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29 April [1535]
R. O.

609. THE PRIOR OF THE CHARTER HOUSE AND OTHERS.¹

Proceedings against Robert Feron, or Fern, of Todynton (Teddington), Midd., clk.; John Hale, late of Isleworth, clk.; John Howghton, prior of the Charter House, Midd.; Augustine Webster, prior of the Charter House, Axholme, Linc.; Rob. Lawrens, prior of the Charter House of Bevall, Notts; and Ric. Reynolds, brother of the house of Syon, Midd.; for high treason, viz.:—

i. Special commission of Oyer and Terminer for Middlesex to Sir Thos. Audeley, chancellor, Thos. duke of Norfolk, treasurer, Henry marquis of Exeter, Will. earl of Arundel, John earl of Oxford, Henry earl of Essex, Thos. earl of Rutland, Hen. earl of Cumberland, Thos. earl of Wiltshire, Hen. lord Montague, Geo. lord Rocheford, Thos. Cromwell, chief secretary, Sir John FitzJames, Sir John Baldwin, Sir Ric. Lister, Sir John Porte, Sir John Spelman, Sir Walter Luke, Sir Ant. Fitzherbert, Sir Thos. Inglefeld, and Sir Will. Shelley. Westm., 23 April 27 Hen. VIII.

ii. The justices' precept to the sheriff for the return of the grand jury, with panel annexed. Westm., 24 April 27 Hen. VIII.

iii. The justices' precept to the constable of the Tower to bring up John Howghton, Augustine Webster, Rob. Lawrens, Ric. Reynolds, Rob. Feron or Fern, and John Hale, at Westminster, on Wednesday next after one month of Easter. Westm., 27 April 27 Hen. VIII. Endorsed with the reply of Sir Edmund Walsingham as lieutenant of Sir Will. Kyngeston, constable of the Tower.

iv. Indictment setting forth that by the statute 25 Hen. VIII. [c. 22.] any person who shall do anything to the peril of the King or prejudice of his succession shall be guilty of high treason; that Rob. Feron and John Hale above named, endeavouring to excite sedition, &c., did, 20 May 26 Hen. VIII. and at other times between 2 and 20 May and subsequently, at Isleworth and Syon, Midd., meet and have various discourse against the King and his marriage while they were walking to and fro. And after many scandalous and false words spoken by Feron to Hale, the said Feron [230] asked Hale if there was no one who had written or who would write against the King's evil deeds. Hale replied that there were many notorious and sufficient causes to write against the King, and further said these most execrable words:—"Syth the realm of England was first a realm, was there never in it so great a robber and pyller of the commonwealth read of nor heard of as is our King. And not only we, that be of the spirituality, by his wrongs be oppressed and robbed of our livings as if we were his utter enemies, enemies to Christ, and guilty of his death, but also thus ungoodly he doth handle innocents, and also highly learned and virtuous men, not only robbing them of their livings and spoiling them of their goods, but also thrusting them into perpetual prison, so that it is too great pity to hear, and more to be lamented than any good Christian man's ears may abide. And he doth the same as if by that mean he would revenge his own injuries and the injuries of Christian faith, by whose title in a marvellous fashion he boasteth himself to be above and to excel all other Christian kings and princes, thereby being puffed with vain glory and pride, where, of a truth, he is the most cruellest, capital heretic, defacer, and traitor under foot of Christ and of his Church, continually applying and minding to extinct the same. And also the lay fee, sometime the noble and sometime the commons, without difference, upon chance and displeasure grown, or of truth forsought and feigned, he doth enpoverish, destroy, and kill, for none other intent but that he may enjoy and use his foul pleasures, and increase to himself great treasure and riches, enriching strangers, and pylling and robbing his own subjects, and making fair houses but most superfluous. Whose death I beseech God may be like to the death of the most wicked

¹ See Report III. of the Dep. Keeper of Pub. Records, App. ii. 237.

John, sometime King of this realm, or rather to be called a great tyrant than a King, and that his death may not be much unlike to the end of that manqueller Richard, sometime usurper of this Imperial realm. And if thou will deeply look upon his life, thou shalt find it more foul and more stinking than a sow, wallowing and defiling herself in any filthy place; for how great so ever he is, he is fully given to his foul pleasure of the flesh and other voluptuousness. And look how many matrons be in the court, or given to marriage; these almost all he hath violated, so often neglecting his duty to his wife and offending the Holy sacrament of matrimony; and now he hath taken to his wife of fornication this matron Anne, not only to the highest shame and undoing of himself, but also of all this realm.”

Afterwards, 10 March 26 Hen. VIII., Feron wrote down in Latin these words spoken by Hale in English. Also in the same conversation on the 20th May, Hale said to Feron, “Until the King and the rulers of this realm be plucked by the pates, and brought, as we say, to the pot, shall we never live merrily in England; which I pray God may chance and now shortly to come to pass. Ireland is set against him, which will never shrink in their quarrel, to die in it. And what think ye of Wales?—Their noble and gentle Ap Ryce so cruelly put to death, and he innocent, as they say, in the cause. I think not contrary but they will join and take part with the Irish, and so invade our realm. If they do so, doubt ye not but they shall have aid and strength enough in England; for this is truth, three parts of England is against the King, as he shall find if he need; for of truth they go about to bring this realm into such miserable condition as is France, which the Commons see and perceive well enough a sufficient cause of rebellion and insurrection in this realm. And truly we of the Church shall never live merrily until that day come.” [231]

v. The justices’ precept to the sheriff for the return of a jury from Istylworth and Syon for the trial of Feron and Hale. Westm., 28 April 27 Hen. VIII.— With panel of jury annexed.

vi. Indictment against Howghton, Webster, Lawrens, and Reynolds, for declaring, 26 April 27 Hen. VIII. at the Tower of London, “The King our sovereign lord is not supreme head in earth of the Church of England.”

vii. The justices’ precept to the sheriff for the return of a jury of inhabitants of the Tower for the trial of Howghton, Webster, Lawrens, and Reynolds. Westm., 28 April 27 Hen. VIII.

viii. Records of the trial before the above justices, reciting the above documents in the preamble, in which the indictments are dated at Westminster on Wednesday after one month of Easter, 27 Hen. VIII.

Feron and Hale, being brought to the bar by Sir Edw. Walsingham on Wednesday after one month of Easter, 27 Hen. VIII., plead *Not Guilty*. Venire awarded returnable at Westminster on Thursday after one month of Easter (29 April); on which day, after the jury were sworn, the prisoners withdrew their former plea, and pleaded *Guilty*.

Judgment as usual in high treason. Execution at Tyburn.

Howghton, Webster, Lawrens, and Reynolds in like manner were brought to the bar on Wednesday after one month of Easter, when they pleaded *Not Guilty*; and again on Thursday, when they pleaded *Guilty*.

Judgment and execution as before.

Proceedings brought into court, Hilary term, 27 Hen. VIII., by Sir John FitzJames.

Cleopatra, E. vi. 231.
B. M.

2.”The bill of indictment against the Carthusians,” *i.e.*, John Rochester and Jas. Whalworth, for denying the King’s supremacy.

Lat. Vellum. In margin: “Billa vera.”