

General Notes and Correspondence.

In reference to a remark in *Arch. Cant.*, Vol. XXXVI., p. 166, by the reviewer of Mr. Charles Igglesden's book, Mr. A. H. Taylor of East Ham writes to point out that the King in question was Henry III., the date 1264, and that the incident itself, which occurred at Flimwell, is to be found related in Farley's *History of the Weald of Kent*, vol. ii., part 1, pp. 83 and 84.

REVIEW.

The Grey Friars of Canterbury, 1224 to 1538. A contribution to the 700th Anniversary of their arrival in England. By CHARLES COTTON, O.B.E., F.R.C.P.E. British Society of Franciscan Studies. 1924.

ON the purely historical side the British Society of Franciscan Studies has no better subject for its work than the history of the English houses of the Order. But the task of compiling such a history of any individual house is not an easy one. Many of the houses were small, the records which they have left are commonly slight, and very often little or nothing survives of the actual buildings. To weave together the fragmentary material requires something more than the industry of an antiquary. If the work is to be successful the author must not only have a good knowledge of the mediæval history of the town where the house was situated, but also an intimate personal acquaintance with its present topography. Dr. Cotton, as honorary librarian of the Cathedral, and as one long resident in Canterbury, possesses in an eminent degree the necessary qualifications. The story of how Agnellus of Pisa and his eight companions arrived at Dover on 10 September 1224, as the first Franciscans who came to England, is too well known to need repetition. They stayed one night at Dover and then went on to Canterbury, where for two days they were hospitably

entertained by the monks of Christ Church. Then four of them proceeded to London, whilst Agnellus with the rest remained to become the founders of the friary at Canterbury. Until they could obtain a more permanent home they were lodged in Priests' Hospice. This Dr. Cotton is able to identify with the Poor Priests' Hospital, of which the remains still stand on the west side of Stone Street. Documents at Christ Church make it possible to trace out the early history of the buildings of the hospital. This it was of importance to do, for it was from the warden of the hospital that the friars obtained for their dwelling a plot of ground on which he built them a chapel sufficiently becoming for the time. This plot was the garden of the hospital on the Island of Binnewith between two arms of the Stour. A very humble lodging satisfied them at first, and it was not till 1267 that John Digge, a wealthy citizen of Canterbury, gave them a larger site across the Stour on the north-west, which became their permanent home. Later on the stone Friars' Bridge, of which one of the original arches still remains, was built for their convenience. The greater part of the Friary buildings was destroyed in the sixteenth century; but recent excavations have made it possible to recover something of the ground-plan and to show that the church, which probably followed the usual plan of friars' churches, was 77 ft. long. Something more of the domestic buildings may be discovered when further excavation is possible. One interesting relic remains in the picturesque building which spans the Stour. This the present owner, Major James, has had conservatively restored under the direction of Mr. R. H. Goodsall, who has contributed to Dr. Cotton's volume a valuable account of its architectural character.

The history of the Friary, apart from its buildings, can only be pieced together from scattered references. Dr. Cotton has done so with care, and he is able to show that, though the Canterbury Friary was not a large house, it was a recognised place of study. He is able to trace six manuscripts from their library as still existing: of the probably much larger library of the Grey Friars at London

only one volume is now known to exist. But for the greater part of its time only a fragmentary history of the Friary can be given; what little is known is here brought together.

At the close of the fifteenth century the Canterbury Friary was one of the few that adopted the stricter rule of the Observants. Two of the last wardens were Hugh Riche and Richard Risby, who both suffered with the Holy Maid of Kent in 1534. Dr. Cotton is able to show that the Friary was not then dissolved, as Hasted, in his *History of Kent*, supposed. It was not till 1538 that the Warden and Convent executed the Letter of Submission, which brought the history of their house to an end. Richard Ingworth, who was employed by Cromwell in the suppression of the English friaries, came to Dover on 13 December, and the Letter of Submission was probably, as Dr. Cotton conjectures, executed on the following day. Much of the domestic history can only be restored from such information as is contained in the wills of benefactors and of persons who desired to be buried in the Friars' Church or precincts. The Friars' churches were favourite places for the burial of well-to-do citizens; and though it was not to be expected that at Canterbury there could be a list which would vie with that of the great Grey Friars' Church at London, Dr. Cotton has brought together in an Appendix all the material of this kind that exists. Other appendices give lists of Wardens and Friars so far as they can be discovered.

The interest of the book is enhanced by plans and illustrations. It is a volume which, in the centenary year of the coming of the friars to England, has more than a local interest.