The following letter must have been written before the preceding, but it will be best understood in its present position. Cromwell was inclined to shew more favour to Latimer than his opponents expected, and the ease with which the latter excused the mistaken harshness of their censures is very remarkable. Little is known of the history of the house of Dominicans, or Friars Preachers, in Bristol, and there is no list of the priors. Dr. Hylsey succeeded Fisher as bishop of Rochester, which shows that he was compliant with the spirit of the times.

V.

JOHN HYLSEY TO CROMWELL.

[From MS. Cotton. Cleopat. E. iv. fol. 140.]

Master chawnselar, I commende me unto you as hartly as I may thynke, trustynge yn Gode that you be (the which Jesu contynewe) yn good prosperyte. Ytt is nott owt off your master-shyppys remembrance, that yn the Lent I dyd wrete unto you off the grete dyvysyon that was (ye and yett ys) amonge the peple yn the towne of Brystoll, off the whyche I wrote unto yowe that hytt came by the prechyng of owne Mr. Latymar, a man nott unknowne. I wrote to you allsoe that he spake off pylgremages, worshyppynge off seyntes, wurshyppynge off ymages, off purgatory, etc. yn the whyche he dyd vehemently perswade towarde the contrary, that the peple ware nott a lytle offendyd. I wrote alsoe that some men thowht necessary to preache agenst hym, the whyche I supposyd nott best, except that he sholde be put to sylence, for fere off fardyr dyvysyon (the whyche by this cause ys nowe happenyd yn dede); and some thowht hytt metur to have hym before hys ordynarye to be examynye, and soe the trewthe to be knowen; and yn thys thynges I desyryd you to do that you thowht metyst to reforme your peryshynge flock, to whome I wrote as to the shepparde off the sayd flocke. Nowe upon thys my byll men hathe crafftly usyd them selfe, ye and crafft was usyd to me or thys byll camme frome me, but that makythe nott nowe, the lettre ys off myne owne hande as thys ys, and nowe seyng that men hathe fownde the way to convey hytt to you otherways then they ynformyd me that they wolde, I cannott denye mye hande, nother wyll nott; wherfore puttyng asyde all thnges that sholde

seme to excuse myn acte, thes war the occasyon of my letter : fyrst the fame that I harde of thys man, master Latymer, before that I knewe hyme, the whyche same decevyd nott only me butt other as well lernyd as I ; seconde was the vehement perswadynge ayenst the abuse off the thynges, as ys above wretyn, wythe more, as off massys, off scale celi, pardons, the fyre off hell, the state off the sowlys yn purgatory, off faythe wytheowt good wurkes, off ower lady to be a synnar or noe synnar, etc. The whyche I and syche other dyd suppose that he dyd preache to the yntent to confownde thes thynges ; wherapon bothe the wurshypfull men, master Doctor Powell, master D. Goodryche, master Heberdynne, master pryour off Seynt Jamys, and I, dyd preache agenst, approvyng purgatory, pylgremages, the wurshyppe off seyntes and ymages, alsoe approvyng that feyth wytheowt good wurkes ys but deade, and that ower lady beyng full of grace ys and was wytheowtte the spott of synne. But when we had dunne, I reken we laboryd but yn vayne, and browht the peple yn greter dyvysyon then they war, as they doe hytherto contynewe. I beseeke God to helpe hytt, for ower kryynge owne agenst another ys nott frutfull, nother takythe onny effecte ; ffor sens I have communyd wythe master Lattymar, and I have harde hyme preache, and have yntytle hys sermon sentens for sentens, and I have percevyd that hys mynd ys myche more agenst the abusynge off thynges then agenst the thyng hytt selfe. More, the thyrde thyng that causyd me to wrete unto you was thys dyvysyon that remanythe and yncreaseth yett amonge us, the whyche wyll nott (by thys way that we have begone) be ceasyd. Therefore hytt lyythe yn you to devyse some other way, as God and your goode counsell shall ynforme you. Yn my jugement, by that that I knowe off master Latymars mynde nowe, yff he myght have your lycens, he wolde opyn hys mynde yn thys matters that the peple sholde be content, and thys wolde plesse the counsell of the towne well, for apone thys they be agreyde, and hopythe apone your good helpe yn hytt. And yff I may wythe my lytle understandynge furder

thys matter, to brynge hytt unto an unytye, as God ys my jugge, I wyll doe my dylygens, and yff he (*quod absit*) sholde hereafter sey onny thyng that sholde sowne other wyse then the catholycall determynacion off the chyrche, ther wylbe inowhe that wylbe redy to note hyt wythe more dylygens then hytherto. The forth was my coscyens, thowhe hytt ware for the tym erronyows, and decevyd for lacke off takynge hede dylygently, to marke and knowe the abuse off a thyng frome the thyng. Thy fythe cause I shall reserve secretly to my selfe, lest that I sholde seme to put other men yn gylty off my factes, that I doe nott yntent, Gode wyllynge, whoe have you yn hys proteccion. Wretyn yn Brystoll, 2^a Mail,

By me, Frere JOHN HYLSEY, doctor
and pryor off the Freers Prechurs ther.

The letters which follow relate to an affair that had much influence in bringing the monks into disfavour, and hastened the great revolution which it is the object of the present volume to illustrate. Elizabeth Barton, so celebrated under the title of the Maid of Kent, was originally a servant, and being subject to strange epileptic fits, she was chosen by a violent party as an instrument of deception. She was taught to pretend to have visions and revelations, and was first brought forward by Richard Masters, parson of Aldrington. Archbishop Warham, and even Sir Thomas More and bishop Fisher, were either deceived, or gave encouragement to this pious fraud; and the former caused her to be placed as a nun in the priory of St. Sepulchre at Canterbury. She was there under the immediate surveillance of Dr. Edward Bocking, a canon of Christ's Church, who was one of the most zealous partizans of the plot; and another monk, named Richard Dering, or Deering, took down her pretended visions, and formed them into a book. This plot was allowed to go on for some time, and the fathers and nuns of Syon, the Charter House, and Sheen, with some of the friars observants of Richmond and Greenwich, participated largely in it. But at length the public violence with which the King's proceedings, in seeking a divorce from Catharine of Arragon, and his quarrel with the pope, were attacked, called down the vengeance of the Court; and the "holy maid" was seized and examined in the Star-chamber, when she confessed the conspiracy and her accomplices. Elizabeth Barton, Bocking, Dering, and others concerned in this affair, were afterwards condemned of high treason, and executed at Tyburn on the 20th of April, 1534. One of these was Hugh Rich, a friar observant. The following letter appears to have been written by one also