

## THE GREYFRIARS IN SOUTHAMPTON.

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THE destruction of numerous buildings in Gloucester Square during the raids on Southampton in 1940 revealed an ancient stone wall and archway, last vestiges of the mediaeval house of the Friars Minor. Unfortunately, these were carelessly swept away by recent demolitions so that no trace of the friary now remains. Today no street or place name recalls the presence of the Greyfriars in Southampton as in Winchester and other towns, while a similar dearth of written records confronts those who try to reconstruct their story there. Although the friars' library contained many chained books and a whole hamper of documents concerning their house, these did not survive the wholesale destruction of records which accompanied the dissolution of religious foundations in the reign of Henry VIII. A single register alone was preserved, which the new owners of the empty establishment presumably valued because it recorded former gifts to the friars of land or houses to which they in their turn might now lay claim. This register eventually found its way into the town archives, but it also has disappeared, and only a brief summary of it, made by Dr. Speed of Southampton at the end of the 18th century, remains as our chief source of information about the friary. Fortunately, these meagre entries can be supplemented by a number of references to the friars scattered among the town records, the registers of the bishops of Winchester, and the wills of mediaeval townsmen, together with a few entries on the Close and Patent Rolls and other national records. The Latin chronicles of the Franciscans in England give us one or two glimpses of the Southampton house in its early days, while the records of the reign of Henry VIII in the Public Record Office throw much light on the conduct of the last warden in the religious upheavals of that reign and the ultimate dissolution of the house. But it is clearly impossible to construct a complete or continuous narrative from these scanty sources. The following short account of the Southampton Greyfriars must, therefore, be considered as an incomplete mosaic: an attempt to piece together, in the absence of any surviving documents originating from the friary itself, fragments of information gleaned over a wide field of both local and national records.

The Franciscans first arrived in England in 1224. Their house in Southampton was probably founded in 1233 or in the following year. Bishop Tanner ascribed its foundation to Henry III, and

although no documentary proof of this has yet appeared and Speed rejected the idea, it is clear that the King took a great interest in the friars' welfare during their early years in the town, frequently sending them gifts of treetrunks from the Royal woods in the New Forest for warmth and fuel.<sup>1</sup> By the time of their arrival in Southampton their work at Winchester and Salisbury had no doubt already ensured them a cordial welcome among the townspeople there. The Franciscans dedicated themselves to the service of the poor, the sick and the afflicted, and to make themselves more acceptable to the neglected classes to whom they came, they lived in the most abject poverty and chose their places of abode among the unbelievable wretchedness of the poorest quarter of the mediaeval towns they visited. In Southampton they settled in the lower part of the town close by God's House, the hospital for the poor. Immediately behind the friary a small postern gate in the town wall (which later became known as the Friars' Gate<sup>2</sup>) led into a poor slum area which had sprung up outside the protection of the town walls, where the outcasts and paupers of the mediaeval town provided a great field for their labours. The area immediately beyond this gate was cluttered up with stalls and slaughtering places, for municipal ordinances forbade the mediaeval butcher to set up shop within the town itself, lest his wares offended the prosperous residents within the walls, but confined him to this region (later called the Friars' Shambles) where the meat market was held.<sup>3</sup> Among these squalid surroundings the friars settled and began their work.

Little is known of their first years in Southampton apart from the arrival of Wygerius, visitor of the Franciscan order, who held an assembly of friars there in 1238.<sup>4</sup> It is evident, however, that their devotion and austere poverty soon won them admirers among the townsfolk, for in 1241 a certain Walter le Flemmyng gave them a piece of land at the bottom of the town which he bought for them from the canons of St. Denys' Priory.<sup>5</sup> Walter was one of the most prosperous merchants and shipowners in Southampton at that period, and his family, whose descendants still live near

1. *Close Rolls*, 1234-7, p. 96; *ibid.*, 1237-42, p. 423; *Cal. Liberate Rolls*, 1240-45, pp. 133, 222. The first of these grants, dated 29th May, 1235, proves that the friary was already in existence two years before the date hitherto accepted for its foundation. In 1232 Henry III had made similar grants of wood to the newly-founded friaries at Winchester and Salisbury, but made no mention of any house in Southampton (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1225-32, p. 467). It seems unlikely that the Southampton friars would have been excluded from this grant had they been in existence then, so we may perhaps presume that their house was founded in the years between this grant and its first mention in 1235.

2. There is no picture of this gate in existence, but records of "the Fryers Gate and Garet" and "the fryers towre and garet" indicate that it was a gate with a room over it similar to the West Gate which can still be seen today, but smaller, forming one of the towers in the east side of the town wall. Cf. Rev. J. S. Davies, *History of Southampton*, pp. 268-9; *Book of Remembrance of Southampton*, ed. H. W. Gidden, i. pp. 21-2, 51.

3. Davies, *loc. cit.* We find the butchers still confined there as late as the reign of Elizabeth. Cf. *Black Book of Southampton*, ed. A. B. Wallis Chapman, iii. p. 114, n. 1.

4. *Records of the Franciscan Province of England*, ed. A. G. Little, in *Collectanea Franciscana* (Rolls Series), i. p. 145, n. 1.

5. *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, iii, No. D 121.

the town, were staunch supporters of the friars for many years.<sup>6</sup> In 1253 a wealthy townswoman, Isabella Chekehall, gave them more land to extend their premises.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the liberality of the burgesses seems to have tempted the friars to exceed what was lawful for the Franciscan order in the style of their buildings. Their earliest dwellings were presumably hovels of clay or wood lent to them by the goodwill of certain burgesses, for the law of poverty did not permit them to own anything themselves. But in 1276 their friends among the burgesses erected stone cloisters for them on the land already put at their disposal. The head of the Friars Minor in England, Friar Albert of Pisa, was deeply imbued with the austere Franciscan spirit, however, and determined to enforce a strict observance of the rule of poverty. So he sternly ordered their destruction, and eventually, carried his point in spite of great opposition from the burgesses who had built them.<sup>8</sup> But even the most austere friar must have seen the need of a permanent house as the years passed. In 1278 Robert le Mercier, an alderman of the town, gave a messuage to enlarge their temporary premises, and taking advantage of this gift, the foundation of a new stone chapel was laid in 1280. The friars celebrated Mass in their new church for the first time on the Feast of St. Francis in 1287, and to mark the occasion John and Petronilla le Flemyng gave a treat to the friars and all their friends in the town. Their chapter house and dormitory were completed in 1291, and several new altars consecrated in 1311.<sup>9</sup> In 1338 the town was sacked and burned by the French and Genoese. A bare entry in the friars' register records this event without comment, but it seems probable that the Friary suffered considerably, for a list of new gifts by the townsmen, made *post combustionem villae Suthampton*, follows. The exact nature of these benefactions is not given, but Henry le Flemyng and Robert Stenigg seem to have done most towards repairing the damage wrought to the Friary during the sack of the town.<sup>10</sup> In 1373 and 1374 the friars were given two more houses adjoining the Friary, making it possible for them to ask permission from William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, to add a considerable area to the cemetery west of their church in 1382.<sup>11</sup>

6. He was one of the first Southampton merchants to participate in the Gascony wine trade with his ships *La Jonette* and *La Heitee*, supplied large consignments of wine for the Royal household and held civic office for some years. Cf. *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1216-25, p. 452; *ibid.*, 1232-47, pp. 105, 133, 301; *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, ii. Nos. B3279, B3368, B3377, B3383 and B 3441.

7. *Speed's History of Southampton*, ed. E. Aubrey, p. 133. The register says she was the chief founder of the convent, no doubt indicating that her gift, although not the first made to the friars, was probably the largest.

8. Thomas de Eccleston, *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, in *Monumenta Franciscana* (Rolls Series), p. 55.

9. Feet of Fines, Southants. Trinity, 6 Ed. I; *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, ii., B3311, B3435; Speed, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-4. The register abstract does not give the surname of John and Petronilla, but it is made clear in P.R.O.; Ancient Deeds, No. B8900.

10. Speed, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 135.

11. *Historical MSS. Commission, XI Report*, Appendix iii, p. 69; *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1370-74, p. 460; *William of Wykeham's Register*, ed. T. F. Kirby, ii, pp. 335-6.

Many of the townspeople were buried in this graveyard, and burial within the Friary church itself was a privilege eagerly solicited by numbers of prominent townsmen. These made many bequests, both large and small, to the friars.<sup>12</sup> One of their biggest benefactors in later years was William Soper, a Southampton merchant and ship-owner, who was mayor and Parliamentary burgess for the town on many occasions, and became a figure of national importance as builder of several of the largest vessels in the Navy of Henry V. Mediaeval people seem to have been far more preoccupied with thoughts of death and burial than the modern townsmen, and their wills show that many of them had made detailed preparations for this event. Soper personally supervised the erection of a fine marble tomb for himself and his wife in the nave of the friars' church, and left long and detailed instructions in his will for the celebration of thirty Requiem Masses to be sung there after his burial and for the perpetual celebration of his yearly obit in the southern chapel of the same church. He even made provision for wax candles to burn daily on the altar of the chapel nearest his tomb. To the friars he left a silver platter for use on the high altar, and one hundred and five shillings for the upkeep of their church—a worthy bequest when the relative value of mediaeval and modern money is taken into account.<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Mundelard chose to be buried in the friars' cemetery and bequeathed forty shillings to the friars, forty shillings to their church, a similar sum for a multitude of wax tapers they were to place around the bier at his burial, and one hundred shillings for the poor of the town. Nicholas de la Bate, a wealthy Florentine merchant living in the town, chose their church as his burial place and left them a handsome bequest in 1467. William Nicoll, sometime mayor, buried his two wives, Elena and Katherine, and a daughter, Iseult, there. The first of these left half-a-crown to each friar and twenty shillings to Brother Nicholas, who was probably her confessor at the Friary.<sup>14</sup> Similar bequests are found in practically all the surviving mediaeval wills of Southampton. Rarely indeed did the townsfolk omit some mark of gratitude or recognition of the work done by the friars when they prepared for their approaching end, even when they were to be buried elsewhere in the town.

It is, perhaps, not surprising to find the parish priests of Southampton often resented the townspeople's attachment to the friars and their frequent preference for burial at the Friary instead of their own parish churches. In the reign of Henry V the priest of St. Mary's tried to assert himself, ordering that his deceased

12. The oldest Southampton wills are to be found among a collection classed as Ancient Deeds in the Public Record Office. Some are enrolled in the *Black Book of Southampton*, the register of the most important business transactions in the town. Other mediaeval wills are to be found in Winchester Cathedral Library, and numerous ones dating from the early 16th century in Somerset House and the Diocesan Probate Registry at Winchester.

13. *Black Book*, ii, pp. 98-110, 123-5.

14. Wills of Nicholas Mundelard and Elena and Katherine Nicoll in Winchester Cathedral Library; will of Nicholas de la Bate in Somerset House, P.C.C. 17 Godyn.

parishioners should first be brought to St. Mary's and all their obsequies performed there, even if they were to be given burial at the Friary. The townsmen supported the friars and opposed his claim. The rector persisted and at length Pope Martin V settled the dispute, pronouncing in favour of the ancient custom in 1425, so that the friars won their point, as is shown by later wills.<sup>15</sup> Evidently they had won a warm place in the hearts of the townfolk. The mayor and aldermen demonstrated this in a practical manner on several occasions, such as their gift of a town house to the friars in 1373 and their decision, recorded in the guild ordinances in the *Oak Book*, that the friars should have two cesters of ale and one of wine so long as the guild lasted.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to their spiritual work among the townspeople, the friars contributed to their welfare in more material spheres. One of their greatest services was the provision of a supply of pure drinking water for their neighbours in the lower part of the town. These had had to depend on water from the well at Houndwell until this time, a supply which was frequently tainted and impure, notwithstanding that it supplied most of the town with water at this period. In 1290, however, Nicholas de Barbefleet gave the friars a spring called Colwell, rising at Hill in his manor of Shirley, some distance from the town. The friars built a conduit and brought the water underground in large lead pipes to a place called "Achard's Bridge" on the boundaries of the manor. The bridge has long since disappeared, but the waterhouse they built there can still be seen in Commercial Road by St. Peter's Church. From there the pipes were laid under the King's highway *via* English Street (the modern High Street) into the Friary. A separate pipe through the Friary wall provided a constant supply of water in English Street for the lower part of the town.<sup>17</sup> In time, however, the pipes decayed, and since the friars were not sufficiently wealthy to put them in repair, the mayor and aldermen took over the entire system for the town use, agreeing in exchange to provide a continual supply of fresh water in the Friary as before.<sup>18</sup> The Friary church also served the townsmen in other capacities besides a place of worship and burial. It is somewhat surprising to the modern mind to find local business transactions taking place there on numerous occasions: as in 1341, when Sir John de Langford and Thomas Florak named it as their chosen place for the settlement of debts between them, or in 1496, when arbitration there by the mayor and other town officials settled a dispute over fees charged in the port for gauging wine and oil.<sup>19</sup> But we must

15. *Calendar of Papal Registers, Papal Letters*, 1417-31, pp. 409-10.

16. *Hist. MSS. Com., loc. cit.*; *Oak Book of Southampton*, ed P. Studer, i. p. 26.

17. *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1281-92, p. 365; *Book of Remembrance of Southampton*, ii. pp. 14-16; Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-5.

18. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

19. *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1341-3, p. 254; Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

remember the close connection between business and moral and spiritual values in mediaeval times, as was shown in the strict laws against usury or moneylending of any kind and the insistence on a just price in the mediaeval market. So it did not seem incongruous to mediaeval folk that a sacred building should sanction a good many business transactions. The plays of Ben Jonson show vividly how this custom led to the abuse of religious buildings at a later date.

Towards the end of the reign of Edward III signs of tension begin to appear between the friars and the townsmen. In 1375 a Royal missive was sent to the mayor and bailiffs of Southampton forbidding them to cause any injury or grievance to the Friars Minor there, but to protect them and enable them to continue their religious celebrations in peace, since the King desired to show them his favour "in consideration of the honesty of their religion." This was reiterated by the new Sovereign, Richard II, in 1382.<sup>20</sup> The occasion which gave rise to these Royal mandates cannot now be discovered. Is it possible that Lollard doctrines were already disturbing the former harmony found in the town on the subject of religion? Or was the cause of the dispute purely secular? In the absence of further records no answer can be given. Indeed, few other traces of the friars and their activities in the Middle Ages can now be found. Occasionally some untoward event brought the small Friary to the notice of Royal officials and left a trace in the national records: as in 1301, when Bernard de Perers, a hostage from Bayonne, took sanctuary there in great fear of the King for forty days, or when a fugitive who had abjured the Realm for previous crimes and secretly returned to Southampton, confessed his robberies and other misdeeds before the town coroners in the Friary church, and admitted he had wrongfully claimed benefit of clergy for the same.<sup>21</sup> But for the greater part of their existence the friars pursued their daily work among the poor and destitute with little to disturb their humble existence.

Reforms within the great Franciscan order in the 15th century produced a new group of friars, the Observants, burning with zealous determination to revive the lofty ideals and stern austerities of the Greyfriars in the lifetime of St. Francis. Their influence was strongly marked in Southampton, for in July, 1499, the Friary there was transformed into a house of Friars Observant.<sup>22</sup> The new order produced men of sound learning and fearless character during the stormy reign of Henry VIII. From the beginning of the religious strife the Friars Observant stepped forward as champions of Queen Katherine and opponents of the Royal divorce.<sup>23</sup> At Greenwich two of them dared to rebuke the King

20. *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1374-7, p. 137; *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1381-5, p. 121.

21. *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1296-1302, pp. 455-6; *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1413-16, p. 173.

22. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

23. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, XVI. p. 366.

in the presence of the entire Court when he attended Mass at the Friary.<sup>24</sup> And in Friar Gabriel Pecock, warden of the Southampton house we find another Observant who combined devotion to principle with the courage of his convictions. On Passion Sunday, 1534, a certain Robert Cooke of Rye was ordered to do penance and abjure publicly in Winchester Cathedral certain heresies he had uttered concerning the Blessed Sacrament. Friar Pecock was invited to preach the sermon on this occasion, and in a Cathedral no doubt crowded with curious spectators drawn by this event, he seized the opportunity of exhorting his listeners to continue steadfast in the old faith and resist all innovations, even to death. Lamenting "the dyuersite of preachynges" and loss of doctrinal unity in England, he condemned those who would deny the Pope's power outside Rome and consequently, as he said, make "the Poope no more than a symple Curate." Ridiculing those who affirmed they could disprove Papal Supremacy with the New Learning, he took up the Bible which lay beside him on the pulpit and read proofs of the primacy of Peter in five or six places, translating them into English for the better understanding of all his listeners.<sup>25</sup>

An unsigned report of his sermon, sent by one of his listeners to Thomas Cromwell, the chief Minister at that time, is still in existence. So bold a challenge of the King's new doctrine of Royal supremacy over the English Church could not be ignored. At the beginning of Easter Week the King's messenger brought to John Perchard, Mayor of Southampton, and Henry Huttoft, customer of the port, stringent orders for his immediate arrest. The friar was absent on a preaching tour in the countryside, however, and some days passed before he was found and sent off to London in accordance with the Royal command. The letters written by Perchard and Huttoft on this occasion to announce his coming are also preserved. It is worthy of notice that both tried to intercede for the friar, who was obviously respected and well liked by the townsmen. In spite of his fear of offending Cromwell, which is transparently obvious in his letter, the mayor writes of Pecock's good character and readiness to obey the Royal Mandate. "Yn hym I founde no obstinate," he says. The fortunes of the Huttoft family were already harnessed to those of the Royal Minister, and the time was not far distant when Huttoft's son, John, was to be nominated secretary to Anne of Cleves, Cromwell's choice as Henry VIII's fourth bride.<sup>26</sup> It is even more striking then, that Huttoft dared to risk his patron's displeasure by writing in the friar's defence even more openly than the mayor. He explains the unavoidable delay in Pecock's appearance, and continues :—

24. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (1906 edition), pp. 47-9.

25. P.R.O., State Papers II, p. 16.

26. *Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII*, xv. no. 21.

Lowly besechyng yor mastershipp according to yor accustomable goodnes, to shewe yor most gentyll favor vnto hym / For as farr as wee have perceyued in hym syns his Cumyng hether the man hath the bene of a very good behavyor & also Kepythe his convent in a right good order.<sup>27</sup>

In view of the generally accepted picture of the state of religious houses at the dissolution these letters are important. When two of the leading townsmen were willing to risk the King's displeasure in this way, it is clear that in Southampton, at any rate, the friars had not sunk so low in the estimation of their neighbours as many historians of the Reformation would have us believe. Apparently their letters were not without effect, for in July Pecock was back at the Friary ready to resist the bogus visitation of his house by Cromwell's servants.

Once Henry VIII had decided on the dissolution of religious houses in England, Cromwell made the Observant Friars one of his earliest objects of attack. The Southampton Friary could not hope to remain unmolested. In April, 1534, a commission was given to John Hilsey, a pliable instrument in Cromwell's hands, to make a visitation of all the houses of friars in England.<sup>28</sup> He lost little time in beginning his rounds, and sent deputies to many houses he had not time to visit in person. A letter written by Friar Pecock gives us a vivid picture of the visit of one of these to Southampton. On July 15th an unknown Black Friar appeared at the door of the Friary, and with scant courtesy took the keys from the astonished porter, and by ringing the bell of their church, assembled all the friars in the chapter house. Announcing that he had come to hold a visitation on the King's authority, he read a copy of the Royal commission to Hilsey. The friars, believing him from his habit and demeanour to be Hilsey, accepted him as their visitor in accordance with the Royal mandate, but discovering their mistake from one of his servants soon afterwards, demanded his authority for replacing Hilsey in the commission, which he was unable to produce. By this time the mayor and other townsmen had been summoned to the Friary, and with their support the friars resisted the visitation. Thereupon the Dominican withdrew, threatening them with the Royal displeasure.

With this threat fresh in his mind Friar Pecock sat down to write a lengthy epistle to Cromwell, explaining all that had taken place and justifying his action. Clearly two distinct ideas were at war in his mind as he wrote. On the one hand was his determination to resist any such bogus visitation of his house, but on the other was a considerable awe of the King's Minister, possibly resulting from the interview in London after his bold sermon at Winchester. The letter reveals Friar Gabriel as a very human man, infinitely perplexed and troubled by the difficulty of combining his devotion to God with obedience to the King's Most Excellent

27. P.R.O., State Papers, I. Vol. 83, ff. 78-9; 89-90.

28. *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, vii. no. 587 (18).



Majesty. Although his first allegiance is undoubted, and in all spiritual things he feels compelled to resist any encroachment upon the Friary, disobedience to the King alarms and troubles him, and he stresses his willingness to obey his Sovereign in all worldly affairs. He concludes :—

I take hym to wyttnes, which only all thynges know, for my parte I am redy for my prynces Honor and welth to spend thys por carkas, and temporall lyf. And thogh of so vyle a person shall hys grace nevr have nede, yit to offer to hys honor is thys all I here worldly haue, thys same mynd I trust verly is in all my por company.<sup>29</sup>

But his humble protestations of loyalty in all things temporal did not avail the Southampton Friary. Cromwell's reply, if he made any, has not been preserved, but a month later five of the seven houses of Friars Observant in England had already been emptied and the inmates of the other two were hourly expecting to be expelled.<sup>30</sup> Cromwell pursued the destruction of the Order with methodical care. A memorandum on the end of the Observants, now in the Record Office, shows thirty-one friars as "lately dead," one mad, some escaped overseas or in Scotland, and at Lincoln gives us a last glimpse of Friar Gabriel among the remaining friars, who have been distributed for custody to Royal prisons or monastic establishments, where, according to Chapuys, the Emperor's ambassador in England, they were locked up in chains and worse treated than they would have been in prison.<sup>31</sup> Although nothing further has been discovered concerning Friar Pecock, it is not difficult to conjecture his ultimate fate.

However, Henry VIII did not yet feel the time was ripe for a general confiscation of religious property in England by the Crown, and the Friary at Southampton passed for a few years into the hands of the Augustinian hermits before it was finally annexed to the Crown.<sup>32</sup> In February, 1538, it was visited by another of Cromwell's tools, who found the friars incredibly poor, although, as he grudgingly admitted, in good order and holiness.<sup>33</sup> Soon he received a further commission to take possession of the Friary and all its belongings. The deed of surrender which John Peyll, the last prior, and five other brothers of the Augustin Order signed on 6th October, 1538, has been printed in an earlier number of *Davies*.<sup>34</sup> The accompanying inventory of the Friary possessions the *Papers and Proceedings* by the Southampton historian J. S. shows that the church was well furnished, with an alabaster high altar and reredos ornamented with scenes from the Passion, two

29. P.R.O., State Papers, I. Vol. 85, ff. 63-4.

30. *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, vii. no. 1057.

31. P.R.O., Inventories of Diaries, Henry VIII. E136/153; Wadding, *loc. cit.*; *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, vii. no. 1095.

32. Wadding, *op. cit.*, xvi. p. 365; Augustinians sign the surrender at Southampton, 1538.

33. *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, xiii, pt. 1. nos. 225, 1053, 1456.

34. *Ibid.*, no. 926; *Papers and Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club*, for the year 1890. No. IV, pp. 17-22.

rows of choir stalls "well and substancyally graueyn," three more elaborate altar pieces in small chapels, a painted picture and a good deal of "emagery," which probably meant carved pieces of sculpture. But in contrast to this the rest of the Friary shows unmistakable signs of poverty. In the vestry were found six sets of vestments, "honest butt none better than sylke or chamlet" and old tunics and surplices of little value. In the parlour there was little but chairs and "ij olde cuschynges," and later we find that some of the Friary possessions had already been sold to pay debts to the baker, brewer, barber and others in the town. It is evident that the money which reached the King's coffers from the sale of the Friary possessions was negligible. The most interesting item is a reference to "the lyborary locked with ij lockeyes and many bokes in yt cheyneid," with a sealed hamper containing "all the evydens of the howse." How one wishes for the opportunity to see these today!

After the friars had disappeared their building was unofficially occupied by Thomas Welles of Southampton, who carried off lead, wood and mats from the abandoned house and made several bowling alleys there, presumably in the cloisters. The King eventually leased the site to William Gonston, citizen of London, but when his agent tried to take possession and demanded the keys, Welles began a violent argument, and

as a man w/out reason not fering the daunger of the kinges lawes toke by the coler & w/ force vyolently strake hym on the face wyth his fyst swering by godes blode & wondes that yf it had not byn for shame he sholde neuer speke more.<sup>35</sup>

Apparently Gonston did not press his claim, for in 1545 the King leased the premises to John Pollard and William Byrt, excluding only the friars' conduit and "Wasshyngyerde," which had passed into the hands of Sampson Thomas, a leading townsman.<sup>36</sup> Early in the next reign it passed into the hands of Sir Arthur d'Arcy, but soon afterwards went to the Earl of Pembroke at a rent of 40s. 4d. per annum.<sup>37</sup> With the accession of Queen Mary the Observant Friars were restored again to the Friary in Southampton for a few years, and several bequests to them show they still retained the affection of some of the townsfolk. Among these was Charles Harrison, a physician of Holy Rood Parish, who left them 40s. with all his books of philosophy, divinity and history to help refurnish their despoiled library.<sup>38</sup> Among the Corporation archives today is a curious treatise on the Philosopher's Stone, believed to be the only surviving volume of the Friary library, which was probably part of this legacy. But with the accession

35. P.R.O., Court of Augmentations, E31/1204; E315/165]5.

36. *Ibid.*, E318/870.

37. *Ibid.*, E318/1564, 1859.

38. Speed, *op. cit.*, p. 136, no. 1.

of Elizabeth the few religious houses Mary had restored were finally destroyed, including the Southampton Friary. The buildings were henceforth put to purely secular uses. In 1565, for example, we find a tenement with the Friary watercourse passing from Nicholas Caplin to Richard Goddard.<sup>39</sup> By the end of the 18th century no trace of the Friary remained save a few walls and arches incorporated in later buildings on the site, and now even these have been swept away.

39. *Black Book*, iii. p. 130.