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RECTORS OF PRESTON-BY-FAVERSHAM.

BY CANON SCOTT ROBERTSON.

The Rectors who for some centuries were appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, as lord of the manor, received all Great or Predial Tithes, arising from corn, hay, hops, and the like. The recipient of these Great Tithes was responsible for the repairs of the Chancel. In A.D. 1340 the Great Tithes of Preston were alienated from their object of providing for the spiritual need of the parishioners. They were then granted by the Archbishop to the Abbot and Convent of Faversham in an exchange of property. The parishioners of Preston thus lost for ever, in respect of the ministrations of religion in Preston, the benefit of this endowment. Henceforward the only return made to the people of this parish for their payment of Great Tithes was the maintenance of the fabric of the Chancel. After the dissolution of Faversham Abbey in A.D. 1538 the Great Tithes were appropriated to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury. In or about 1865 they passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.*

A.D.

1283. WALTER DE PLESIACO is the first rector whose name is on record. There had been many rectors during preceding centuries, but their names are not known. Archbishop Peckham's Register states (on folio 53^b) that in 1283 Walter de Plesiaco was found in possession of the church of Preston, but resigned it. The Archbishop forthwith collated him to be again Rector of Preston, on the 4th of July 1283. This strange transaction seems to imply that Walter de Plesiaco had not been properly collated by the true patron (the Archbishop), and that the error was afterwards rectified. In April 1284, this rector appointed Richard de Trengre to be his vicar here.
1290. GAUCHER DE DOLINA was deprived of this rectory by Archbishop Peckham in 1290. How long he had held it, or why he was deprived, the records do not state.

* Of another benefice of this name, Preston next Wingham, the Abbot and Convent of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, were patrons from an early period.

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A.D.

1290. SYMON DE FAVERSHAM was the successor appointed by Archbishop Peckham, who collated him to the church of Preston outside Faversham on the 24th of September 1290. That day was the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity. He had been ordained Deacon on the previous day, in the church of Bocking, Essex, by Archbishop Peckham (Register, folio 139^b), his title for Orders being this Rectory of Preston.

This rector's name was Simon Marchaunt (Peckham's Register, folio 109^b) and he was a native of Faversham. In the parish church of his native place he had been ordained an acolyte seven years before in September 1283.

Simon Marchaunt seems to have been a man of talent and activity. The Bishop of Hereford (Richard Swinfield) in 1303 promoted him to the Prebendal Stall of Hampton, in Hereford Cathedral. Three years later, Simon Marchaunt had occasion to send a Petition to the Pope, Clement V., and Rymer in his *Fœdera* states that King Edward I. backed, with his royal recommendation, Marchaunt's petition, which was dated April 12, 1306. Possibly the petition related to the tax of one-tenth of their incomes demanded from each parish priest, for three years, by Boniface VIII. in 1301. Of this tax the Abbot of Faversham was the collector.

The records of Hereford and of Canterbury fail to afford any clue to the length of Simon de Faversham's tenure of his preferments.

1313. Master DIONYSIUS AVENALE, whose prefix "Master" implies that he was an University Graduate, was collated on 9th of May 1313, by Archbishop Winchelse. Nine years later he was promoted to be Archdeacon of the East Riding.
1322. JOHN DE TOMYFORD succeeded Avenale at Preston. He was collated by Archbishop Reynolds on the 9th of May 1322. How long he remained rector of this parish we cannot ascertain.
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