my selff by thes presentes that from hensfurth I shall at all tymes and in all places, whansooever I shalbe called uppon, be redye and glad to conferme, ratefie, and astabilishe this my deyd, purpos, mynd, and intent, as shalbe devised by the lerned counsell of the kynges said highnes, wiche commyth frely of my selff and without ony inforcement, in consideracion of the evyll dissposicion of the bredren of the said monasterie, as is aforesaid ; in wittynes wherof herunto I have subscribed my name, and writtyn this byll with myn awn [hand], the day, yere, and place beforesaid, in the presence of the right honorable lord my lord therle of Sussex, the kynges leuetenaunt within this countie of Lancaster, and also in the presence of sir Thomas Butteler, sir William Leyland, Mr. Johan Cladon, clerk, sir Johan Beron, and sir Antony Fitzherbert, one of the kynges justicis, beyng of the kynges counsell within the said countie, who hereunto have also put to theyr handes to testefie the same.

Per me, ROGERUM abbatem Furnesii.

ROBERTUS SUSSEX.

ANTONY FITZHERBERT.

WYLLIAM LEYLAND.

HENR. FARRYNGENK. (?)

JOHON CLAYDEN, prest.

The next letter relates to a small priory in Norfolk, Newbridge, of the history of which very little is known. The duke of Norfolk appears to have wished to protect it by giving up voluntarily to the minister a share in the patronage.

LXXV.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK TO CROMWELL.

[From MS. Cotton. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 41.*]

My veray goode lorde, after my herty commendations unto your good lordship, thiese shalbe tadvertise the same that it is

comme unto my knowlege, by the relation of the berers hereof, that the priour of the house of Newburgh, beyng of my fundation, is lately departed this world; and albeit of many yeres heretofore it hath not ben seen contrary but the religiouse persones of the same in such like cases have ever furst repaired unto me and myne auncetours for our consent as patrone of the same, and theruppon to tharchebushoppe of Yourke for their confirmation, yet nowe, forasmoche as they knowe not howe to use themselves (considering the kinges highnes hath *plenariam potestatem* in such cases) any further than as I shall directe them, I have therefore thought convenient at this present to sende them to your good lordshippe, requiring the same to take such good order with them therin as by your great wisdome shalbe thought most expedient, and in such sorte as the same be not to the hurt or prejudice of any my right and title in the saide house, wherunto I doubt not but ye woll have good respecte accordingly. My good lord, considering as well that the said house is far indebted and behynde hande by the great mysorder and negligence of the saide late priour there, as also that none of that house is mete to be rewler therof, beyng of such sorte as not lik of long tyme tamende and restore the same to his pristine estate, I require you therefore, my good lorde, to handle them by all the policie ye can, that they at their retourne from you may frelye put the matier of ther election in compromission to us twoo, to thentent that we boothe conjointly togeyther may so order the matier as to us shalbe thought most convenient; and of your procedinges with them herein I require you of advertisement. And thus most hertily fare ye well. From Kenyngale, the xijth daie of Aprill.

Yours assewredly, T. NORFFOLK.

My lord, if ye shall fynde any diffyculte in them to consent to compromytt this mater to us ij., I re quyre you to retorne them to me hither, trustyng to reforme their folies, little gode discrecion being in any of them, as I thynk.

In the summer of this year (1537) began the second great visitation of the monasteries, preparatory to the final measure of suppression. Layton and Legh, who in the following letter solicit their commission, were from beginning to end two of the most active agents of the court. It was during this visitation, which continued through the year 1538, that so many houses were persuaded or compelled to a voluntary surrender.

LXXVI.

DR. LAYTON TO CROMWELL.

[From MS. Cotton. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 10.]

Pleasit yowe to understonde, that whereas ye intende shortly to visite, and be lyke shall have many sutters unto yowe for the same to be your commissares, if hit myght stonde with your pleasure that doctor Lee and I myght have committyde unto us the north contre, and to begyn in Lincolne dioces northwardes here from London, Chester dioces, Yorke, and so furthe to the borders of Scotlande, to ryde downe one syde and to cum up the other, ye shalbe well and faste assuryde that ye shall nother fynde monke, chanone, frear, prior, abbott, or any other of what degree so ever he be, that shall do the kynges hyghnes so goode servys in this matter for thos partties, nether be so trusty, trewe, and faithfull to yowe in the same, doying all thynges so diligently for your purpos and your discharge. And forasmuche as the kynges hyghnes hath put his onely truste in yowe for the reformation of his clergie, gyvyng yowe therunto onely auctoritie and power, ye muste have suche as ye may trust evyn as well as your owne self, wiche muste be unto yowe as *alter ego*. Doctor Lee and I have onely bene preferryde to the kynges servys by yowe, *et te solum ab eo tempore in huncusque diem habuimus Mæcenatem et unicum patronum, nec alium unquam habituri*. Owre desier is, therfor, nowe to declare unto yowe owre trewe herttes and faithfull mynde, owre faste and unfaynede servys that we bere towards yowe, and owe unto yowe, as ye have of ryght bownde us. Ther ys nother monasterie, selle, priorie, nor any other religiouse howse in the