

The only two early Mayors of whom I have found mention so far are Thomas Dobbes, who was elected at the Court in October, 1428, and William Cressener, who was Mayor in 1444.

The register of Abbot Curteys, of Bury St. Edmund's, contains some letters throwing an interesting light on the functions of the Mayor of Sudbury in the 15th century. In April, 1444, the King (Henry VI.) directed his letters to the Abbot, to the Sheriff of Suffolk, Sir John Heveningham, and Sir William Drury Knights, and to John Harleston, bidding them follow the good example of the City of London, in furnishing men and victual to the King from the county of Suffolk, for the succour of the duchy of Guiennés, which had been attacked by the French. The abbot in his turn sends on the King's letter to Sir R. Waldegrave, William Cressener, Mayor of Sudbury, and the true commoners of the same town, commanding them to deliver it to the chief constable of Babbergh and Corsford Hundreds, and to furthermore purvey men and victual, to strengthen and comfort our said Sovereign Lord against his adversaries in his great and behoveful necessity, and to appear before the Abbót at Bury, to certify him what they will do in this behalf.

#### CLARE PRIORY.

This house, which belonged to Friars Eremite of the Order of St. Augustin, is said to have been founded in the year 1248 by Richard de Clare. His widow Maud (or Matilda) and their descendants were also liberal benefactors to the Friary, which was probably the most important house of this order in England. Their grants of land, together with many other matters relative to the history of the Friary, may be found in the *Chartulary*, a MS. collection of deeds now in the British Museum (*Harl. MSS.* 4835). There is also a rhymed dialogue between a secular priest and a friar quoted in Weaver's "Funeral Monuments," which gives an account of the Friary together with a history of the de Clare family, who were its chief patrons. Weaver also gives a list of important persons buried in the Friary Church at Clare. The dress of the friars was a white tunic over which a black habit with leather girdle was worn when they went abroad.

Gilbert de Clare (son of the founder) married Edward I.'s daughter, Joan of Acre, so called from the place of her birth. She built a chapel which she dedicated to St. Vincent, and in which she was buried, 1307.

The Church of the Friars was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1338. Mention is also found in the *Chartulary* of a Chapel of Annunciation which was in use in the year 1361.

The Friars of Clare were fortunate in obtaining the patronage of Lionel of Antwerp, son of King Edward III., who married Elizabeth, lady de Clare, great-granddaughter of Gilbert and Joan, and who, in consequence of this marriage, was created Duke of Clarence.

Lionel obtained a grant from the King entitling the Friars to hold certain lands, the Statute of Mortmain notwithstanding. He died in Italy and was buried at Pavia, but his body was afterwards brought back to England and interred in the Church of the Austin Friars at Clare before the High Altar, in accordance with the instructions left in his will. The remains of a fine memorial tomb may still be seen in the east end of the north wall of the church; this was probably the tomb of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, and Elizabeth, his wife.

The Dormitorium Fratrum and Chapter House of the Friary were built by Elizabeth de Clare, daughter of Joan of Acre and wife of John de Burys. The great building which still stands, is thought by some to have been the library, and by others the Farmery Hall or infirmary of the Friary. The western range of buildings now occupied as a house was probably the cellarer's domain, used partly for storing provisions, partly for entertaining guests.

Clare Priory was suppressed by order of King Henry VIII. in the year 1538, and the house and land was granted in the following year to Richard Friend.

The house was owned and occupied during the greater part of the seventeenth century by the Barnardiston family. For the last century and a half it has belonged to members of the Barker family. The present owner is General Sir George Digby Barker, K.C.B., who, with the assistance of Mr. Detmar Blow, has put the house in good repair, and by removing unsightly partitions and encumbrances has revealed much of its former beauty. He has also made excavations in the garden, on the advice and with the assistance of Mr. St. John Hope, and it is hoped that an account of this work together with a short history of Clare Priory may be published before long.