

A History of the English Austin Friars

(continuation) *)

Chapter 3

PRELIMINARY

THE ORDER AFTER THE GREAT SCHISM (1422-1500)

« A renovation in the head and members of the Church » was the cry of the councils of Constance and Basel. The assembled prelates sought to solve the problem by legislation, but if renewal is to be true and permanent it must come from within. Men must arise whose spotless lives and high ideals bring about a voluntary reform ; whose steady courage and persuasive powers will carry along the average religious. The Austins had many such men. Reform Congregations rose in every nation save in France in England. France, however, had a belated, violent reform movement in the seventeenth century. England perished before Observance changed certain deplorable conditions. Reform would not have saved the English province but its end might have been more glorious.

Reform does not necessarily mean things new and spectacular. It does mean a return to the exact observance of the vows and constitutions. In the next chapter we shall show in detail the destructive force of endless exceptions to the Rule and the ruination caused by the neglect of true poverty. A spirit of selfishness which only sought its personal comfort and welfare had entered the Augustinian Order whose ideal is the common good. Everyone provided for himself, and nothing was left for the repair of buildings or the education

*) *Augustiniana* 8 (1958), 22-47, 465-496; 11 (1961), 533-563.

of youth. Good religious chafed under this lawlessness but could do nothing because lawlessness had become legal. Every exception had been granted by some pope or general with strictest orders to lower superiors not to interfere. The Reform Congregations abolished every personal privilege, every exception to the Rule. Above all they bound themselves to practice perfect common life in which no one called anything his own. Frequently this true new way of life was bitterly attacked and the reformers found that the best solution was to unite their followers in houses from which non-observant members were excluded. They protected themselves against the interference of antagonistic provincials by the union of observant houses into new governmental districts. These were called congregations to distinguish them from provinces and were placed directly under the general.

The reform, as might have been expected, started in Lecceto ¹⁶²⁾, the house which has been the greatest center of holiness in Augustinian history. Its congregation remained small never exceeding more than twelve houses, but from it came some of the most famous Austins of this period, for example Charles Sforza of Attendola, a brother to the duke of Milan, and archbishop of the same city; and Mariano of Genazzano, the well-known opponent of Savonarola ¹⁶³⁾. Another was the famous cardinal, Giles of Viterbo. The Congregation of Lecceto began in 1387. It was followed by the mighty Congregation of Lombardy which grew from the reform of Matthew de Introducto. In 1540 it comprised almost eighty houses but had an unfortunate tendency towards complete independence from the general ¹⁶⁴⁾. The reform came to southern Italy through the Carbonaria of Naples which was approved in 1421 ¹⁶⁵⁾. Its greatest

¹⁶²⁾ Unless other sources are given we follow David GUTIÉRREZ, « Les Ermites de Saint-Augustin », *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* fol. 27/29 (1960) col. 683-1018. Father Gutiérrez is one of the best informed and most reliable historians of the Order. — The number of 12 houses for Lecceto is given in Ms. 958 fol. 18, Angelica.

¹⁶³⁾ D. PERINI, *Un Emolo di Fr. Girolamo Savonarola, Fr. Mariano da Genazzano* (Rome 1917). Perini successfully cleared Mariano's name from many calumnies of Villari: PASTOR, *Gesch. d. Päpste* III, ed. 8 (Freiburg 1926) 160n.

¹⁶⁴⁾ The names of the provinces and houses of the Order at the time of Seripando are enumerated in AA VI (1915).

¹⁶⁵⁾ The oldest document quoted by EMPOLI is « Sacrae religionis sinceritas » of 22 March 1463 (*Bullarium* 308). It gives Carbonaria some of the privileges previously granted to Lecceto.

son was Cardinal Jerome Seripando, papal legate to the Council of Trent. Simonetus of Camerino brought observance to the north-east section of Italy in 1436. By his great influence and reputation he was able to mediate peace between Milan and Venice after every other means had failed ¹⁶⁶). His Congregation of Monte Ortone remained the smallest, its houses never numbering more than five. It gave the Order Blessed Gratia a Cattaro (Jugoslavia) a laybrother of extraordinary holiness ¹⁶⁷). The north-western part of Italy was reformed by the Congregation of Genoa, approved in 1473. Other reform groups were the Congregations of Perugia in 1436, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, in 1470, and Puglia in 1492. The Congregation of Santa Maria del Popolo is of special interest for our history because the reform movement in Ireland became affiliated with it ¹⁶⁸). All these congregations added lustre to the Order. Their excellent monastic life induced King James IV of Scotland to petition Pope Julius II in 1509 for a foundation in his kingdom (D 1176). Only one congregation failed and brought the Order to the brink of disaster : the Congregation of Saxony which produced Martin Luther. The fact of his membership has continued to haunt the Austins, though they consoled themselves with the saying of Cardinal Seripando : « Lutherus erat nobiscum, sed non ex nobis ». Whatever the Saxon Congregation lost for the Order was more than regained by the Observants of the Iberian peninsula. They gave the Order Saints John of Sahagun and Thomas of Villanova. The latter initiated the great missionary work in South America from where it expanded to the Philippines, Japan and China. Reform also prepared Portugal for its missions in India especially along the Bay of Bengal.

The Observance succeeded only after a long and at times bitter struggle. Provincials deeply resented the constant efforts of the Observants to wrest the largest and most substantial houses from their control. The latter's retort that the bad example of such houses

¹⁶⁶) PASTOR, *Gesch. d. Päpste* I, ed. 8, p. 638-639. C. CREPI, *Le Case degli Sforza e fra Simone da Camerino* (Venice 1913).

¹⁶⁷) The latest lives of Bl. Gratia are; Ivo MATKOVIĆ, *Život i Štovanje Bl. Gracije Kotoranina* (Spljet 1910); St. VUKAŠINOVIĆ, *Život Blaženog Gracije iz Mula u Boki Kotorskoj* (Kotor 1939); V. CAPANAGA, *El B. Gracia de Cataro* (Rome 1938); B. VAN LUIJK, « Hagiografia Agustiniiana », *Archivo Agustiniiano* 53 (1959) 28. A group of Gratia's countrymen under the direction of V. Knaus, a lawyer of Chicago, agitates for his canonization.

¹⁶⁸) MARTIN, « Ir. Aug. Reform Movem. » 247.

in important cities was more scandalous than in small places was convincing, but the conventuals seldom credited the Observants with such noble motives ¹⁶⁹). The Observants usually won out because the secular arm supported them in most instances and the populace has ever admired a strict religious life. The attitude of the generals veered from the conventuals to the observants according to their own affiliation. All the great generals of the fifteenth century came from the Observance.

Two popes of this period showed marked favor towards the Order: Eugene IV, 1431-1447, and Sixtus IV, 1471-1484. Of late the claim has been made that Pope Eugene was actually a member of the Austin Friars. Even the great historian, Ludwig Pastor, regarded this as a fact ¹⁷⁰) but none of the reliable historians of the Order ever did. There is not a single document known which supports this claim even though some aspects of the pope's daily life seem to favor it. For instance he chose two Austins to recite the divine office with him daily together with two secular priests. He promoted the observantine movement within the Order ¹⁷¹) but had no intention of letting the latter be torn asunder by extremists of either group. Thus he stopped the efforts of the Lombardic Congregation for complete independence ¹⁷²). The greatest favor he bestowed upon the Austins was the canonization of St. Nicholas of Tolentine in 1446 ¹⁷³). This process had begun more than a century previous but was delayed time and again through no fault of the Order. The impetus of this canonization was tremendous. It was the first in the Order since the Great Union of 1256 and gave it great prestige in

¹⁶⁹) « Propter introducendam reformationem et observantiam, vel potius absorbentiam meliorum conventuum Provinciae Rheno-Suevicae »: HÖHN, *Chronologia* 121.

¹⁷⁰) PASTOR, *Gesch. d. Päpste* I, 297.

¹⁷¹) « Regimini universalis ecclesiae », 6 Sept. 1434 exempts the Congregation of Lecceto from the jurisdiction of the provincial of Siena: EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 115.

¹⁷²) « Laudabilem in Domino », 18 December 1445: EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 112/3 AA VI, 1-2.

¹⁷³) The bull of canonization « Licens militans in terris » of 1 February 1446 in EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 112/4. A list of biographies in A. RUELLI, *Compendio della Vita di S. Nicola da Tolentino* (Viterbo 1905) 93-100. In 1926 the saint's relics were found again (AA XIII, 48-52). Father Hermann Sella, a German Augustinian, contributed essentially to their discovery. See also PASTOR, *Gesch. d. Päpste* I, 363 and VAN LUIJK, *Hagiogr. Agust.* 32. Concerning the English lives of 1510 see chapter on authors.

the eyes of men. Little is known of the life of St. Nicholas but the many miracles wrought through his intercession quickly spread his devotion and the Austins did everything to promote his cult. Two lives of the saint, printed about 1510, are among the earliest English books published by Augustinians (D 1029).

In the year of St. Nicholas' canonization Eugene IV gave the Austins their greatest cardinal protector since the days of Richard Annibaldi. He was William Estouteville ¹⁷⁴), archbishop of Rouen, a blood relative of the royal house of France. Immensely rich and powerful he came within one vote of winning the papacy in 1458. He had been created cardinal by Eugene IV on 9 January 1440 and in 1452 won the love of his nation by starting the process of rehabilitation of Joan of Arc. One of the star witnesses at this trial was the saint's confessor, the Augustinian John Pasquerel. Due to the Great Schism he has remained completely unknown to historians of the Order though he played at least as great a role for the maid of Domrémy as Wiliam Flete did for St. Catherine of Siena ¹⁷⁵). Another outstanding Augustinian with whom Estouteville became intimately acquainted was Alexander Oliva of Sassoferrato, prior general and cardinal ¹⁷⁶). Oliva's early death on 20 August 1483 frustrated

¹⁷⁴) At the general chapter of Perugia in 1482 an extraordinary tribute was paid to the cardinal. It begins: «Item considerantes excellentissima beneficia nostro collata ordini, indefessos labores, quos *sex et triginta annos* pro nostra protectione pertulit Reverendissimus in Christo pater et dominus (Guillelmus) Estouteville... attendentes etiam mirificum eius animum in hedificiis coenobii et ecclesie Sancti Augustini, quam mirandam nobis in Urbe a fundamentis extruxit, in quibus non minus centum milibus aureorum expendendum est, ut opus ad perfectionem ducatur... » (AA VII, 275). For Estouteville's life see PASTOR, *op. cit.* I, 375/6. — A history of the cardinal protectors of the Augustinian Order has not yet been written.

¹⁷⁵) The testimony of Pasquerel is published in J. QUICHERAT, *Procès de Condamnation et Réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc III* (Paris 1849) 100-112 and J. B. AYROLES, *La Vraie Jeanne d'Arc IV* (Paris 1898) 216-234. See also my article « Die Jungfrau von Orleans und die Augustiner ihrer Zeit », *Cor Unum* 12 (1954) 83-86.

¹⁷⁶) He became cardinal under Pope Pius II on 5 March 1460 (EUBEL, *Hier.* II, ed. 2, p. 13. PASTOR, *op. cit.* II, ed. 10 (1928) 205.

¹⁷⁶) Sassoferrato became cardinal on 5 March 1460 (EUBEL, *Hier.* II, 13). Pope Pius II called him « a man celebrated for his knowledge of theology and illustrious for the purity of his life » (Fl. ALDEN - L. GABEL, *The Commentaries of Pius II, Smith College Studies in History* 30 (1947) 305/6). See also PASTOR, *op. cit.* II (1928) 205 and PERINI, *Bibl. August.* III, 31-35 and I, 96. G. RAPONI, *Il Cardinale*

all hopes the Order may have had for gaining special support for its needs. Estouteville, on the other hand, left a lasting monument by the erection of the church of St. Augustine, the finest example of early Renaissance in Rome¹⁷⁷). It was built between 1479 and 1484 in place of the church St. Trifon to which the remains of St. Monica had been transferred in 1430¹⁷⁸). In order to have proper administrative facilities a great General Curia was added to the church. In 1482 more than 100.000 ducats was still needed for the completion of the double undertaking and the Order pleaded at its general chapter of Padua for the continued support of its protector but his death on 27 January 1463 placed a severe strain on the finances of the Order, a strain which also had its repercussions in the English province.

What Eugene IV did for the Order was not forgotten. When Amadeus, count of Savoy, took the name Felix V and set himself up as antipope¹⁷⁹) the Order valiantly rallied to Eugene's support (D 783).

The other pope to whom the Austins and all mendicants owe a great debt of gratitude was Pope Sixtus IV, 1471-1484, the former

Alessandro Oliva, O. S. A. (1407-1463), Dr. Thesis Gregorian Univ. Rome 1959, has not yet been published.

¹⁷⁷) J. P. KIRSCH, « La Chiesa di S. Agostino », *Archeologia Cristiana* IX (1932); PASTOR, *op. cit.* I, 376.

¹⁷⁸) The translation granted by Pope Martin V upon he request of Augustine Favaroni, prior general OESA, was one of the great religious events in Roman history (PASTOR, *op. cit.* I, 244-5). The inscription which once decorated St. Monica's tomb in Ostia was re-discovered by the Augustinian A. Casamassa: R. ARBESMANN, « A Lucky Archeological Find », *The Classical Bulletin* 23 (1946) 9-10. The oration which Pope Martin V supposedly gave at this occasion seems to be fictitious: A. CASAMASSA, « L'Autore di un Preteso Discorso di Martino V », *Miscellanea Pio Paschini* II (Rome 1949) 109-125.

¹⁷⁹) In French circles Felix V is venerated as a saint; his cult, however has not been officially recognized. He established a house of the Order in Thonon (Switzerland) before he was chosen anti-pope. « Libravit fratri Johanni de Friburgo ordinis Augustinorum (ad) fabricam eorum ecclesie de proximo tunc Thononii, deo hospite, incepturo... dimidium modii frumenti... 11 dec. 1427 ». A year later the friary was being erected. In 1443, while anti-pope, he granted an indulgence for its completion: M. BRUCHET, in *Mémoires et Documents publiés par l'Académie Chablaisienne* 21 (1907) 908-910. French Austins, for example the historian of the house in Seyssel (LUBIN's Collection, State Library, Bruxelles, Ms. II. 2590 p. 125) and M. ALLOBROGE, *Sacra Eremus Augustiniana* (Chambery 1658) 205 do not hesitate to make Felix an Austin friar. His hermitage at Ripaille, however, was united with the Augustinian Canons.

general of the Franciscans. In his very first year he revoked the obnoxious decree of Callistus III which had abrogated all exemptions and privileges of the mendicants ¹⁸⁰). He followed it with the *Mare Magnum* which guaranteed to the individual Orders not only their former privileges but vastly increased them. It was given to the Austins in 1475 ¹⁸¹) and proved to be one of the most important pieces of legislation within the Order's history. A copy of it was found in all important houses because it was their bulwark of defense against any attacks on their rights. It was, however, not sufficient that Orders be protected from without. They also had to be strong within themselves and this by harmonious cooperation. In the same year in which Sixtus IV granted the *Mare Magnum* he also forbade the Augustinian Observants to take over the houses of conventuals by force ¹⁸²) and put a stop to the altercations between the Hermits and Canons of St. Augustine as to their descent from St. Augustine ¹⁸³). To show the Austins his personal favor the pope at his own expense, rebuilt St. Maria del Popolo, a place which the Austins had obtained before their Great Union in 1256. The pope placed it into the hands of the Observants ¹⁸⁴).

It may have been a sign of sincere affection that Sixtus IV appointed his own nephew, Raphael Sansoni-Riario, as cardinal protector of the Austins after the death of Cardinal Estouteville ¹⁸⁵). The Order, however, could scarcely be pleased with the choice. Raphael was only seventeen years old when created a cardinal in 1477 and became almost immediately involved in the foul attempt against the life of Lorenzo de Medici. Though unaware of the plot he was nevertheless imprisoned and in great danger of losing his life. Like the other papal relatives on whom the pope wasted the income of the Church, he lived like a great secular lord and was of

¹⁸⁰) « Quia in futurorum eventibus », 7 Dec. 1471, EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 318-24; OVERMANN, *Urķ. Buch Erfurter Klöster* III n° 266 falsely reads « Quod futurorum eventibus ».

¹⁸¹) EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 329-350. The fee of the Papal Curia for the lengthy document was 720 ducats (AA VII, 261).

¹⁸²) « Dum singulos regulares », 1 May 1475: EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 359-363.

¹⁸³) « Quia apostolis precepit », 9 September 1484, EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 321/7.

¹⁸⁴) Constitutions VI-X in EMPOLI, Bull. 350/9. The pope granted some special privileges to the Austins of Vienna, Austria, upon the request of Frederic III: « Promptum et benevolum », 10 Dec. 1474: *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Wien* I (1895) n° 179. See also the indulgence to OESA - Huntingdon: D 918.

¹⁸⁵) PASTOR, *Gesch. d. Päpste* II, 537.

little help to the Order in its most difficult time, the outbreak of the Reformation. He died in 1521.

The forerunner of the Reformation was the Rinascimento, the rebirth of classical antiquity. It had its greatest impact on Italy, the land of its origin. The Austins did not shy away from this movement but tried to foster a Christian humanism by the fullest participation in classical studies without acceptance of pagan vices¹⁸⁶). The center of this movement was the convent S. Spirito in Florence. Humanism came to England rather late. Its cultivation of the mother tongue found eager adherents in Capgrave and Bokenham; its purely classical revival came to Cambridge through the unfortunate Barnes.

Humanism was not the downfall of the Order. It was caused by the Reformation which supported by the powerful personality of Martin Luther and the greed of princes, brought untold harm to the Church. It is a puzzling mystery that such great catastrophies within the Church are always preceded by an increase of devotion to Our Lady. The Austins fostered three such devotions¹⁸⁷). Two originated in Italy, devotion to Our Lady of Good Counsel and Our Mother of Consolation, the third began in Portugal and is known as devotion to Our Lady of Grace. In medieval England only the latter devotion seems to have gained a foothold. The origin of all three is more or less shrouded in mystery. In 1467 — it is said, — the picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel suddenly appeared on the unfinished walls of the Austin Friars church in Genazzano, a little town south of Rome. Whether it was really a miracle or just the discovery of an ancient fresco is disputed. The event, however, caused the greatest excitement and an unbelievable concourse of people. The church has remained one of Our Lady's favored shrines even until to-day. The devotion to Our Lady Mother of Consolation was known under various titles until it gained its final form towards the end of the

¹⁸⁶) R. ARBESMANN, « Outstanding Augustinian Humanists », *The Tagastan* 10 (1946) 101-112. See also COMBES on Jacques Le Grand (*Magni*) OESA and his contacts with the prince of French humanists, John Montreuil, *AUG VII* (1957) 334-341.

¹⁸⁷) A. GIACOMINI, « L'Ordine Agostiniano e la Devozione alla Madonna », *Sanctus Augustinus Vitae Spiritualis Magister II* (Rome 1959) 109-113. A greater degree of caution and doubt as to the actual events at Genazzano in 1467 is expressed to-day than in the otherwise excellent work of A. F. ADDEO, *Apparitionis Imaginis Beatae Mariae Virginis a Bono Consilio Documenta* AA 20 (1947) 3-149 and separate. See *Acta Ordinis E. S. Augustini* 6 (1961) 25-33.

fifteenth century. It originated in Bologna and was more or less connected with the formation of the Third Order. Its privileges far surpassed those of any other devotions of the Order.

The development of the English province during the fifteenth century was influenced little by continental movements. Its history during this period rather reflects the spirit of the nation, which, driven from France by the victories of Joan of Arc, lost its political leadership in European affairs. Through Wyclif's heresies and the rise of the new universities especially those of Padua and Bologna it lost its spiritual pre-eminence. Attendance of foreign students at English universities dropped to a tiny trickle while more and more English students set out for Italy. Weakened by the lack of vocations expansion ceased in all Orders and also among the Austins. Individual efforts for personal sanctification are recorded but no great saint to move the majority towards observantism appeared. Neither did any other Order in England produce a saint in this period. In Augustinian Ireland Observance did get a foothold but only outside the English pale and without English support. All English religious life was at a standstill. Stagnant would be the right word.

I. THE ENGLISH PRIOR PROVINCIALS 1427-1487

John Lowe 1427-1433

The *Martiniana* precluded the re-election of Thomas Sharington. In his stead Master John Lowe, one of the outstanding Augustinians of the fifteenth century, was chosen. Born ¹⁸⁸⁾ near Droitwich about the year 1380 he entered the Austin friary of that small town, made his theological studies most probably in Lincoln where he was also ordained acolyte on 18 September 1400 and deacon on 20 December 1403. By 1420 he had obtained the *magisterium* in Oxford and was urged by Masters Richard Dodington and Frank Clerk to seek affiliation with London (D 716) ¹⁸⁹⁾. Dodington who had partaken in

¹⁸⁸⁾ Best accounts on Lowe in EMDEN, *Biogr. Reg. Oxford* II, 1168-9 and N. TONER « Augustinian Spiritual Writers of the English Province in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries », *St. Augustinus Vit. Spir. Mag.* II, 504-7 and DNB XII, 194/5.

¹⁸⁹⁾ The general granted the request on 19 April 1420 under the condition that after Lowe's death half of his goods should go to his native convent Droitwich and the other half to London: D 716.

the process against Oldcastle, lord of Cobham ¹⁹⁰) saw in Lowe a kindred soul burning with desire to stamp out heresy. He was not mistaken. Throughout his life Lowe waged a vigorous battle against Lollardism and partook zealously in all convocations called for their suppression. In 1423 he was a member of the panel of theologians appointed by the Convocation of Canterbury for the examination of Master William Taylour, a secular priest. Taylor was found guilty, refused to recant and was, therefore, burnt at the stake in Smithfield on 2 March 1422 ¹⁹¹). Like Lowe other learned mendicants supplied the weapons for the destruction of the Lollards, whose hatred of friars is, therefore, fully understandable. Their constant attacks upon all religious could not fail to stir up people who disliked the friars for reasons quite different from those of the Lollards. In 1422 an Augustinian canon published one more tract ridiculing the direct descent of the Austin friars from St. Augustine ¹⁹²), and a year later Lowe himself experienced some of the dislike which was abroad. On Sunday, 23 October 1423, he was scheduled to preach at St. Paul's Cross, London. A canon of the cathedral, named Peter Henewyk, stopped him from entering the pulpit, and bitterly villified him. The chapter acts of St. Paul reporting the incident do not give the reason for Henewyk's action nor the content of his tirade, but merely report his trial and punishment (D 1173). The judges seem to insist only on keeping discipline within their own ranks ; indirectly, however, their action reveals a high regard for Lowe. It is, therefore, not surprising that he was elected provincial in 1427. His regime must have won the full approval of his brethren because they re-elected him at Northampton in 1428 (D 747) and at York in 1430 (D 757). There is no record of a dispensation from the *Martiniana*. Lowe did not think it necessary because canonists had found a loophole through which its prescriptions could be avoided. They claimed that the papal decree had not been authentically intimated to the general of the Austins and, therefore, need not be followed by them (D 825). Pope Eugene supplied the juridical form in 1453 and for the next sixty years its precepts were carried out.

Lowe's appointment to provincial did not stop his fight against heresy. In 1428 he spent much time as co-examiner of Ralph Mun-

¹⁹⁰) J. Fox, *Acts and Monum. of Christian Martyrs* I (London 1851) 771.

¹⁹¹) *Fasc. Ziz.* 412.

¹⁹²) Now Brit. Mus. Add 38-665.

gyn, Richard Monke and William White (D 749). In his own province, however, he did nothing to stop the accelerated trend towards personal privileges (D 748). He personally followed this easy path by obtaining permission from the prior general to secure a chantry for himself (D 760). Whether he made use of this permission is not known. It should not have necessary because on 25 February 1432* he was appointed confessor to the king with all privileges of former chaplains ¹⁹³) and on 11 August 1433* was appointed bishop of St. Asaph, Wales. The choice of a mendicant as ordinary of an English diocese had become most unusual towards the middle of the fifteenth century. It required, therefore, not only personal competence but also the concurrence of several fortunate circumstances to make this appointment possible. They were given through the friendship and high esteem in which both Eugene IV, the pope, and Humphrey, duke of Gloucester and regent of England, held the Austins.

The records of Lowe's ten years at St. Asaph are lost. As far as his contacts with his former confreres are concerned we only know that his rooms at Austin Friars, London, remained reserved to him for life and Master Henry Kirton of OESA, Clare was called to preach « in this mountainous diocese, inhabited by rude men, whose idiom he speaks » (D 782). Lowe seems to have expressed in these lines his own feelings towards his diocese. Its people were rude and backward and his work among them was made difficult by their Welsh tongue which he probably did not speak. Despite these sentiments he seems to have dedicated himself wholly to the affairs of his difficult diocese and reappears in the public eye only towards the end of his regime. In 1442 he was associated with the foundation of Eton College and two years later of King's College, Cambridge. He was also sent on a political mission to Frankfurt, Germany which lasted from 15 March to 14 August 1442. It has always been uncertain when he built the new library for Austin Friars, London ¹⁹⁴). He

¹⁹³) He received 3s a day « for the maintenance of himself, his fellow, his men and servants within the king's household, and for the wages of each of four grooms keeping his four horses and one « hakeney » in the household, one and half penny a day and for small necessities 116s a year at the Exchequer... in like manner as brother William Siward, confessor to King Edward (III), brother Robert Madcall, confessor to Henry IV, and brother Stephen Patryngton, confessor to Henry V, were wont to receive »: *Pat. Henry VI 1429/33* p. 196.

¹⁹⁴) « In biblioteca Augustinianorum Londini, quam Lous (Lowe) episcopus

donated a manuscript¹⁹⁵) to this monastery in 1436 but this does not necessarily indicate the date for its beginning. It seems more probable that the regulations which the prior general gave for the London library on 3 February 1456* mark the date for its completion. Lowe enriched it with many books of which only three could be identified so far. Two other manuscripts given by him to the Austins of Oxford are now kept at Cambridge.

On 22 April 1444 he was transferred by Pope Eugene IV to the See of Rochester. His still extant register shows him a strict disciplinarian whenever infractions of moral or canon law occurred. He also showed a firm hand with pastors and curates who refused to make their annual payments; his rebuilding of the episcopal palace probably demanded such firmness.

Throughout his life Lowe made the preservation of true faith his principal concern. His efforts reached their climax in the condemnation of Reginald Pecock, bishop of Chichester¹⁹⁶). The rationalistic tendencies and extreme criticism of this bishop had done much harm and had to be stopped. The case was difficult because bishops do not easily proceed against their equals and Pecock was a highly intelligent man. Lowe proceeded, therefore, with great care. He engaged his former confrere, Master John Bury of Clare, to write a detailed refutation of Pecock's errors and assisted in the composition of this book to such an extent that he might be called co-author. Bury entitled it *Gladius Salomonis*. It contributed essentially to Pecock's condemnation. He recanted on 4 December 1457 before Thomas Bourchier, archbishop of Canterbury, John Kemp, bishop of London, and Lowe. His books were burnt and he was deprived of his see.

Lowe has been criticized for these activities though only praise should have been his due. Medieval men did not know modern tolerance. Believing in an eternal destiny they regarded the loss of true faith worse than death. Hence a heretic was thought a greater cri-

fundamentis construxit et libris ornavit»: Joh. LELANDI, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea* 4 (London 1774) 54. For the manuscripts in question: EMDEN, *Biogr. Reg. Oxf.* II, 1168/9.

¹⁹⁵) Now Ms. E. 21, Trinity Collegè, Dublin.

¹⁹⁶) V. G. GREEN, *Bishop Reginald Pecock* (Cambridge 1945); E. H. EMERSON, «Reginald Pecock, Christian Rationalist», *Speculum* 31 (1956) 235-242; TONER, *St. Augustinus Vitæ Spir. Mag.* II, 504/7.

minimal than a murderer. Lowe was a churchman of his time and did his duty as he was bound to do it.

Political matters interested him as little in Rochester as they had in St. Asaph but his position as member of Parliament and his duties as bishop did not allow a complete separation from public affairs. After the revolt of Cade (1450) he impeached John Paston, servant of Sir John Fastolf, as one who had been involved in the revolt. « So I was arrested in Marshal sea », writes Paston, « and there was in right great duress and fear of mine life and was threatened to have been hanged, drawn and quartered ». He could prove, however, that he had been forced to fight and lived to tell his story in the *Paston Letters*. Ten years later Lowe like most Austins favored the Yorkist cause and joined Richard, earl of Warwick, whose forces had gathered at Rochester. He was sent from Dunstable as an emissary to Henry VI at Northampton, where he had an unsatisfactory interview with the king's delegate, the duke of Buckingham. After the battle of St. Alban's he was a member of a delegation of the citizens of London to ask Edward, duke of York, what his intentions were.

By this time Lowe had passed his eightieth year and the infirmities of old age pressed heavily upon him. In 1465, therefore, he asked King Edward IV for his resignation but died before the pope's answer to the king's letter arrived. He passed away on 3 September 1467 at Halling at about eleven in the morning.

« All night he had labored in prayer and watching. Then rising and sitting in his chair, as it were made new for the occasion, and placed before the chimney of his parlor, in the midst of his chaplains, servants and officers who were praying for and in attendance upon him, he expired as if sleeping and without a groan yielded upon his spirit most purely to his Creator, whose soul the same God may receive in his glory. Amen »¹⁹⁷).

He was buried in the north-east transept of the cathedral. His episcopal register is still preserved at Rochester but has not yet been edited.

William Wells Jr. 1433-1441

Lowe did not relinquish his office of provincial immediately

¹⁹⁷) A. T. PEARMAN, *Rochester* (London 1897) 228.

after he had been appointed to the See of St. Asaph ; he held it even after his consecration on All Saints of the same year (D 1172a). The chapter which elected Master William Wells Jr. must have taken place in December (D 768/9). He had inherited not only the name but also the administrative gifts of his older namesake, since the brethren re-elected him at Hull 1 August 1435*, at Canterbury 22 June 1437 (D 781) and a fourth time on 15 August 1439 (D 189/90, 793). He had been ordained priest on 17 May 1410 while stationed at Oxford, had been declared *baccalaureus formatus* in 1422 and received at the same time the right of continuing the practice of medicine which he had studied for a long time (D 722).

Wells was in the best years of his life when elected provincial. One should expect a great deal of action from a young superior, but his term in office seems to have been handicapped by a greater lack of vocations than at any period in English history. To remedy the situation the prior general suggested that special favors be granted to priors of greater houses who gained five and to priors of lesser houses who gained at least three novices within a period of three years. The favors were to be purely spiritual. They could confess five times (respectively three times) a year, their confessors having the right to absolve from all censures, whose remission the general could grant. For the relief of immediate needs Wells was allowed to grant conventuality more often than any previous provincial. He was allowed to send four men to Rye, twelve to Cambridge and Oxford, and three to any house (D 789). The permission for the two *studia generalia* shows a great drop in attendance and signifies the low prestige of the two universities. Talented students came no longer to England ; they went to Bologn and Padua or to the universities of their own countries of which many were established during this century. The impression of a lowered standard is also given by the regulations of Gerard of Rimini, prior general and theologian of repute, to the *studium* in Cambridge (D 788). They clearly point to the losses suffered by the Cambridge library through carelessness and to the easygoing ways of some of professors. The rules had been suggested by the provincial who added some of his own which the general also approved (D 788). This shows Well's desire to create order. Unhappily, part of Rimini's register is lost, especially the sections on England and thus we know little about Well's regime and that of his successors during the next ten years. One important fact, however, which is recorded in the annals of

Oxford, illumines the darkness and clearly reveals the status of the province. Philip Norreys¹⁹⁸), professor at Oxford, had waged a continuous battle against the mendicants, until the Augustinian Master William Musylwyck declared him a heretic and caused him to be cited by the chancellor of England in 1438. By this citation Musylwyck had broken his oath to respect the laws of the university which alone claimed jurisdiction over its members and consequently Musylwyck was expelled and his convent put under interdict. But times had changed. The Austins no longer bowed meekly to unjustified demands. Their protest found a willing ear of the mighty Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, brother of Henry V and regent of England. He asked the university to lift either the ban or forfeit his patronage. The university complied (D 784) but the attacks of Norreys continued and though all mendicants became arrayed against him, nothing was done on the part of the university to silence him. In the same year in which the university bowed to Humphrey, John Capgrave dedicated to him his commentary on the book Genesis (D 786). His friendship with the duke might have been more important in gaining Humphrey's support than the plea of the provincial.

Robert Godwick 1450

The name of the next known provincial, a Master Robert, has been preserved only in the account books of the Order under the year 1450 (D 856). He is most probably identical with Master Robert Godwick whose tombstone before the sanctuary of Clare's old parish church calls him « provincial of our Order » (D 820). By a strange quirk of history his family name is omitted in the Roman document while the year of his death is completely erased from the tombstone thus making a positive identification impossible. His relatives must have held Master Robert in high respect otherwise they would not have transferred his grave and tombstone to the parish church when the monastic church was suppressed.

During the year 1450 the dislike against the friars reached such heights that a certain John Norreys did bodily harm to Thomas English, an Austin of Oxford. The culprit had to do public penance imposed by the chancellor of the university.

¹⁹⁸) EMDEN, *Biogr. Reg. Oxf.* II, 1365/6; MARTIN, « Irish August. Ref. Movement » 244n. The two bulls against Phil. Norreys (1440 and 1448) are published in TORELLI, *Sec. Agost.* VI, 713/5, 777.

John Capgrave Jr. 1453-1457

At the chapter of Winchester held 22 July 1453*, the voters chose Master John Capgrave Jr.¹⁹⁹) as their new provincial. The reasons for their choice were well founded. Capgrave's prolific literary output had gained him renown and influence. He was guided by sound religious principles and could take a firm stand despite a natural inclination towards mildness. Most of all he led a saintly life and had been eminently successful as prior of Lynn in attracting so many vocations that in August 1446 his house numbered 30 priests and 16 young students not counting deacons, subdeacons and clerics in minor orders²⁰⁰). Since Lynn's membership²⁰¹) excels that of other houses its flourishing state must have been due to Capgrave's attractive personality. The election to the provincialate came somewhat late ; for Capgrave had just passed his sixtieth year having been born at Lynn on 21 April 1393. About the same year an Austin friar of the same name and apparently a relative obtained the *magisterium* at Oxford. We may surmise that this relative directed his younger namesake to the Austins. According to the prescripts of the province he had to enter at Lynn where he probably made all studies preparatory for the priesthood which he received in 1417. Known as being very studious — « he clung to his books like a limpet to his rock » — he was sent to the *studium concursorium* in London where he stayed until 1422 teaching and studying. During that time he was made *cursor* and at the end of five years he was declared *lector formatus* (1427) and sent to the university of Cambridge with the right to « oppose » within four years. He should have obtained the *magisterium* about 1433.

His coming to Cambridge signifies the beginning of an intense literary activity which continued until he was elected provincial. He wrote commentaries on the Lombard and all books of the Bible in

¹⁹⁹) We rely in our narrative on the latest and best study of Capgrave's life by Alberico de Meijer, OESA in AUG. 1955 and 1957 and separate.

²⁰⁰) Though a school at Lynn is not mentioned in the Registers of the priors general it existed. Capgrave omits the exact number of clerics because some came from other houses of the limit and were not actual members of his convent.

²⁰¹) Data on membership are very rare in the 15th century. In 1448 a gift was made for 20 priests in York, but the total number of members is not given (*Test. Ebor.* II, 129). In 1463 the names of 15 priests are listed for Clare (D 868). In 1504 we count 18 members in Hull (D 275) and at least 24 for York (D 46).

addition to several theological treatises. His literary importance, however, does not seem to rest with these works, though none of the few still extant has yet been critically evaluated. It lies in his historical studies and the advocacy of the mother tongue, in the form of the Suffolk dialect. His long rhymed lives of the saints are clearly dated, an important fact for students of the English language, and his *Chronicle of England* is the first history written in the mother tongue. His English works seem to have been composed in Lynn, where he appears as prior in 1446, when King Henry VI stayed at Austin Friars. Someone used the occasion to make false accusations against the Austins but Capgrave firmly stood his ground before the angry king basing his defense on a solid knowledge of the documents of the friary. Impressed by his fearlessness and the flourishing status of his house the pacified king took them under the special protection of the royal family.

During the great jubilee of 1450 Capgrave visited Rome. His expenses were paid by the mighty Sir Thomas Tudenham. It would be interesting to know whether he met the great Augustinian saint, Rita of Cascia, who also pilgrimaged to Rome in that year. While being in the Holy City Capgrave took seriously ill but was carefully nursed back to health by his life-long friend and Maecenas, William Grey, later bishop of Ely (1454-1478). The exact notes he had taken in Rome enabled him to write a guide to the city called *Ye solace of Pilgrims* which was rediscovered in 1907. It was the last but also the best guide written by an Englishman during medieval times. The accuracy of his transcript of ancient inscriptions qualify him as a trustworthy historian. « His keenness of observation is remarkable, and has this one great superiority to most medieval writers : viz., that he is most careful not to put down a thing unless he has either seen it himself, or has, in his opinion, the best of authority for it » ²⁰²⁾. His thirst for knowledge made him study wherever he went. In the great Augustinian house of Paris he found Jordan's *Collectanea* from the works of St. Augustine and made it the basis for his *Life of St. Augustine* ²⁰³⁾. There he also found Jordan's *Vitas fra-*

²⁰²⁾ *Ye Solace of Pilgrims* p. VIII.

²⁰³⁾ R. ARBESMANN, « Jordanus de Saxony's Vita Sancti Augustini, the Source for John Capgrave's Life of St. Augustine », *Traditio* I (1943) 343/353 and Geo. SANDERLIN, « John Capgrave speaks up for the Hermits », *Speculum* 18 (1943) 358/61. It is a rare occurrence that scholars of repute report on a literary find at the same time. It should be noted, however, that Arbesmann had noted Capgrave's

trum and made use of it for his biography of Henry Friemar in his *Famous Henries*. In this search for manuscripts Capgrave reveals another humanist trend.

Literary men of great repute always attract a large audience. When such men combine the creative word with a well-developed inclination to kindness and the power of sanctity the attraction is doubly strong. Capgrave united all these qualities in his person. He was also humble and gracious. He did not glory in the brilliance of sharp rejoinder at public debates he rather promoted good will among men. For a long time a bitter dispute had raged between the Hermits and Canons of St. Augustine as to their descent from the great doctor of Hippo. In the year in which Capgrave started his graduate work at Cambridge a new tract on the subject contemptuous in tone and insulting in contents had appeared. It might have been one of the reasons why Capgrave occupied himself with the question. He chose it for his university sermon and followed it with the *Concordia* or *De Augustino et suis Sequacibus*, added a rhymed life of his spiritual father which is still extant and a book on famous Augustinians which unhappily is lost. In all these works Capgrave did not answer in kind. He wrote his *Concordia* « to reforme charite » between the Hermits and Canons dedicating it to John Watford, abbot of the Augustinian Canons in Northampton. He composed the Life of St. Gilbert of Sempringham in deference to Nicholas Reysby, master general of the Gilbertines who also followed the Rule of St. Augustine. His admiration for this Order, its origin and mode of life could scarcely be expressed in warmer words.

His literary work gained him and his province some excellent friends. In addition to Bishop Grey and Sir Tudenham he found much favor with Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, Thomas Kemp, bishop of London and later cardinal, and of course his own confrère John Lowe, bishop of St. Asaph and Rochester. He dedicated books to all of them and they in turn, no doubt, paid for the high expense of their publication. Capgrave's example stimulated other gifted men of his province to imitate their « father ». Ralph Marham wrote his *Manipulus Chronicorum*, in Latin, John Bury on the other hand used the mother tongue frequently and Osbern Bokenham exclusively.

source in his edition of *Vitas fratrum* p. xxv note 3. This work had appeared before either article.

Capgrave's conscious cultivation of the mother tongue did not only proceed from humanistic tendencies, but also from a deep love of his country, a love which was increased by his contact with the mighty of the land. He deeply felt the humiliation of his people, when he saw Bordeaux, England's last hold on France, taken in 1453 ; when he saw piracy rampant against British merchant vessels and some of his confrères held for ransom. Unafraid he told young King Henry VI :

« Our enemies laugh at us and say : « Take the *ship* off from your precious money, and stamp *sheep* on it, showing thereby your own cowardice » — we, since we used to be the conquerors of all nations, are now being conquered by all nations » ²⁰⁴).

This keen resentment over the loss of English prestige might also be the reason why he does not dedicate a single line to the heroic deeds of Jeanne d'Arc in his *Henries*.

Capgrave was re-elected at Lynn on 6 August 1455. Only a few facts are known of both his terms in office. As he had zealously protected his friary against calumnations so he resisted any infringement upon the rights of his province. When a few months after his election the sanctuary rights of Clare were violated by the local sheriff he found quick and strong support from John Kemp, bishop of London (D 827). A difference with the university of Oxford was apparently composed before it fully erupted into the open (D 836). He also helped the impoverished house of Oxford by granting the privileges of founder to Sir Edmund Rede of Boarstall, a descendant of Sir Haudlow of Boarstall. Salter, the well known historian of Oxford, thought the granting of this right historically unsound as it was given only for the material benefit of the friary and the aggrandizement of Rede. Salter's statement was not based on the knowledge of facts. Capgrave was better versed in the history of his province than we are to-day and being a saintly man he would not lie for the sake of some material profit. Haudlow was really the founder or at least the chief benefactor of Oxford. He was a knight in Kent and having killed a man in self-defense in 1269 (D 291n), he apparently atoned for his deed by endowing the friary in which the king took a great interest. Indeed, his gift may have been the fine imposed by the king. The recognition of Rede was, therefore, justi-

²⁰⁴) *History of the Henries*, 156.

fied. It was incidental that he gained in stature and the house in Oxford some regular income from the advowson of the parish in Werplesgrave which Rede donated (D 866).

While Capgrave's literary activity seems to have ceased during the busy years of the provincialate he promoted the love of books throughout his jurisdiction. He gave new regulations for the library in London which were approved by the general in 1456 (D 839). This date probably signifies the completion of this fine library built and enriched by Bishop Lowe. Towards the end of his second term in office another new library was established in Norwich through the generosity of Margaret Wetherby, widow of the former mayor of the city (D 849).

Nothing quickened monastic life in England during this period when Ireland passed through the regeneration of reform and the excitement of new foundations. It is not known to what extent Capgrave favored this movement. Most probably he had little control over it because the observant houses were located on the west coast of Ireland where English law did not prevail and where travel was both difficult and dangerous ; furthermore, any interference in the movement was forbidden by the general. Within the English province Capgrave is not known to have done anything against the ever growing tendency for personal independence, though his dislike is evident from his attitude towards honorary papal chaplains (D 627). For the same reason he probably disliked the constant recruiting of his best men for the services of noble families. John Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, employed the Austins Robert Newark and Clement Wells. John Crowche served as chaplain to Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, and John Hettingham, alias Byart, of Clare held the same position in the household of John Vere, earl of Oxford. John South was assigned to Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, and John Tyson to Queen Margaret of England (D 822). Some of these men served as secretaries to these lords or as educators of their children, others were needed as military chaplains and went with the troops overseas or to the northern parts of England. Such services were as necessary then as they are to-day but they have not always been beneficial to individuals. Many of these chaplains needed benefices to maintain « a proper standard of living », consequently the vows of poverty and obedience suffered. Nicholas V, therefore, renewed in 1451 the constitution of Martin V which for-

bade the acceptance of such positions to members of the Order ²⁰⁵) but dispensation was easily obtained in Rome when the great lords signed the requests.

The great lack of vocations which worried Capgrave's predecessors seems to have abated ²⁰⁶) ; his main trouble seems to have been the lack of means to provide for a real increase. He tried to solve the problem by promising the privileges of lector to those who provided for three professed clerics until their ordination to the priesthood.

It is doubtful that Capgrave was elected a third time, because the *Martiniana* had been put into effect for the Augustinians by Eugene IV in 1453 (D 825) and was since then strictly enforced. After his retirement he wrote a Commentary on the Apocalypse and his *Chronicle of England*. He died on 12 August 1464 at the age of 71 and was buried in his beloved Lynn.

John Bury (Berl) 1459-1465 ; 1475-1485

The year 1459 in which John Bury was elected prior provincial was crowded with events and excitement. The saintly Alexander of Sasso Ferrato was appointed general and a year later created cardinal. William of Worcestre started his famous journey leaving us the description of various Augustinian houses ²⁰⁷). Bishop Pecock recanted and his books were burnt. Above all, the War of Roses erupted. The Austins being for the most part Yorkists must have taken a keen delight in the exploits of one of their confrères who single-handed inflicted a serious setback to the cause of the Lancastrians.

²⁰⁵) « *Sollicitudo pastoralis officii* » of 17 May 1451 (EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 262).

²⁰⁶) Any special efforts of Capgrave to increase vocations should appear in the episcopal ordination lists about a decade or so later. Only the Lincoln registers favor Capgrave. They give 92 ordinations for the years 1473/89 which percentage-wise triples the figure of 100 ordinations between 1401-1451. On the other hand, Hereford and Canterbury, show a decrease of 50 %. A definite answer could be given if the lists of all bishoprics in which *studia concursoria* were located were available, i. e. York, Lincoln, London and Norwich (or Lynn). Absolute certainty will never be achieved because the registers of Norwich are almost void of ordination lists, those of Lincoln have no entries for more than 50 years and other extant registres have similar *lacunae*.

²⁰⁷) *Itinerarium Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre*, ed. Jac. Nasmith Cantabrigiae 1778. The authors give the measurements of the houses in Bristol (233, D 218), Oxford (297), Norwich (307) and Gorleston (375, D 853).

Richard Neville, one of York's lieutenants, had avoided a complete rout of his forces at Blore Heath when darkness broke off the battle. During the night he could withdraw unobserved because an Austin friar stayed behind and fired canons all night making the Lancastrians believe that the Yorkists were still encamped. One can imagine their chagrin when in the morning they found only the Austin friar who said « that for fear he had abode in that park all night » (D 855). The momentary advantage was erased, when the Yorkists were defeated at Ludlow. The city was sacked, but it is not known how much its Austin friary suffered.

John Bury was a product of these turbulent times. Unrest, warfare and strife mark his career. Born probably in the village of Bury or Beri ²⁰⁸) in Sussex he entered the Austin friary in Clare which then experienced one of its prosperous periods. He was ordained subdeacon 18 December 1417 and his ordination to the priesthood must have followed a year or two later. Without permission of his superiors he left the province in 1419 for a visit of Italy, but the kind superior general, Augustine Favaroni, absolved him from the punishment incurred by this serious breach of discipline and sent him first to the *studium* of Siena then to those of Perugia and Rimini. On 12 April 1420* the prior general permitted Bury and his confrère, John Morton, to stay one year with Lord William Bardolf. It must have been during his stay in France as chaplain to this war lord that he was taken prisoner and regained his freedom only by the payment of a large sum of borrowed money. On 1 March 1423* he was sent as a student to Oxford for three years but the creditors insisted on payment and Bury was allowed in 1424 to go to Picardy to serve some lord in order to repay the loan. The time of his return and of his advancement to the *magisterium* is unknown.

A man with Bury's background seldom gets elected provincial. He seems to have been carried into the office by a wave of enthusiasm over his *Gladius Salomonis* which had essentially contributed to Bishop Pecock's downfall in April 1459. On August 5 of the same year he was elected provincial at the chapter held in Orford.

The exacting new prior general, Alexander Oliva of Sassoferato, seems to have forgotten about the special dispensations granted to England and ordered a chapter to be held at Penrith on 2 August 1460 (D 857) and another to take place in 1451 (D 861). Whether it

²⁰⁸) EMDEN, *Biogr. Reg.* Oxford I, 323.

was the confusion created by these changes or the serious disorders in London we do not know but some special reason brought the prior general, William Becchi, to England. He stayed from 21 April to 1 May, 1463. His principal concern seems to have been the lawfulness of Bury's re-election. It depended on the right of the papal legate, Francis Coppini, to dispense from the provisions of the *Martiniana* which had reserved any dispensation to Rome. The conduct of Becchi in this difficult question was rather vacillating. First he doubted its legality, then he accepted it and approved Bury, but before departing from Sandwich he changed his opinion again. Trying to do the least possible harm to himself and Bury he declared Bury to be only vicar provincial, a change which made little difference to the actual direction of the province, but upheld the canonical requirements. The uncertainty of the general in this matter seems to have been connected with the fate of Coppini who had been recalled to Rome, condemned for his excommunication of the Lancastrians (who had become victorious) and accused of simony during the crusade. After his condemnation on 2 March 1463 he was deprived of all honors and positions and sent to a monastery where he died shortly after ²⁰⁹). In his other decisions Becchi appears quite forceful. Being very displeased with the poor government of London, he took away its privileges and placed it under the jurisdiction of the provincial. Not a single document ever calls an English house a *conventus generalis*, that is a house exempt from the jurisdiction of the provincial and placed directly under the general. This directive, however, points to London as such a convent. Equally significant is the rule that no one could depose its prior, subprior, sacristan and procurator without the general's permission (D 956).

The other regulations which the general left at the of his visitation (D 871) reveal little of a startling nature. In the main he tried to correct faults which must be corrected time and again. He stressed, for example, the participation in conventual mass and Vespers on weekdays and demanded that financial accounts be given regularly. Deeply revealing for the materialistic attitude which had crept into the Order are two regulations. One demanded the auction of all goods left by a deceased brother ²¹⁰)! The other confirmed a previous

²⁰⁹) PASTOR, *Gesch. d. Päpste* II, 75.

²¹⁰) William Becchi prescribed also for Paris in 1463 « Item quod camere conventus, decedentibus fratribus, vendantur ad utilitatem conventus... » E. YPMA, *Les Statuts pour le couvent de Paris promulgués au XV^e siècle* (Rome 1959) 48.

statute of Bury that each graduate must gain a novice and provide for his sustenance ; refusal would brand him as rebel (D 879, 871). The visitation ended on a sour note when the general had to defend himself against the accusation of extravagance in his journey. He did so most successfully by pointing out that the whole cost for the journey from Ancona to England had amounted to only 15 nobles. The historian cannot pass over this offensive criticism because it reveals an inimical attitude towards all expenses for the common government, an attitude which reflects the spirit of the whole English nation and which becomes more evident during the next decades. There was also grumbling against the special assessment for the new curia general in Rome. Each province had to pay annually two ducats and each provincial a like amount from his provision. This was to be paid in addition to the annual assessment of 24 florins. It constituted a fair share of an obligation binding the whole Order and should have been discharged with ease if all houses had done their share. This was not the case. During his visitation William Becchi threatened the priors of Bristol, Stafford, Stamford, Shrewsbury and Ludlow with excommunication if they would not pay their taxes within two months (D 871).

Money matters must always take second place in any society, most of all in a religious community devoted to poverty. When subjects, however, fail to live up to essential requirements, material problems can become of primary importance. In the moment they take first place and are strictly enforced they seem to be a perversion of all things spiritual, lead to heated arguments and create lasting discontent. This ominous attitude took hold of England and slowly became a festering wound during the following decades. A serious effort to fulfill the prescribed obligations would have been very much easier on mind and heart but it was not made. The situation worsened when faulty bookkeeping in Rome led to accusations of non-payment where payments had been made ; or when economies of the Order insisted on payment though the general himself had cleared the English province. As a result tempers became frayed and the antipathy against the entire « Roman » monetary system, which infected all England, raised also its dangerous head among the English Austins. It was, therefore, important for the general not only to have his representative in England but also to have men appointed as provincials who by personal acquaintance had an understanding of Roman ways and customs. Bury was such as supe-

rior, so were his successors John Halam and Thomas Penketh, but not John Sloley who felt the ire of the prior general as no provincial before him. Each of these men ruled but three years as demanded by the *Martiniana*. Bury was again elected in 1475 and ruled until 1478. During the interval he was appointed president of the chapter held in 1466; he is mentioned as prior of London in 1472 (D 902) and was still alive in 1486 (D 946). He must have been close to 90 years of age. No wonder that he excused himself from attending the general chapter held in Rom in 1476.

John Halam 1463-1466

John Halam had obtained the *magisterium* in 1456 at the university of Naples together with Robert Stocton. Though both had been students at the university of Oxford (D 852), their doctorate in Naples was apparently not considered on a par with a promotion at either Oxford or Cambridge because the prior general, Julian of Salemi, had to state explicitly that they had to be honored like English masters and should enjoy all their privileges (D 839). In the same letter Salemi appointed the two new doctors as vicars for the next provincial chapter. When Halam was again made vicar general for the chapter in Penrith in 1460 (D 851) the voters understood that he was *persona gratissima* in Rome and elected him provincial in 1463 (D 819).

Halam is a town in West Riding, Yorks. Master John was, therefore, one of the few provincials from the north country. He had been ordained priest by the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield on 2 December 1436 and was, therefore, about 50 years old when elected (D 839n). Of his term in office nothing is known beyond the fact that he paid the prescribed assessments regularly (D 886). He was still alive in January 1476 when he was appointed vicar general for the coming provincial chapter (D 913). Despite his pro-Roman attitude he did not attend the general chapter of Pamiers in 1465²¹¹), the first such chapter of which we have all the acts. From 1465 until the suppression in 1538 not a single Englishman appears in these many acts. In order not to deprive England and other distant provinces of their right to vote the generals obtained from Pope Sixtus IV the privilege allowing other masters present at the chapter to

²¹¹) AA VII (1917) 106-120.

substitute for the absentees ²¹²). It was not a satisfactory move, because it did nothing to further the unity within the Order, served as an easy excuse for staying away and laid itself wide open for a rigged election. It was again abolished some time after the Reformation but meanwhile the loss of contact was to bear bitter fruit. True, the generals also contributed to this loosening of bonds by handing more and more of their rights to the provincials ; for example the right of accepting apostates, giving letters of confraternity ²¹³), appointing men to academic degrees and affiliating members with a house not their native convent. Some of these delegations of power were, no doubt, necessitated by the many wars, others by a quicker and more sensible transaction of business but as a whole they weakened the contact of the prior general with his provinces and vice versa. The generals felt this weakness and tried to counteract it by having a permanent Italian vicar in London. He was not allowed to interfere with the business of the provincial but proved an excellent source of information and was a vital factor in collecting the prescribed assessments (D 902). The first resident master was Dominic of Sangimignano whose troubles fill many pages in the registers of the general. We shall speak of them later.

Non-attendance at general chapters was not the only cause of weakening the ties with Rome. Provincials sent their own chapter acts much later than the prescribed six months. Communication had broken down to such an extent that the general had to inquire who the provincials were between 1460-1463 (D 891) ! This separation became more pronounced as the suppression came closer. It reflected a general tendency within the entire English church, but could have only evil consequences. No member can live by itself ; it must be joined to the body and the head.

John Sloley 1466-69 ; 1472-75

Sloley, a town in Norfolk, was the birthplace of Halam's successor, Master John Sloley. Its proximity to Norwich automatically

²¹²) « Quia ut plurimum » of 2 May 1482 (AA VII. 256), renewed by Innocent VIII in 1486 (AA VII p. 342).

²¹³) Halam received the right to grant fifty letters of confraternity « if they profited the Order » (D 879) and received like Penketh unlimited freedom in transferring members from one house to the other (*ibidem*).

affiliated young John with the great Austin friary of this episcopal city which like Clare found many generous patrons during this period. John obtained the doctorate of theology in Cambridge and was supposedly prior of Norwich in 1420 ²¹⁴). His oratorical ability made him famous throughout England and the general expressed his regard by appointing him president for the chapters of 1454 and 1463. In 1466 he was elected provincial (D 888). The War of Roses which ended only in 1485 had impoverished many houses and Sloley may have found it difficult to pay the Roman assessments. When several warnings of the general did not produce results he was deposed and excommunicated. His successor, Thomas Penketh, however, took care of the payments and consequently was delegated to lift the ban (D 945). Sloley's failure did not stop the electors from recalling him to the provincialate at the chapter of Hull on 2 August 1472*. He ruled until 1475 and died two years later on June 4. He must have been over 80 years of age when he found his last resting place among his brethren in Norwich. Bale mentions a few manuscripts which he had composed but not one has survived.

*Thomas Penketh 1469-72 ; 1480-7**

When Master Thomas Penketh ²¹⁵), also called Penker or Penkyer, assumed the reins of government in summer of 1469 (D 891) few of the voters could foresee that he would be the last of the great scholastic masters of the province.

Born in Penketh, Lancashire, he joined like so many noblemen of the neighborhood the Austin friary in Warrington, whence he was sent to Oxford. For some unknown reason he transferred to the university of Cambridge for his inception and became Doctor Cantabrigiensis ²¹⁶) in 1468-9. Though the laws of the university bound him to teach during the following two years (D 893) he was chosen provincial in summer 1469. At the end of his term in office (1473) he went to Rome to get a brief against some apostates and also a dispen-

²¹⁴) BLOMEFIELD, *History of Norfolk* IV, 90/1.

²¹⁵) BEAMONT, *Hist. Warrington Friary* 44/8; EMDEN, *Biogr. Reg. Oxford* III, 1457.

²¹⁶) It is quite evident that the title doctor was given before a candidate had become master. It seems that he was styled doctor when he was admitted to « incept ». When this usage became general is not certain but it explains the difficulty which we could not solve in our life of Jacques Le Grand: AUG VII, 491.

sation from the *Martiniana* ²¹⁷), but without success (D 904). It was probably on his return trip that he received an invitation to teach at Padua, then Christendom's most famous university. A special chair of Scotist philosophy had been erected and he became its first salaried professor ²¹⁸). His contemporaries boasted that he had the works of Scotus so firmly impressed upon his mind that he could have re-written them, had they been lost ²¹⁹). This reputation caused the famous printer Albert Stendahl to approach him for an edition of Scotus' works. Penketh complied and in quick succession brought out Duns' *Quaestiones Quodlibetales* and the *Commentarius in Petrum Lombardum* in four separate volumes. The *Quodlibetales* saw at least four editions by 1481. It had been believed that Penketh was the first editor of Scotus' works but this is not the case; the honor belongs to Wendelin of Speyer OFM, but Penketh used a good manuscript and sound judgment in his corrections. Stendahl's excellent printing made the edition famous ²²⁰).

On 20 May 1477* Penketh received permission to return to England. He returned as a scholar of European reputation and the prior general, William Bechetti, was so conscious of this fact that

²¹⁷) There seems to be a contradiction in the Roman documents. The Register of the General speaks only of the dispensation from the *Martiniana* (D 708) while the econome of the Order charged the English province ten ducats for the revocation of the *Callistina* (D 945 and note 180 *supra*). The entries in both books are correct; they concern two distinct matters. The fee charged by the Papal Curia for recalling the *Callistina* was over 200 ducats and, therefore, each of the 24 provinces was taxed ten ducats by the prior general (AA VII, 260).

²¹⁸) G. BROTTO - G. ZONTA, *La Facoltà Teologica dell'Università di Padova* I (Padova 1922) 179-181 and the passage from James Foresti of Bergamo p. 99n.

²¹⁹) A. Cora, prior general 1475-1486, for example writes: «Trigesimus nonus est Magister Thomas Penket Anglicus: qui non modo Anglicana sed Italica illustravit ginnasia. Hic doctor subtilissimus sic Johannis scoti opera mente habet soluta et trita: ut si perdita essent ea posset facillime reficere: Cui omnes multum Scotiste debent: quoniam ipse eius opera elucidavit: emendavit et in publicum dedit: multos in dialecticis: et in philosophia et theologia edidit tractatus: et quidem subtilissimos». Ambrosius MASSARI DE CORA, *Chronica Sacratissimi Ordinis Fratrum Heremitarum S. Augustini* (Rome 1481) fol. 113v. Penketh is the only Englishman of the 15th century mentioned by Cora. The passage on Penketh was verbally taken over by SCHIPHOWER (*Chronicon* II, 178).

²²⁰) Penketh's edition was a very commendable effort considering the problems involved. His contribution to Scotism has received a fair evaluation in Joannis DUNS SCOTI, *Opera omnia* I (Vatican 1950) *Prolegomena* 80, 128-135. We have not seen this work which was printed in an extremely small edition but rely on the kind communication of Father L. Meier OFM.

he gave him permission of placing his « spiritual sons » wherever he thought they would advance most in their studies (D 917). If Penketh had expected an immediate re-election he was mistaken. A Master William of Cambridge (*Cambrixi*) was chosen but seems to have died before his term was completed. Penketh followed him being elected at the chapter of Oxford in 1480 (D 924). This second term was to prove very stormy because he let himself be involved in the politics of an ambitious king.

Richard, duke of Gloucester, had been appointed protector of the children of King Edward. Instead of protecting their just inheritance he coveted the throne for himself and looked for persons who might help him. Among many others he found Sir Edmund Shaw, mayor of London, his brother John, a well-known doctor of divinity, and the Augustinian Thomas Penketh. Shakespeare gave both divines immortality by including them in his drama *Richard III* (act 3, scene 6) :

« Go, Lovel, with all speed to Doctor Shaw
Go thou to friar Penker — bid them both
Meet me within the hour at Baynard Castle ».

Penketh participation, however, was not as immediate as Shakespeare would make us believe. The famous Scotist preached his sermon in favor of Richard III many months after the Coronation, viz. in St. Mary's Hospital on Easter Sunday. He could not finish the sermon because of a throat ailment. Years later, when the righteousness of Henry VII's cause was « proved » by the continuance of his Tudor dynasty historians could not find words of condemnation strong enough against Richard III and his adherents. To-day such sentiment is under attack ; even a society has been formed in defence of Richard III ²²¹). Bale who loved to chastise his former brethren would like to convince us that the sermon turned all people against Penketh and through him against the Austins, when he writes : « Under him fell the Austins as under Mylverton the Carmelites ». It is time to stop believing Bale's statements. Facts speak a different language. Penketh lost neither the respect of the people nor of his brethren, because he had preached for a king

²²¹) *The New York Times* 22 August 1960. Th. B. COSTAIN, *The Last of the Plantagenets* (New York 1962) 371 calls the story of the murder of the two princes pure propaganda without any basis in fact.

actually in power. His brethren apparently did not know anything of the foul murder of Edward's children in 1484 (if murder it was) and re-elected him a third time in 1485. A year later the general invited him to dispute on indulgences at the coming general chapter of Siena, but there is no record that he attended. He died on 20 May 1487 before the completion of his third term and was buried in Austin Friars, London.

Penketh was not the only Austin whom Richard III tried to win for his side. He made York's very capable prior, William Bewick, surveyor of all his works within that friary. We are not certain whether the king started to build some personal living quarters within the monastery or on its ground (D 940). He also presented Richard Bleuet, prior of London, to the parish of Pilham (D 937), the only time an English king gave the advowson of a parish to a member of the Order. This prior was most probably related to Walter Bleuet, gentleman of London, who was decapitated for taking part in the revolt of Perkin Warbeck (D 978). An effort to gain the Austins to his side may have been the reason for Richard's gift of five marks annually to their house in Tickhill. Penketh himself was granted 10 M annually (D 910). The Italian Mancini who wrote a contemporary defence of Richard's usurpation is also believed to have been an Austin ²²²).

Rome did not hold the partisanship of Penketh against him, neither did King Henry VII show any signs of dislike for the Austins. He had received holy communion in their church of Atherstone before the battle of Bosworth which gave him the crown ²²³). He stayed with Queen Elizabeth and many great lords at their house in Lynn in 1498 (D 975) and most of all he made the French Augustinian Bernard André tutor of Prince Edward. As long as we know André he was blind; his appointment is, therefore, difficult to understand though he was a masterful Latinist. He became the official historiographer of Henry VII as well as his poët laureate and continued in this position under Henry VIII.

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(To be continued).

²²²) *The Usurpation of Richard III* (Oxford 1936), ed. C. A. ARMSTRONG.

²²³) J. LISLE, *Warwickshire* (London 1936) 191. The author adds: « The king does not, towever, appear to have considered that this in any way contributed to his victory, for he made no special gifts or dispensations to the convent after he had ascended the throne ».