

A History of the English Austin Friars

(continuation) **)

Chapter 2

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE *)

1. *Saintly Men*

The rapid extension of Augustinian life during its first century on English soil speaks impressively of the high esteem in which its first members were held. Pope Clement VI voiced this esteem eloquently when in 1343* he wrote to the Baron of Stafford :

« This Order, conspicuous throughout the world, strengthened by the fecundity of virtues, the grace of excelling merits and the doctrine of an exemplary life, has since the beginning of its [re-] construction brought rich, sound fruit to the universal church ».

Since the Austins were re-organized in 1256 not a year has passed in which they did not see a saint in their midst ³⁶⁰). The English Province contributed its share of holy men, though only one, Fr. John Stone, has reached the honor of the altars. He forms the end of a line made bright in its very beginning by the Venerable

***) *Augustiniana* 8 (1958), 22-47, 465-496; 11 (1961), 533-563; 12 (1962), 93-122, 391-442.

*) Due to the one-sidedness of the available sources it is an almost impossible task to give a satisfactory outline of the moral and religious status of the English Province during medieval times. It must not be overlooked that good conditions in a monastery are taken for granted and that only the reprehensible deeds are recorded. An individual act is not indicative for the status of the whole community, only an accumulation of deeds is, be they good or bad.

³⁶⁰) « 700 Jahre Heiliger Orden » by F. LANG in *Cor Unum* 1 (1936) 18-22.

William of Sengham. If we may trust tradition he was the first Englishman to join the Order, was sent to Italy for his studies and then returned to his native land to propagate the Order with singular success. An Augustinian poet sang of him :

« Anglia me genuit, formavit Roma, recepit
Anglia, quo caperet, quae mihi Roma dedit » ³⁶¹).

Sengham's most valuable associate was John of England who is described as a man of great holiness in the first list of Augustinian saints (D 93). We identified him with John, the first known provincial who induced Henry III to give his wholehearted support to the foundation of Oxford ³⁶²). Men like these two drew that model of perfection Master William Lincoln into the Order, while he in turn inspired souls like William Monklane and William and Flete to join.

William of Lincoln.

When William Flete pleaded with his English brethren to return to a more perfect practice of the common life, he set before them as an ideal the Master William of Lincoln. « Be perfect in this virtue as he was ! » ³⁶³). The admonition would have been useless, if the name of Master Lincoln had not been held in highest esteem throughout the English Province ; an esteem so great that an appeal to him stopped all objections. Furthermore when the praise comes from William Flete who himself strove valiantly for holiness, then Master William of Lincoln must have been a saint.

Beyond the remark of Flete nothing was known about this great man until a few years ago. Now we know that he was ordained on 22 December 1292 (D 136a) but where he obtained his *magisterium* has not yet been found. By 1316 he was master and had reached

³⁶¹) HERRERA, *Alph. Aug.* I, 278 speaks of a poeta modernus Augustinianus as author of these verses, but the author could not yet be located. We would welcome any information. — Sengham was a hamlet belonging to Tattersale. (BLOOMFIELD, *Hist. of Norfolk* 7.195).

³⁶²) On John's false identification with John Wilton, the Franciscan scholastic master, see the chapter on Authors.

³⁶³) « Nitamini vos ad omnes fratres nostri Ordinis in Anglia vivere secundum regulam B. Augustini, omnia habendo in communi ac alium modum perfectum vivendi tenere. Sitis vos perfecti sicut magister vester celestis perfectus est [Math. 5. 48], et saltem sicut magister Willelmus de Lincolnia hac parte perfectus fuit » : AA 18, 314.

such fame that Richard Kellawe, bishop of Durham, commended him highly to his people. « God has given him », writes the bishop, « virtue and the gift of prudence in so great a measure that God's people can only benefit from his sermons ». In order to increase his audience he granted an indulgence of forty days to all listeners (D 186). Only one more item is now known of his life. As proctor of Prior Provincial Richard Wetwang he presented in 1318 to John Dalderby, bishop of Lincoln, sixteen confreres for licence to hear confessions (D 199a). This bishop had been rather reluctant in the past to license a larger number of friars (D 141). It might very well be that Master William being *persona gratissima* to Dalderby was used by the provincial to reach the desired end.

William Monklane.

William of Monklane was of royal blood and the last of his family. His entrance into the Augustinian Order was, therefore, bitterly opposed by his relatives who would have dragged him out by force had the king not personally intervened. The king also determined that the final decision should be left entirely with William.

His highly dramatic profession is singular in Augustinian history. The prior and his confreres stood on one side with only the black habit before them. The noble relatives stood on the other with rich garments. William was brought in and asked to make his decision. He chose the black habit of the Austins. His complete rejection of all worldly goods and high positions won even the hearts of some of his kinsfolk, but the Order thought it wiser to forestall further interference by sending him to Germany for his theological studies. There he came under the tutelage of Jordan of Saxony who records this little drama in his *Vitas Fratrum*, and concludes with the words : « As the youth had begun in the novitiate to devote himself firmly to acts of piety so he continued after profession to make steady progress from good to better things, May God guide his progress » ³⁶⁴).

³⁶⁴) « Item est exemplum in quodam iuvene fratre nostro, nobili quidem genere, quia de prosapia comitum Angliae, sed animi virtute nobiliore. Hic divino afflatus spiritu pompis saeculi renuntians Ordinem Eremitarum sancti Augustini est ingressus; quem amici eius secundum saeculum, sed inimici secundum Deum, qui valde de hoc dolebant, retrahere nitebantur ad saeculum pollicentes ei magnos honores, divitias et potentiam in regno. Sed iuvenis in Dei amore fixus haec omnia vilipendebat et sic in bonis principiis Religionis permansit inflexibilis per totum annum probationis. Termino igitur professionis adveniente amici fortius

This mysterious passage, the only one dedicated to an Englishman in the original *Vitas Fratrum*, was written about 1354. The text leaves not doubt that the young man was then alive and seemingly not yet ordained. It also reveals a close personal acquaintance with his inner life. Jordan, however, does not mention his name. Herrera was the first historian to conjecture an identity of the youthful saint with the Austin William Monkland mentioned in the testament of Humphrey Bohun. In this testament ³⁶⁵), written in 1361*, Mon-

insistunt mutare molientes iuvenis animum, et nunc blanditiis eum alliciunt, nunc minis et terroribus concutiunt. Rex quippe praeceperat eum non violentandum, sed suo libero arbitrio relinquendum. Sed Christi miles nec blandimentis seducitur nec terroribus concutitur. Demum vero cum nimium sibi infesti essent, ipse intendens vexationem redimere, dixit se deliberare velle et quid Deus sibi daret eligendum, apparere deberet hora profitendi. Laeti efficiuntur satellites diaboli sperantes iuvenem a suo proposito resiliturum. Constituto ergo tempore et hora profitendi confluunt multi proceres et nobiles regni afferentes secum pretiosarum vestium apparatus, quibus idem iuvenis indueretur. Stabant autem consanguinei sui et amici secundum saeculum ad unam partem, et ad aliam partem constitutus fuit Prior cum fratribus suis; positaque erant vestimenta saecularia pretiosa ad partem unam, ad aliam vero iacebat habitus Ordinis. Ipse vero athleta Christi constituitur in medio dimicaturus contra diabolum et pompas eius. Cumque Prior proponeret, ut in talibus moris est, quomodo oporteret eum unum eligere e duobus, vel ire ad amicos et indui vestibus illis pulchris vel manere in Ordine et indui veste despicabili propter Deum, confestim iuvenis spreto consanguineis et amicis mundanis et illorum vestimentorum pompa et gloria hilaris ad cappam accurrit ipsamque brachiis astringens coram Priore se prostravit et professionem suam recipi postulavit. O quantus fletus multorum. Flebant fratres prae amore congratulantes saluti iuvenis et tam eleganti exemplo praestito in hoc facto. Flebant amici saeculares prae dolore. Nonnulli vero flebant ex quadam pia compassione et devotione, eo quod tam nobilis iuvenis tam ardentem et alacriter ad Christi militiam convolaret. Videntes autem amici, quod aliud non restabat, pietate moti ipsum Priori commendabant et fratribus. Ipse vero iuvenis professione facta, sicut in novitiatu coeperat actibus devotionis insistere, sic nunc professus studuit semper de bono in melius proficere. Deus ipsum dirigat ad profectum ».

Codex Papiensis, written in 1400 and Codex Sicilianus, written between 1465-70 added « Et sic in vita et in morte eius multis miraculis claruit ». Jordanus de Saxonia, *Vitas Fratrum* 361-363.

³⁶⁵) The conjecture of Herrera (*Alph. Aug.* I, 282) was based on N. HARPSFIELD, *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica* whose Douai edition of 1622 reads: « ...prospectum est; ut post quatuor annos Guilelmo Monkelaio ex secta Augustiniano-rum, uni ex heredibus Humfredi Bohumii, comitis Herfordiae et Essexiae [word missing]. Qui voluit, ut apud aedes fratrum Augustinianorum, quas aedificaverat Londini, sepeliretur... » Unaware of Herrera's previous hypothesis, A. Gwynn came to the same assumption in his *English Austin Friars*, 108.

By a very careful search Father Benedict Hackett could finally locate the

klane is designated only as his confessor, not as relative. The warmth, however, with which Humphrey recommends him to the prior provincial leaves little doubt that he was a highly esteemed relative. Though the identification is pure conjecture it is acceptable because the two sources do not contradict any known fact. The provinces of Saxony and England, for example, exchanged many students during the fourteenth century and while the *studia generalia ordinis* in Erfurt and Magdeburg did not compare with the universities of England, they were directed by excellent masters, Jordan himself being one of them. Usually only ordained priests were sent to such *studia* but there were exceptions to the rule (e. gr. D 605). Monkland was ordained priest either in Germany or England before 1361 when he appears as confessor of the earl. Apparently he had not attained any academic degrees, otherwise the earl would not have asked the prior provincial to grant William « a fine, honorable chamber » and the privileges of a magister. These would have been given to him without any intercession had he obtained a degree. That William became Humphrey's confessor shortly after his ordination is not extraordinary. Faculties to hear confessions were often given to newly ordained priests especially in this period when the pestilence had caused such a shortage of priests (D 394). The earl, no doubt, chose him despite his youth because he was a relative whose holiness had made a deep impression upon him. The Bohuns' relationship with the royal family originated with the marriage of Elizabeth, daughter of King Edward I, to Humphrey Bohun, Fourth Earl of Hereford. Finally, the opposition of Monkland's relatives can be easily understood because the Bohuns were immensely rich and Humphrey was unmarried. A nephew succeeded him, but died in 1373 without an heir, whereupon all his possessions fell to Henry of Bolingbroke, later King Henry IV. The main facts in *Vitas Fratrum* as applied to William Monkland are, therefore, acceptable but not

original of Humphrey's will in the Register of Simon Islip fol. 178v-180r, Lambeth Palace, London. We had not yet received the photostatic copy when this text went to press. Our own inquiries had been in vain, because the index to Islip's register does not mention the will. — According to Father Hackett, the original leaves no doubt that William's name was Monkland, not Monklane, while Monkelaius seems to be Harpsfield's own rendition of the name.

The Austin chronicles of Roman and Panfilo did not know of Monkland. Roman however, mentioned in his manuscript collection a « Beatus Guilelmus de Oxonia » (HERRERA, *Alph. Aug.* I, 292). This Guilelmus might be Monkland.

the late addition of two Italian manuscripts that he died as a young man in a German monastery and shone by miracles and wonders. The tale of Monklane's heroism must have become widely known. Wherever it was told, it gave testimony « of the Order's attractive power of high ideals and strict observance » (Gwynn).

William Flete ³⁶⁶).

About the time Monklane returned from Germany William Flete left for Italy (1359). Flete was bachelor of divinity and, therefore, was but a step removed from the coveted *magisterium*, when he decided to turn his back on its honor and special privileges and seek instead in the solitude of Lecceto nothing but God. The similarity of spirit in Monklane and Flete proves that there was an active and heroic striving for sanctity in the English Province. Monklane sacrificed everything the world had to offer in honor, power and position for but one purpose : to find perfect union with God. Flete gave up the final and highest achievement of his career and left the fatherland, he loved so dearly, with the firm purpose never to return. His reason was the same as Monklane's : to live for God alone and become united with him. In his letter to the Prior Provincial Thomas Winterton he intimates that he had come to this union : « At mass in the presence of Christ's body I was in a miraculous way compelled to write, I was forced by the Holy Spirit... » ³⁶⁷). Thus only a man can speak who is fully conscious of the presence of the Spirit within him and of the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist and who willingly obeys the Spirit which moves him. Flete was a true mystic ; and, therefore, trod the way of all great mystics. He created an environment where nothing would impede his intercourse with God. Such God-centered men find it extremely difficult to enter the arena of public life. A St. Celestin even surrendered the papal throne to return to his beloved solitude.

Flete had been accompanied by two confreres, John Dington and William Pigot. Whether Dington remained is not known, but Pigot returned the following year (D 454). In order to strengthen his own resolution Flete did not write a single line to anyone in

³⁶⁶) P. 69-72 (XI, 537/40) *supra*. Quotation in parenthesis refers to AUG.

³⁶⁷) « ...modo mirabiliter tractus sum ad scribendum etiam in missa in presentia Corporis Christi compulsus et coactus a Spiritu Sancto ad scribendum » : AA XVIII, 321.

England until the crisis of the Great Schism compelled him to break the silence of 21 years. In 1380 he wrote three letters to his English brethren which in their allusions to existing conditions and by their recall to the ideal Augustinian monachism form a most interesting document in the ascetical history of the Order. To the hallowed principles of St. Augustin's Rule to love God and the neighbor Flete adds his own ideal of solitude. Their very title Hermits of St. Augustine should make the Austins surpass all Orders in withdrawal from the world. Flete does not ask the strict eremitical ideal he had chosen but pleads for a spirit of retirement which keeps Austins at home where alone inner peace can be retained.

Pax est in cella
Foris autem nonnisi bella ³⁶⁸).

To remain at home is essential for the Divine Office. Unhappily at times more brethren were found in the marketplace than in the choir :

Aliquando plures sunt in foro quam in loco,
Pauci in choro ³⁶⁹).

He recalls that Prior General Bonaventura Badoer as master in Padua arranged with the lord of the territory that the brethren could leave the monastery but once a week ³⁷⁰). One cause for many and long journeys was the prescribed attendance at chapters. Flete thought it sufficient for the needs of the Order if General Chapters were held every six and Provincial Chapters every three years thus anticipating by several centuries the present practice ³⁷¹).

Flete's choice of strictest eremitical life for his own person seems to contradict the papal mandate of 1256 to enter the active life of the cities but the church in general and the Orders in particular needed different ideals in the fourteenth century. Both needed extraordinary examples of self-denial if they were to be recalled to the interior life. Flete gave such an example and in this lay much of his greatness.

The erection of a cell for an anchorite beside the Austin friary

³⁶⁸) AA XVIII, 311.

³⁶⁹) AA XVIII, 316.

³⁷⁰) AA XVIII, 319.

³⁷¹) AA XVIII, 311.

in Droitwich in 1388* was like the answer to Flete's message. Henry of Stokebrugge, a member of the house, was the first to have himself enclosed. Thomas Beauchamp, who had built the cell, determined that any successor would either have to be an Augustinian or at least wear the habit of the Order and be subject to the direction of the local prior. Similar cells were connected with Thetford and Warrington and in Northampton various legacies were made to « good friar ancre » (D 1005). Richard Barret was the last man to occupy this cell ; he signed himself as anchorite at the suppression of the house (D 1132). In the same year in which an anchorite's cell was established at Droitwich Fr. John Wadding of Cambridge received permission to live as a contemplative ³⁷²⁾, while three years earlier Walter Birington had been allowed to relinquish his priorship of Lynn in order to enjoy « the peace of devout contemplation » (D 574). The same desire made Lector Richard Lesyngham ask in 1424 for papal permission to seek an oratory and live there as an anchorite (D 731). It should not have been necessary to seek far and wide for eremitical houses in the English Province, which had been started by hermits and had established before 1256 such lonely houses as Woodhouse and Tickhill. John Waldeby loved to withdraw to Tickhill, « our solitary place » and John White received permission in 1431 to stay for three years in Woodhouse and then in one of the reformed houses of Italy (D 760). These various attempts at solitary life signify, no doubt, a very serious desire for closer union with God and, therefore, a striving for real sanctity. While they seem to touch only individuals they could not but leave their mark upon the community with which such men were connected. Only one English Austin of the active life has been regarded as a saint : John Capgrave. His constant pre-occupation with the lives of saints filled him with their spirit to such an extent that King Henry VII desired his canonization.

Solitary as Flete's life at Lecceto might have been, he had clear knowledge of some ominous practices creeping into English public and religious life, for his letters ^{372a)} inveigh against the interference of public authorities in ecclesiastical matters, and urge each master to preach unceasingly against this usurpation of rights, a crime which was calling God's anger upon their country. He accuses the chan-

³⁷²⁾ Dd, 3, fol. 64v.

^{372a)} AA XVIII, 315/7.

cellor of stopping religious superiors from correcting their subjects and the king of interfering in canonical elections. He must also have been fully aware of the discord among his English confreres which occupied the priors general for several decades and which led to the divided election of 1419*. Therefore his repeated, strong plea to have one mind and one heart in God and let a supreme and inviolable concord unite all, was not only a pious paraphrasing of the Rule, but of vital necessity and highest actuality.

2. Religious Observances

The vow of Poverty or the Common Life ³⁷³).

The strongest pleading of Flete is reserved for the perfect common life. It was well timed and very much needed. A spirit of selfish individualism was at work to pervert monastic ideals. It showed its face in the open sale of papal chaplaincies for the sum of ten to twenty shillings by the Carmelite master, Walter Dys. They granted a multitude of privileges and exceptions from the Rule which were to plague all Orders for many decades. These chaplaincies were eagerly sought by religious who wanted to be rid of the irksome discipline and jurisdiction of their Orders. For the years 1387-1415 the names of twenty eight papal chaplains have been found among the English Austins ³⁷⁴). The number was large enough to create considerable disorder ³⁷⁵). The superiors fought back vigorously and both pope and king tried to lay a restraining hand on these freedom-loving friars (D 627). Unfortunately the reasons given for their reaction considered only the material side of the matter not the obligation of religious vows and virtues. They stated that the « fratres bullati » — as these chaplains were called — could not enjoy their privileges like secular chaplains (though this very thing had been promised) « because they were provided from the alms of the houses as other friars who were not cha-

³⁷³) P. 35-38 (VIII, 467-470) *supra*.

³⁷⁴) D 655 (18 names), D 656 (2 names), D 698 (8 names), 840 (1 name).

³⁷⁵) The Prior General Bartholomew of Venice wrote in 1391 to the provincial of the Roman Province that some of the men who had been allowed to become chaplains of princes and prelates had the effrontery to carry arms, go to public taverns, where they drank and gambled, and in general were leading a rather dissolute life (AA VI, 13).

plains » ³⁷⁶). The titleholders accordingly bent every effort to become self-providers by obtaining benefices. The unfortunate part was that while the chaplaincies disappeared, the striving for benefices « ad commendam » remained. It was to prove one of the most insidious destroyers of common life and grew in propensity from decade to decade ³⁷⁷). It made the beneficiary independent of his superior, deepened the greed for possessions from which the vow of poverty was to free the religious, created inequality and with it dissatisfaction plus a host of other evils. The Order forbade the acceptance of benefices ³⁷⁸) but could do nothing against Roman dispensations. These two evils — chaplaincies and benefices — could never have found so many followers if the so-called *peculium*, the right to personal possessions, had not been a generally accepted practice. Some kind of pocket money will ever be necessary. Even the very strict Prior General Gregory of Rimini permitted each friar to keep two florins for daily needs ³⁷⁹). It is the unlimited accumulation of money for uncontrolled personal use which created the havoc in community life and signified the end of the Augustinian ideal « to have all things in common ». « Call nothing your own », wrote Flete. « We are allowed to use temporal things like books and clothes because they are necessary. We should, however, not take delight in them, but only in Christ Crucified ».

In England we do not know of the great abuses of community property which had to be corrected in other provinces but the *vita communis perfecta* went out of practice either before Flete's letters were written or shortly after. This is especially noticeable in the endeavor to leave the narrow cells in the common dormitory ³⁸⁰)

³⁷⁶) *Cal. Papal Reg.* IV, 444 [1393] and 508 [1395]. The first was given to the Dominicans and the second to the Franciscans.

³⁷⁷) P. 115 (XII, 112) *supra*. For permissions to receive benefits with or without cure of souls vide D 782, 791, 805 [8 names], 816, 822, 843, 869, 934 [5 names].

³⁷⁸) In 1388 the General Chapter of Imola decreed that such churches had to be assigned to the Order by the Holy See within a year or be given up. Anyone who dared to continue to live outside the monastery while taking care of a benefice, would be regarded as an apostate and incur the punishment for such (AA V, 79). This definition was confirmed in 1391 at Würzburg (AA V, 103) and in 1394 at Rimini (AA V, 129) and thus made a law. It was again repeated 1465 at Pamiers (AA VII, 107). *Vide supra*, p. 115 (XII, 112).

³⁷⁹) « ... ita quod nullo casu ultra valorem duorum florenorum pro suis necessitatibus et expensis quis possit aliquam pecuniam retinere »: AA IV, 374.

³⁸⁰) *Vide note 298 supra; Constit. Ratispon., Add. fol. 41v.*

and to have large, convenient chambers still within the enclosure of the monastery but outside the dormitory. In itself this does not constitute a breach of poverty, since to-day most religious, even novices have sufficient rooms of their own. The breach lay in the fact that the room had to be bought or built at one's own expense and was then regarded as private property. The « owner » could resell it when he moved to another house. After his death it had to be sold to the highest bidder for the benefit of the monastery, unless other arrangements had been made ^{380a}). With the right of a private room the priors general often granted permission to take meals in them alone or with others, a practice which Flete derided as making a public tavern of one's cell ³⁸¹). Fr. Simon Strateley has the dubious distinction of being the first known English Austin to build his own private chamber in 1385*. Within a few decades such grants by the general formed a steady stream ; the exception had become the rule. By 1438* it had become so common that the general granted to the provincial considerable leeway in granting these permissions, a « grace » which had been reserved to him alone because it was an exception to the Constitutions. Once the feeling for the true common life was lost new members followed the practice in use and since it was done with permission of the highest superiors it was not regarded as sinful. The evil of room ownership disappeared when religious were no longer affiliated to a house but to the province and could be easily transferred.

The accumulation of private money must have been considerable when an unknown lay (?) brother could build the whole library of Gorleston (D 979) or a Fr. John Bachelor erect and furnish a chapel in Clare (D 462). While for these two acts a perfectly legitimate reason might be found, there can no excuse be given for a condition which permitted Magister John Beston to loan in 1382* his convent of Lynn fifty marks for needed repairs.

The more the common life deteriorated the less material resources were available for common needs. Buildings could not be repaired unless a rich friend paid for them. The frequently stated disrepair of monastic buildings at the time of dissolution was the result of this breakdown, not just an exaggeration of the royal commissaries. The provincials found it difficult to provide for candidates of the Order and had to take recourse to taxation to pay for

^{380a}) P. 118 *supra*; D 734.

³⁸¹) AA XVIII, 315; D 591, 716, 730, 764 *etc.*

the long years of study. The number of candidates decreased because with the loss of its ideals the Orders lost their appeal. The antagonists of religious life did not fail to capitalize on this weakness. Fortunately their attacks also protected English monasticism from the excesses of other countries where open enmity was less blatant.

The Austins were not the only religious who suffered the loss of the perfect common life which is the very basis of all monasticism. Its loss and evil consequences had spread to all Orders in all countries. In order to check this degradation it would have been necessary to follow the advice of Flete's final sentence : « God demands that England make a complete turn towards him ». But this turn was not made, Reform did not come to England. Had it come it would not have saved the Orders from destruction but the fifteenth century would not have been so stagnant and the end in the sixteenth century might have been less inglorious.

Reform came to the Irish Austins³⁸²) and exactly in the form which Flete had desired : in solitude. It started in the West of Ireland where English influence was weak. The movement coincided with the reform of the Dominicans and Franciscans and proceeded from the same sources. It did not proceed exclusively from religious ideals but had some strong roots in the simultaneous resurgence of Gaelic nationalism and the ingrained desire of the Irish to be free of English control. The way to achieve this goal in the religious domain was to join the Observance which rendered houses independent from conventual provincials and placed them directly under the prior general. The first foundation was in Bennada, County Sligo, in 1423*. The O'Haras donated the land and a friar Charles, probably a member of their family, became the first prior. The house was situated in a barren and deserted place and extremely poor. From here the reform continued to spread and was still alive in 1519 when Drogheda joined. One of the most effective measures for reform lay in the appointment of « rectors of the Observance » as presidents of the Irish chapters. By this move the generals not only stopped conventual houses from interference, but also raised their own standards, since these rectors were not so much guided

³⁸²) Note 132 and p. 78 (XI, 546) *supra*. MARTIN osa, « The Irish Friars and the Observant Movement in the Fifteenth Century », *Proceedings of the Irish Catholic Historical Committee* 1960 (Dublin 1961), pp. 10-16.

by bad customs as by the true way of the constitutions. After 1512 the vice provincials of Ireland were taken only from the Observance. This completed the independence from the English Province except for a token payment. Independence, however, did not mean unity among the Irish brethren. Callan, the only house in the South-East to accept the Reform, did not join the other Irish observant houses but affiliated itself with the Lombardic Congregation, the mightiest reform group within the Order.

The Vow of Chastity.

Transgressions against the vow of chastity are so rare that we must conclude on a high standard of morality. The first known transgressor was Fr. Walter Baygeney of Stamford³⁸³). Since he showed no sign of sorrow for his sin but remained arrogant and stubborn he was dismissed from the Order. The second case consisted in a charge of adultery against Fr. John Palmer of Lincoln. Since he was a student at Oxford his case was examined by the chancellor of the university who exonerated him (D 603n). More serious were the charges — but they were only charges — against three friars of Canterbury. The Prior General Gabriel della Volta took energetic steps to remedy the situation when the Provincial William Wetherall delayed action (D 1064). It might very well be that Fr. John Stone referred the case to Rome. Accusations of misbehavior had been made against some members of Canterbury in June 1499 before the Quarter Sessions Court of Canterbury, but again we do not know the result of the investigation³⁸⁴). If true, then three cases in one house would definitely signify a breakdown of good morals before the dissolution.

*3. Liturgical Prayer Life*³⁸⁵)

Jordan of Saxony regarded it a singular privilege of the Augustinian Order to have been established by the Catholic Church

³⁸³) D 478 with addition p. 518* and p. 61 (VIII, 493) *supra*.

³⁸⁴) *Canterbury City Records J/B/298*, fol. 97. Kind communication of archivist Wm. Ury. There are three distinct accusations of moral misbehavior with women.

³⁸⁵) The only treatise on Augustinian liturgy and liturgical books was published in AA XV and XVI by the late Prior General Eustasius Esteban. He was,

itself ³⁸⁶). This is certainly true of the reorganization of the Order in 1256. In the years following the Church exercised an extraordinarily strong influence upon its development and organization through the mighty Cardinal Protector Richard Annibaldi († 1276). Beside many other things he also made the liturgical usage of the Papal Curia binding upon the Order. Even before the Great Union of 1256 a like command had been given to the Tuscan hermits and this was re-confirmed by Pope Alexander IV. Almost every Augustinian missal from the earliest manuscripts to the first printed copy ³⁸⁷) bears, therefore, on its title page the notation « secundum consuetudinem curie Romane ». Seemingly the Order had its own *Ordinale Sancti Clementis* ³⁸⁸) which remained in force throughout the Middle Ages, but this was almost a verbatim copy of the ceremonial used by the Roman Curia ³⁸⁹). For this reason the Austins did not and could not develop a liturgy of their own. Their liturgy, however, did not fossilize for it participated in the constant revitalization of the Roman breviary and missal.

The only deviation from Roman usage lay in the celebration of its own feasts. Diocesan or local feasts were inadmissible. The principal feast of the Order, the *depositio Sancti Augustini* on August 28, did not need an introduction, only its rank was raised. It was followed in 1341 by the feast of his conversion on May 5 and in 1343 we hear for the first time of the commemoration of his two translations. The first, on February 28, celebrated the translation of his body from Africa to Sardinia, the second, on October 11,

however, not acquainted with the great publications of Leroquais on liturgical books in French public libraries. — Important is also S. J. VANDIJK and J. HAZELDEN WALKER, *The Origins of the modern Roman Liturgy* (London 1960) which treats principally on the liturgy of the Franciscan Order which like the Austins had to follow the practice of the Papal Curia. See note in Additions.

³⁸⁶) Vfr. 67.

³⁸⁷) The oldest extant MS missal of the Order was written in 1314 by Fr. Henry Bonnkirch; it came with other books of the Palatina into the Vatican Library where it is to-day Ms. Palat. 500 (AA. XVI, 80). The first Augustinian missal was printed by the Austin press of Nuremberg in 1491. It has 256 leaves in folio. A copy is in the British Museum London I-B-7930.

³⁸⁸) St. Clement is Bl. Clement of Osimo, prior general († 1291). This ordinale or caeremoniale was printed in its entirety in 1508, though — as the foreword states — some parts had become obsolete and others were no longer in use: AA XV, 182.

³⁸⁹) VANDIJK-WALKER, *The origins* 318.

commemorated its transfer from Sardinia to Pavia where it still rests. The Austins introduced the principal feast to the university of Paris in 1361 which declared August 28 a « dies non legibilis »³⁹⁰). The whole university gathered at the church of the « Grands Augustins » for sermon and mass. Other universities followed the Parisian example. The Order propagated the feast with such success that first a few principalities in Spain and Italy declared it a legal holiday and in 1515 Pope Leo X made it obligatory for the whole world³⁹¹). Flete wrote already in 1380 that the English king and his realm should show devotion to St. Augustine and keep his feast as they must³⁹²). There is to our knowledge no record that the feast was obligatory in England at that time.

From the Parisian university the Austins probably adopted the feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria as the patroness of their studies. Definite data for its introduction have not come forth, but a gradual of the Order from the fourteenth century, now preserved at Solothurn, has already a sequence in her honor, a sure sign that she was highly venerated³⁹³). The university of Paris had declared St. Catherine her own patroness and carried her picture in its coat of arms. Since all early masters of the Order graduated in Paris it would be natural to adopt its customs in this matter³⁹⁴). The feast of St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, was intro-

³⁹⁰) P. 43 (VIII, 475) *supra*.

³⁹¹) « Accepimus quod licet » of 5 April 1515 (EMPOLI, *Bullarium* 243/4). The pope writes, that his predecessor Sixtus IV had introduced the feast, but some parts of Christendom, especially Provence, had not observed it as a day on which servile work was forbidden. From now on it would have to be kept as a holyday. We could not yet locate the decree of Sixtus IV nor is the above bull contained in *Leonis X Pontificis Maximi Regesta*, ed. Jos. HERGENRÖTHER (Freiburg 1881). If Sixtus IV introduced the feast of St. Augustine for all Christendom, then it is strange indeed that his successor, Innocent VIII, granted its public celebration on 21 August 1489 to the diocese and city of Trent (TORELLI, *Secoli Agost.* 7.379) and Alexander VI extended it to the whole Marche of Treviso on 22 June 1493 (EMPOLI 34; TORELLI 7.422/3).

³⁹²) « Habeat ergo rex et regnum eius devotionem in beato Augustino et servent festum eius, sicut tenentur, et melius stabit regnum eius » AA XVIII, 317.

³⁹³) Kind communication of Dr. Alfons Schönherr, Solothurn.

³⁹⁴) VANDIJK-WALKER, *The Origins of the modern Roman Liturgy* 388. She was also the patroness of studies in the Franciscan Order (*loc. cit.*) and of the Dominicans: W. HINNEBUSCH, *The early English Friars Preachers* (Romae 1951) 154/5.

duced in 1388 and that of St. Nicholas of Tolentine after his canonization in 1446.

The official liturgical life of the mendicants is a happy medium between the Cluniac monks who spent almost the whole day in church and the Jesuits who discarded communal liturgical prayer entirely. They managed to combine active ministry which was their main task with the solemn recitation of the Divine Office at the prescribed canonical hours. To the very eve of the dissolution we find documentation for the fact that the Divine Office was sung in English houses of the Order. That the Office still had meaning is beautifully stated in the petition made in 1528 by the prior of Shrewsbury to the city council :

« ... for the love of God and Our Blessed St. Mary and St. Augustine and all that holy company of heaven the which we are bound as religious men at midnight and also the day season devoutly to honor and worship and also to pray for the good of the estate of our founders and benefactors and brothers and sisters of our said religion... » (D 1068).

The office started with Matins at midnight. Psalms were known by heart but for the singing of responses and lessons everyone gathered around the lectern ³⁹⁵). After Matins all brethren assembled in the chapter room where the martyrology was solemnly read which was followed by reading from the Constitutions. On Monday and Friday a chapter of faults was held which consisted in the individual public profession of faults against the rule. The penance for such transgressions was prescribed by the Constitutions. If they prescribed the discipline it was given by the prior right then and there. Guests accused themselves first then the community according to seniority. A talk by the prior concluded the chapter.

Lauds were chanted at dawn, Prime preceded the conventual mass which everyone, also the students and professors, attended unless the latter said mass privately. Vespers were said after lunch and the evening meal was followed by Compline. A siesta was permitted in the afternoon.

In addition to the prescribed office for priests the Austins also recited in common the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin ³⁹⁶). It

³⁹⁵) See note 304 *supra*. For the whole paragraph see *Constit. Ratispon.* chapters I-III.

³⁹⁶) AA III, 77 (Chapter of Genoa 1308).

preceded Matins and was said standing. Another usage which antedates the year 1284 ³⁹⁷) was the recitation of the *Vigiliae Beatae Mariae Virginis*, so-called because they were said in the eve in connection with the Compline. They are known to-day, from the first words, as *Benedicta Tu* and consist of three psalms and three Pseudo-Augustinian lessons. Since 1308 these *Vigiliae* were sung on Fridays but only recited on other days. The office of the dead had not only to be said on the days prescribed but also for many individual benefactors. Such assignments could be at times rather time-consuming as may be seen from the testament of Humphrey Bohun.

Lay brothers were not allowed to say the office of priests. Anyone who presumed to teach them was to be punished by a fast on water and bread for three days. Instead they had to recite a fixed number of Our Fathers ³⁹⁸), viz. 25 for Matins, 10 for Lauds, 7 for each canonical hour of the day, 11 for Vespers and 7 for Compline. The like number of Our Fathers had to be recited for the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, for a total of 162 Our Fathers.

Meals

Since prayers and meals formed a unit in the day's order a note on meals ³⁹⁹) may be added. Breakfast is not mentioned. The principal meal (*prandium*) was eaten at noon. At a sign of the bell the brethren gathered before the dining room, washed their hands and then entered two by two. Facing each other they said the liturgical table prayer and then sat down in silence but did not uncover the bread until the reader in the pulpit had begun the lesson. Reading continued throughout the meal. When dinner was ended, everything on the table was taken away except the towels (table cloths? *tobalia*). Then reciting the *Miserere* the brethren walked processionwise to the choir for Vespers. The

³⁹⁷) « Diffinimus quod omni sero post Completorium dicant fratres Vigiliis Beatae Virginis, sicut actenus [sic] factum est »: AA II, 252, Chapter of Orvieto 1284.

³⁹⁸) *Constit. Ratispon.* ch. 2. Laybrothers are scarcely ever mentioned for England. The rent of monastic farms to outsiders during the fifteenth century seems to indicate that this institute had practically died out.

³⁹⁹) *Constit. Ratispon.* ch. 21-23.

evening meal (*coena*) followed the same pattern except that silence was kept on the way to choir for Compline.

Meat was forbidden though the prior could dispense the infirm, the aged and those doing hard manual labor. Egg, cheese and whatever could be made from milk was permitted. In the eve one small dish of food (*ferculum*) was to suffice. An English chronicler ⁴⁰⁰) claims that in 1377 the Austins received permission to eat meat under the condition that they would keep the Vigil of Christmas. In the annals of the Order this fact is not reported but it seems to be true, because in 1486 the General Chapter of Siena forbade meat on Monday and Wednesday ⁴⁰¹). Friday was always meatless because it was a fastday.

In addition to the fastdays of the church the Austins also had to observe a strict fast from November 1 to Christmas. On fast days only one meal a day was permitted. For the collation in the evening only a drink could be served, but those who needed it could take a small piece of bread « ne noceat haustus ». Punishments for neglecting these fasts were severe.

As to table manners only one directive has come to light : both hands had to be used when drinking. Apparently the vessels used did not have handles ^{401a}).

⁴⁰⁰) *Eulogium Historiarum*, Rolls Series vol. 9, part 3, p. 340.

⁴⁰¹) AA VII, 346.

^{401a}) *Constit. Ratispon.* ch. 17, fol. 22v.

Chapter 3

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

1. *Preaching and hearing confessions* ⁴⁰²⁾

By papal mandate the Austins had been called from their hermitages into the cities to preach and hear confessions. This work had been sadly neglected, therefore was greatly appreciated by the people but it also interfered with the well regulated parochial life of previous times. A bitter fight against these privileges of all mendicants had just begun, when the Austins entered the cities and they felt its blazing fury throughout the remainder of the Middle Ages. That the success of the mendicants proved the necessity of their work and that to hinder the work of the Austins was against the clear directives of the Holy See was not taken into consideration. The fight was not only carried into the pulpit but also into the streets and was not only waged with words but also by fists. It belongs to the least edifying aspects of the period. The dispute might have been less bitter had the mendicants not also obtained the privilege of burying non-members within their monastic precinct. Boniface VIII found the only statesmanlike solution in his decretal *Super Cathedram* but the fluctuating position of succeeding popes and the false leadership of violent antagonists kept the quarrel alive to the very end.

⁴⁰²⁾ P. 34 (VIII, 466). Much attention has been paid of late to this question, but the surface is scarcely scratched. For a general outline see: C. UYTENBROECK, *La droit pénitentiel des religieux de Boniface VIII à Sixte IV*, Cath. Univ. Louvain. *Sylloge Excerptorum e Dissertationibus*, fasc. 5 (1935). — A. WILLIAMS, « Relations between the Mendicant Friars and the Regular Clergy in England in the later Fourteenth century », *Duquesne Studies. Annale Mediaevale* 1 (1961) and separate. — L. HÖDL, « Zum Streit um die Buss Privilegien der Mendikantenorden in Wien im 14. und beginnenden 15. Jahrhundert », *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, Wien 79 (1957) 170-189. John Retz OSA († 1404), professor at the university of Vienna, wrote *Questiones duae de Confessione*, now Ms. 475, Wolfenbüttel, which would add considerably to HÖDL's presentation. — We based our presentation, esp. Herdeby's on F. MATHES OSA, *The Poverty Movement and the Augustinian Order*, New York, Fordham Univ. Dissertation 1952.

The standard bearers of the parish clergy were John Pouilli (*de Polliaco*) and Richard Fitzralph, archbishop of Armagh, Ireland, hence called *Armachanus*. The dispute centered on two questions. The first question concerned the right to grant faculties. John Pouilli claimed that the pastor had an exclusive, divinely ordained right to hear the confessions of his people, a right with which neither pope nor bishop could interfere. Since this teaching was more dangerous to the hierarchy than the mendicants it was promptly condemned by John XXII in his bull *Vas electionis* of 1317. The second question derived from the decretal *Utriusque sexus* of the Fourth Lateran Council which commanded the faithful to confess at least once a year to their own pastor (*parochus proprius*). This simple directive given before the formation of the Mendicant Orders was now extended to every confession. This extension was not only without basis in fact but illogical as well. Yet pastors declared from the pulpit that any confession to friars would have to be repeated to the parish clergy. This did violence to men's conscience, made the sacrament hateful and created endless scruples and confusion.

Pouilli was the great defender of parochial rights. He tried not only to eliminate friars from any encroachment on pastoral rule but attempted at the same time to protect the parish clergy from the increasing domination of bishop and pope. This dangerous endeavor eased the struggle of the friars. Fitzralph avoided such a mistake. He waged his battle exclusively against the Mendicants. He wanted them or at least all their privileges suppressed. His argumentation against their right to hear confessions borders at times on the ridiculous, for example when he declares them unable to hear confessions because this would be against their humility, since they could boast to have kings and queens or at least men and women of the highest nobility as their penitents. Humility, however, was demanded by Christ not only for Mendicants, but for all his followers, especially for priests. Parish clergy should, therefore, be equally unable to hear such confessions! Again he declares the friars unfit because faculties had been given them not from necessity but because of their importune clamor. This opposed God's command not to seek the neighbor's goods, including his spiritual goods. In obtaining the right to hear confessions they had taken away the spiritual goods of pastors, had, therefore, committed mortal sin and were consequently unfit to absolve. After sending his book *De pauperie Christi* not only to the pope and the cardinals

but also to the English universities where it created acrimonious discussions, Fitzralph came to London and violently attacked the friars in his sermons during the winter 1356/7. The friars, as was to be expected, retaliated. On 7 March 1367* they convened in London and drew up a list of 21 errors. Their accusations, drafted in the form of a public summons, was delivered to Fitzralph by John Arderne, prior of Austin Friars, London, and a prominent churchman of the city. When the Irish archbishop answered in speeches more violent than before the friars appealed to King Edward III to stop him from preaching against their privileges. It seems that they were successful, for on 25 March the archbishop preached his last sermon in St. Mary's Newchurch. On 1 April 1357 the king issued an order forbidding Fitzralph to leave England without his licence and likewise « not to permit any religious to cross from that port to parts beyond the sea, especially not an Austin friar until further orders » (D 432). The purpose of this mandate was to prevent Fitzralph and Arderne from carrying their cause to Pope Innocent VI at Avignon. Fitzralph escaped, however, and on 8 November 1357 delivered his most famous anti-mendicant sermon before the pope and the cardinals at Avignon. During the following legal proceedings both sides were busy writing pamphlets and answering them. Innocent VI avoided a formal condemnation of the Armachanus, but on 14 July 1359 confirmed the teaching of John XXII in his *Vas Electionis*. This was in effect a condemnation of Fitzralph's errors which were essentially the same as those of John Pouilli. Nevertheless Richard continued the controversy until his death on 10 November 1360.

The more violent Fitzralph's attacks became the more careful the Order had to be not to give offense. On 20 January 1358* the Prior General Gregory of Rimini commanded the English Provincial William under the vow of obedience not to allow any of his brethren to preach or hear confessions unless they were properly approved and licensed. He also called on all learned men under his jurisdiction to take up the defense of the Order against Fitzralph. The English Province appointed John Herdeby who publicly defended the Order at Oxford in 1360 (D 450) and then sat down to write a detailed rebuttal of the Armachanus. His book *Tractatus de Vita Evangelica sive Defensio Fratrum Mendicantium et Ordinis Sancti Augustini contra Richardum Fitzralph, archiepiscopum Armachanum* was divided into twenty chapters. Herdeby directed his main attack

against the erroneous interpretation of the decretal *Utriusque sexus*. He rightly insisted that this interpretation missed both the original wording and meaning. He furthermore argued that the church would never impose such a burden upon its members; that the Canon *Utriusque Sexus* had been abrogated by the Constitution *Dudum* ⁴⁰³⁾ of Pope Clement V which declared that friars approved by competent bishops or the pope could hear confessions of lay people freely and licitly. The right of the pope and bishops to grant these faculties derived from the fact that they and not the parish priests were the *sacerdotes proprii* ⁴⁰⁴⁾ of the people, be they lay or religious. Therefore, friars did not need the added permission of the parish priests nor need the lay people confess the same sins again.

With the death of Archbishop Fitzralph in 1360 the controversy quieted down and, therefore Herdeby did not publish his work ⁴⁰⁵⁾; the Order was not interested in keeping the quarrel alive. A year later the Second Pestilence caused a great shortage of priests, greater than it has been realized by historians. This shortage of priests and the steady increase of frequent confessions ⁴⁰⁶⁾ made the support of the friars not only welcome but necessary.

The majority of priests and bishops had not been misled by the controversy. Since 1300 ⁴⁰⁷⁾, when Pope Boniface VIII demanded

⁴⁰³⁾ For the various decretals see Aem. FRIEDBERG, *Corpus Iuris Canonici* 1879, reprint Graz 1959.

⁴⁰⁴⁾ Henry Friemar Jr († 1354) treats the question of the *sacerdos proprius* in great detail in his widely known Commentary to the Fourth Book of Sentences. He distinguishes *iurisdictio propria* (held by pastors) j. *superordinaria* (bishops), j. *subordinaria* (representative of pastor), j. *extraordinaria* (privileged religious). HÖDL, *op. cit.*, 182.

⁴⁰⁵⁾ The bitter attacks of Wyclif finally induced him to publish the work. He dedicated it to the Prior General Bartholomew of Venice (1385-1400): B. HACKETT, *The spiritual life* 449. Our statement on p. 60 (VIII, 492) that Herdeby died shortly after 1380 should, therefore, be modified.

⁴⁰⁶⁾ In each of his three letters Flete urges frequent confession, e. gr. « *Faciat predicator publice per totam Angliam quod omnes convertent se et frequenter confiteantur* » AA XVII, 320; also 313 and 317.

⁴⁰⁷⁾ Before 1300 English Austins presented for their right to hear confessions only the bull *Vota devotorum* given on 23 March 1244 to the Tuscan Hermits by Pope Innocent IV (VAN LUIJK, *Bullarium* n° 34, 57 (2x)). It demanded the consent of both bishop and pastor. It was certified in 1283 by Richard Swinfield, bishop of Hereford (D 75) and 1286/7 by John Romaine, archbishop of York (*Publications Surtees Soc.* 141 (1928) 162).

in *Super Cathedram* that friars obtain faculties from the local bishops there is not a single case known that a friar was refused because of bad will on the part of a bishop. In case of reluctance the *conservatores privilegiorum* reminded their fellow bishops of the papal legislation as Bishop Grandisson reminded the bishop of St. Asaph in 1328 (D 250). Faculties could be granted for a whole diocese or only for one of its archdeaneries (D 311, 316). Limitors received them at least for their districts (D 340). Sometimes the number of people is clearly defined and in one case licence was given for but one person. In 1313* Archbishop Greenfield of York commissioned Fr. Richard Wetwang to hear the confession of Lord Percy. This was a singular honor because it was done upon the request of Cardinal Arnold, papal legate to England. Lord Percy, first baron of Alnwick, had revolted against the king and was probably under excommunication. An outstanding confessor was needed in this case. By 1340 a distinction was made between ordinary confessors and penitentiaries; the latter could probably absolve from reserved cases while the ordinary confessor could not (D 340).

Before an Augustinian could be presented to a bishop for faculties he had to be approved by the provincial chapter ⁴⁰⁸). This approval was given only when a special examen had shown his fitness for the work. Since faculties were also given to newly ordained priests this training must have taken place before the ordination. The one-sided claim that all priestly training was missing in most *ordinandi* cannot be sustained ⁴⁰⁹). A further proof for such training is that a young priest chosen to be student at a *studium generale* had to be well acquainted with theological terminology ⁴¹⁰). How long this training lasted is not known. The General Chapters of 1486 ad 1491 demanded that a confessor of seculars should have at least the book which begins *Defecerunt scrutantes scrutiny*, also known as the *Antonina*, or another book treating on confession ⁴¹¹).

⁴⁰⁸) « Item diffinimus et ordinamus, quod nullus frater nostri ordinis audiat confessiones secularium, nisi fuerit promotus per capitulum Provincie aut immediate per priorem generalem et nisi fuerit debito Ordinario presentatus ». General Chapter of Siena 1486 (AA VII, 345). See also Gen. Ch. of Pamiers 1465 (AA VII, 111) and note 257 *supra*; *Constit. Ratispon. Additiones*, fol. 40v.

⁴⁰⁹) P. 142 (XII, 407) *supra*.

⁴¹⁰) P. 157 (XII, 422) *supra*.

⁴¹¹) *Supra* note 257. The *Antonina* was the *Summa confessoris* by St. An-

As a confessor so also a prospective preacher had to be examined and approved by a provincial chapter ⁴¹²). If we conclude from the remaining *artes sermocinandi* ⁴¹³) then the training of preachers consisted mostly in the method of composing sermons, not in a full program of homiletics. Two such tracts have come down to us, one written by Geoffrey Shale, the other by Thomas Penketh. They contain all the distinctions and divisions so aptly described by Owst ⁴¹⁴) and Charland but Shale did not practice his own teaching in his one remaining sermon preached at the Council of Constance in 1417 (D 703). As a rule preaching was assigned to those with academic degrees. No one could be promoted to the lectorate unless he had preached at least ten times in the mother tongue ⁴¹⁵) and for sermons which drew great public attention like Lenten sermons one had to be at least a cursor in order to be appointed.

Among the great preachers was Benedict Icenus or Bennet of Norfolk, auxiliary bishop of Norwich, whom Weever calls « a man godly, wise, fluent in speech... ⁴¹⁶) », another was William of Lincoln. None of their books survived but six books of sermons of John Waldeby are still extant. We shall consider them under authors. Of interest here is one passage which gives an inkling of his appeal to listeners. Returning from Tynemouth to York about 1354 he found himself so overwhelmed by the crowds, that he fled away to « Tikkille our solitary place » in order to write the tract he had promised to Abbot Thomas de la Mare ⁴¹⁷).

Services in mendicant churches were well attended because there people were assured of a well prepared sermon. This made their pulpits important instruments for welding public opinion. The

tonine († 1459) which began with the words « Defecerunt scrutantes scrutinio »: *Catholic Encyclopedia* under St. Antonine.

⁴¹²) « Diffinimus quod nullus frater nostri ordinis audeat predicare, nisi fuerit promotus et approbatus ac diffinitus in capitulo provincie sue, sicut solent promoveri confessores »: Gen. Chapter of Rome 1491 (AA VII, 425). The same chapter also demanded that Lentenpreachers in Italy held at least the rank of *cursor*.

⁴¹³) R. CHARLAND, *Artes predicandi* (Ottawa 1936).

⁴¹⁴) G. R. OWST, *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge 1926) 279 sqq., 309 sqq).

⁴¹⁵) See note 136 *supra* and *Constit. Ratispon.* ch. 36 and 37.

⁴¹⁶) J. WEEVER, *Antient Funeral Monuments* (ed. London 1767) 530.

⁴¹⁷) G. R. OWST, *op. cit.* 65; GWYNN, *Engl. Austin Friars* 121.

English kings often made use of them. In 1314* King Edward II asked the Austins to preach against the Scots and in 1346* King Edward III « bound the provincial and all his brethren to expose the justice of his war against Philip IV of France »⁴¹⁸). After the Peasants Rebellion in 1381 the friars supposedly lost favor with the king because they had excited the masses to revolt. « Walsingham venomously noted the rebel fondness for friars [D 545] and Langland definitely accused them of preaching communism. A letter of the four Mendicant Orders addressed to John Gaunt on 22 February 1382 taxed Wyclif personally with having first caused the rising and having then tried to blame it on the friars. The *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1381/5* shows many favors to friars and in some of them they are even described as « oratores assidui pro statu nostro et tocius regni » which would have been inconceivable, if they had actually incited the rebels »⁴¹⁹). The truth of this observation is also confirmed by the unpublished records of preachers who were invited to preach before the king, especially during Lent and Advent. The expense accounts recorded their generous financial rewards⁴²⁰). None of the Austins mentioned in these accounts surpassed John Lowe who had left a whole book of sermons preached before the king. As long as these court preachers proposed only the word of God, they fulfilled their obligation even if none dared to tell the truth as bluntly as Jacques Le Grand did in Paris⁴²¹). The involvement in political matters, however, became an abuse, when causes were defended which were or seemed unjust. When the famous Thomas Penketh spoke in favor of Richard III in 1484 he supposedly lost a great deal of his former popularity (D 939). Worst of all political speeches was the defense of royal supremacy by George Brown in 1535*. It caused loud murmuring in the crowd which so infuriated Henry VIII that he ordered the mayor of London to stop a recurrence or incur his wrath.

A rather pleasing description of a sermon in Austin Friars, Lynn

⁴¹⁸) *Supra* p. 55 (VIII, 487).

⁴¹⁹) A STEEL, *Richard II* (Cambridge 1941) 65.

⁴²⁰) Some of the names found so far include Thomas Winterton 1390 and 1395 (EMDEN, *Biogr. Reg. Oxf.* 3, 2062); John Devenir 1403 (D 667); John Brynkeley 1403 (D 667); Thomas Slymebrigg 1403 (D 667); William Bircheley 1413 (D 689); Thomas Hervey 1451 and 1452 (EMDEN, *op. cit.* II, 921).

⁴²¹) Fr. ROTH, « Jacques LeGrand » AUG. VII (1957) 316/7.

shall conclude this chapter. It is preserved in the *Book of Margery Kempe*.

« Afterwards in Lent, preached a good clerk, an Austin Friar in his own house at Lynne, and had a great audience, where that time, was the said creature present. And God, of his goodness, inspired the friar to preach much of His Passion, so compassionately and so devoutly, that she could not bear it. Then she fell down weeping and crying so sore that many of the people wondered on her, and banned and cursed her full sore, supposing that she might have left off her crying if she had would inasmuch as the good friar [O. P.] had so preached there against, as is before written. And then this good man that preached now at this time, said to the people : « Friends, be still, ye wot full little what she feeleth ». And so the people ceased and were still and heard out the sermon, with quiet and rest of body and soul ».

The name of this Austin is unknown but his very patience reminds one of Capgrave.

2. Care for Strangers

If the Austins added anything new in England it was their spiritual care for strangers, especially in London. Their unique location in this great metropolis was no doubt the cause for this specialized work. The tenements within their monastic enclosure and those of the immediate neighborhood were principally rented to foreign merchants, mostly Lombards and Flemings. The name Lombards was applied to all Italians and by Flemings were meant the Dutch people. Priors general often granted foreign students at Oxford and Cambridge to go to London during their vacations, but principally during Lent, to preach Italian and German sermons and to hear the confessions of their nationals⁴²³). In 1354*, an official resolution of the city council of London called Friar Richard Savage « a blessing to all strangers repairing to London » and begged for his academic promotion because of this work. The Flemings in particular played an important role in Austin Friars and it is, therefore, not surprising, that after its suppression the king permitted this church to serve as « foreigners » church ». In 1550 it finally became the Ger-

⁴²²) *The Book of Margery Kempe* ed. S. B. Meech and H. E. Allen I (London 1940) 167. Early Engl. Text Soc.

⁴²³) Note 306 *supra*.

man church when it was given to the Dutch Huguenots. Ironically it was a German landmine which destroyed this magnificent church on 10 October 1940.

The care for strangers within their own country opened the eyes of the English Austins also to the spiritual needs of their fellow men on foreign soil. At the turn of the fourteenth century, Fr. Richard Clay travelled widely in Prussia and Lithuania to provide religious facilities for English merchants and their families dwelling in those regions (D 662). Neither did the Austins forget the neglected regions of their own country. When the Augustinian John Lowe was made bishop of St. Asaph he called his confrere Henry Kirton « to preach to the rude men of the mountainous parts of the diocese, whose idiom he speaks » (D 782). These activities do not necessarily represent a constant, concerted endeavor, but such individual cases are indicative of specific trends in history where so much is in mute oblivion.

A great deal of priestly work outside the monastic gates was done by the limiters, that is the collectors of alms within strictly defined territories or limits. While travelling through their circuits they were expected to preach, hear confessions and edify the people by their good lives ⁴²⁴). They were probably also the chief recruiters for the Order.

As to-day few priests remained in the monastery over the week-ends. They helped out in various parishes ; « singing abroad » it was called by the royal commissioners of 1538. They reported that in Winchester 25 priests were stationed in the three religious houses. Only three of them — one for each house — remained over the week-end to say the conventual mass. The commissioners were, of course, eager to stop such « disorder » because the income from this work helped the friars to survive.

3. Care for the Dead ⁴²⁵)

Nothing binds priest and people more closely than the care for the departed loved ones. The churches, chapter houses and ceme-

⁴²⁴) « [Prior] studeat fratres mittere ad terminos honestos et providos, qui devocionem populi provocent predicationibus, confessionibus et virtuosis actis ac bona vita »: YPMA, *Mare Magnum*, AUG. VI (1956) 318 and the revealing statement in *Vfr.* 480 n. 104; TOMBEUR, *Prov. Belgica* 102.

⁴²⁵) The difficulties connected with burials in Austin friaries have been treated

teries of friaries were eagerly sought for sepulchres and a number of friaries were built for that purpose. Weever has left us lists of great personages buried in Austin friaries of East Anglia ⁴²⁶) and last wills give many more names of friends and benefactors. The oldest and probably most important will in English Austin history is that of Humphrey Bohun, the relative of William Monklane, which was executed in 1361*. It throws some interesting light upon the religious obligations of Austin Friars, London. Humphrey left 300 marks in silver with the stipulation that for one year after his death, fifty brethren should chant daily mass, sing *Placebo* and other devout prayers. The brethren also had to keep a vigil day and night for one year in such a way that one group of thirteen friars should succeed the other chanting *Placebo* and *Dirige* and other Psalms and prayers (D 465).

While such extravagant demands were not often made, many others on a smaller scale are registered. Curious in their requirements are some anniversaries also known as chantries or obits. In 1379 Sir Thomas Dutton constituted one of them in Warrington. Present were two abbots, two priors, the Provincial Henry Tesdale and many noblemen. In return for Dutton's gift the Austins promised to say a daily mass and in case of omission the provincial would fine the house 3s 4d. The names of Sir Dutton and his immediate family were to be entered into the martyrology in order to recommend their names regularly to the prayers of the brethren (D 538). Sir Thomas Bendish stipulated in 1401 that in case his annual obit at Clare would be omitted it should be « lawful for his heirs and assigns to enter the mansion of the prior and the convent and distrain precious objects (*jocalia*) if they found any, or other goods to the value of ten pounds and carry them off not withstanding any papal or royal privilege » (D 660). Lord Thomas Darcy showed himself even more ingenious when he founded an obit at York in 1511. His name was to be written into the martyrology and was to be read to the brethren every Sunday. After the 'pronunciation' of his name the psalm *De Profundis* with a collect was to

supra p. 85/6 (XI, 553). The increasing coarseness in behavior (see n° 4 *infra*) reveals itself also in the violent defense of funeral « rights ». As late as 1532 six Austins of London « had to bear tapers for their penance in St. Dunstan's-in-the-East for striving with the priest of said parish for the corpse of a stranger that died there » (D 1081).

⁴²⁶) See history of individual houses.

be recited. On the anniversary itself the solemn *Dirige* was to be sung and on the following day a Requiem Mass to be said. During the year a trental of masses was to be offered and at his admission, every new member should promise to observe these obligations. For every default the house in York was to pay the Lord Abbot of St. Mary's ten shillings sterling to be used for the poor and in case they should not read these indentures to the provincial at his annual visitation another ten shillings was to be forfeited to Austin scholars in Oxford (D 1006).

Other last wills provided refreshments either on the day of the funeral itself or at the anniversary services. Stephen Wallnot of Boston for example provided in 1524 for the people present at his funeral in Austin Friars the meat of a fat oxen and a sheep with as much bread and drink as 20s will buy (D 1046). William Calley of the Draper Company in London, which had its offices in Austin Friars established in 1505 an obit with the condition that it be attended by the warden and members of the gild, who should be given « such refeccions as the said Freres yerely ordeyn and prepare for Norman » (D 1017). Norman was a former warden of the gild.

Interesting, also from a liturgical standpoint, is the will made in 1522 by Sir John Fineux, chief justice of Common Pleas and one of the great benefactors of the house in Canterbury. Between seven and eight o'clock every morning « forever » mass was to be said in the Lady's Chapel which he had built. After the Offertory and before the washing of hands the celebrant had to turn about and say :

« Let us call on God's mercy for the souls of John Fineux, knight, and his wife Elizabeth — of Henry VII our king — of Cardinal John Morton, sometimes archbishop of Canterbury — of William Apuldorfeld and his wife Mildred — and for the souls of all faithful departed » (D 1043).

Last wills and testaments are important for many other reasons. They supply the names of many Austin friars. They afford us at least a fragmentary view of religious practices and devotions which would be otherwise unknown. They tell us for example of a *Scala Coeli* in each of the five Austin churches of East Anglia, whose many indulgences proved a great attraction. They alone have preserved the memory of one Marian devotion peculiar to the Austin friars. In 1513 Margaret Humphrey left to the altar of Our Lady of Grace in Northampton her « best gyrdel gilte » and as late as 1537 Agnes

Haywarde left her best ring to this shrine, which was so famous that the Austins were known as Friars of Our Lady of Grace.

4. *In defense of Human Rights* *The Right of Sanctuary*⁴²⁷)

Some of the more exciting and colorful happenings in Austin medieval history are connected with the right of sanctuary. Anyone convicted or accused of a felony or crime could seek refuge in any church where he was supposed to be safe against attackers. Not even lawful civil authority was allowed to take him out by force without permission of the ecclesiastical superiors. Violation carried with it excommunication and severe punishments. After forty days the criminal had to submit to a court of justice or leave the kingdom. He also had to take an oath not to return without the king's leave. The main purpose of sanctuary was protection against the lack of orderly legal procedure and against the swift, cruel punishment of medieval times. The orderly, humane practice of law made the need of sanctuary superfluous.

Almost every aspect of sanctuary and the problems connected with it are revealed in the cases involving Austin churches. In 1297* a blacksmith, Walter Eure of Oxford, knifed a certain John Attehalle from Wallingsford. When John died, Walter sought asylum in the Austin church. He acknowledged his deed, abjured the kingdom and left by the port of Dover. His property amounting to 7s was confiscated. In 1299* John le Berner, a clerk of the bishop of Hereford, committed a trespass and fled to the Austin church in Ludlow, but some men of this town dragged him out, put him in chains, and jailed him in Shrewsbury. At the complaint of the bishop the king ordered the prisoner replaced in his former state within the friars' church, if an investigation by the sheriff should prove the bishop right. The case of John Quintone whom the men of Thomas Mortimer, kn. dragged in 1384 from the Austin church in Clare, cut off his ears and then replaced him has been told pre-

⁴²⁷) Ch. Cox, *Sanctuaries and Sanctuary Seekers of Medieval England* (London 1911) has only one of the eight cases involving Austin friaries. See D 127 (1297) and D 955 (1489) for Oxford; D 133 (1299) for Ludlow; D 562 (1384) and D 827 (1453) for Clare; D 903 (1472) for Shrewsbury; D 994 (1505) for Rye; D 1053 (1525) for Canterbury.

vously ⁴²⁸). In 1453* Thomas Foster sought also refuge in Clare, but John Bamburg, coroner of Essex county, violated the right of sanctuary by invading the church, obtaining by threats a confession of guilt and by taking a promise from Foster not to leave the church for forty days. One could, however, not trifle with the great bishop of London, Thomas Kemp. He immediately published a condemnation of the coroner's deed and gave Fr. James Exall, prior of Clare, the right to proceed with canonical punishments, if necessary.

As the years progressed action seems to have become more turbulent in these cases. In 1472* an unknown Austin had killed a man in selfdefense, and then sought refuge in the church of his Order at Shrewsbury. A group of irate citizens tried to take him out by force but resistance proved so fierce that in the melee another citizen was killed, this time in church. When the king was informed he took energetic action in favor of the friars, but this did not appease the citizens and a mendicant house cannot live in enmity with the people on whom it depends for its ministry and existence. A great act of reconciliation was, therefore, arranged between the town and the monastery. Dr. Edward Storey, bishop of Carlisle, and Thomas Mynde, abbot of SS. Peter and Paul of the city, appeared personally and proved able mediators.

Not equally violent but moved by the same fierce will to protect their rights was the action of the Austins of Canterbury in 1525*. According to the report of the sheriff to the king some Austins had abetted a woman thief to find refuge in their church. When he wanted to take her out by force, the prior and some brethren had resisted him with knives and clubs.

5. *The Monks' Theatre*

The presentation of sacred mysteries for the edification and education of people has ever been cultivated by the Orders. The Austins were no exception. The able historians of Shrewsbury assure us that an open air amphitheatre with ascending seats cut into the rock joined their Austin friary to the west. They suppose that here Whitsun Plays i. e. the presentation of sacred mysteries were given for which the religious of Coventry and Chester were so cele-

⁴²⁸) P. 80 (XI, 548) *supra*.

brated ⁴²⁹). A play in honor of St. Nicolas was given for a large audience at Lyon (France) in 1506 by the Austins of that city ⁴³⁰) but except for this fact nothing is known. Luckily the text of a mystery or *comedia* has recently come to light which was composed by Geoffrey Pierre, a French Augustinian, and translated into English by the Lector Edward Soppeth. It is called *Comedia Sancti Nicholai* or *Miraculous Bread of St. Nicholas of Tolentine*, and was printed by Pynson in London about 1510. It is scarcely identical with the play given in Lyon otherwise the fact would be noted in the foreword. Our play was written by a religious for novices of the Order, not for the general public, and was, therefore, Monks' Theatre in the true sense of the word.

The play is of considerable interest because it is the oldest religious drama of sixteenth century France written in Latin.

The *Comedia Sancti Nicholai* is based on a story in the life of St. Nicholas. During a serious illness the Blessed Mother accompanied by St. Augustine is said to have appeared to him, bid him to send to a neighboring lady for a fresh piece of bread, dip it into water and eat it. When the saint obeyed, he was suddenly and fully cured and when he sent the remainder of the bread to some sick people they also were cured. In memory of this event the distribution of bread blessed in honor of St. Nicholas formed, also in England, a very early part of his cult. In 1404*, for example, the Austins of Atherstone were permitted to continue their distribution of small blessed breads, since it was an old Augustinian custom. The name of St. Nicholas is not mentioned but throughout the early history of the Austins no distribution of blessed breads is known but that in honor of St. Nicholas.

In dramatic form this story is presented in our *Comedia*. It owes nothing to Humanism whose plays were imitations of Plautus, Seneca and Virgil etc. Its characterization and presentation is purely medieval. This is especially manifest in the descent of the Bl. Mother from heaven Yet there is a trace of Renaissance in the play when a character cites Plautus and another swears by Castor and

⁴²⁹) OWEN-BLAKEWAY, *A History of Shrewsbury* 1 (Shrewsbury 1808) 328.

⁴³⁰) The City Council permitted the Austins of Lyon « de faire bâtir un grand théâtre aux Terreaux, sur les fosses de la porte de la Lanterne, pour y jouer la vie de saint Nicolas de Tolentin, que ledit Couvent des Augustins, vouloit faire jouer ». P. DE COLONIA S. J., *Histoire littéraire de la ville de Lyon* 2 (Lyon 1730) 428/9.

Edipus (!), but most of all it appears in the division of the play into acts. Real dramatic possibility offers the scene between the brother sent to fetch the bread and two neighboring women. While the mother is willing to grant the request, the daughter is not. She becomes finally so incensed that she boxes the ears of the poor brother. This unkind treatment makes him burst forth into a recital of all the passages on bad women he remembers from Holy Scripture. When Soppeth calls in his foreword the play charming and learned he must have meant these two scenes. When he speaks of its utility he must have meant this training to stay away from women, also to obey and to have confidence in Christ's mercy and the succor of Mary. Soppeth speaks of the obvious shortcomings of the play but thought it valuable enough to have it printed. It is proof that the Monks' Theatre survived even into the sixteenth century.

It may be added that the cult of St. Nicholas seems to have been more energetically promoted during this time because a short English life of the saint, printed at the beginning of the sixteenth century, has also been discovered of late.

The play certainly wants to promote his cult and particularly a real trust in the bread blessed in his honor. The title page seems to indicate not so much the belief in a sacramental as in a sacrament.

Né timeás mariá, flammám, morbósque furéntes
Técum Nícoleós sí modo pánis adést.
Fear not high water, fire or raging sickness
As long as you have the bread of St. Nicholas.

The same thought is repeated in the last line

In flammám, morbós, pestém, terráque maríque
Fér Cererís munús. O Nicoláe, tué.
Against flames, sickness, pestilence, on land and sea
Bring [with thee] the gift of Ceres [= bread]. O Nicholas,
protect.

This last invocation « O Nicholas, protect ! » eliminates, however, any erroneous interpretation. The play also leaves no doubt that the power of the bread does not come from itself, but through a special grace of Christ granted to St. Nicholas upon the request of Mary.

⁴³¹) For literature see Chapter on Authors.

6. *Gilds*⁴³²⁾

Whether lay-people attended the performance of the Monks' Theatre is not known, though an invitation was no doubt sent to certain friends and neighbors. A performance of mystery plays for the general public would certainly have exercised a tremendous influence upon the people and led to a closer contact between them and the monastery.

Such contact and influence was achieved through the trade guilds which started to flourish during the second half of the fourteenth century. These guilds rented the halls of the monastery for their great annual affairs, here they held their meetings and rented office space. Being men of faith they provided not only for the material well-being of their members but looked also after the welfare

⁴³²⁾ So far we found the following guilds in English Austin churches

Canterbury: Guild of the Assumption of Our Lady of the crafts and misteries of the shoemakers, curriers and cobblers of the city of Canterbury » 1518 (D 1027). It is probably identical with The Brotherhood of St. Erasmus 1524 (D 1046).

Leicester: Company of journeymen shoemakers 1523 (D 1044) 1532 (D 1079).

London: The worshipful Company of Pewterers since 1451
Ch. WELCH, *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in the City of London* 1 (London 1902). The audit books begin with 1451. In 1486 they built their own hall (D 948).

The worshipful Company of Drapers 1350 (D 388); 1515 (D 1017)

A. H. JOHNSON, *The History of the Worshipful Company of the Drapers of London* 5 vols. Oxford 1914 sq.

Fellowship of the Yeomen Officers of the city

G. UNWIN, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London 1938) 174/5.

The Waterbearers of London 1496 (UNWIN, *op. cit.* 108).

Newcastle: The Guild of Weavers 1525 (D 1054).

Norwich: St. Christopher Guild began 1384.

Sunday after the feast of St. Christopher was the day of the fraternity On that day it offered five candles.

J. TOULMAIN SMITH, *English Gilds* (London 1870) 22.

The Guild of St. Margaret AD 1512, 1516, 1529.

The Guild of St. Austin, held by the shoemakers 1492 (Kirkpatrick, 142).

The Guild of the Holy Cross 1492 (Kirkpatrick, 142).

J. KIRKPATRICK, *Hist. of Rel. Orders etc of Norwich* (London 1845) 147.

York: Carpenters' Union 1487 (D 949).

of their souls. A mass usually preceded their general annual meeting and special funeral services were held for each departed member. The number of gilds connected with Austin friaries can no longer be determined, but London's great house surpassed them all. It did cater not only to rich companies. The poor Company of Waterbearers was as welcome as the powerful, rich Gild of Drapers. The small Company of Pewterers held its meetings here as did the influential Gild of Yeomen or Police Officers. Their fine for neglect of duty was often six pence or a pound of wax towards the light maintained by their gild in Austin Friars. The Weavers of Newcastle also maintained a light in their Austin friary. For York we still have the contract between the Carpenters Union of the city and Fr. William Bewyck, the prominent prior of that house. It provided for a trental of masses for each deceased brother and twice a year a trental of masses for all deceased brethren. Similar contracts are known for the shoemakers' gilds (« The Brotherhood of St. Erasmus ») connected with the Order in Canterbury, Leicester and Norwich.

It would seem, however, quite improbable that the relationship did not extend beyond the purely religious services. Questions involving difficult problems of justice and policy were no doubt discussed with the learned masters of the house. This would explain why the weavers and cordwainers of York met in the place of Friar Bewick to settle their differences (D 915). Such contact rather than the religious services was the main reason why medieval friars were so alive to social questions, why they stood with the working classes and were so much loved by them.

7. Letters of Confraternity ⁴³³⁾

The closest link between lay-people and religious has ever been the Third Order. Though the Austins had formed such organizations even before the Great Union, when Bl. John Bonus had started his « Brothers and Sisters of Penitence », no record of it has come

⁴³³⁾ D 25, 66, 443, 463, 469, 504, 555, 659, 673, 746, 790, 793, 796, 804, 892, 911, 930, 931, 1014, 1052. D 493 is not a letter of confraternity.

The best available article on this subject is Rev. CLARK-MAXWELL, « Some further Letters of Confraternity », *Archaeologia* 2, ser. 29 (1929) 211. Here he corrects and improves his first article *Archaeologia* 2, ser. 25 (1926) 19-60 [OSA pp. 55/6].

to light for England. Their place was somewhat taken by the Letters of confraternity by which one became a brother and sister of the Order. It gave a share in all good works of the Order and the owner partook in the same prayers and masses as were said for deceased Austins. Such letters were quite regularly given to great benefactors because the Order wanted to return in spiritual treasure what it had received in material help (D 659). The very fact that nineteen of these letters are still extant proves the high regard in which their owners held them. The first known such letter was given in 1265 to Roger de Scaccario, one of the early supporters of Clare (D 25). The next was presented to Sir Richard Brampton for his aid in the establishment of Ludlow (D 66). The last letter on record is mentioned in the will of John Wit de Combe in which he calls himself a brother of the Temple (= Austin) friars in Bristol ⁴³⁴).

The letters follow a set formula. One of its phrases distinguishes Austin letters from all other Orders: « ... dilectis sibi in Christo N. et N. oraciones et quicquid hauriri valeat dulcius de latere crucifixi... ». It almost seems that English Austins practiced a special devotion to the Sacred Heart ⁴³⁵).

In *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* where the various mendicant Orders are ridiculed for boasting of their special powers, the Austin friar is singled out for heralding his Letter of Confraternity. He says :

- 318 « We have power of the pope ; purliche ⁴³⁶). assoilen
All that helpen our hous. in helpe of her scules,
320 To dispensen hem with. in dedes of synne ;
All that amendeth oure hous. in money other elles,
With corne other catell. or clothes of beddes,
Other bedys or broche ⁴³⁷). or breed for our fode.
And zif thou hast any good. and wilt thi-selfe helpen
325 Helpe us hertliche ⁴³⁸) therwithe. and here I undertake
Thou schalt ben brother of oure hous. an a boke habben
(at the next chaptire) clereliche ensealed ;
And thanne oure provinciall. hath power to assoilen
Alle sustren and bretheren / that beth of our order.

⁴³⁴) F. WEEVER, « Somerset Medieval Wills », 2, 263 [= *Somerset Record Soc.* 21 (1905)].

⁴³⁵) *Pierce the Ploughmans Cred*, ed. W. W. SKEAT, *Early Engl. Text Soc.*, original series 30 (1867), verses 318-334.

⁴³⁶) completely.

⁴³⁷) Brooch, jewel.

⁴³⁸) heartily.

- 330 And thouz thou conne nouzt ⁴³⁹) thy Crede (knele downe here.)
 My soule y sette for thyn, to assoile the clene,
 In Covenaut that thou come againe. and katell us bringe. »
 And thanne loutede ⁴⁴⁰) y doun and me leve grauntede
 334 And so I partid him fro, and the frere left.

Just about the time this poëm was written [1394] we notice a marked increase in the granting of such letters. Several of them carried the added benefit of 424 and more days of indulgence (D 659). During the fifteenth century they multiplied even more. Provincial William Wells II was empowered in 1438 to grant ten letters of affiliation (D 789) while in 1464 Provincial John Halam could confer fifty (D 879). Under the impetus of the Reformation the provincial chapter of York, held in 1525, thought it wise to change the text. The new formula sought a dogmatic basis for this grant by referring to the Order's treasure of grace and the authorization to make use of it. It avoided extravagant claims and added a definite promise of three masses from each priest of the province at the departure of the owner (D 1052).

Pierce the Ploughman's Creed also tells us what a medieval Austin thought of his Order. Accordingly, it originated with St. Paul the First Hermit and for a long time its members lived in the wilderness doing hard penance. Then came the call of the church to amend the lives of men in the big cities :

« We made our celles
 to ben in cyties y-set to styztle ⁴⁴¹) the people
 Preaching and praying as profetes schuden »

Praying, preaching and hearing confessions filled the life of the ordinary Austin. Margery Kempe tells us of frequent sermons and great numbers of people who went to daily communion. Long rows of communicants imply many hours in the confessional. As they do to-day so did they in the past.

F. ROTH, O. S. A.

(To be continued).

⁴³⁹) naught.

⁴⁴⁰) knelt.

⁴⁴¹) styztle = to get in order.