon her and praying by her were highly edifyed at her devotion & though she was not then able to say much beeing tyrde and spent. The next day all the Community, beeing agayn assembled to her chamber to take leave of theyr Deere Mother and receive her last blessing, she spake to them with so much tendernes of devotion and affection as movde them all to tears, she exprest much in few words recomending to them zeal and charity, which so sensibly toucht theyr harts, as kneeling down silent tears they bid adieu and all attended her to the litter. Tow or 3 of the Religious went in a coach, Mr Digby and others rid by. My lady sufferd much in this journey, but most of all when they took her out of that strait litter.

They were lodgd at Mrs Poyns her hows, who treated them with much cevillity & kyndness. That Doctor was cald. All imaginable remedys were applyed but with very little effect, which made them redouble theyr vowes and prayrs the more to heaven for her.

Very Reverend Father Wigmore came often to visit, comfort and assist her, but was frequently cald away; but care was taken that severall other good Religious men by turns watcht and prayd by her; all were much edifyed at her patience and submission to God's holy will: and the houre now beeing come in which she was to pass out of the world, summoned as we hope to the never decaying glory in heaven, she breathed forth her happy soule about 12 o'clock at noone; on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December,

1661

leaving her afflicted children deeply sensible of the loss of soe deere a Mother; it fell to the lot of very Reverend Dame Marckham who, passionatly loud and honored my lady Christina; and beeing that first auntient was sent in this conjuncture to assist and serve her; and deere Dame Christina Thorold the first profest at Bullogne; who was no less a lover of

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my lady, and beloved by her as was that other to be her companion in this sad encounter, with sister Mary Joseph Bolny, who were all overwhelme with greefe but were forst to dry theyr tears and attend to theyr duty in what belonged to prepare the body for buriall. She was embalmde, and her hart taken out and brought down to Pontoyes in a leaden case and placed in the wall of the Quire on the right hand for the comfort of her children. The body beeing embalmde was enchast in ledd and buried in the church of the Fullintins [*Feuilletains*] who performed the funerall office Mass and dirge very solemnly for My lady with much respect and devotion.

Princes Louisia, Religious then at Mauboyson came that day to our Monastery, some thought by desighn, but what advantage could she expect from a poore hows unfounded so as I rather believe it was accidentall, not determinate.

Our tow Religious, having despatcht all that duty required of them, in order to my lady Christinas service at Paris, hasted away with the sister, and when they arrived at the monastery meeting with the other Religious new flouds of tears were shed on both sides. But other dutys cald them away. It is certain this lady was as much belovde and esteemed, both at home and abroad, as any person of her dignity could be; but as all must end in dust, but what is reserved to Glory, soe nothing but our good works can stand us in steede, ether for time or Eternity, and as that lady received great tallents from Gods hands. I hope she layd up treasures in heaven by them; and will enjoy them for ever.

My lady Christina in her time of prelature;

profest Dames - [blank]  
Convers sisters - [blank]

This following Epitaph was made for her by Reverend Father Subpnyor that writ our French Chronicle [*Abbess Neville left a blank page here for the epitaph, but never inserted it as intended.*]

All funeral dutys being past, they took theyr usuall retreat and my lord Abbot Montgu, beeing authorized by my lord Arch Bishope of Roane to presid at the ellection of a new Abbess. All things was disposd accordingly for it, and the day appointed. In this intervall some propositions were made of severall restrictions about the Constitutions for parsimony the temporalls of the hows beeing low, which drew the Community to accord to them for a time; though much agaynst theyr inclination. [1661 December 24] My lord Abbot Montagu came to say the Mass of the holy Ghost, and communicate the Religious which having donn, and a permission granted that Dame Eugenia Thorold beeing under 40 shold be admitted into the ellection. The Community were assembled and Mr Jhon Digby with Mr Thomas Claverin, theyr confessor, stood for the tow chosen by the community to assist; Mr Walsingham was honoured as my lords secretary, the Veni Creator having been sayd, & my Lord recommended to them

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theyr obligation in this great action: Dame Paula, then presiding Superior, requested his Lordship to admit of the Communitys proposition of 1661 December 24] beeing theyr Superiour and Visitor under my lord Arch Bishop, which he granted, and had soone after his patent for it, very ample & with a tru testimony of esteeme for his lordship and much kyndness for the Community. All du ceremonys beeing observde and the votes given, Dame Eugenia Thorold was ellected by the generall votes, theyr Abbess and Superieur. My lord, next to the Divin Service, recommended to her frugality as most importing the present necessities of the hows; and she then sighnd those proposals before mentioned for parcimony, my lord and all congratulating with her he gave his blessing & took leave & after the ceremonyes in chapter, & the *Te deum* in the quire; it beeing Christmas Eue all applyed them selves to theyr devotions. My lady Eugenia was of a most sweet peasible humour, silent & of few words, and had in the conjuncture a hard game to play. Having a smale fortun & a tender Community to governe, to whom restraynt and scarcity even sometimes in what was necessary, could not but seeme hard, but her pyety & prudence suppress all in silence.

In the beginning of lent My lord Arch Bishop sent word that about the 5<sup>th</sup> of March he wold be at Pontoys, and performe the Cerimony of the Benediction, for which all things was prepard in a readines. When the day before they expected his lordship news came that he was gon to Paris, and wold bless her ther if she could goe thither to meete him; so about the 4<sup>th</sup> of March My lady with 5 or 6 of her Religious went up to Paris, with Mr Digby and some other English. My lady and her company [March 7<sup>th</sup> 1662] loging at Mrs Poyns, her ladyship at a solemn high mass in in [*sic*] the Fullinteens church where my lady Christina lay buried, was installed Abbess receaving theyr the Bishops Benediction and all du priviliges and rights. My lady Abbesse Treddway and Madame Timperly assisting at the solemnity.

My lord Bishop was extream cevill and obliging; and so was all the English that were in Paris, especially the monasteryes which my lady visited and after 2 days returnd home to Pontoys: where, after she had visited Mauboyson and the other Monasteryes, her owne deere Religious receavd her with great expressions of joy. All was now very happily setled and with great zeale and sweetnes my lady applyed herselfe to the government of the hows, and the Community, who had a great respect and kyndness for her and she a motherly affection for them and though she was of a soft and silent way. Yet when reason required, she could, and would carry on the authority of what she ordaynd and thought fitt to be donn, for the glory of God and good of Religion.

1663

Queene Mother of England, beeing recald thither, my lord Abbot Montagu as grand Almonier to her Majesty was to goe with her; his lordship taking leave of the Community, left Mr Digby his supply in absence; and tooke Mr Walsingham with him.

It was but a short time that Mr Walsingham livd after his arrival ther, not withstanding he gave soe signall proofes of his tru concern

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and affection for this hows and how reall a frend he would have proved had he not binn cut off by a suddayn sicknes and death in [October 9th] the year 1663 . My lady Eugenia & this Community were very sensible of theyre loss and accordingly performde all in du expressions of gratitude by theyr redoubled prayrs & devotions for the good of his soule.

Of some things omitted in severall years, that are here briefly supplied. [1663] Whilst my lady Knatchbull was with my lady Mary Carrill and some other Religious in England, she had a Neece heere whos frends by the misfortun of the times were dis inabled to give her the hows portion, and she beeing young, having more zeale than discretion, pretended to be a sister, but upon tryall found wholly unfit for it: of which my lady Knatchbull being advised [July 1614]desired she shold be sent to her into England; and it was thought fit that sister Mary Joseph shold goe to conduct her thither with Mrs Anne Bruning, whos vocation her frends were resolved to examine themselves before they wold permit her to proceede. But she beeing both pyous and desirous to overcom theyr importunity and endeavours to divert her, as they gave her theyr approvde consent; and settled her portion and all other considerations full and compleate. And she joyfully returned with Sister Joseph on the 4th of October with a kinswoman of my lady Eugenias, Mrs Dobson and Mrs Winnefred Philpott & litle miss Mary Wyborn for the convict. They took ship 2 or 3 times, beeing still beaten back by tempests and very neere casting away. But Gods merciful hand and providence landed them at last safe at Diepe, where Rvd father Confessor mr Conniers stayd to expect them and brought them home to the monastery:

[1668] May 27 - Reverend father Edward Simeons was chosen by the votes of the Community, indifferent man.

[1672 May 1] Very Reverend father Jhon Warner was chosen indifferant man.

[June 26] St Gotiers body was carryed in procession to obtain rayn, and was for our devotion brought into our church. [September 28] Her Royall Highnes princess Louisia, Abbess at Mou-boyson, having binn at Paris in her return home, did us the honnore to spend some howres in our monastery.

1674

On the 18 of January being the 50 year since the beginning of our Mother Monastery at Gant we had a Solemn high Mass Sung by Very Reverend father pryor at St Martins. We shold by the great Duke of Tuscanys means have had a jubily for Gant and all the houses decendant of it but it arrived not in time but will be supplied.

This noble Princely Duke having a great kyndness for the English Nation, and hearing theyr hows was in want, sent them 300 pistols - my Lady Knatchbull returning her obliged thanks for such a bounty that Duke sent her this letter:

Madame,

I have so great a valu for the whole English nation, and so perticuler an affection and kyndnes for all the Catholicks of your kingdome,

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that I could be content to shed my bloode to assist them and contribute to theyr felicity even in this world; since theyr invincible constancy in suffering persecution, makes them merit an eternall Crown in the next. I shale conclude to assure you that you have not in any part of christendome a frend more desirous to serve you than, Madame,

Your most devoted Servant;

I have all ready declarde folio (200) and agay[n] folio (201) how, in the yeare 1663, my Lady Mary Knatchbull came a 2nd time into England and had left me ther for that affayers of Gant hows. Her ladyship then returning with madame Carrill to Dunkerk went from thence to Pontoyes, and after a most obliging reception by my Lady Eugenia, she soone let them know her affayr was to request this Community to let her have her sister, Dame Paula, whom she was to imploy for some concerns of Gant hows in England. They though sensible to part with theyr cheefe auntient and a regular piron, could not refuse to grant what was demaunded. So after a day or towes resting at Pontoys with all the testimonyes of respect and kyndness to my Lady Knachbull and deare Dame Paula, they took leave [November 4] and returnd for Dunkirk, where Dame Paula was admitted for on[e] of the chapter at the ellection of the Abbess; and my Lady Mary Carrill beeing chosen, my Lady Knachbull sent her Sister for my Companion into England, to negotiat in cheefe the yearly payment of the 500lb promist by his majesty out of the privy purs.

1664

The building debt lay heavy uppon my Lady Eugenia & this Community but the tow eldest Sisters of the Dame Ropers, beeing profest and of full age to require theyr portions, which by right should have binn more than 1000 pounds a peece, was now to be payd in. But theyr Aunt, Mrs Gifford, though she had had her full portion payd by Mr Roper theyr father and her brother, yet she pretended that she and her children ought to have a part in this large fortune of theyrs, and that it shold not be all burried in a cloyster. This made such a noys and she did so importune Queene Mother about it as my Lord Abbot Montagu could have no peace or quyet, til his Lordship condescended that in case all the 3 Sisters took to religion she shold have 500 pound, 300 now to be payd downe, and tow more if ever Mrs Catherine Roper be profest.

This news coming from my Lord to my Lady and the Community, many proposalls was made, but that which most swayd theyr hopes to be prevalant with my Lord in it was for my Lady to take the elder Sister and go suddaynly and privatly for England. Mr John Digby was then superiour & did not only approve the journy but intended to accompany them thither; Very Reverend father Wigmore was persuaded it was the best cource could be taken, so accordingly all was concluded and every thing preparede. Mr Digby was a sever man to him selfe, and fasted Lent most strictly and having a great weaknes in his head by the many wounds he had receavd in the wars, was subiect to payns in his head in thos wounds; and fasting this Lent with nothing but a mess of peas porridge and bread, being a corpulant man

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became weak of his head by it. And some day or tow before the desighned journy, in the night fell into an apperplex, was anneald and dyed the next day [1664 March 17], and was buried in our church, having upon his Tombe by his former orders given for that and written

**Hic jacet Nihil**

That was the tru emblim of that profound humility lodgde in that great hart, which both in life & death dispisde all that the world held great. All dutyes appertayning to his person and funeralls being dispatcht with as much respect and affection as was possible. The sudaynes of the accident, and the loss of so worthy a frend struck deepe with my Lady and all the Community, but time was not to be lost in order to my Ladys journey, plans beeing taken and all things in readiness. Very Reverend father Wigmore dispatching them from Paris ther beeing only in company my Lady Eugenia, Dame Mary Roper, and Dame Aloisia Eliot.

1664

Their Journey was safe and speedy, and I and Mrs Knatchbull was surprizde to meete them, but truly glad to see them. My Lord Abbot Montagu very civilly received them, but requested they wold nether pretend or act anything contrary to what his Lordship at Queene Mothers request had agreed upon, to which conditions upon the reason my Lord alledgd they agreed to.

Some time past before all things could be ended. In the meene time my Lady and her litle company gave much edification and satisfaction to all by theyr Religious proceedings in all occurances. My Ladys owne relations were very Noble and obliging in entertayning both herselfe and all her company with all expressions of esteeme and affection.

So was my Lady Southcote, Mrs Eliot and all Dame Aloysias relations. Dame Mary Ropers relations invited her into the country, where she found a very kynd reception, from her uncle Mr Petit, Mr Collins and the rest, and when she was at London, my Sister Dowager Bergaueny, my sister Francis Nevill and several more of our neere kindred was overjoyd to see her; and I was all ways much satisfyed with her company; and as often as occations wold permit I endeavoured to be with them or have them with me. This meeting soe renewed the auntient friendship that had ever binn betwixt my Lady Eugenia and my selfe: and we many times held discources of it, my lady stil assuring me a hartly welcome if I wold come to Pontoys.

1664

Whilst my Lady Eugenia was in England, order was given by her Ladyship and my Lord Montague his approve, that Dame Francisca Carrington as she proposed should return to Gant; Sister Agnes Pickering and Sister Ann Solomon attending her thither; and were ther receavde with all kyndnes; as also in there return back at Dunkirk.

My deere Lady, finding that my Lord was ingaged to give, by the Queens importunity and others, Mrs Gifford, Aunt to Dame Ropers, 300 pound sterling and hereafter if Dame Cathrin shold profess; she was to have 200 more; thought it best to follow advis and not dispute

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it with my Lord: so her ladyship gave all into my Lords powre: and ther was recavd payed then to mrs Gifford 300 pound sterling.

My Lady having dispatch this cheefe affayre, taking leave of my Lord and all frends, she made all the hast possible away [1664 June], intending to goe by Bullogne to receive what she could procure to be payd off there of theyr remayning fond; I wayted upon her to Lambeth to see her take coach; Her ladyship renewde her promis of a kynd welcome if I wold come to Pontoys and I gave her my humble thanks and assurance of my sincear affection. When they came to Bullogne the summe her ladyship receavd ther was 11250 livers. Very Reverend father Thimblebee came out of England with my Lady, and going to St Omers her ladyship was very obligingly entertayned in that Colledge with all thos testimonyes of kyndness in theyr powre to show her; from thence she made hast home where she arrived upon [...] and was most joyfully received by all her Community with severall testimonys of respect and congratulation. Very Reverend Father Wigmore was cald away to be rector at Gaunt, very Reverend father Thimblebee was chosen by the Community indifferant man.

1665

My lady Eugenia was all ways very zealous to advauns the profitt of that hows by anything in her powre, and poynt beeing then much in mode she her selfe, and divers of her Religious, wrought very hard at it, and though it was an advauntag for the howses profitt, yet it much prejudist both theyr eyes and health, my Ladys in perticular, for she wold commonly rys about 3 in the morning and dispatch her prayr and goe to work. Her zeale for the Divin Service & Singing in the quire sat of all other things the nearest to her hart, and accordingly she was all ways in a readines to assist ther both for saying and singing, though she had a weake brest; and she nether spared her hart or hands, when she could serve Almighty God by them.

1666

The plague, and burning of London being both in this yeare, and the warr between Holland & England, in which my Lord Falmouth was kild, hath made this year very remarkable. This worthy Lord beeing dead, and he that succeeded to have the purs no frend to our profession, my lady Knatchbull cald me and her sister away, and finding I was much prest by my Lady Carrill to go with her to Dunkirk I requested my Lady Knatchbull to permit me to accept my Lady Eugenias invitation for Pontoys; which my Lady of Gant was not at first very forward to grant, but after wards, Letters passing on all sigdes, it was agreede uppon; and as I have already noted folio [...] passing out of England by Ostend with Mrs Knatchbull to Gaunt wher I made a short stay, finding my good frends ther dissatisfyed with my remove. But I beeing tyrde with my remove first to Dunkirk and then staying 4 year in England I was glad to retyre more out of the Roade and so I hasted to Pontoys, wher I was by the 25 of January [1667]; and coming with a Spanish Marquiss was robde by the way. It will not become my penn to express the kynd reception I

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found from my Lady and all the whole Community. I confess I was much edifyed at their regularity and religious comports of every on[e]. My Ladys silent sweet way did much pleas me and all things seemde to breath forth vertu; and that good character which very Reverend, deere father, Thomson had given me of that hows appeared so truly verified as I was much satisfyed in all respects.

That summer Queene Mother of England, coming to Saint Martins, bestowed an howre or tow with all her court in our inclosure, and was very obliging to my Lady and all the Community. Towards Michalmass my Lady began to be a litle indisposde, but made as litle show of it as was possible, but in October she was for a great catar constrained to keepe her beade; but growing a litle better her Ladyship having more zeale and courage then strenth or health; my Lady rise both to Mass and Communion being present at high mass. and saying all her office was so much tyrde that in the afternoone she was confinde to her bedd, from which she seldome ris but to have it made; yet continued some tow months with a continuall cough and lingring feavour. Her silent patience was so natural and customary to her, as she was allways uppon her gard, never permitting any word or action to appeare that might disgust or dissatisfy any. She seemde unconcerned for all things of this world even from the first howre of her falling sicke, imploying her whole time in silent recollection, and frequent aspirations. The Community was truly sensible of her Suffering and of that great loss they shold have in her; and accordingly all endeavours devin and humayne were employed, and nothing neglected that they could imagin might give her ease, or advaunce her recouvy. But God permitted nothing proved to any other effect than to make her vertu and that of the community the more apparent. Very Reverend father Thimblebee was then our dirrector and very obliging in coming down frequently to visit and assist her; both with his councill and prayres. She ever having binn most dependant on her dirrectors it was of the more comfort to her.

1667

Ther was a Jubily this year, to be gaynd at the end of Advent, and as her ladiship was ever singularly devoted to thes great advauntages soe she took singular comfort in this great benifit, and accordingly prepared for it. Her peasible and silent way made the doctors less knowing how neere she was to her last howre; but she dessirde very Reverend father Thimblebee uppon Saint Thomas, his eve, to Communicate her for her Jubily; and after having taken som broth was layd to rest. Reverend father Thimblebe and all retyrd to theyr beds. Of a sudayn, a new defluction falling uppon her breast, the watchers finding her speach to alter, they speedily recald father Thimblebee, and cald up father Confessor to bring her viaticum, and all the Community beeing assembled, pardon and prayrs was demanded with tears; and after she had received our dear

Lord she, with much earnestness, strove to speak to the community recommending charity and zeale to them but that defluction stopt her speach and the[y] hasted to give her the holy oyles, between tow and 3 o clock in the morning and she remaynd in a

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strong agony, all the community praying by her, truly sensible of theyr approaching loss. For at 7 of the clock uppon Saint Thomas his day in the morning she rendred her happy soule into the hands of her Creator. I shall not heere enlarge uppon any thing by reason that duty is payd in an other place more proper. Her ladyship was exposde in the Quire vested with her Religious habit, and all thos other ornaments that belonged to her Abatiaall dignity. She was buried in our church and hath heere following that Epitaph which was made for her by Reverend father then Sub pryor at Saint Martins of the reformde munks [*missing*].

The funerall and all other dutis dischargde for my deere lady Eugenia, the retreat of 3 days beeing taken, my Lord Abbot Montagu presiding at that ellection by the Appoyntment of my lord Arch Bishope of Roane our Superior; having sayd mass of the holy Ghost, and communicated the Religious, they had before chosen Reverend father Thimblebee and Reverend father Confessor, conformde to the statutes; all beeing assembled the votes were given. And I [Anne Neville] the most unworthy was chosen [1667 December 30], though I blush and hold this and severall other things of this nature improper for me to wright. But having begun our Annals and finding yet non[e] of ours willing to ingage intirly in it, I am constraynd to take this mortification uppon my selfe, till death easeth them of me, or they shall pleas to take the trouble from me, which I am .

The funerall and all other dutys dischargde for my Deere Lady Eugenia, the retreat of 3 days was taken, and my Lord Abbot Montagu by authority from my Lord Arch Bisp of Roane, was to preside at the ellection of a new Abbesse; Reverend father Thimblebee and Reverend father Conniers our confessor, by the Communityes choyce and approve, assisted my Lord at this great action. [1667 December 30] which ought not to be set down by my penne beeing the person uppon whom the favour of so unmerited a dignity was bestowd by the kyndness of so worthy a Community which was much more justly du to everyone of them than to my selfe; and confounds me to name it, but having had no annalls till thes I began I am constraynd to touch severall perticulars which were more proper for an other hand, but knowing the necessity of it, I hope for a favourable censure from thos to whom this work in cheefe belongs.

[*A page missing here in MS.*]

that solemnity by theyr presence

The ellected Abbess with some 5 or 6 of her Religious with very Reverend father Thimblebee, and on[e] or tow English gentlemen were all nobly entertaynd by my lord Abbot. After the High mass and Cerimony was past in the affter noone princess Louysia [*Princess Louisa Hollandina, daughter of the Elector Palatine and granddaughter to James I, later converted and became Abbess of the Cistercian Abbey of Maubuisson, near Pontoise*] with the rest, in passing entered our poore hows with many expressions of love and kyndness, which she hath continued ever since. This Solemnity made us transfer the electing [of] officers which shold have bin the first Munday of Lent; but this beeing Shrove Sunday and I, that a stranger to the Community,

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could not possibly be in readiness by that soe neere approaching day, yet we differd it but on[e] weeke, what all was most unanimously dispatcht; all officers and offices well sorted, according to a tru religious spirit; that appeared [...] every on[e]:

The 12<sup>th</sup> [March] his lordship having desighnd to take up all accounts and examin the state of the hows, all things and officers beeing prepared ready for it. I gave my lord a breefe account: that we

had a farm yealding us in rent yearly 600. Theyr remaynd of our principal at Bollogne - this lay dead and gave us no rent - livers 6900.

In yearly pensions we then had some 900, besids our young ladys, which might come to some 1500. Many other debts we have that ar considerable, but of litle probabillity to be payd.

We are in family 52 and this is all we have got to support it; thus my lord I have declar'd very sincerely the temporall condition and beeing yet a stranger in the way of gouvernment, and indeed in all affayrs, it beeing but 15 months since I had the honnore to be made a member of this Community, yet I must affirme that for order regularity and zeale, I have receavd much edification from them, and so in order to theyr spirituall dutyes, obedience and submission so as I can not but confide God's providence will ever assist us, as through his mercy he hath very liberally donn. I then gave my lord the knowledge of what your debts were, and what monys we had then taken of a frend to lessen them, and conclud the litle building then in hand of the refectory, infirmary and cells. My lord was well satisfyed with all, but sensible of finding so slender a fortune. But his lordship encouraged us to confid in God, and very exact in the observance of poverty.

Finding many stops in the payment of Dame Catherne Ropers portion, my lady Lee, desiring that Dame Mechtilda might go to Saint Winifred's well [1668] for the cure of her eyes, my lord gave leave for it and concluded that it might be a proper occation for me to procure the dispatch of Dame Catherin's portion. So the day after midsummer day Mrs Mary Smith with her sister, Dame Michtilda Smith, and I went for England [June 25], having a speedy & safe passage and found ther a reception of much kyndness from all frends. And after I had visited Saint Winifrids well with Dame Smith I returned to London and found it hard enough to bring friends together that were engaged in that affayr, but at last all was happily concluded and 800 pound sterling payed downe, and 200 of it immediatly given to Mrs Gifford, according to the bargayn made, by my lord Abbot Montagu and my lady Eugenia. The other 600 was made over by bills and I imediatly left England [1668 November 5], and coming by Bullogn wold have receaved what monys was ther remaying of ours; but found it not feasible not having all thos formalitys ther in wrighting required by the Bishope; I writt to requir leave that Dame Aloisia and deere Dame Justina Timperly, then procuratrix, might meete me at Paris. We lodgde and dynded at madam Timperlys and very obligingly treated by her and her Religious, nor were we less kyndly entertayned by my lady Treddway and my lady Gascoyn. My Lord Abbot Montagu was extreamly civill and obliging, carrying us to

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kiss Queene Mother of Englands hands and madames but, as I was never fond of living at court, so I was as litle ingaged by thes visits ther, and having dispatcht those litle affayrs I had to do at Paris I made hast to Pontoys, but could not declin the favour of loging on[e] night at Mauboyson, receaving ther all possible expressions of kyndness from the Royal Princes and her worthy Religious.

Uppon the 6<sup>th</sup> of December [1668] I arrived at our own monastery church where very Reverend father Edward Simeons, who at the remove of Reverend father Thimblebee to be master of the Novices, came hither to supply his place, and was by the votes of the Community chosen indifferent man, this yeare 1668, the 27 of May; and coming down to Pontoys now with Reverend Father Confessor, with theyr surplis and stole met me, & having receavd holy water and kist the Cros Reverend father Simmions gave me the welcom in a very proper exhortation. Entring the monastery I found so many tru expressions of love and respect as gave me a double joy.

The 3rd of Ja[nuary] [1668/69] Dame Catherin Roper was profest. All things went on with much satisfaction on all sides. About the midle of January, faling very sike, I expected death, which I prepar'd for, by making my confession to my Lord as to my Superior, and rendring him a cleare account of all things, both of our temporall and spirituall concerns in the presence of the pryores and consult. Very Reverend father Simmions and our worthy confessor Mr Conniers, and as in all occations so now I found that vertu and goodnes of the Community very evident by theyr patience with me, and assisting charity now and in all my concerns.



This year Mr Robert Riddall, a neer relation to Mr Conniers, coming down from Roome made conditions to stay with us as a chaplin to sing & say the masses.

This year [1669] the remaynder of our fond at Bulloyn was sold of[f] to the valu of 6900 liv and were thus disposed of. 4000 livers was plast first in Monsieur Cursils hands - then at Hostell de Ville - where it is now. The other tow 2000 payd the monks of Saint Denis for what was du to them for our indemnity for this purchas.

1670

My lord finding our smale incumme to draw increas of debts he was pleased to assure us that as soone as God shold inable him to help us to increas that stock he wold not fale to do it. And now his lordship payd many debts, which gave us much assistance. In gratitude for this and those other advauntages his lordship gave us so just hopes of, the community made an act that was sighnd and seald by all to make my lord, living and dead, participant of the prayers and merits of the Community.

1671

[May] My lord beeing to tak a long journey, his age and infirmity considered, his return might be uncertayn, this made me propose to my lord the making of a formall visit, and I sent by Reverend Father Confes that chapter of the statutes to his lordship, and proposing it to the community all was concluded, and the day named.

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1671

[May] My lord having sayd mass of the holy Ghost : Reverend father Simions beeing gon to Gant, we made use of no other in his absence in this concern but in what I thought fit to imploy our Confessor, which was only in my owne concern, and so when I went first in to my lord I took father Confessor ye pryores consult and procuratrix. I told my lord, though I knew he was no stranger to me and the Community, we having ever held a free and oppen way of dealing with his lordship both for the spirituall and temporall affayrs of our hows, yet duty and Religion obliging to thes visits I desired to acquit my duty in what I was obliged. Our family now is amounted to 69 persons. Our revenew as your lordship knows is only [...] our debts [...].

So that your lorship can not but judge how impossible it is with all the industry possible to keepe with in compass. As for the order and regularity of the community I have no reason to complayn, finding all so well disposed as readily to admit of making satisfaction when they comit faults, and as long as this continueth with that tru union and charity which now through God's goodnes flourisheth in the community, I hope no great disorders will ever be amongst us. I then also gave my lord account of the dispensations I and other superiors some times gave, with the reasons for it and so went through all that order of governrnt ; adding

that for all greater matters I always made my recourse to his lordship as occations occurd; and in all things as much as lay in me, I endeavoured to cary on the government of the monastery as neere as possible conformde to the Rule and constitutions.

When my lord and we had discourst a while uppon thes points, I knelt down and requested his lordship, considering my want of health and ability, that he wold pleas to procure of the Community, the ellection of an other Superieur. My cheefe reason of doing this was that in my great fit of sickness I made a purpose that if I could meet with a fitt opportunity, I wold offer to my Superiour and the Community the surrender of my place to on[e] more worthy of it.

[May] My lord and all the company seemde surprisde for I had made no overture of this to any, not that I wanted confidence, or any free communication with my Confessor, but had I told him of it probably he wold have diverted me; and I was not willing to dispute it with any, but to put it into the full powre of my Superiour and the Community, which I conceavd to be my best way to find out the will of God in this affayre, sincearly desiring and resolving that, as it shold please God to direct my Superiour and the community, I wold submit and rest satisfied; for as I freely made offer of this

dignity into theyr hands to dispose of, so I concluded having that power at theyr own choyce, they wold be so much theyr own frends, as not to stand uppon tearmes whether I really desird it or noe; though for as much as I can judge, I did sincearly desir it, as farr as I wold find or prove it to be God's will, or most to theyr satisfaction. My lord sayd not much then, but only that was an affayr that wold require consideration. When we went out some of the Religious that seemd concernd at what I had donn and sayd, spoke freely to me not with out tears

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on both sides, which I also found from some others that came to know it; nor did I pas with out a check from good Father Confessor, but as I told them I had acted nothing, but only put that powre into my Superiours hands and the Communityes to act for me and them selvs, as God shold dirrect them, which was to be my discharg and theyrs, as well as our comfort.

The first day as I had tow or 3 times occation to wayt uppon my lord, he told me had I not made that offer he nor the Community shold never have had any thought of such an accident, but now they ought to consider the affayr with much deliberation. I had some reason to think I might have binn set at liberty till the day following, when my lord told me the Community wold not accept my resigning. Saying many things of my high obligation to the Community, which were trueths I was very well convinst of, and of theyr great vertu in supporting my many infirmityes and errors. When my lord with much satisfaction had treated aloan with every on[e] of the Community, his lordship desird to have them all assembled together. My lord spoke very obligingly of the great comfort and edification his lordship had receaved by making this visit, encouraging all to go one in the same way of vertu and peace, he now found them.

We all knelt downe as I told my lord to receave his fatherly reprehensions for our faults, and wold not fayle to comply with his paternall admonitions, and obey in what so ever he shold command us. His lordship, speaking very sensibly of our temporall condition, recommended to us frugallity and care of holy poverty in all things; and then in perticuler his lordship gave me to understand my high obligation to the Community's kyndness in theyr not accepting the surrender of my office, which he also desired I shold continu, with a searious application to my duty, in the spirit of sweetnes & charity, yet with zeale and vigor in seeing disciplin observd with the Rules and Constitutions; and to have a care of little faults. So with a most paternall expression of honnor and esteeme for the Community, he gave us his Blessing and tooke leave. His lordship gave us advis to profes non[e] under full 5000 livre. Now as I found my obligations to the Community redoubled by this last favour, so I was in payn for the litle abillity I had to make my gratitude appeare; but as formerly I had found theyr kynd acceptance of that litle I could do to serve them, so I now confided they wold not be less ready to take that litle in good part, which I could compass to do them service. All things went on with much evenness and peace, and my lord took much pleasur to com downe frequently to Pontoys, spending many howrs in hearing confessions and treating of spirituell things with divers of the Religious, retyring from them with much edification and satisfaction.

1672

His Lordship, finding our great want of a good foundation to subsist by caused us many debts and prejudices, he now put into my hands a wrighting constituting 10000 to give us a rent by of 500 livers yearly.

His Lordship made it his studdy to render all things commod[ious] for

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the service of the hows, and having parted the cells, he made a recevoyr at the fountayn and pipes to convey water to the Kitchen.

After the death of Madame, and Queen Mother, my lord determining to lay down all the pompe and honors of this world, procurde leave of the King of France to part with hls Abbey at Saint Martins into my Lord Cardinal de Bullionn his hands, as confident it wold prove both of honor and

advantage to the whole town, and to us in particular: whom he seriously recommended to my lord Cardinall's favour, as his Eminence hath not failed since, to let us know and find, by very ample effects in all occasions his most sensible concern for us.

1673

The more frequent my lord's visits were to us the greater esteeme and concern he was pleased to have for us, and to take to hart the supplying of us with monys both to pay debts and help us to subsist. Now as my lord was very obliging and preventing in his favours to us, so was he much incouraged in this particular by very Revd father Jhon Warner, of the Society of Jesus, who came to succeed father Simmions last yeare, May the first. We tryed all ways to help ourselves for our temporall advantage but found litle by any endeavour, ether by work or address, to friends, all our supplys were from my lord who never seemed weary of relieving his poore children. We did not fayle to try to put out part of the portions we received, but with very litle fruit, for generally what wee put out on month or yeare, we took in another to help us to subsist.

1674

His lordship always took a singular content in clothing and professing the Religious, and we no less satisfaction to see his lordship do it with soe much searious devotion.

He still persevered frequently to visit and treat with the Community with much satisfaction and content.

His lordship had allways a singular devotion to the Feasts and Cerimonys of the church and at the request both of the Cardinal and the monks, his lordship came down to officiat at theyr prime Solemnities, which gave us also an advantage of more frequent visits and conversation with his lordship, much to his and our content; and though for the most part, when we began to lay open the temporall distresses, he wold be a litle concernd and troubled but uppon a longer time of conversation of spirituall things with the Religious he would fall into excellent humour and on[e] way or other give or send us some summe that was considerable, to let us se how much he was satisfied with the advance the Community made in vertu, though theyr temporall condition of a smale fortune held his lordship still in care and concern for us. I had ever a singular comfort in that tru intelligence and right understanding my lord had of myne & the Community's proceedings in all respects, which as it still the greater evidence of his lordships prudence; so it was also the greater proof of the union peace and vertu of this holy hows.

1675

The suffragan of my Lord Arch Bishop of Roane came at my entreaty

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to confirme severall of our profest Religious and of the convict, with many others of the towne, and gave lesser orders to severall.

My lord Cardinall de Bulliogn made us a visit, with an excuse for not having yet given the Community his blessing, recommending the King and Royall family, with his own concerns to the prayers of the Religious very obligingly tooke leave. My lord Cardigan with his daughter, the Countess of Shrewsbury, and her sonne, my lord of Shrewsbury, with divers other English persons of quallity, comming to live in France, were much edified by the visits they made to theyr relations and friends heere at the grates as well as others were whom my lord gave permission to enter the enclosure.

1676

[May] Mrs Selbee having declard her desire of Religion, my lady, her mother, sent to have her meet her at Calis. Sister Mary Joseph Bolny went with her. My lady finding her desirs settled for religion gave her her blessing and permission to enter the Noviship; so they returnd back, and brought the tow Mrs Standlys with them who entered that convict.

The tow Dame Giffords were now to be profest [September 12] and ther wanted no good will in them to have brought theyr whole fortun, 2000 pound a peece; but when all came to be adjusted ther was given them only 1000 pound for each. All expenses involvde; which was as sensible a

mortification as could befall them; for non[e] desired more to advance God's glory and the good of the hows by theyr fortune then thes tow good Religious did, but God wold not allow them that content, nor us the advauntage, his holy will be donn. They most generously left all to be disposed of to pay debts (and) or what might be other ways mos(t) for that present concern : the younger Sisters was not then paid in, she not beeing full 21 but it was all receavde 1681. Then that last 400 pounds was payd & Sir Jhon Gifford required that shold be put out for them in case of the community's decay of fortun and though the necessitys of that yeare could not spare it, yet it must be supplied by assighning them some other monys.

1677

This day [January 15] was a sad on[e] to us by the vyolence of the river breaking in and casting down our walls, bringing a great distruction uppon us in all kynds. I was much edified at the payns the poore Religious took to save and preserve what they could from spoyles, and to support this cross with a cheerful patience.

I fayled not to give my lord a speedy account of this new charge. His lordship immediatly sent me, 500 livers to begin the wals, with letting us know he was a litle better; which was welcome news to me and the Community. But as all humayn comforts pass like a flash of lightning, so did this, for immediatly word was brought he was daungerously ill. I instantly sent away Mr Coniers our worthy Confessor, who found his lordship very ill but most pyously disposed for that last houer. He cald for the holy Sacraments which his lordship recavd with much devotion, and as the Community was his cheefe care and concern in his

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life, so now at his death both to our Confessor and Reverend Father Warner, his lordship made many livly expressions of his sensibility in leaving us in so low a condition.

Whilst my lord lay thus between life and death the Community was in continuall prayr and pennance to move heaven to spare him to us: but he had made his preparation so perfectly for that journey, and soe compleated his crown as no delay wold be allowed. Soe assisted by Monsieur D'Espond, his owne ghostly father, very Reverend father Warner and Mr Conniers he most pyously rendred his soule at ten in the morning, beeing Fryday and the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 1677.

1677

This sad news soone arrivde and struck all of us with a most sensible grieffe, drawing sighes and tears from every hart and eye; but duty cald uppon us to pay that debt of sorrow by some more signall and effectuall expressions of our love and gratitude to his memory, as to the best of frends, father and benefactor, under which title all dutyes the statutes ordayns was by all both in publick and privat performde. The whole office of the deade with a solemn mass sung the next day, by the Cureé of our Blessed Ladys Church and all his ecclesiasticks heire in our litle chappell, our harts beeing yet so full of greefe and our eyes to apt for tears to discharge that duty.

My lord Cardinali de Bulliogne ordered all for the coming down of my lords body, reception and buriall at Saint Martin's, his emminence expressing all obliging civillity in this occation.

1677

[February] My lords Ghostly father Monsieur D'espond came down with the body and so did very Reverend father Warner. The Cureé of our Ladys church, with all the priests and singing boys, met the body by our Ladys church uppon the bridge and so attended the hears till the body was buried in Saint Gotier his chappell. Asking permission to sing ther a de profundis the monks mett the course with du solemnity and devotion. From Saint Martins the Clergy of our Ladys, with all theyr attendants, came to our Church. The whole community beeing assembled together in the quire, with lighted candles in theyr hands, and the Hirce in the midle of the church and candles lighted on the Altur. Very Reverend father Warner with his surplice, stole and cope, entring a litle before into the

church. After the church door was open, we sung *In paradiso*. Monsieur d'Espond had brought downe embalmed in a case of leade the lights, liver and lungs, which my deere lord had consigned to us, and with a proper speeach upon my lords vertu and kyndness to this Community, he delivered what he had in charge to very Reverend father Warner, who was not to sicke in his return of as long prayes in my lords behalfe; and assurance of this communityes great sensibility of their loss by my lords death, and hartly prayrs for him. The priests of our lady asked permission to sing in musick a *De profundis*, and so all took leave and went to the Carmelits; my lord having given ther to mother Jane and her worthy community his hart. His bowelles was buried at the Incurables.

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For a testimony to posterity of this obligation we esteemde orselves to have to give some perticular evidence of our gratitude to my lord, as to our cheefe benefactor, we made a litle hears with a black velvet hire cloth and whight sattin Cross and my lords armes imbrodered upon it to expos yearly when we performe his anniversary office. Wee put the case of ledd into a kynd of ledden coffinn, about a foote and halfe long, and on[e] foote broade; then it was sodered up and buried in our church

The inscription upon it was:-

**The cover of the hart and liver of the Right Honourable the lord Abbot Montague, formerly Commendatory Abbot of Saint Martins heere in Pontoyse, and actually when he dyed Abbot of Nantuell. He was Illustrious by birth but more illustrious by his vertu and bounty to this Community, and most illustrious by his pyety towards God, and charity to his Neighbor. He dyed and rested in our Lord on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February. Anno 1677.**

**Requiescat in pace:**

A marble stonn was bespoke to be placed on the side of the wall over agaynst wher the hart was buried, with this Epitaph imprinted in gold letters as a poore remarke of thos charractors of gold which the sensibility and due gratitude for his many favours and great bountys to them hath imprest upon their harts.

Requiescat in pace

Amen

1677

This is a mere observation of all passages set down more at large in other proper places. Therefore I only briefly touch the most essentiall perticulers.

Monsieur Joffoss, beeing then vicegerint; it fell by providence that it was our lott to be under his charge, and it was much to our advauntage. For non[e] could be more obliging and concernd for us then he was, or more ready to do us favoure and though he made no formall visit, yet he very closely and seariously examined all things, advising and assisting us both by councill and action.

Very Reverend father Warner beeing cald away Reverend father Clifford was sent in his place.

1678

The widdow Mrs Titchborn entred to be religious [January 16]. She brought a considerable anuity for her life of some 600 livers a yeare; with 2400 livers more to be payd in at her death or before, as the on[e] half of it hath bin.

Mrs Charlot Selbee also entered and was clothed and profest at the du time; she had 4000 livers at her profession and 20 pound a year annuity.

Mrs Mary Titchborn, daughter to Sir Henery Titchborn, came much about the same time to Religion. She had 300 pound at her profession and is to have payd to the community after her death 400 pound more, and 20 pound annuity during her life.

My lord Cardigan sent me a token of 50 pound.

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1678

The Pope, his Nuntio, coming to Saint Martins to retyre some days [March], he came on[e] afternoon to our church, and then gave his blessing to all the community, seeming much satisfyed and pleased. The noys of warr began to be whispered up and down, and my lord Cardinall comming to give us a visit and his blessing, he was very pleasant and well pleased saying, though ther shold be wars between France and England, yet ther shold be non betwixt Saynt Martins and our monastery. Father Clifford beeing suddaynly cald away to Loretto [September] very Reverend father Clare [Warner SJ, formerly Sir John Warner] was sent in his place; and thus the promissing hopes given us, of many advauntages by his assistance; yet the effects hath much exceded all that was promist. Nor is it to be immagined or exprest how tru a father and kynd a frend he hath binn and is dayly to this community.

The ill seede that Oates had sowed began now to appeare ripe, and the disturbances in our nation fell heavy uppon us, by a stope of all necessary correspondance and du payments. We were advised to send some of our Religious to Paris.

1678

My lady Mary Carrill and her Community at Dunkerk by the stopping up of the goffers found that town grow less wholesome. So she with some of her community came to Paris, and mad[e] also a step to Pontoys, beeing first invited by me and the Religious. They stayd heere some time and then returnd to Paris to deale theyr owne business, desighning to procure a patent, if possible to remove her whole family. I beleeve theyr ayme was for Paris, but not succeeding they obtaynd on[e] for Abbeville.

Some days before my lady Carrill went from us to Paris, Mr Joffos, our Superiour, gave me his approbation to send Dame Aloisia Elliot and Dame Mary Christina Whight to Paris to try what advauntage could be had ther. This ought to be more perticulerly and clearly sett downe and so is referd to a more proper place. All I shale now say is that from that address then made to madame, the Duches of Riechlu and madam Mayntenoone, recommended by Reverend pere Rapin and assisted by Reverend father Clare his advis and endeavours, uppon theyr presenting a placet to his Royall Majisty, wee may justly, as it shale be made cleare, attribute the succeeding almes of that and latter yeares.

The lady Powes beeing cald in question uppon severall fals accusations made agaynst her; and her ladyships letters & myne beeing declar'd to foment Rebellion and the having her daughters heere in our monastery alledge agaynst her; she sent privatly to have her tow daughters removed, as they were immediatly, that and many other Crosses falling upon us thes times.

1679

As all publick actions are leading ways for others to follow, so after

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our tow Dames had appeard at court and presented theyr placet, divers monasteryes and several others of the Nation began to make theyr addresses by theyr perticuler frends helpe, which made severall obiections, at all hands. And we were advise to call our Religious home, who in theyr return were most obligingly entertaynd at Mouboyson by her Royall Highness, Princes Louisia [July 27]. It is not to be imagined how many ways endeavours were used to procure our small sumes from England and how litle succes wee found. For times were soe dangerous and the acting or coming to monasterys so much prohibited and punnisht as non wold ingage in our affayers after Mr Gowen, his imprisonment and his papers with all ours beeing carryed to the councill table since well time, wee could never yet recouvre them agayne.

1680

By the favour of my lord Cardinall de Bulliogn when the Almes was distributed [March 25] for praying for the good success of the Dolphin, his happy mariage, 4000 livers fell to our lott, which we enjoyde some yeares.

My lady Marina Beaumont writt to desir me and the community to let her have some of our Religious to settle her hows, proposing a dependency and total surrender of all powre to this monastery, and to make that dependant upon this. Several letters past, for it could not so sudaynly be ended. Much about that same time a great lady at Paris proposde to Reverend father Clare the giving her hows at Paris for a monastery, and desired we shold be treated with about it; but father Clare beeing to go into Flaunders with his Brother and daughter, the business lay deade till his return, though the lady and my selfe past severall letters about it in his absence.

1680

Reverend father Clare gave the exercys [November] and then going to Paris treated with that lady, Pere la Chaise, and others about this affayre. And on the 18 of December I went to Paris as well on this servise, which was a secret, as to meete my lady Marina then to conclude with her; which was soon dispatcht, for she finding some favour and bounty at Court, fell of from her former proposolls, and so we parted. But she took 3 Dames out of the Chand lu Lait [*Champs l'alouette*] with others and so returned to her monastery and was soone cald to the other world; and that hows fell into dispute, - and if it could be compast fell into a desighn of being made an Irish hows. Now all theses passages beeing at larg set down elswher, I shall only touch heere what cannot be avoyded.

1681

This great Duches that desighnd us her haws, was very well acquaynted and esteemed by the Arch Bishop of Paris, and ther was an other great lady joynd with her in the promotion of the good action, and intention of concurring in the settlement of means for that good work. Tow other ladys of lesser quallity, though no mean persons acted much

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in the concern. Between us and the Duches, Pere le Ches was treated with. All things seemed so probable and prosperous as nothing appeard more easy and facill to be 'compast. Good Pere Rapin acted with vigor and zeale on all sides, and soe did Reverend father Clare; we had the Cardinals permission when we first began to treat it, though he never was very willing for it and finding that ther was noe evidence of obtayning an establishment, after the Duchess of Ritchlu and Madame Mayntenoon by Pere Rapins importunity had spoken to his Majesty, and he had given them a flat denyall, yet with great expressions of esteeme of the Community, with promiss of supplying us some other way. I resolved, as soon as my health wold permit, to return home, so on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, in Madam Vilsanyns coach, Mr Pearch and Mrs Warner with us, we came to Pontoys, but at the demaund of her Royall Highness we lodgde at Mouboyson some 3 nights, receauing from the princess and all that excellent community all possible testimonys of obliging kyndness. Wee visited all the monasteryes and Saint Martins, and were receavd with much civillity by all. I confess as soon as entred into our own church. I found my hart at tru ease, and having kist the Cross, and donn our devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, the *Te deum* beeing sung, we entred the Quire, wher I tasted tru Joy and content, finding the Community in so good order and cheerfull a way. I never think of this affayr without much admiration considering all circumstances and probable ground to bring it to pass and the non dispatch of it; as we much admired that providence that gave us such greater probabillitys with out the effects, but we must not dispute, but submit to Almighty God and his holy will, as from my soule I desir to doe.

1682

Mrs Penelope Henedge receauvde the holy habitt [July 2] and past through her Noviship very courragiously and will much satisfaction to all. Her portion was 15 hundred pound; 1000 pound put out and the 400 pound payd to the hows, the other 100 to pay all charges of clothing and profession to which she added other Summes and imployd much of it for the community.

1683

This yeare with the last was of no small weight in regard of our temporalls; which ever since, my good lord Montagu, his death, hath still growne wors and wors. Yet providence so disposed that

through Gods mercy and the motion of friends, Sir Thomas Preston gave us a good sume of 11500  
livers which my lord Carrington, and my lord Mullinex did avdaunce with theyr interest: but that wee  
have not the free use at it; but hope it will come. God send all to conserve our interest in it; for sure I  
am wee have real want of the use of it.

1684

Our distresses still continuing, very Reverend father Clare beeing now to setle his daughter, Mrs  
Susan Warner who declar'd to be Religious

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Wlh her sister at Dunk[...]k, his Reverence did what he could to satisfy our butcher and other  
creditors that were most importune and lent us 500 pound which wee agayne repayed at her  
profession out of the mony Sir Thomas Preston gaue us.

This abreviated observance is much more at large set down and in better proportions  
but becaus all thos things ar hazardous to decay and lose I made this litle compendium more  
for my owne helpe of memor and knowing wher to find perticulers as occation might require,  
than for any other desighn.

Agayn this next yeare at his Lordships return back he was pleased to give us an other visit  
[1687] with all possible expression of obliging kyndness and favour.

*[The MS. ends with this last detached paragraph, which seems to refer to a missing account of  
1686.]*