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 particular, as if she had had no other or greater business, then to comfort and assist those who address'd themselves to her in theyre necessities, 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 & affabillity 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 Allmighty god tha 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.

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The Abbess, Anne Clavering, with the larger number of her Religious were received into the community at Dunkerque, only to be expelled with 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 Brussels, and since extended, into several other houses of the same Rule & Constitutions, all of them dedicated to the Honnor 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 their owne country retyred into Flauunders 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 Barkeley 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 particulars advaunst very prosperously and with great approbation and success; and father Holt sayd theyr first Mass, upon 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 enjoined by all the moniales of the order, always upon condition the they remayn 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 Abbesse by my lord Arch Bishope of Macklin and 8 young English ladys offered themselves to bee her subjetics. On the 21 of November the same month and yeare, beeing the feast of the presentation[n] of the ever Glorious Virgin Mary, thes 8 ladys, of which number my lady Mary Percy was the first and chiefe, receavde the holy habit at the hands of my Lord Mathias Hovius, Arch Bishope of Macklin, in presence of thyr Highnesses the Arch Duke Albertus and his Duchess the lady Isabella Clara Eugenia, the infanta of Spayne; and all the cheefe of that Towne of Bruselles.

Anno 1600

The 21 of November, my lady Mary Percy with the other 7 devout ladys, beeing the same feast on which the yeare precedent they had receavd the holy habit of our Glorious father St Benedict, They made theyr sacred vowes and profession in the hands of the most illustrious Lord Mathias Hovius, Arch Bishope of Macklin, and the lady Jean Barckley, Abbess, in presence of the affer sayd Alltoresses. All the princes and magistrates of that towne expressing great joy, as beleeving that by this monastery of holy virgines, dedicated to Allmighty God, they and they Citty shold receave many blessings.

1601

Rev Father Holt was sent to Roome & in his place very Reverend Father William Bauldwin of the same Society, came to Bruselles. A person of great vertu and veneration, who had binn prisoner long in the Towre of London, and was ther put to the wrack, for not discovering the Confessions he had heard of some of thos that were put to death for the gunpowder treason plott, a reall plot by the heriticks agaynst the catholicks, to destroy them, but with out any intended desighn on theyr parts of any treason or want of duty to the King.

1603

Under the spirituall conduct of the holy man, the first hows of our Congregation advaunced much in vertu, living in great esteeme and veneration; nor was he les of advauntage to them in order to theyr temporalles.

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1610

[By many Abbots and others of learning and sanctity] The lady Abbess and her Community desiring some constitutions shold be given them by my lord Arch Bishope, proper and proportioned to the Rule of St Benedict; his lordshipe, taking into his consideration the dispatch of so great a work, calling to council and advising with ma[n]y learned persons, compild the Statuts and gave them to be observde uppon tryall for a yeare, which they did which much zeale and exactness.

1612

The lady Barckley and her Religious, finding the constitutions to theyr satisfaction, as of tru advauntage to perfection, and not above theyr ability to comply with, requested the confirmation of them. So his lordship, by a perticular powre delegated to him from his Holiness, confirmde the statutes.

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

The pope’s Nuntio that lived divers years at Brussells and dealt many cheafe affairs for our Religious Dames at Brussells, when he returned for Italy desired to have a coppy of them with intention to introduce them in his jurisdiction whe ther were monasterys of Religious women. That was in the yeare 1631. And several 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 Dioceeses.

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 opinion 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 actted 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 Vavousir when I began our chronicle, and she affirmd she had it from father Chambers

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

[Lady Vavousir]God’s providence raysed great frends to the Community in theyr beginning and, as my lady Mary Vavousir 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. Several Abbots of our holy order gave us some assisting helps and summes towards our building. By the wisdome & 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 3d, 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 Baldwin 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 silvery 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 goddy 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 vayle and garment, very authentically tru. This monastery hath also several 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 begining establishment; very Reverend father Robert Parsons at Rome, procuring the Pope his Breve in so favourabe and paternall terms as nothing could be more obilging;
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 antiquites of the order, which he had studdedy 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 abroade. This Community hath binn always very zealous in the pursuit of vertu and ambitious to pertake of the participation of merits, with the most eminent monastereys of our holy order.
[The lady Vavasir] 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 procude a confirmation of it. And the same advauntage they have also 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 establisht in both for temporall and spirituall blessings. And when it was uppon the eve of dissolving by the Arch Bishope, Allmghty 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 Brussels and what els I shall heerafter sett downe:
I have endeavoured to amass together all the memorials 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

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was some opposition made against the statutes: but the greatest part of the community stood for them, and we then made our humble recourse to his Holiness and the sacred Congregation for the defense of our statutes. And God be praised the Holy See always protected us, but yet in that time we 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 cordial correspondence between our tow howses, so much as I hope devoted to the love and practis of our constitutions, and constant dependance on the direction and assistance of the Society of Jesus, wher upon certaynly depends both our temporell and spiritual good. I now send you the copy of the first confirmation of our statutes which sufficiently proves the honor and obligation we owe unto thos sacredd lawse; and which will ever be best observde, under the guidance and direction of the fathers of the Society of Jesus; experience having taught us what damoge wee sustayned when deprived of that benefitt and the happiness we now enjoy 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 Vavousoare
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 little 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 writye of the first Monastery of our Congregation I had my intelligence from the worthy lady, and shall accordingly depyn upon 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 Brussels:-

[The opinion of Reverend father Subporyr in wrighting of this lady in the French chronicle] The family of Barkley, 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 joyned with vertu, this is the foundation upon which we are to establish what is prays worthy in this first Abbesse, rather upon 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, retyrde 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 compleat year of Noviship was ther profest, living with such prudence, and pyety, as she was judge capable to be the first Superior 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 we have no particular knowledge of the life of this worthy Abbess, 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 Institutos of orders and beginners of Congregations, lights and particular graces, which by them he also intends shal descend to thos who shal succeede them, and make profession of the same institute.

[Father Sub Prior] This divin goodnesse 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 designd him to establish an order in the church, in which his children ought to flourish in all sanctity and justice, giving them a Rule caled in the Counseells for its excellency the Holy Rule.

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The wisdome of Allmighty God observeth the same manner in order to such as he is pleased to chues for founders of Religious orders and Congregations. Soe as we may probably confide that his holy providens had espetiall regard to the first Superioriour 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 receave, 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 Abbess in the Monastery, in the yeare 1699 [sic] worthily discharging the office for the space of 17 years and dyed holily the 2e 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 uppon [...] she was blest Abbess on the 14 of November 1616. As she was a person of honnor by birth so was she much esteemde for her pyety and vertu. And as many remarkkable things of divers kynds hapned in the time of her prelature, so I shall briefly touch the most considerabe of them. But as this is no chronicle, but a little abstract and compendium of the most noted years and accidents, I must omit 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 abiliities came to setle in the monastery of Brussells, non[e] surpassing it in reputation both for vertu and all other excellencyes proper to a Religious life. This probably drew the thoughts of the English Missioners, the monks of our holy order, to address themselves 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 Bishop 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 designh; after 4 days com[m]ending the matter to Allmighty God, and tretting with all apart, there was only 3 that declar'd themselves ready to undergoe this great work, and willing to imbrace such hardship as can not be avoyded in these 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 abiliities 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, especially Dame Yaxly, who, after some years when our English monks had the Superintendancy in spiritual dirrection and were Confessors at Brussels monastery, Dame Yaxly, beeing then Mrs of Novices at Cambray, was brought by the monks

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back to Brussells 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 Brussells, 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 Brussells 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 Brussells. 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 honor and virtu in it, and mor conforme to a good religious spirit and conciens. This hows of Cambray are very strict observers of Silence and retreats

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

Brussells monastery being the first of the English Nation established since the fall of Religion, except that of Lisbon in Portugall, it soone grew numerous with persons of a great reputation and vertu. This made some of the wyset of theyr friends cast theyr thoughts upon 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 pro

ertyes were used back to Bru.

This hows of Cambray are very strict observers of Silence and retreats

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much less probability how to increase the number. And yet when God designs a new establishment shall take, 'tis strange to see how all things fall out prosperous, and proper for it; and how sweetly Almighty God disposeth all persons necessary to this affair to concur with it, as in a most especial manner he did in this of Gaunt.

Their letters and patents from Spayne were very ample and compleat, with all the orders grants and privileges that could be given

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in their behalves to the Arch Bishop or Bishops, Princes and Magistrates, to protect and assist them in this great work; and that with all the kind expressions of esteem and preference that could be wished or desired, and sealed and signed for them on the 24 day of September, in the year 1623.

Thus all things went prosperously on, in a silent quiet without noise, whilst in the interim, Reverend father Norton and others of the Society writ to friends in England to dispose and prepare them for such a work, which divers engaged in.

The consent and approval of my lord Bishop of Gaunt, the governor and magistrates, was also procured, a hows taken and pre pared in readiness for them, and all seeming now compleat. My lord Arch Bishop of Mackline declaring it his will and pleasure that Dame Lucy Knatchbull, as Superior by his Lordships appointment, should goe with Dame Eugenia Pulton, Dame Magdlin Digby and Dame Mary Roper with two 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 said appointed Superior Dame Lucy Knatchbull and the rest of their obedience due to us, upon express condition, by her and the other profest Religious, accepted:

That they shall carry nothing with them whatsover out of the said Cloyster of Our Lady, ether in pensions, rents or process of pursuance for them any other way, then as the Right Honorable Lady Abbess and the Community will freely give them, in witness whereof we have signed this with our own hand, and cause our seale to be fixed upon them, in the town of Brussells, on the 5th of January, and in the yeare of our lord 1624.

This is the tenor of the chiefest points of my lord Arch Bishop's grant, and dismission of the Religious from under his jurisdiction and remaining in the monastery at Brusselles. The authority of my lord Bishop and his command that no disputes or difficulties or any kind of exceptions should be objected, on the one side or the other, but that they should part with all love and kindness, to which they own good natures easily disposed them, and ther was nothing but embraces and tears of sisterly love amongst them. But as their time was but short after my lord Arch Bishop had declared his orders for their removal, so the dispatch of so great an affair requireth their whole attendance for preparing for their journey against the appointed day.

The lady Vavouisir

1624
upon the 16 of January, Dame Eugenia Pulton, then pryores, Dame Magdlin Digby, Dame Lucy Knatchbull, Dame Mary Roper with Sister Elizabeth Bradbery a Novice for the quire, and Sister Lucy Bacon a Novice for the convers Sisters, departed this our monastery at Brusselles. I must not omit the Justice to give testimony they were all most worthy Religious, truly vertuous, endowed by Almighty God with great abilities. 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 favourd by Almighty God in prayer of an admirable temper and wisdome.

Dame Eugenia Pulton, the 2d 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 Bishop 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, favourd 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 favourd by Allmighty God, with extraordinary graces and I lament [the] neglect of recordes.

[1624] The good Religious that were dissimist from our monastery to begin a new foundation at Gant left Brussells upon the 16th of January, arriving the next day at that greate citty where the[y] happily setled. And we that remaynd behind were extreamly sensible of theire loss. Heere ends thos letters of my lady Vavouror.

[Janu 18] Beeing the feast of Saint Peetrs 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 ingaged in this affayre, yet did she not for this neglect thos other humble imployments of her state, [such] as beeing in the kitchen, infirmary [or] stillhows,

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 3d, 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 increases 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

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thos particulers 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 Brussels, 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 particular.

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 recoursce to the Holy Apostolicall Sea and know theyr sentiment. He therefore writt to the Cardinalls, to whom his Holiness the Pope had recom[end]ed 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 greatnes 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 satisfiedy and edifyed 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 direc[tion] 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 shalke judge most to the purpose, you shalke adveris 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 fruitt and receave many Benedictions from Allmighty God, the giver of all good gifts.

I shalke 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 certayny theys 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 setled 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 abroade. For certayny though ther were some disunion and disturbances yet the world can not deny but ther was much pyety and tru solid 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 & setled according to theyr first beginning in time of my lady Vauousoar. 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 appartenents are answerable. So this Noble lady, beeing brought from a depravd Nation, and made the first stonn in this spiritualle building, hath by that preheminence a veneration du, & which she may justly challeng
from all that shal succeed her in this Congregation. She Gouerned the monastery 26 years. She was of a grave sober spirit, much addicted to prayer and piety. 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 Catholick faith suffered long time imprisonment, in England; and afterwards beein refuge in Flauders, she caused to be founded in the Town of Brussels 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 Nobility of England. Inritching it with the temporall goods which she brought and procured from her frends

15 & allys, 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, comporting 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, entering the monastery at Brussels, was ther at 21 years of age solemnly profest; and according to the extraordary 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 blesst by the Arch Bishope of Macklin; blesst on the 13 of November 1642.

She was of very worthy extraction, of a most vertuous and exemplar life, fauoured by Allmighty God with extraordinaire 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 lived with her, hath given so good a reputation to her, as will live to eternity.

1651
What follows was taken out of my lady Vavasors letters
Dame Alexia Blanchard was of auntient extraction for Gentry both by father and mother. Her father Judg Blancharde was a person of eminent wisdome 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 Brussels. She was profest at the age of 30, [in] 1612, and lived in the monastery with that temer and equalitie 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

1652

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On the ii of September following, Dame Mary Vavosor was to the joy and singular satisfaction of all that knew her elected 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 difficulties which though I rather decline then treate of, yet all that were acquaynted with her in thos days highly comended 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 u[nion] under the du obser[vaunce] of our holy Rul[ing] & 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 Vauousor 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 Catholick faith, for which he suffered 5 years imprisonment with loss of a great part of his estate, his howses seased and posest by hereticke 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 upon the children, as most of them tooke to be Religious, and on[e] of them, a secular priest who dyed at Antwerp on the 6th 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 recea[v]e the reward of his patience & pyous sufferings.

Requiescat in pace

My lady Mary Vavouer for severall years was a great sufferer both by sickness and other great Crosses, by which it seemses Allmighty God preparde her for this great worke of settling 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 5th of October, she made her Jubely with great solemnity and satisfaction to all. She had then governed the monastery in quality 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 17 years till the winter before she dyed, then she was much exhosted; yet held out till the 4th 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.

My lady Mary Vauousor 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.

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Her time of government was but short, for beeing in hard times and the revenew and temporall state low, with some other litle occurring difficultyes that then happened to fall out. She beeing 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 temporall, for certaynly it is a weight that can not but lye heavu upon the hart of any Superior, let her courrage be never so great & with all highly assisted by divin grace and supernaturrell helps from Allmighty God. Of which I make no question, but she had a very assisting share which inabled her at least for 5 yeaeres 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 Bisophe and Communitys consent to lay it down, resigning it up on the 13th of October in the yeare 1682. The Bishope, with much expression of respect to her, ordayne 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 elected 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 2nd was Duke of York and with his now Royall Consort, livde at Brusse[l]les in time of thayr exclusion from England, His Maiesty and the Queene exprest much favoure to this our mother monastery and still retayneth the same as by several occasions they have made apparrant 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 conggregation a most sincerare affeccon. Nor do I want it for any of our monasteryes thos espetially of our Combination, which I account so necessary a spirit for all to have, that are of a conggregation 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 pryores, 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 yeaeres not able to goe through with the dutyes 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 little 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 thayr interest in her yearly pension to Brussells, with all other necessary and requisit

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agreements and free approve and consent for her entring and persevering in our first monastery at
Brussells, where to Gods honore she became soe healthy and strong as she went constantly through
with all the duties of Religion, rysing to matins at 3 in the morning, ringing the rysing belle, calling
the Religious, keeping Quire with constancy and zeale. She was allways a very spirituall person and
more then a little favoured by Allmighty God by especiall lights and graces very deppendant upon
holy obedience and superiours by whom, and by her director, 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 profess Religious, and allsways had a particulere frendshipe and intamacy with her. Not only to
my great satisfaction and edification, but advantage 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 applied her selfe with an indefatigable zeale to serve the Community,
and as pyroress to assist the Lady Abbes that succeeded Dame Vauousor, which she

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

Requiescat in pace

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

The monastery of Cambray went out from Brussells to that new beginning with father Rudesin
Barlow, then president of the English Benedictine Munks, on the 3d 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 theyr own
monastery of Brussells to that of Gant, is alreadie 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 theyr hyrde hows, with little 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 clayne or right to any thing but what the Lady Abbes & her Community of Brussells shold
freely give them, and this monastery not beeing then in a condition the most flowing in temporells,
so they had only theyr owne little 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 prouidence.

For though theyr hopes was on sister Bradbery's portion, 3000 pound, yet of certaynty theyr could
be no assurance, in regard both of mortallity and the casuallity of other reasons, that might be
incident to work a change in a Novice. But they cast themselves totally uppon Alimighty God and his holy providence, were not dismayd with any apprehension[n] or difficulty, but with all cheerfullness setled themselves in the hows taken for them, and were most kyndly welcomed by the Bishope Magistrates and all the towne, who then seemde much joyed at theyr settling 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 Flandres with his sisters and other relations, livde ther with much pyety, and beeing cald to an exclesiasticall state 20 by Allmghty God & living with much exemplar vertu, was by my Lord Antony Tryst, then Bishope of Gant, made Deane in that Cathedrall; and so well demeaned himselfe in that charge, as in few years after, he was made Bishope of Ipsers, but injoyed it but few years.

When our Religious arrived at Gant, my lord Bishope sent Mr Chamberlin to giue 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 benevolance.

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 prerogatiue uppon 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 litlle Collonny went on very prosperously, having in the Town a Colledge of English Jesuits that much conduced both to their spirituall and temporell benifitt. For thes good fathers dealt with several families 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 herselxe 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 ove; a kinsman to my Lady Lucy Knatchbull and partnor in that stock of vertu and naturall goodness with which that happy family is endowed. He was then setled 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 ove to setle in this new plantatione. Dame Gertrude Lawson and on[e] Mrs Mary Pease, both discreet 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.

1626

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She [i.e. Lucy Knatchbull] was ellected by all the votes of her Community for theyr Lady Abbesse and mother; the day and yeare she was blest in her owne church upon [March 21].

In the first desighn of erecting this monastery it was determined to be dedicated to the Im[m]aculate Conception of the ever Glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and to be of the Benedictin order. For that the children of our holy father Saint Benedict had bin the zealous promoters of that singular grace and priviledge, especially Saint Anselmne, who in the yeare 1109 first ordaynd the serving of this feast. This Saynt was a glorious ornament of our holy order and of the Church of England & gave us that first grounded authority of solemnysing this festivity.

My Lady Lucy caused the picture of the Imaculate Conception to be drawne as discribed in the Apoalipx.

A virgin, clothed with the Sunne, crowned with 12 starres, having for support the moone & her foote crushing the head of a serpent; our Holy Father, Saint Benedict on the right hand and Saint Ignatius, the founder of that society whos order hath all ways strongly diffended this her priviledge and title - on the left hand - supports her Throune.

This afterwards was designhed to be the dedication and alterpeece of all the monasteryes issuing out of Gaut; at least desird it shold be so; -

This monastery increasing much both in vertu and good subiects, all went on with much improvement and advauntage in all respects.

1628

Mrs Roper, sister to Dame Mary Roper, that came from Brussells following her sisters good example, entred and was profest on the 14th of September 1628. An other of my lady Lucy, her Neeces, sister to Dame Paula Knatchball, was profest this year 1628 on the 8th of December. She is now Abbess of the monastery of Gant, which with great wisdome and pyety she hath governed above 30 years and still lives in perfect health, and highly esteemde by all as well for her great parts as vertu.

1629

The last that my lady Lucy receave and profest was Dame Mary Trivelian on the 30 of January 1630. She was a most eminent person in this practis of humilliity, shrinking at no difficulty, but with much zeale and courage passing through all degrees of suffering both in sickness, and all other tryalls and Crosses.

Out of the portions of the Dames, which my lady Lucy protest for the Quire, she purchased several howses & gardens on Mont Blandinus within the Jurisdiction of Saint Peeters Abbey, with the good Approbation of the prince, Abbot and City of Gaunt; who all afterwards accorded to that amortment of the saide ground as amply appeares by the patents granted for it.

In this purchase my lady Lucy Layd out 13516 Florence;

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and in building a smale residence, chappel and quire for present use, 12000 florence. If the health and long life of this worthy lady had been answerable to her zeale and courage she wold have left us admirable proofes of her eminent wisdom & sanctity. But God permitted for her greater merit that her life was but short and by continuall sickness much disinabled to make thos great abilities she had appeare with soo much evidence to the world, as otherwyse they wold have donn. Not with standing ther ar[e] still extant in Gaunt monastery many of her owne wroughtings discovering that as her endeavoure was only to love, serve and pleas Allmighty God, soe his emmence goodness imparted many graces and favours to her, very advauntagos to her selfe and her Community.

Sir Toby Mathew, in the yeare 1652, writ a short compendium of the ladys life and dedicated it to her Neece, then Abbesse, the Lady Mary Knatchbull. In this booke ther are divers letters very spirituall 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 lif by his assistance I purpose to have it written fayre and kept with veneration to the vertu and happy mernory;

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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 Gant; where she with incomparable prudence and vertu governd that Community, and dyeing, was buried in the church of her own monastery having the inscription uppone her tombe:

The venerable Abbesse,
The Lady Lucy, in the world call'd Mr[s] Elizabeth Knatchbull, dyed at Gaunt, 1629 on the 5th of August, the 45 yeare of her age, the 19th of her profession, the 6th of her prelature and Superiority, in the monastery of the Im[a]culate 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

23

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 reverenced by them and by externes. For the great sanctity of her life, wisdome in management of affayres, with suavity in government, joynd with a most admirable humility, Solicitude, retyrement & prayre, in which Allmghty 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 allso, 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 higgher dignityes, but he humbly besaught her Royal Majesty to permit him to lay down his imployment & retyr into Irlande 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 riches 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 devout pilgrimes and poore passengers with beere breade & cheese, which stooled allways ready ther uppon a hatch at the lowere gate, at all howrs, both day & night.

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This family have not only binne auntient good Catholicks, but many of them also have binn Religious, to the great edification and advantaige of thos Religious familyes where they have binn profest; so wee may say of this, as of that of Saynt Basil, 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\textsuperscript{nd} Abbesse at Gant.

After the death of my lady Lucy Knatchbull, my lady Eugenia Pulton, beeing cannonically eleckted by all the votes of the Community on Saint Lawens his day the 11\textsuperscript{th} of August.
And upon the 17\textsuperscript{th} 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 eminentely 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\textsuperscript{th} of May. She was one of thos 4 that came from Brussels

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for the beginning of this monastery of Gaunt. She was very much esteemde at this monastery at Brussels, from whence she was dismalst to this beginning, and was then actually pryoress, 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 emprove 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 al expences, vigilant over all the occasions that might advance the temperallityes of her young, but yet unfounded, hows.

Many things in her time were agitated of great importance & carried 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 affections 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 & obtaund 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 setlement of this concerne.

But the same year the bloody wars broake out in Germany by the vyiolent invasion of Gustavus, King of Swethland, who with the other confederate heritike princes took & possesst themselves amongst other places in Germany with thos that were assignhnd 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 designhng 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 little troublesome debts which she, of a frend, bowrowed 100 pound to pay off[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 Refrayre & 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 setled to worke and when it rung to 9th 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 imediately when it was ended with great recollection & silence, it not being permitted for any to speak to others or devart 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 sevral things were redd of history, or according to seasons or times proper. In work times, especially 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 4howrs 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 prejudice theyr health. But it was for God and good of a Community which stoode then in neede of theyr assistance and service and they very cheerfully embraced the opportunity. Having then, by several 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 complyns with the desighne & endeavours of theyr worthy Abbess, and advis and assistance of the fathers of the Society & other frends, many persons of quaility and fortune came to be Religious in the monastery and by degrees several portions were put out and all debts payd. In acknowledgment and thanksgiving to Allmighty 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 Ladies most fauourable concurrence 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 addde 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.

Several frends were advisde 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 receaved now, myLady reservd out of these last portions payd in 2000th 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

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were remitted out of England by his father, and this 2000\textsuperscript{b} sterling, designned for the building, was put into his hands to bargayn and pay the workmen. Oother knowing personnes were called to advise with about the affayre.

On[e] Mr Durnass, a grave and well experienced personn, 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, entring with Mr Hobrooke and the workmen to survey the ground and measur it after he had scene the platforme & considered the situation of the place, offered to exchaung and let us have an other hows, in which he live[d], just opposit to this on the other side the streete, on the tope 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, wold before it was ended cost at least 7000 pounds, at which the workmen & Mr Hobrooke smilid and offered to make out the whole desighn for 2500 pound.

The first stonn of this building was layd in the yeare 1639 and all when it had layn to setle, that was necessary beeing dispatcht, advaunst very prosperously but as the height of the building was to be very high, and the foundatio upon the side of a hill they were accordingly to desend in laying a deepe foundation under ground. So that before the wals were a yard high above ground the whole 2500\textsuperscript{b} was despatcht and ther was nothing left to conclude all with. But new supplyes were to be found out to goe on with the building. We had then, or a little after, severall in the Noviship whos portions were very probable to discharg the work, so as ther was little apprehension of any difficulty in taking upe monys which Mr Hobrooke shewd him selfe very willing to lend, at 6 and a quarter. This was a high rate and lay heavy upon that hows a long time. But thos persons and portions they had then in the hows, and others in prospect abroade, made them sighne to the conditions. Mr Hobrooke promissing 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 weer grawhen high, and as our frends and relations were both Catholicks and of the Royall party so our interest in them and the monys wee had in theyr hand soe fell to the ground. As that from the yeare 1642 we never receavd any penny of rent for what we had in England and but litle of the principall many years after. And thos that were both in the convict & Noviship were forst away, by want of abillity in theyr frends to pay ether they

27 pensions or portions. So you may conceive to what a condition this poore Community was reduced unto, and what a chang this made in all things and how heavy it lay upon the thoughts & harte of my Lady Eugenia Pulton, who had a vast building in hand, a great Community to mayntayne, and all temporall probabilittys in soe low an ebbe as ther was title growhend for any promising hopes to build upon and it could not but shake a great hart; yet this worthy Abbesse held fast upon that never fayling Anchore of God, his Holy will and providence, into the deph of whos Secrets we must not search into.

If you cast your eyes upon the good success the temporall affayrs had in the beginning of the Superiours time, you will see no humayn prudence or forcast was wanting: parcimony & parcimony in howshold affayrs was very well adjusted, promising hopes and expectations ready at hand. When at an instant all fayles, even necessary subsistance, for upon such a cessation of rents and all other monyes 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 apparantly proptitious to this holy hows after wards. Yet not by that first overture of his favour which was then very promising, my Lord Marquiss of Worster had still my lady Ann, his youngest daughter, to dispose of. My lady Elizabeth, the older, was marri to my lord Viscount Montigue. 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 retreate, all things were accordingly proposed and prepared for her Journey.

We had a little 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, besides jewells and many other advantages, 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 setted 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 ancl 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 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 receave the Holy Sacrament of the Aultar with sighnes of tru devotion, but wholly insufficient in all things of government and domestick affayres. All tryalls and remidyes 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-adutrise but the Community persisting in the positive demand 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 little English. This very much surprizd us, beein 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 knowldg of the language for that affayre, he returned to my lord Bishope to give account how all had past, and our refusing him. Upon this my lord Bishope sent Mr Hobrooke to be interpreter but his beeing no priest or Religious man soone cut off[f] that pretence. Then his lordship sent an Irish priest, Mr Dalton, the pastor of the great hospital, a freind to the Community and a man without exception for abillity. Yet the Community remaind constant to the refuseall, alleaying that they wold not quit their priviledg of making theyr owhene 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 imediately 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

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theyr behalfe in these concerns. They also shewde 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 Ducket, both then resident at Gaunt; and father Faulkne, the only man that beeing a Jesuit the Bishope admitted to visit and discource 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 accidental 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 joynlyt with the Bishope of Gant, writt to Rome or in some perticuler manner soe declarede for Jansenius 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 conceaved, willing to declin the having the Jesuits to attend upon him.

The petition being written & sighnd by every perticuler person of the Dames, it was sent away to the Bishope. And his lordship was much satisfied 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 poyn of chusing thos that are to attend and assist the Bishope at visits and ellection of the Abbese is of so great importance to be mayntaynd 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 advantaage, 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, rher 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 occurrences.

The day and howre being come that was designhed for this great action, the Community having 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 upon her knees, and ther made her resignation, delivering up her pastorall stafe, and with much cheerfullness and respect receaved 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

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all was of much comfort and satisfaction. Having thus sweetly layd down the stonn of Governmen she now seemed to be retyréd into the iland of peace, enjoying 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 should pleas to call her from a temporall to an eternall life. She still retayned her owne logging 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 demaunding her blessing, everyon[e] striving who should 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 comportment 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\textsuperscript{th} of Decem

The Mass of the Holy Ghost, according to custome, having binn sung and all things in the usuall forme dispatcht, theye came to the giving [of] theyr votes for the nu ellected Abbesse. And at the first scrutiny the lady Mary Roper was chosen mother and Abbess to this Community. My lord Bishopope gave her his blessing and seemde much satisfied with all that past in this great action, encouraging the lady elect 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 upon 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 itselfe 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, ou 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 intensely she suffered, the more straignt the prison of impossibilitiely seemed to her to accomplish even what was decently necessary for the service of God and Religion. She was a person most accomplisht, 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 abroade, and much esteeme at home, but she had the misfortune to begin her government uppon infinit disavantage. For besides thos resulting difficulstys from so great debts, and great number of Religious with litle or noe revenews to mayntayn them, rebellion in England with civil ware, with that horrible sacrilegious murther 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 victims in the same sacrifice; for they became uncapable to pay ether rent or principall, so that for about 7 years and some few

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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 carryd it 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 occasion to treate with them. Now amongst other gifts that God had bestowed uppon her, that of convinsing & converting heretickes was remarkeable in her. To this advauntage, the modesty and gravity of her Religious behauiour and thos convincing reasons, which with such an humble majesty she would dilever, wrought more effectually uppon theyr minds than her eloquence, yet she was not wanting in that art but was as well verst in all poynpts of conversation as anyone wold be.

My lady Duchess of Buckhinghame was forced by the trouble to fly both from Irland and England, retyring into our monastery for 15 months, living with much pyety in a solitayr life, taking soo much content in the monastery, that had not the necessity of her marylde condition forst her away, she wold ther have ended her dayes. And this layd then the dissighe of beginning a hows in Irland, imparting thes thoughts to Reverend father Duckett who, I suppose, gave her permission to ask 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 journy 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 satisfied 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 majesty. Assuring the Bishope, and others of the Spanish, then ther with his majesty, that if ever God restorde him to his kingdome this Community shold ever find the effects of his favour.

Wee must now divert a little 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 rouse up to receave, with much pyety, her holy viaticum. All being 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 peasilbly and happily rendred her pyous soule into the hands of her Creator, on the 9th of Noumber 1645.

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

Thus having governed 13 years & and some 3 months-lying then dounwe her Crozier and surrendering 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

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

**Requiescat in pace:**
Heere Iyeth buried, the most Reverend Dame the Lady Eugenia Pulton – 2nd Abbesse of this monastery, who happily dyed in our lord 1644 the 9th 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, inchaced 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 sev'ry 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-years. 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 Lorrayn, 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, procura 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 declarde her selfe incomparably pleased with my ladys way of treating of her, and as highly edifyed 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, uppon 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 applyed to prevent death and restore this worthy lady to her health, but with out affect, for each moment the approches of death seemde to be so neere at hand. This holy weeke was the last of a preparation for the Jubily, which fell very advantagious for my ladys satisfaction. She made a generall confession and most pyouso disposed her selfe to gayn that great pardon. On Easter eve she communed 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

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

The court of England was just removde into Holland to attend his Maiesty for his Coronation in Scotland. Some of the Nobility that past by Gant and rid post, gave the King notice of my ladys desperat condition. His Maiesty imediatly 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 lookest seriously uppon her and sayd ther appeard 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 extremely 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 appeard 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, extremely 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 sighs and tears, payd theyr last dutys to her and fayld not with theyr pyous prayres in that last moment to serve her.

She profess for the Quire Dames 13; Convers Sisters 4.

She dyed on the 21 of April 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 upon her grave and the following Epitaph to be ingrauen upon it in Lattin.

Requiescat in pace

The Lady Mary Roper
3rd 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

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

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sweetness of conversation
made many Lords & persons of quality 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 comandong with modesty
Heaven and the Cloyster grew emulous to have her I salute you o most holy and Noble virginal
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 dutyes to the dead dischargd and that my Lord Bishop
could tend to take the votes, the 3 recollection dayes ordayne 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 ordayne 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 honor to know her worth and merits. And
as the fame of her vertu and wisdom, as well as the excellency and eloquence 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 congratulations come to give her joy
from all places, which she receaved 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 spiritual 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 pryress and I can affirm it was soe involubly
observed, as I can say with truoth, there was not an aple or a nut eaten out of order, but was
acknowledged 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 tru advauntsment in vertu. Taking of the least liberty in that kind,
thus from time to time and every yeare, when she and the Community took the spirituall exerçys,
she layd hold of some one espetiall Rule to take to hart, to improve the Communitys vertu by.

The King of England often entred the monastery and exprest much esteeme and respect to
this worthy lady, conferring with her and intrusting her with many affayrs 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 thos affayres she had the conduct of in sending letters or the lik, ever came
to miscarry.

This was the time in which this worthy lady exprest how great a concern she had for His
Majesty, who then wanting mony & supplyes in that kynd. She, with the consent of her Community,
ingaged her monastery to thos persones that uppon that condition promised to lend the King mony.
My lord Chancelor Hyd, giving caution to save her and her Religious harmless, if it sholde pleas God
to preserve His Majesty & restore him to his owne. But for the present, many rather blamed her
loyall generosity than commended it. But she went on in her owne accustomed sweetness with out
disputing theyr disapprowbation or justifying her own action, leaving all to God.

When the prince had nothing in his power but honners to bestow, and express kyndness and
favor to thos that serve and expres love & duty to him, thos that are not then contented with what is
in the princes powre desvers not to tast his bounty when his abillity may be more compleate. But
this generous minded lady was so Farr from expecting any other recompence than the Kings
acceptance of what servis she could do His Majesty or any of his Royall party, as she still added her
ownt dayly endeavours to serve him and his, and employed all the frends she could make to assist
him;
Tis tru,this did not encreas her revenew or give any present
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ease or assistance to support that debt contracted by the building or help her to maayntayn a
numerous family. So as she began to cast about what releefe could be had from any other way, as
wee owde Mr Hobrooke more then 6000 pounds, and payde him 200 pounds a yeare interest. And
as that year came above & we faylde the payment, the interest was joynd to the principall. The
security he had thus was the hows it selfe with all the ground as that year came abo

wee owde Mr Hobrooke more then 6000 pounds
This lay heavy uppon the hows, besides other debts for hows hold expences and little or
nothing receavde from England, soe as all the world declared we shold be ruind with out releefe
unless ther was a stoape put to the estrent. Uppon this, her Ladyship made her address to the
Bishope and the Cathederall chapter to treat with Mr Hobrock 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 shold cease and noe payment of it expected, till the monastery was out of
debt, all entirly built and had a good foundation and revenue, so as that without prejudice they
could pay the arrears of the interest mony; nextly that every on[e] that was for the future profest a
Dame of the Quire, Mr Hobrock shold haue 200 pound of theyr portion, and that what soe ever
summe they receavde less or more. Uppon thers conditions wrightings were drawne, sighnd and
seald on all sides and invyolably observd by the Religious and theyr worthy Abbess. Though it was
many years after before the whole debt was payde, not with standing this gave them a capacity to
compass it in time, as through Godes assistance they did. But the arrears of the interest mony is not
yet payd which gives them prejudice sometimes, for Mr Hobrooke, his heyres, do much pursu the
hows for it. And when they can heare or know of any monys belonging to the monastery if they can
come at, they presently seize uppon it, and take all the advauntages they can agaynst the
monastery; but all that consciens could exact was dischargde.

1652

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Though this put a stopt 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 frends, my lord of Bristow in particulier, 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 mension no perticulers of it heere. The personnes that went first for this great work was Dame Catherin Wigmore, pryoress; 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.

Uppon the 8th 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, loging the night at the English monastery at Bruges, and then at Nieport and Gravelin passing by many sad encounters, by

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 frighted 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 uppon the town. Uppon 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 little 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 procede to ellect 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 retreate 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 ellected 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 cerimonyes. 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 Lorrayn sent the Crowier and tow Rings, my lady Knatchbull supplying the rest.

The Benediction of the Abbesse was uppon 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 several 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, deppending entirly uppon her and that Community. I have not in
the first settlement made any division betwene 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.

39 This great work and new establishment being so happily setled my lady Knatchbull then made the Ellection 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 appon 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, see 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 uppon the eve as it were of that happy day assignhd 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 receaved yours of the 25th and I do assure you that as I have ever since my beeing in these parts receaved many evidences of your good affection to me, so I shall never forget it but shall all was have a particular 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 shall find that hearafter 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 several 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 wrer 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 peasiably setled in his kingdome and Throne, my lady, finding noe evidence of the Kings bounty yet appeare and theyr debts and wants crying aloude, taking councell of the wisest and best of her frends she designhed to surprize the King not by

40 letters but a personall visit, which, not with standing, she caried 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 uppon which my lady proposed her journy, and

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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 their journey for Saint Omers and so by Callis for England. From Saint Omers she writ 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 advantage for his majesty assigning 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 guided 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 setting ther, which he made no difficulty to grant, uppon condition that the poore Clare wold let us have theyr hows and sette 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 refuse 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 encouragerment of her best frends ther. On the 6th of May last, with Mr Gerard our Confessor; Dame Ignatia Fortescu, Dame Ursula Butler, Dame Mary Carrill and myselfe, the most unworthy, with a man and maybe servant went in a private coach to Dunkirk where we arrived uppon the 8th 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

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 little 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 setled 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 15th.

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 pryores, 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

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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 townue. My lady of Gant fayld not to be with us at All Saints, which was the time designned for the King of France, his coming, to take possesion 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 setlement of temporalls he went to advise with my lady of Gant and they concluded that my lady Carrill, then pyroress, 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 upon 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 parents were not so well satisfyed 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 & advauncement they have had from them.

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 receave 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 receave 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: see that fayling and several other businesses dispatch for which we were imploied 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 upon the Conversion of Saint Paule 1667. All concerning my entrance and setlement in the holy hows being largly 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 foundacion he promised to contribute liberally. Soe all things beeing agreeed upon, my lady Mary Knatchbull went with her by Dunkerk to see her and her Religious happily setled in theyr new plantation.

The Religious designned 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 useoth to render new plantations hard and thorny, as may well be admired and taken for a happy Augure of its
future progress. For wheras the princes Grant the Townes admittance and the Bishops Satisfaction in 
temporall 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 sincere good Religious persons; and for my lady her selfe, 
certaynly she had as many naturall abillityes as could be found in any of our sex; nor did she want 
pyety. What then could be the over waying balance that over powrde soe much good in her or 
them? All that I can alledge to have receaude 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 
aminosty, thos natural deflects and propensions to which all ar subject, more or less, may some 
times hinder what is desired. And obseve how they ether guide themselves by prudence, 
mortification and recourse to God in the overcomming thos deflects 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 defective in them: and will give the preferrance to counsell and good advise and not rather 
leave theyre frennd than lay downe their own desighn, or following their passion or humore, and so 
having ons brought them selves upon the stage, will rather mayntayn their own errors by vyolence 
than yeald to draw of[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 myselfe, and all that are or may 
be Superiours or joynt actors with them in the settling or governing a Community. For unless all such 
persons as are chosen by Allmighty God for such imployments resolves with themselves to observe 
different motions of natur & grace and to take up the weapons of mortification, and fight 
courageously against them selves, and both to implore God's assistance to becoem victorious, and to 
make use of counsell and advis how to manage such a warefare, litle advauntage will be made. 
Certaynly ther ar some things which when we obtayn of God Allmighty by importunity he grants us, 
but makks us pay deere for it, and it is a mercy in him to do it. Many times devout soules perswads 
themselves that if they were in such or such an office, or had such or such an imployment or dignity, 
they wold employ it much to God's honnore and service and really intend it; and many times God 
taks them at their word and gives them their 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 encounters to render what 
is du to every on[e], they soon discover their own indigence, and find that a sincere 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 upon earth 
and for heaven, than all the naturall and acquired parts what soe ever; and generally Allmighty God 
dothe so dispose that thos that are great in their 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 little 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 endeavour 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 Allmighty God carryeth on our 
endeavours for his service with a probable prosperity, and yet when we think the work well advantst

WHO WERE THE NUNS? PROJECT 2009
he is pleas'd to let it fall to the grawnd that we may learn to love and sever 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 ability, and least any shold too much count thos naturall parts, or to[0] much prize them in them selves or others, Allmichty 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 advaunce his honnor and Glory.

The Bishops death, and some other things occurring in this setlement brought it into hazard of utter ruin, but not with out some signall marks of God's favouring providence. Within a yeare thos 3 formented Dames that went with Dame Beaumont to the new beginning, came bake. Finding smale hopes of a wished setlement 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 avoid 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 Prat 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 con...
Dames & made them great offers if they wold come at theyr return from Irlande with what company or fortunes they might bring & settle with her. The vicariat was very kynd to them and made them all proper offers for theyr advantage, which was very much to theyr comfort. But as to theyr passing to Irland by Nieport, all disswaded them from it in that ill season, so they past privatly to Mardycke where, taking ship, they went to England and so from thens to Irland, which my lady Carrill did not take well of them; but they excused it as being necessitated to it. They had so good Succes ther as in 7 or 8 monthes they returnd with very good assurance, and bills for considerable summes put into Mr Bertine his hands. Supposing that hows and establishment shold be made good unto them and that they might send their daughters and frends to it; Now they finding my lady Marina as it were entred into a Setlement with thos tow Dames from Pariss & my lady Carrill at Dunquerk not fully resolved upon selling that hows, they went to Paris to negotiat theyr affayrs in that Court, but with out effect, though that Queene by means of her Confessor, was very gracious to them, and many other frends, especially Irish, that did endeavour to promote the work, and my lady M Knatchbull, Abbess at Gaunt with theyr own Superiour, my lady Mary Carrill, but nothing was donn in it. In the enterim, my lady Marina dying. And Dame Conniers the Eldre, went into England before her death, and ther was only the younger with Dame Flavia Cary and a convers sister. Dunkerck and Ipers beeing 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 beeing dead at Paris, by advis from my lady Knatchbull and my lady Carrill our Bishope approving of it, with the advis of our indifferent man, by consent of the community, and request of the best of the Irish Nation heere in France, tow 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 beeing 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 Munks, conditions were agreed upon and the tow Dame Conniers were returned to Paris, Dame Ryan and Dame Christina ented that monastery, my lady Carrill bringing with her thither 3 or 4 of her young Religious. The Election past for the chusing an Abbesse & Dame Flavia Cary was ellected; and after some little time, my lady of Gant, as well as my lady Carill 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 vyolent fevor left them to deplore that loss they had in her, which certaynly was great, for she was a personn of very good parts, tru pyety and vertu. Dame Ursula Butler with Dame Ryan went for Irland to procure thos monys formerly promised, and some fitt subjects for that new beginning monastery and had very good success; Dame Ryan returning to Ipers 1684, ther came with her 5 or 6 for the convict but on[e] or tow of them were for the novishipe. A little before theyr arrival 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 affayrs of that hows, which was gaunted, though with much unwillingness on our side, to part with her, but theyr much importunity preueyld. Dame Ursula stayd behind in England for the dispatch of some affayrs, and is ther still, and will not, I presume, retyre from thence till the Coronation of or Soverain King James is past, assignd to be on Saint Georg, his day this 1685; But death surprisde Dame Ursula Butler by a vyolent favour in England and not long since this year 1686 Dame Flavia, their last ellected Abess, dyet sudaynly of an Apperplex. Dame Ryan beeing in Irland, ther is only Dame M Joseph Butler, and Dame Mary Laurance Lawson, both of our hows, now remayning ther. And till some news or the return of Dame Ryan from Irland no positive determination can be taken, wee pray dayly 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 6th of January from Gant to this foundation; how they arrived at Bullon on the 17 of January; how unwelcome they were to that Bishop, not having any foundation, with out which he wold not receave them. They past more then a yeare in great sufferance and uncertaynty of theyr setting, 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.

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 satesfyyed 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 competenumber 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 their 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 Pontoy to the usuall 3 days retyment to prepare for the election of her successor. All things was carryed on as 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 election which was as easily granted as it was requisit for ther smale number than that were of age, and her great abillitys considered. The Superior 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 discharge 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 particular satisfaction who had a great esteeme and kyndness for her. Never did election pass with more tru evidences of universall 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 Gouernment and the continuance and increace of it still augmented theyr happiines and hers. All things went on with much satisfaction, but by reason the Bishop of Bullogne went soone after the election to Paris, to the Assembly ther, the Benediction was differd till Trinity Sunday [1657 May 27] which was performed at the Bishope palace. Divers were clothed and profest; and all other proper occurrences went on very prosperously. Providence, which sweetly orders and disposeth all things for the greater good of his servants, had permitted that though they had made use of severall good priests yet non[e] was yet setld with them for a Ghostly father, God reserving this for Mr Thomas Claverin, on[e] most proper for them. He was made priest at the Romayn Collidge under the Jesuits ther, whom he much respected, and they agayn gave a high commendation of hime to my lady Christina whos kinsman he also was [1657 May 22]. His arrivall 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 thos many pressing affayrs which falls out every howre in a new beginning setlement. Though they had bought timber, stonn and other materalls for building, yet finding the sea ayre to give them all agues, and being a frontier town was not only subiect to surprises of war and many other casualties, and that year Dunkirk beeing taken by Cromwell, and he assisted by the French, drew much comers of soldiers and many difficultyes and distractions uppon our Religious. My lady Christina writ to Sir Richard, her worthy father, and other frends, who advisde them to pursu that endeavor, assuring them of what assistance they could in it; her ladyship communicated the affayr with my lord Bishop of Bullogn, to which he could not but assent for theyr good, yet most unwilling that they shold leave his dyoces. but preferring their interest before his own satisfaction, he gave them his approbation. All dispatches from Paris, Roane and other places beeing compleat

[1658] the appoynted day for theyr leaving Bullogne beeing come my Lord Bishop, with all his Clergy and cheefe 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 shipe beeing put under sayle; his lordship, looking after it till out of sight, declare to all then present the resentment he had to part with such pyous deserving children. They landed at Diepe and staid a day at Roane. My lady Christina and all the profest Religious entered that Monaster, they receaung my lady as the daughter to theyr founder, Sir Richard Forster, her worthy father, having given thes poore Clares at theyr first setlement 1500 pistolls for a foundation and to build with. This journey was both very laborious and expensive: most of them, beeing sick of agues, were much incommoded. They arrived at Pontoy and remayned 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 remayned at the Grand Goodde [Grand Godet – name of the inn] by a permission granted them by my lord, Arch Bishop of Roan, sighnd 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 purchas was made of the farme of Maudestaur of Pontoy, 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 severall Novices then to be profest.

[1659 July] In that yeare, his Majesty of France sighnd theyr letters patent for theyr establishment at Pontoy; my lord Arch Bishope gave his permission for our establishment at Pontoy [2nd October 1659]. Upon the 1 of November the same yeare, he came to se the place we had chosen and made a procee 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 we 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 Superior gave him.

In that first yeare of our arrivall at Pontoys, affayrs still multiplying and the Community increasing, a pyrores was chosen, Dame Paula Knatchbull. After they were establisht and could accommodate a little 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

50 her little present of silk flowers, cariage and discours, as her Majesty seemde much satisfyed 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] Conformd 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 little 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 extrimely well satisfyed 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 little 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 receave: 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 fend to this Community, was made a priest and Curé of D'Aronville; fayld not on all occasions to promye their 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 receave 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 they acknowledgment with great civillity, and shewed him selfe an excellent courtier, returning back the honnor they rendred, My lady and he made a very pretty passage of very solide testimonys of the du sinessibilty that each of them had of theyr obligations on both sides. God had binn very liberral 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 designd 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 several of the Religious hath often told me.
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 upon 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 given 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.
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 errect a Tombe for him.
Uppon his grave ston at Saint Martins thes words are written

Heer Iyes messier Richard Forster Knight Barronet; Baron of Stockley, Treasurer Generall 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 ths 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 supplyed 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 1Nfirmityes, as an agu beeing added, she took her bed and living only a month or 6 weeks she gave admirable profoes 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 especially ones when she thought her selfe neere death, she made them an excellent exhortation, forcibly persuading to all vertu: and most of all to charity and union.
All humayn and Divin helps wer applied 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 being ons fixt in her imagination, was not easily movde; leave therefore being 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 upon her and praying by her were highly edified at her devotion & though she was not then able to say much being tyrde and spent. The next day all the Community, being agayn assembled to her chamber to take leave of theyr Deere Mother and receave 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 several other good Religious men by turns watcht and prayd by her; all were much edified at her patience and submission to God’s holy will: and the houre now being 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 16th 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 Markham who, passionatly loud and honnored my lady Christina; and being 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 overwhelmde 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 Pontoys in a leaden case and placed in the wall of the Quire on the right hand for the comfort of her children. The body being 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 accidental, not determinate. Our tow Religious, having despatcht all that duty required of them, in order to my lady Christina’s service at Paris, hasted away with the sister, and when they arrived at the monastery meeting with the other Religious new foulds 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 abroade, 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 receaved great tallents from Gods hands. I hope she layd up treasures in heaven by them; and will injoy them for ever.
My lady Christina in her time of prelature;

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This following Epitaph was made for her by Reverend Father Subprioer 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 sevral restrictions about the Consti

[alm text]

[blank]tutions 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 hav

[alm text]

ving 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

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 gi

[alm text]

ven, Dame Eu

[alm text]

genia Thorold was elected by the generall votes, theyr Abbess and Superiour. My lord, next to the Divin Service, recommended to her frugality as most importing the present necessityes of the hows; and she then sighnd those proposals before mentioned for parcimony, my lord and all congratulating with her he ga

[alm text]

ve his blessing & took leaves & after the ceremonys in chapter, & the Te deum in the quire; it beeing Christmas Eue all applyed them selve to theyr devotions. My lady Eugenia was of a most sweet peасible humour, silent & of few words, and had in the conjuncture a hard game to play. Having a smale fortun & a tender Community to goerne, to whom restraynt and scarcity even sometimes in what was necessary, could not but seeme hard, but her pyety & prudence supprest all in silence.

In the beginning of lent My lord Arch Bishop sent word that about the 5th of March he wold be at Pontoys, and performe the Cerimony of the Benediction, for which all things was prepard in a readiness. 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 4th 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 7th 1662] loging at Mrs Poyns, her ladyship at a solemn high mass in in [sic] the Fullinteeens 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 receaved her with great expressions of joy. All was now very happily setled and with great zeale and sweetnes my lady applied 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 ordanyd and thought fitt to be donn, for the glory of God and good of Religion.
WHO WERE THE NUNS? PROJECT 2009

Queene Mother of England, beeing recalld 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 Walsinghame 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 howall 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 supplyed. [1663] Whilst my lady Knatchbull was with my lady Mary Carrill and some other Religious in England, she had a Neece heere whom 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 resolvd to examine themselues before they wold permit her to proceede. But she beeing both pyous and desirous to overcom their importunity and endeavours to divert her, as they gave her theyr approvd consent; and setled 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 & little 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 Conriers 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 indifferent 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 Mouboysen, 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 Tuscany's means have had a jubily for Gant and all the houses decendant of it but it arrived not in time but will be supplyed.

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 particulere 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 pirson, could not refuse to grant what was demaunded. So after a day or towes resting at Pontoyes with all the testimonyes of respect and kyndness to my Lady Knachbull and deare Dame Paula, they took leave [November 4] and returned for Dunkirk, where Dame Paula was admitted for on[e] of the chapter at the ellection of the Abbess; and my Lady Mary Carrill being 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 upon 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 couId 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 journey 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 preparde. Mr Digby was a sever man to him selfe, and fasted Lent most stricly and having a great weaknes in his head by the many wounds he had receavd in the wars, was subject 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

57 became weak of his head by it. And some day or tow before the designhed 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 disipide 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

WHO WERE THE NUNS? PROJECT 2009
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 receaved them, but requested they wold nether pretend or act anything contrary to what his Lordship at Queene Mothers request had aggreed upon, to which conditions upon the reason my Lord alledgd they agreed to.

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

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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 frendship that had ever binn betwixt my Lady Eugenia and myselfe: and we many times held discourses of it, my lady stil assuring me a harty 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 hearafter if Dame Cathrin shold profess; she was to have 200 more; thought it best to follow advis and not dispute 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 dispacth 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 receave what she could procure to be payd off there of theyr remayning fond; I wayted uppon 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 uppon [...] and was most joyfully receavd by all her Community with several 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 indifferent man.

1665

My lady Eugenia was all ways very zealouz 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 perticuler, 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 Allmghty God by them.

WHO WERE THE NUNS? PROJECT 2009
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 Pontoyes; which my Lady of Gant was not at first very forward to grant, but after wards, Letters passing on all sigdes, it was agreeed 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 Pontoyes, 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 found from my Lady and all the whole Community, I confess I was much edifyed at their regularity and religious comportment of every one. 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 appeard so truly verifyed 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 constrayned to keepe her beade; but growing a litle better her Ladyship having more zeale and courrage 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 lingering 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 unconcernd for all things of this world even from th[e] 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 recouvry. 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 councell 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 advantages soe she took singular comfort in this great benifit, and accordingly prepared for it. Her pleasible 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 recalcd 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 receaved our dear
Lord she, with much earnestness, strove to speak to the community recommending charity and zeale to them but that deflucion stopt her speach and 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 approching 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 Abatiall 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 communicted the Religious, they had before chosen Reverend father Thimblebee and Reverend father Confessor, conforme 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 several 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 upon 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 Abbessse; 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 particulars 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 aproaching 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 12th [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 yealling us in rent yearly 600. Theyr remaynd of our principal at Bollogue - 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 little probability to be payd.
We are in family 52 and this is all we have got to support it; thus my lord I have declard 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 honoure 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 little building then in hand of the refectory, infirmary and cells. My lord was well satisfield with all, but sensable 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 receavd what monys was ther remayning of ours; but found it not feasible not having all thos formalitys ther in wriyting 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 dyned at madam Timperlys and very obligingly treated by her and her Religious, nor were we less kyndly entretayned by my lady Treddway and my lady Gascoyn. My Lord Abbot Montagu was extremly 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 little engaged by thes visits ther, and having dispatcht those little 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 6th 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 surpris 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, falling 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 pryoress 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.

WHO WERE THE NUNS? PROJECT 2009
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 off[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 munks 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 being to tak a long journy, 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 open way of dealing with his lordship both for the spiritual and temporall affayrs of our hows, yet duty and Religion obliging to these 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 government ; adding that for all greater matters I always made my recourse to his lordship as occasions occurr'd; and in all things as much as lay in me, I endeavoured to carry 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 these points, I knelt down and requested his lordship, considering my want of health and inability, that he wold pleas to procure of the Community, the election of an other Superiour. 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 one 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 conceaved to be my best way to find out the will of God in this affayre, sincerely 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 sincerely 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 should 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 resighning. 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 recea

v'd his fatherly repre

hensions 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 po

verty in all things; and then in perticu

ler his lordship ga

ve 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 little ability I had to make my gratitude appeare; but as formerly I had found theyr kynd acceptance of that little I could do to serve them, so I now confided they wold not be less ready to take that little 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 howers in hearing confessions and treating of spiri

tuell 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 commodious for 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 his Abbey at Saint Martins into my Lord Cardinal de Bulliogn his hands, as confident it wold prove both of honor and

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advantage to the whole town, and to us in particular: whom he seriously recommended to my lord
Cardinal's favour, as his Eminence hath not fayled 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
encouraged 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 tried all ways to help ourselves for our
temporall advantage but found litte by any endeavours, ether by work or address, to friends, all our
supplies 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 receaved, but with very little fruict, for generally what
wee put out on monath 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 always a singular devotion to the Feasts and Cerimonys of the church and at the
request both of the Cardinal and the munks, his lordship came down to officiat at theyr prime
Solemnlities, 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 oppen
the temporall distresses, he wold be a litle concerned and troubled but uppon a longer time of
conversation of spiritual 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 their 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 several 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 edifyed by the visits they made to theyr relations and frends
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 setled 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 pееce; 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 advaunce 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 advantauge, 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 necessitis of that yeare could not spare it, yet it must be supplyed 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 distruc[tion] upon 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, 500Ivers to begin the wals, with letting us know he was a little 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 il. 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 receivd with much devotion, and as the Community was his cheefe care and concern in his life, so now at his death both to our Confessor and Reverend Father Warner, his lordship made many lively expressions of his sensibillity in leaving us in so Iow a condition.

Whilst my lord lay thus between life and death the Community was in continuall prayr and penance 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 5th of February 1677.

1677

This sad news soone arrivde and struck all of us with a most sensible griefe, 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 being 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 and all his ecclesiasticks heire in our Chappell, with all our 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 Aulter. Very Reverend father Warner with his surplice, stole and cope, enring a little before into the
church. After the church door was open, we sang *In paradisio*. Monsieur d'Espond had brought downe embalmed in a case of lead the lights, liver and lungs, which my deere lord had consignified to us, and with a proper speach 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 prayses in my lords behalfe; and assurance of this communityes great sensibillity of theyr loss by my lords death, and harty 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.

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 little hears with a black velvet hire cloth and whight sattin Cross and my lords armes imbrodered uppon 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 uppon it was:-

The cover of the hart and liver of the Right Honourable the lord Abbot Montague, formerly Comminatory 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 5th 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 sensibillity and due gratitude for his many favours and great bountys to them hath imprest uppon theyr 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 essentaill perticulers.

Monsieur Joffoss, being 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 closly and seariously examined all things, advising and assisting us both by counsell 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 livres a yeare; with 2400 livres 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 livres 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.

1678

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The Pope, his Nuntio, coming to Saint Martins to retire some days [March], he came on[e] afternoon to our church, and then gave his blessing to all the community, seeming much satisfied 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 wonders between France and England, yet ther shold be non betwixt Saynt Martins and our monastery. Father Clifford beeing suddenly cald away to Loretto [September] very Reverend father Clare [Warner SJ, formerly Sir John Warner] was sent in his place; and thus the promising hopes given us, of many advantages by his assistance; yet the effects hath much exceed 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 upon us, by a stop of all necesary 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 sume time and then returnd to Paris to deale theyr owne business, designning to procure a patent, if possible to remove her whole family. I beleev e 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 particulerly and clearly sett downe and so is referd to a more proper place. All I shal now say is that from that address then made to madame, the Duches of Riechlu and madam Mayntenoone, recommened by Reverend pere Rapin and assisted by Reverend father Clare his advis and endeavours, upon theyr presenting a placet to his Royall Majisty, wee may justly, as it shal be made cleare, attribute the succeeding almes of that and latter yeares.

The lady Powes beeing cald in question uppon several fals accusations made agaynst her; and her ladyships letters & myne beeing declard 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 70

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 advisde to call our Religious home, who in theyr return were most obligingly entertaynd at Mouboysen 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 little succe wee found. For times were soe daungerous 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 being carryed to the counsell 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 injoyde some years.
My lady Marina Beaumont writt to desir me and the community to let her have some of our Religious to setle her hows, proposing a dependency and totall 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 compost fell into a desighn of being made an Irish hows. Now all thesp 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 joyned with her in the promotion of the good action, and intention of concurring in the setlement of means for that good work. Tow other ladys of lesser quality, 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 Cardinalls 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 t o 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 9th 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 Mouboyon some 3 nights, receaving from the princess and all that excellent community all possible testimonys of obliging kyndness. Wee visited all the monasteryes and Saint Martins, and were receaved 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 probabilittys with out the effects, but we must not dispute, but submit to Allmighty God and his holy will, as from my soule I desir to doe.

1682
Mrs Penelope Hennedge 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

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through Gods mercy and the motion of frends, 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 declard 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 little compendium more for my owne helpe of memor and knowing wher to find perticulers as occasion 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.]