XXXVIII.

JOHN AP RICE TO CROMWELL.

[From MS. Cotton. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 120.]

Please it your mastership, fforasmoeche as I suppose ye shall have sute made unto yow touching Burie er we retourne, I thought convenient to advertise yow of our procedinges there, and also of the compertes of the same. As for thabbot, we found nothing suspect as touching his lyving, but it was detected that he laye moche forth in his granges, that he delited moche in playng at dice and cardes, and therin spent moche money, and in buylding for his pleasure. He did not preche openly. Also that he converted divers fermes into copie holdes, wherof poore men doth complayne. Also he semeth to be addict to the mayntenynge of suche supersticious ceremones as hathe ben used hertofo.

As touching the convent, we coulde geate litle or no reportes amonge theym, although we did use moche diligence in our examinacion, and therby, with some other argumentes gethered of their examinacions, I fermely beleve and suppose that they had confedered and compacted bifore our commynge that they shulde disclose nothing. And yet it is confessed and proved, that there was here suche frequence of women commynge and reassorting to this monastery as to no place more. Amongest the reliques we founde moche vanitie and superstition, as the coles that Saint Laurence was tosted withall, the paring of S. Edmundes naylles, S. Thomas of Canterbury penneknyff and his bootes, and divers skulles for the hedache; peces of the holie crosse able to make a hole crosse of;* other reliques for rayne and certain other superstitiouse usages, for avoyding of wedes growing in corne, with suche other. Here departe of theym that be under age upon an eight, and of theym that be above age upon a five, wolde departe

* The immense number of pieces of the *true* cross possessed by different religious houses, both on the continent and in England, was a frequent subject of ridicule among the earlier reformers.

yf they might, and they be of the best sorte in the house and of best lernyng and jugement. The hole number of the covent before we cam was lx., saving one, beside iij. that were at Oxforde. Of Elie I have written to your mastership by my felowe Richard a Lee. And thus Almightye God have you in his tuicion. From Burie, vth. Novembre.

Your servant moste bounden,
JOHN AP RICE.

The following letter is an additional evidence of the eagerness with which the country gentlemen and the courtiers were looking out for shares in the abbey lands. The small priory of Ingham in Norfolk was founded in the fourteenth century, by Sir Miles Stapleton, of Bedale in Yorkshire.

XXXIX.

RICHARD WHARTON TO CROMWELL.

[From MS. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 122.]

Ryght woorshypfull syr, as I am most bownde of dewtye, with my humble recommendacions to your mastershypp, syr, yt shall please yow to be athvertysyd that here ys an abbey callyd Ingham in Norfolke, not fare frome Seynt Benettes abbeye, the fownder therof ys on sir Frawnses Calthrope, and after hys dethe one Edwarde Calthrope, newewe and heyer unto the sayd syr Fraunses, whoo hathe maryid a nere kynswoman off myne. The prior and covent of the same abbeye, by the covent seale, hathe solde the hole abbeye with all the londdes therto belongyng, to one Wylliam Wodhowse a nere dweller to the same, wythowght the knowlege of the fownder, and allso contrary to the promysse of the sayd prior and covent, who promysyd the sayd Edward Calthrope that in case they dyde eyther selle or aleyne the same or ony parte therof, that the same Edward shulde have yt before any other man, forasmyche as yt was ffoundyd by hys awn-