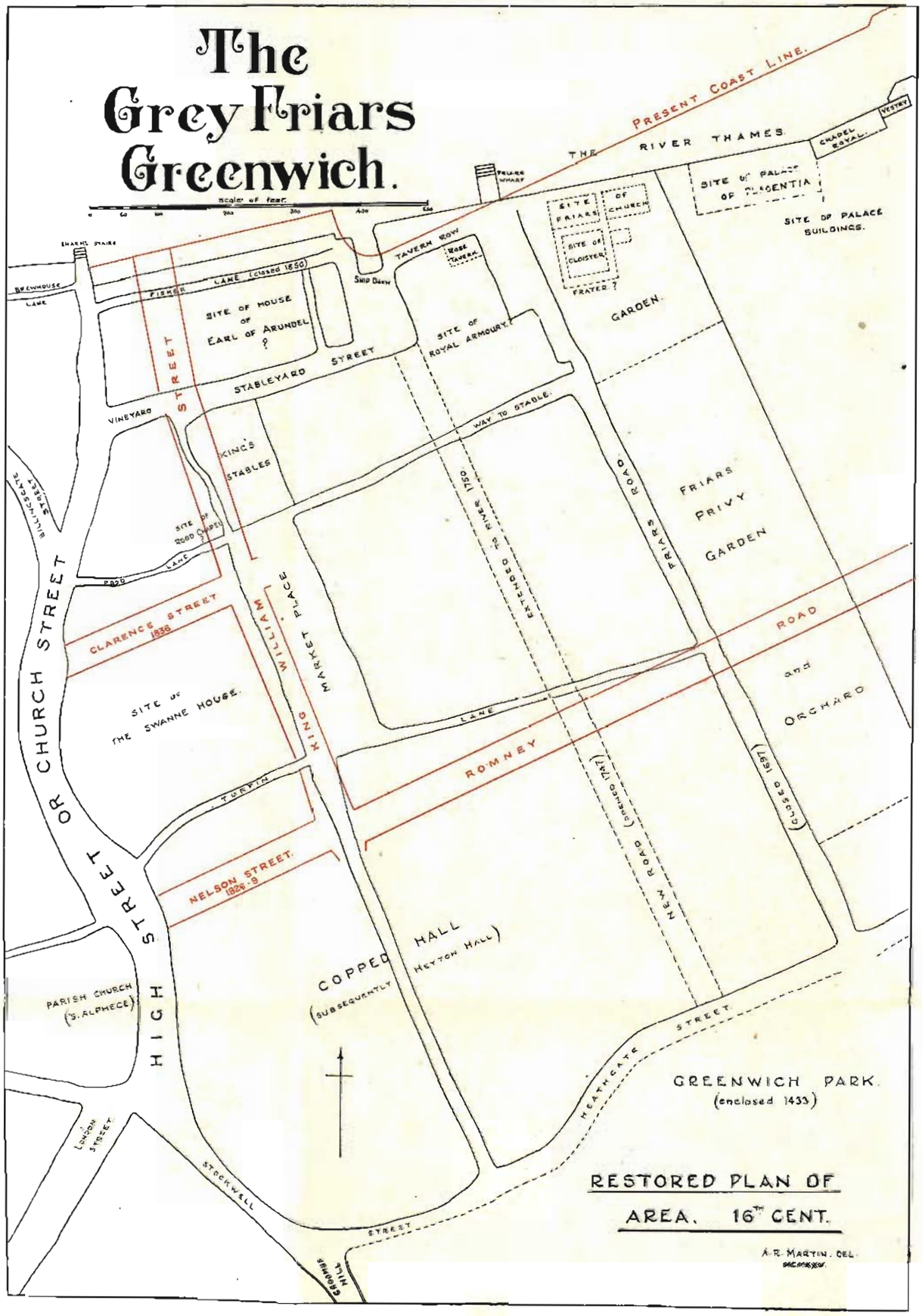


RECONSTRUCTED PLAN OF THE GREYFRIARS, GREENWICH.
Modern streets indicated in red.

THE GREY FRIARS OF GREENWICH.

By A. R. MARTIN.

The recent celebration of the seven-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the Franciscan friars at Canterbury and Oxford has lent a prominence to Franciscan studies which should stimulate the already considerable interest shewn in the history of the Order. Accounts of individual houses of the Grey friars in England are at present few, though those of the establishments at Oxford[1], London[2] and Canterbury[3] may be cited as models of what can be done in this respect. The English Observant houses have received still less attention, and it is undoubtedly to the history of the Greenwich friars, who were the first of the reformed order to settle in England, that one must primarily look for a proper understanding of the general effect of the introduction of the Observants on the English Franciscan province.

The followers of St. Francis, called Minorites from their humble desire to be regarded 'less than the least,' and Grey friars from the colour of their habit, had arrived in England in 1224, two years before the death of their founder and three years after the arrival of the Dominicans. The order had flourished, for by the time of the Dissolution there were about sixty-one[4] Franciscan friaries in England alone, while the Minoresses or nuns of St. Clare were represented by three English houses.

Early in the fifteenth century a movement began to spread among the Franciscans on the continent in favour of a stricter observance of their founder's rule. The great increase of wealth and luxury since the days of St. Francis had resulted in a general disregard for the vow of poverty among the friars, and much of the teaching of their founder

[1] *The Grey Friars in Oxford*, Little, 1891.
[2] *Grey Friars of London*, Kingsford, 1915.
[3] *The Grey Friars of Canterbury*, Cotton, 1924.
[4] This figure includes the six observant houses.

had been lost sight of in the course of centuries. The revival was well timed, and under the patronage of Eugenius IV and subsequent popes the new or reformed order, who were called Observants to distinguish them from the Conventuals who retained their former rule, spread with great rapidity. In England, however, the Franciscans still retained much of their early simplicity. Few of their houses owned any property beyond the few acres on which their friary was built. The friars themselves, who were not as a rule attached to any particular house but journeyed from one to another in the course of their mission, were largely dependent on alms for their support. In England in fact the general enthusiasm for the four orders of mendicant friars had not yet subsided, while on the continent the lazy and dissolute lives of many of these friars had brought them into general contempt. Although there was little call for a reformation of the order in this country, isolated instances of immorality and excessive luxury certainly existed. It must not be supposed that the observants failed to introduce into this country any beneficial changes. In the matter of dress, for instance, a general reform throughout the province was effected in 1502. 'Aboute Easter this yere,' it is recorded, 'the gray ffreres chaunged their habyte: ffor where of long tyme before they vsed to were broun russet of iiiis. vid. or viiis a yerd now they were compelled to were kenet russet of iis. a yerd; which was brought about by labour of the ffreres of Grenewich and by favour of the bisshop of Wynchestre, Doctour ffox.'[1]

The observants never secured the popularity of the older orders and marks of their foreign origin survived with them to the end. As the history of the Greenwich house curiously shows, the observants in England were a forced growth; their introduction was the result of no popular demand but of the personal request of the king, and their subsequent history is largely a record of royal bounty. As soon as they lost favour with the king their end became inevitable, for the plant had failed to take root and disappeared almost as unnoticed as it had come.

[1] Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, pp. 255-256; *Studies in Eng. Franc. History*, Little, 61.

The absence of any serious call naturally lead to the late arrival of the observants in England. They are said to have first settled in Scotland in 1447,[1] and about two years later were licensed by the pope to found a house in Ireland.[2] More than thirty years elapsed before Edward IV introduced some foreign friars of the reformed order and settled them at Greenwich. The subsequent increase of observant houses was very slow. For sixteen years Greenwich stood alone as the only representative of the order in England. In 1498 the three conventual houses at Newcastle, Canterbury and Southampton, probably owing to external pressure, adopted the reformed rule. It was not until about 1500 that the second new Observant house which, like the first, was a purely royal foundation attached to a royal palace, was founded at Richmond in Surrey. In the meantime, at the general chapter held at Malines on 19th May, 1499, England had at last been recognised as a separate province of the ultramontane family.[3] The remaining observant house in England was founded at Newark in 1507, and was thus destined to less than thirty years' existence before the final suppression of the order. The observant house founded in Guernsey in 1486 never formed part of the English province.

It has been stated that a house belonging to one of the mendicant orders existed in Greenwich as early as the reign of Edward III. The originator of this statement seems to have been John Speed, who, in the list of religious houses at the end of his history of Great Britain,[4] mentions in addition to the later observant house, a house of friars minor, founded by Edward III in the fifty-fifth year of his reign and John Norbury. No documentary evidence is quoted in support of this, and it is now certain that no such house existed. The statement has however been repeated so frequently by later writers that it is worth while to examine its origin. The first to doubt the existence of this foundation was Daniel Lysons,[5] who suggests that it may have been confused with the alien

[1] *Scottish Grey Friars*, Moir Bryce, i, 53.

[2] *British Society of Franciscan Studies*, vol. ix, 203.

[3] *Analecta Franciscana*, ii, 521, (Glassberger). Prior to this date the Greenwich house had been under the rule, first of a commissary of the vicar-general of the ultramontane observants, and subsequently of the provincial vicar of Cologne.

[4] (1611) f. 791 b.

[5] *Environs*, iv, 464.

priory of Lewisham. Weever,[1] after referring to the observant house says, 'here in this towne was another monastry of friers minorites and aliens founded by king Edward the third and the foresaid John Norbury which, as Lewsham did, belonged to the abbot of Gaunt in Flanders.' One can thus see how the error arose. At this time both Greenwich and Lewisham belonged to the abbot of Ghent, whose lands are frequently referred to as the alien priory of Greenwich and Lewisham, though the priory buildings were at Lewisham. In 1399 this property which had been temporarily seized by the crown, was placed in the charge of the king's treasurer, John Norbury, as custodian during the war with France. This accounts for the introduction of Norbury's name and the reason for the confusion is clear. Philpot[2] however repeats Weever and adds, that Sir John Norbury was reckoned a benefactor. Kilburne,[3] Dugdale[4] and Tanner[5] also repeat in substance this account and, on these somewhat confused authorities, Hasted[6] in 1778 states that Edward III, in 1376, at the instance of Sir John Norbury, founded a religious house 'for the order of minorites or Franciscans commonly called grey friars which was made an alien priory subject to the abbey of Ghent.' The fact that Greenwich was in the hands of an alien Abbot would probably in itself have deterred Edward from establishing a Franciscan house there.

Less than seventy years after the suppression of the neighbouring priory of Lewisham and the return of the foreign prior and the few monks to the continent, another but very different party of foreigners arrived in obedience to the king's request, and settled at Greenwich. It has been clearly shown by Mr. Little in his admirable account of the introduction of the Observants into England[7] that this event could not have taken place before 1482, in spite of the endeavours of some older writers to establish an earlier date.

What determined Edward IV on founding a house of observants in England it is now difficult to say. His

[1] *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (1631), p. 339.

[2] *Survey of Kent* (1659), p. 163.

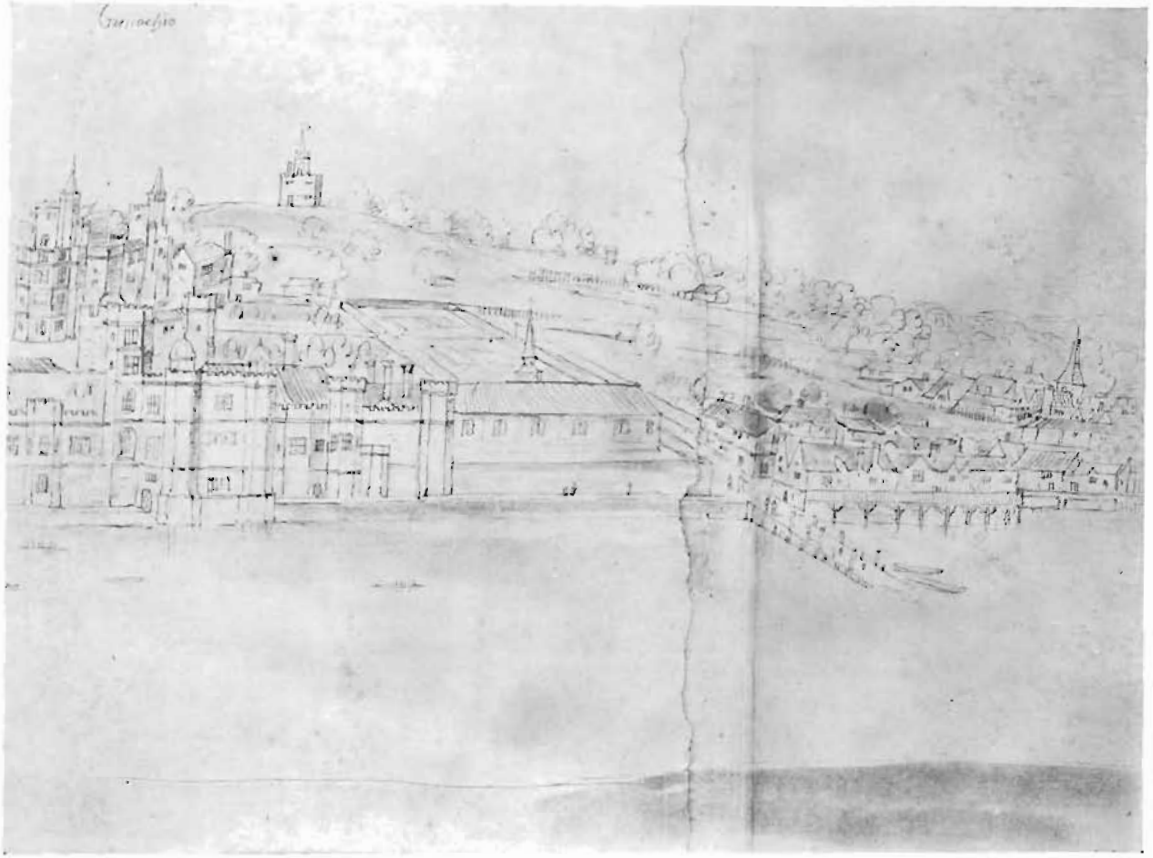
[3] ibid. (1659), p. 114.

[4] *Monasticon* (1682), i, p. 1035, and (edit. 1846) vi, pt. 3, p. 1512.

[5] *Notitia Monastica* (1744), p. 227.

[6] i, 30.

[7] *Proc. Brit. Acad.* x, pp. 455-471.



VIEW OF GREENWICH FROM THE NORTH, SHOWING THE FRIARS' CHURCH IN 1558.
(From the original drawing by Antony Van den Wyngaerde in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.)

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sister, Margaret of Burgundy, is known to have been an ardent supporter of the order, and the fact that she was on a visit to the English court during the summer of 1480,[1] leads one naturally to suppose that it was her influence which brought about the foundation of the Greenwich house. Some confirmation of this is to be found in the fact that the British Museum possesses a single leaf of an illuminated gradual which appears to have been presented by her to the Greenwich friars.[2] In the margin are the arms of Burgundy impaling France and England, and on the back is the following note: 'Ther was a booke called a graile given unto the graie observant friers of greenwich by Margaret duchesse of Bourgoine sister unto K. Edward 4. the booke was made beyond the seas.'

In the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is a letter-book[3] which belonged to Nicholas Collys, notary, and apparently dates from the early part of the sixteenth century. Amongst other documents in this volume are two which were drawn up at the request of the Greenwich friars as a permanent record of their foundation, from which almost all that is known of the circumstances connected with this event is gathered. The first of these documents is a notarial instrument prepared by E. Grimely, public notary, and an assistant, giving an account of the foundation of the observant house at Greenwich on 2nd July, 1482.[4] The other is an open letter by Edmund Audley, bishop of Rochester, setting forth the same events.[5]

Edward IV being now determined on introducing some of the reformed Franciscans into England, offered a site in Greenwich to the vicar general of the ultramontane family of the friars minor of the observance, but before this could be accepted, a papal licence had to be procured. Edward accordingly obtained a bull from Sixtus IV dated at St. Peter's, Rome, 'MCCCC octuagesimo pridie non. Januar. p. n. anno X^mo' (4th January, 1481) in which the pope granted a licence to build a house with church, low bell-tower, bell, cloister, frater, dorter,

[1] *P.R.O.*, E. 101, 412-11.
[2] Arundel MSS. 71 f. 9.
[3] Catalogue of MSS. Corp. Christ. Coll. Cambridge (James, 1912), i, p. 381.
[4] Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 170, 43 (printed in full, *Proc. Brit. Acad.* vol. x, 466-469).
[5] ibid. 170, 44.

gardens and other necessary offices, for the perpetual use and habitation of the friars in Greenwich or in some other suitable place in the kingdom. At the same time the pope wrote to the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops of Lincoln and Rochester requesting them to protect the friars during the building of their convent.

The king then sent to the vicar general asking him to select some friars and send them to England to receive the site. Bernard of Lochen or Blochen was appointed the latter's commissary and brought with him to England friars Vincent of Ostend, Cornelius W——, Arnold of Ostend and other friars from beyond the seas. In due course they arrived in Greenwich and no doubt found a temporary lodging in the town or in one of the buildings connected with the palace.

Something can be learnt of the ceremony when the friars were formally placed in possession of the chosen site from the notarial instrument already mentioned. On Tuesday, 2nd July, 1482, being the feast of the visitation of the blessed Virgin Mary, James Goldwell, bishop of Norwich, who acted as the king's representative, received the friars, probably on the vacant space on the riverside immediately to the west of the palace which had been chosen as the site for the new convent.

Here the land was confirmed to the perpetual use and habitation of the friars minor of the observance and dedicated by the bishop to the honour of God, Mary the most blessed Mother and St. Francis. Then in the name of the king he laid the foundation-stone of the future convent with due solemnity. The friars in token of their true and real possession first chanted the *Te Deum* and then solemnly sang mass. Grimely, the public notary to whom we are indebted for this account, was present at the ceremony, and among the other witnesses is mentioned Edmund Russell, vicar of the church of East Greenwich.

Although as we have seen the foundation-stone was laid at this time, little seems to have been done immediately towards completing the new convent, owing no doubt to the poverty of the friars and their inability to procure the necessary funds from the king. They proceeded however to demolish some ancient houses on

the site and began, as we learn from the charter given them by Henry VII, 'at their own cost, labour and exertion to rebuild divers poor little dwellings with the assistance of certain devout and faithful people to the glory of God, the blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis and All Saints, and to pray for ever for the health and prosperity of the whole kingdom.'[1]

During this period and before their own church was built, the friars seem to have used a small chapel which already existed in Greenwich dedicated to the Holy Cross. The historian, John Rous, who died in 1491, and was therefore contemporary with these events, writes: 'Et hujus etiam regis diebus Fratres observantiae ordinis Minorum circa annum regni hujus regis xxi in Angliam primo venerunt locum regis benevolentia habentes pro tempore in cantaria cum capella sanctae crucis de Grenwych super Thamiseam Londoniae juxta le Blakheth.'[2] Lambarde writing in 1570, adds that 'they obtained by means of Sir William Corbrige (as some think) a chauntrie with a little chapel of the holy crosse, a place yet extant in the towne: and (as Polydore and Lilley say) king Henrie the seventh builded for them that house adioining to the palaice which is there yet to be seene.'[3]

In view of the intimate connexion of this chapel of the Holy Cross with the early history of the Greenwich friars, we may here pause to consider what may be learnt as to its somewhat obscure history. Its origin is uncertain as the earliest known reference to it is in 1465,[4] only a few years before the friars took possession. It is interesting to note, however, that there was a chapel in Greenwich at a much earlier date. Besides the twelfth-century chapel at Combe[5] of which nothing is known, there is a single reference on the early Kent assize rolls to a chapel of All Saints at Greenwich in 1265. The entry refers to an action of novel disseisin brought by Adam of Leuesham and others against Simon, vicar of the chapel of All Saints,

[1] 14th Dec. 1 Henry VII. P.R.O. Chart. m. 20. Writ of Privy Seal dated 11th Dec. (P.R.O. Chancery warr. ser. ii, file 5). The charter is printed in full in *Archaeol. Journ.* xxiii, 57. See also Materials, Hen. VII, i, 216.

[2] *Hist. Reg. Angliae.* (ed. Hearne), p. 211.

[3] *Perambulation of Kent* (ed. 1596), p. 432, and (ed. 1826), p. 389; *Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica*, A. P[arkinson] (1726), p. 207.

[4] Rochester Consist. Court Wills, Reg. ii, f. 335.

[5] *Textus Roffensis.*

Grenewyz.[1] The evidence is at present too slight to connect this chapel with that of the Holy Cross. The fact however that the latter appears subsequently to have been known as 'All Hallows chapel,' tempts one to think that the similarity of dedication may have been something more than coincidence.

A brotherhood or guild of the Holy Cross existed in Greenwich, attached to the parish church of St. Alphege as early as the time of Edward III.[2] These guilds, of which six are known to have been connected with the parish church at various dates, were a very common institution of mediaeval times and in many cases survived until suppressed by Edward VI. Occasionally we find them possessing property in a corporate capacity. This was the case with the brotherhood of the Holy Cross at Greenwich; for in 1377 the king's escheator seized a messuage and 4 acres of land in Estgrenewiche which John atte Nasshe the elder of Greenwich and many others of the brotherhood of the Holy Cross in the church of St. Alphege (Sancte Alfridis) had purchased contrary to the statute of mortmain, to find a chaplain to celebrate divine service for the souls of John Boyn the lame, Stephen Sharlet, John Clerc, William Martyn and many others. The king however returned the property to the brotherhood.[3] It does not appear that any chapel in the parish church was reserved for the use of this guild, as was usual at a somewhat later date. The members of the guild may therefore have built the chapel of the Holy Cross at this time, for their use, or have converted the earlier chapel of All Saints to the same purpose. It is however impossible to be certain as to this.

In 1465 the first direct reference to the chapel occurs when William Lynde, in his will dated 12th February, directed that if his son should die without issue his lands were to be devoted 'to the dedication and makyng of the chapell of the holy crosse in Estgrenwich' or the same might be 'amortised and given in mortmayn to the same chapell for ever more.'[4] Although this seems to suggest that the

[1] P.R.O. Kent Assize roll 1191, 21 d. *Greenwich Antiq. Soc. Trans.* i, 204. The chapel (capella) does not seem to have been attached to the parish church, as it would have been unusual for a chantry priest to have been styled 'Vicar.'

[2] P.R.O. Close roll, 51 Edw. III, m 16. Inquisition 51 Edw. III, no. 36.

[3] ibid.

[4] Rochester Consistory Court, Reg. ii, f. 335.

chapel was being built at this time, it may possibly indicate a reconstruction and fresh dedication of the earlier building.

From this time until it was acquired by the Greenwich friars nothing is known of this building, and its subsequent history is almost equally obscure. In 1483, the year after the arrival of the Observants at Greenwich, Anthony Widville, lord Scales and second earl Rivers, who was owner of the neighbouring manor of Lee, made provision in his will for 'a preest to be fowde to syng at the chapell of the rodes in Grenewich to pray for my soule and all xp'en sowlys.'[1] Whether this refers to the chapel of the Holy Cross is uncertain, though the similarity of dedication is of course obvious.[2] From this time on while the rood chapel is frequently mentioned, there appears to be no further reference to the chapel of the Holy Cross as such. It seems probable therefore that the two were in fact identical.

Our knowledge of the rood chapel, or the chapel of All Hallows, as it was sometimes called, is almost entirely confined to what can be gathered from the wills of Greenwich people. Thomas Ustwayte, of East Greenwich, in his will, dated 1496, left 'to the rep' of the chapell of Alhalowen in Est Grenewich and for the lightes in the same chapell iiis. iiij*d*.'[3] In 1501, Agnes Hardyng desired a trentall of masses to be said 'in the chapell of Al Halowyn in Grenewych.'[4] The friars' church had by this time been built, and the rood chapel, if we are correct in identifying it with the chapel of the Holy Cross, would probably have been given up by the friars and again put to secular use as these bequests seem to indicate. The repairs apparently undertaken about 1496 may well have been necessitated by this change of ownership, as the friars' new church was consecrated about two years before. A reference to a burial in the rood chapel is of interest on account of the description of the tomb which was to be erected. William Cornysshe, of Estgrenewiche, gentleman of the kings most honourable chapel, in 1512 desired to be buried 'in the body of the chapell of the roods within the said towne of Estgrenewiche if I happen

[1] Perogative Court of Canterbury (40 Milles). *Excerpta Historica* (Bentley), 1831, p. 247.

[2] e.g. the church of the Holy Cross at Canterbury, frequently referred to as the Rood church.

[3] P.C.C. 7 Horne.

[4] Rochester Consist. Court, Reg. vi, 79.

to deceas within the same towne or nygh to the said towne . . . I will that if I be buried in the said chapell of the Roods within grenewich aforesaid, then I will that there be made a tombe of bryke over me with a stone upon it and a border aboute the same for people to knele upon of half a foote high.'[1] A bequest of some interest is contained in the will of Richard Piry, dated 1529, in which he left 'to poor people v pennyworth brede in the worshipe of the v wounds of o^{r} Sauyo^{r} ihu Xpe—this dole to be given at the roodes chapell after the mass be songe euery fridaye duryng a hole yere after my deceasse.'[2]

Soon after this date the building seems to have been allowed to fall into decay. On his accession to the throne in 1547, Edward VI granted the site to Robert Hocland, one of the gentlemen of the king's chapel at Greenwich, in recognition of his faithful services to his father, Henry VIII. The original grant in the Public Record Office[3] which is undated, describes the property as 'all that chapell now being ruynous and in decaye late called the rode chapell standing and being in o^{r} towne of Grenewiche in o^{r} countie of Kent behynde o^{r} stable there and the steple of the same covered with shingle together with the walles of rough stone and the leade (roof ?) of the same chapell, and also the soyle and grounde whereupon the said chapell now standith not being half an acre.' The property was stated to be capable of producing a rent of five shillings and the materials were valued at six pounds.

It seems that Robert Hocland must have sold this property almost immediately, and at the same time the chapel was probably finally demolished; for in the following year Rauffe Tappyng, 'sergeant of the king's most honorable vestray,' who from his calling must have been well known to Hocland and may therefore have been the purchaser, in his will, after desiring to be buried 'on the south side of the quyre of Saynte Alphage,' devised to his kinsman, Thomas Becke, 'the pece of grounde in Grenewich whereupon stode the chapell of the roodes.'[4] This seems to indicate that the rood chapel had disappeared,

[1] P.C.C. 13 Bodfelde.
[2] Rochester Consist. Court, Reg. viii, 227.
[3] Particulars of Grants 1 Edw. VI, no. 1700: Strype, *Eccles. Mem.* (1822), ii, 405.
[4] P.C.C. 24 Coode.

although, as we have seen, Lambarde, who lived the greater part of his life at Westcombe in Greenwich, and should therefore have known the district well, refers as late as 1570 to the chapel of the Holy Cross as 'a place yet extant in the towne.' If one is to identify the latter with the rood chapel it must be assumed that this merely refers to the site, where the foundations may well have survived until much later times.

This site can be identified with some certainty. Rood or Stocks lane,[1] which is frequently mentioned in old deeds, evidently took its name from the rood chapel. It was a narrow lane which ran from Church street eastward to the old market, which was situate where the northern part of King William street now is and partly within the present western boundary of the hospital. When Clarence street, which was constructed in a line with and slightly south of the old lane, was opened in 1836, Rood lane fell into disuse and was subsequently built over. At one time this lane must have formed the westerly continuation of the road from the old palace marked 'way to the stable' on a plan of the site of the hospital in the Royal Naval College museum.[2] From the friary buildings this road passed to the south of the royal stables, across the north end of the old market-place and joined Church street under the name of Rood lane. In the grant of the rood chapel to Robert Hocland the site is described as behind the royal stables, which in reference to the palace can only mean to the west. The king's stables were situate between Rood lane and Stableyard street, and to the east of a narrow passage, at a later date known as Hell alley, and running between the two on the site of the present King William street. These stables stood partly on the northern extremity of King William street which was extended to the river in 1836, and partly within the present hospital grounds. The site was granted to the hospital in 1701, and new stables were subsequently erected. Immediately to the west of these buildings therefore, and probably to the north of Rood lane the

[1] At a later date it was known as Stocks lane in reference to the cage and stocks which stood there before they were removed to the old market-place.

[2] *Greenwich Antiq. Soc. Trans.* iii, 18.

chapel of the rood must once have stood, and it has been said that when King William street was extended to the river, stone foundations of some such building were discovered.[1]

To return now to the Greenwich friars who had received the site for their new convent adjacent to the palace. Edward IV never lived to see the completion of his plans regarding the new observant house, for he died less than a year after the friars arrived in Greenwich. During the brief reigns of Edward V and Richard III they probably devoted themselves to the erection of such domestic buildings as were most needed, while the chapel of the Holy Cross sufficed for the conduct of their simple services.

About the time of the accession of Henry VII the friars began to think of building their own church. As a result of their petition to the king setting forth their condition and the delay in the completion of Edward IV's intended foundation, Henry granted them a charter dated 14th December, 1485,[2] confirming the grant of the site in frankalmoign, and 'bearing in mind Edward IV's pious intention [and] the good disposition, devotion, expenses and labours of the said brethren day and night in orisons prayers and fastings,' he formally founded their convent which was to consist of a warden and twelve brethren at the least.

From this time the building of the church proceeded, and at some date before 1494 it was consecrated probably by Thomas Savage, bishop of Rochester, who issued a decree granting an indulgence to any who should bring to the chapel of 'All Saints' on the day of its dedication alms towards the fabric.[3]

The progress of the building can be traced to some extent from a few bequests in contemporary wills. The earliest of these was in 1485 when Richard Tylle of Sellinge in Kent, by his will dated 17th December, after giving sums to the Grey friars, Austin friars and friars preachers at Canterbury, and the White friars at Sandwich, left 'to

[1] Note by J. L. Jay, a former treasurer of Greenwich hospital, in Hasted's *Hundred of Blackheath* (ed. Drake), p. 97, n. 10.

[2] P.R.O. Charters 1 Hen. VII, m. 20; Writ of Privy Seal Chancery Warr. Ser. ii, file 5; *Arch. Journ.* xxiii, 57; Materials, Hen. VII, i, 216-217.

[3] Hasted, *Hundred* of *Blackheath* (ed. Drake), p. 86, n. 4.

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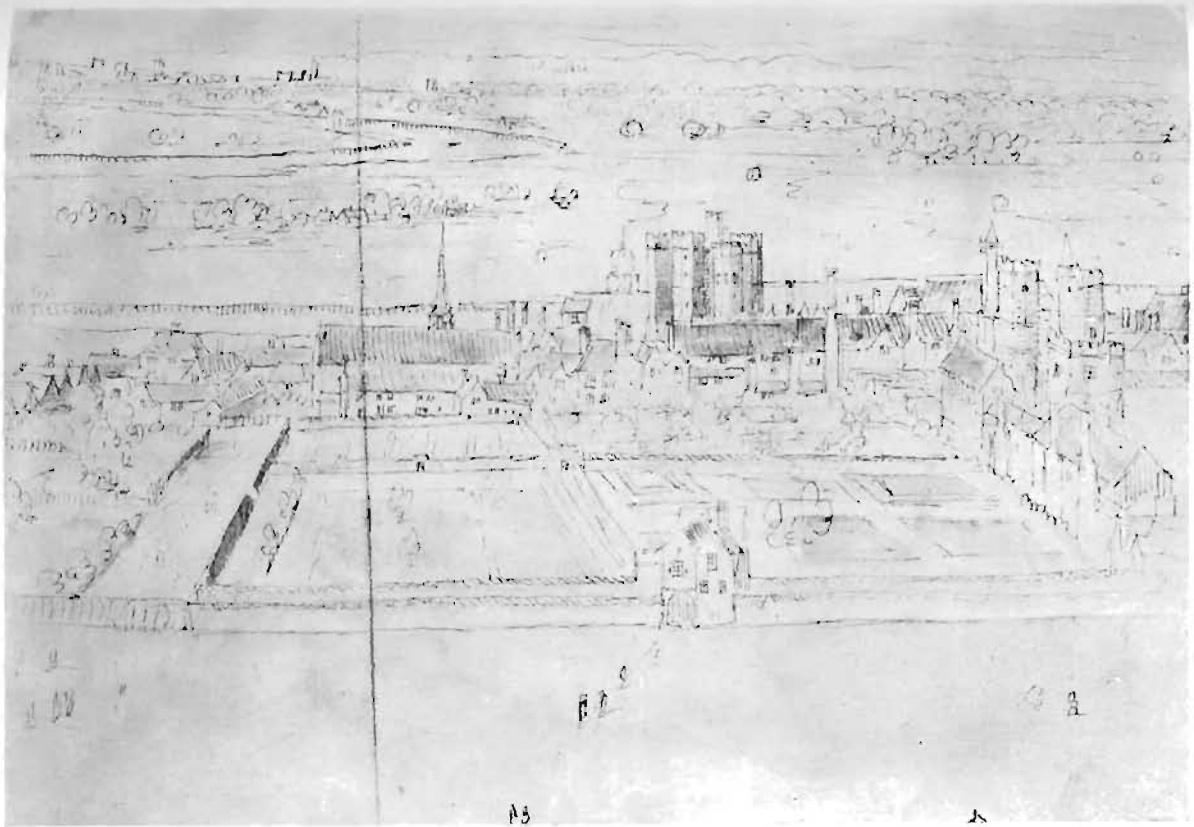

VIEW OF GREENWICH FROM THE SOUTH, SHOWING THE FRIARY BUILDINGS IN 1558.

(From the original drawing by Antony Van den Wyngaerde in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.)

the building of the observance house at Greenwich 100*s*.'[1] Seven years later the church was evidently still unfinished, for in 1493 Elliot Alfons left to the friars 20*s*. for their 'vitaille' or the building of the church.[2] This seems to fix the date of consecration as 1493 or 1494, as the church had apparently been consecrated before 8th April in the latter year, when the bishop of Rochester authorised any catholic bishop to consecrate 'the cemetry and cloister of the religious men friars Donald Gilbert (or Gilberti) guardian of the house of Greenwich and the convent of the same place recently built there.'

Of the disposition of the various buildings we know very little. The site on which the future friary was to be built is described in the notarial instrument already referred to as 'a certain flat piece of ground surrounded by walls, in which the game of ball used to be played adjacent to the house or manor of the king, together with certain buildings and a plot of land which adjoin the said piece of ground and have been bought with the king's money.'[3] Henry VII's charter of 1485 describes the site as a certain parcel of land with certain ancient buildings thereon in the town of East Greenwich, contiguous to his manor called the king's plot, and measuring twelve virgates in breadth and sixty-three virgates in length. Presuming a virgate here means a rod or pole, the site would enclose an area of $66 \times 346\frac{1}{2}$ yards. Nearly two hundred years later, when the priory buildings were sold during the Commonwealth, the area on which the buildings stood was estimated at one acre, two roods and six perches, while the privie garden adjoining is said to measure from east to west in length 184 foot of assize and in breadth 168 foot of assize.[4] Although one cannot altogether reconcile these figures it is clear that the whole property which at any time belonged to the friars was very small. Here then the friars began to erect their buildings. The cloister, domestic buildings and cemet ry

[1] Canterbury Consist. Court, Reg. 3. *Testamenta Vetusta*, Nicholas i, 384.

[2] P.C.C. 27 Vox.

[3] The original reads 'certam planiciem muris circumdatum que ludus pile appellabatur contiguam domui seu manerio dicti domini Regis in dicto loco de G. Roffensis diocesis in comitatu Kancie unacum certis edificiis et terre Fundo de pecunia ipsius dicti domini Regis emptis eidem adiacen' ad ecclesiam cimiterium claustrum refectorium dormitorium ortos et alias officinas ad conuenientiam dicti ordinis requisitas adoptandam.'

[4] P.R.O. Particulars for Sale, Commonwealth, H. 7, no. 3.

had to be to the south of the church, as the river passed immediately beneath its northern wall.

The only views of the friary buildings known to exist are in two drawings of Greenwich, by Antony Van den Wyngaerde,[1] now in the Bodleian, made in 1558 just before queen Mary's death and the final suppression of the house. These two sketches, which are evidently unusually accurate for drawings of the period, are of great interest; one shows the view from the park, the other the river front, and in both the friary buildings can be seen immediately to the west of the palace. The church itself is a long low building of six bays with six windows facing the river, and above a somewhat acutely-pitched roof is a small bell-turret surmounted by a light spire. The view from the park shows the domestic buildings to the south of the church, and the garden and orchard extend to the northern boundary of the park, where a gate-way beneath a small gatehouse or lodge gives access into the park.

From these views one is justified in assuming the church to have been typical of other small Franciscan churches. Long and narrow and probably without aisles, the church formed a plain rectangle without transepts, and was surmounted by the small bell-tower which seems to have been an almost invariable adjunct to Franciscan churches. Their great church in London had a similar 'belfry'[2] and also those at Canterbury,[3] Lynn, Coventry, and Richmond in Yorkshire. The simple rectangular ground plan, which was usually adopted by the Carthusians was very common among the friars' churches. This was no doubt partly because their rule forbade the erection of elaborate buildings, but also because a simple ground-plan was often a necessity where the site was already restricted by existing buildings, as was the case in most of the larger towns where the friars' houses were almost invariably built. Elaboration of plan with the object of increasing the sites available for additional altars was also uncalled for in a community where a minority only were

[1] See plates II and III. A much reduced reproduction of the whole of the view from the park appears in *Mediaeval London*, Benham. The long building surmounted by a small spire to the west of the palace shown in Hollar's view from Greenwich park (1637), is almost certainly the friars' church.

[2] *Grey Friars of London*, Kingsford, 41.

[3] *Grey Friars of Canterbury*, Cotton, 24.

priests. Some of the larger friary churches had wide aisles to the nave, though this is more noticeable in the Dominican churches such as the Blackfriars church in London, where the nave was specially constructed with a view to its suitability for preaching. At Greenwich there does not seem to have been aisles.

The size of the friars' church at Greenwich can only be vaguely estimated. The total distance between the west wing of the palace and the friars' road could not have been more than 250 feet, while the former is known to have been separated by an intervening space from the friary precincts. It seems unlikely therefore that its extreme length exceeded 150 feet, while it would probably have measured from 30 to 40 feet in width. This would represent a church which, though not in the first rank among the friars' churches, was yet large enough to have afforded space for the numerous important ceremonies which took place within its walls. Compared with the great Franciscan church at London, which was 300 feet long and 89 feet broad, the observant church at Greenwich must have been small,[1] though the Grey friars' church at Canterbury, on the other hand, appears to have been 27 feet wide, while its total length is stated, though probably incorrectly, to have been only 77 feet. In this case the foundations so far uncovered appear to mark the quire of the original church only, so that its total length must have been something between 150 and 200 feet, and would thus approximate fairly closely with tne probable size of the church at Greenwich.

The interior of the church seems to have been arranged on the usual plan. No arch divided the nave from the presbytery, though an ambulatory or 'walking space' would have effectually secured the privacy of the quire for the friars, at the same time forming a suitable substructure for the small lantern and bell-tower.

This peculiar feature of the friars' churches, called the 'ambulatorium inter chorum et altaria,' usually

[1] The following approximate measurements of the other friars' churches in London are given for comparison: Blackfriars, length 220 feet, width of nave 66 feet, width of quire 35 feet; Whitefriars, length 260 feet, width of nave 80 feet, width of quire 25 feet; Austin Friars, length 265 feet, width 83 feet. The Dominican church at Norwich is about 254 feet long, the nave being 77 feet and the quire 38 feet wide.

occupied one bay between the pulpitum, which in these cases was probably a single stone screen wall with a loft above, shutting off the west end of the quire, and the rood-screen at the east end of the nave. The space thus enclosed, to the north and south of which a doorway opened into the church, seems to have corresponded in some respects to the retro-quire of some monastic churches,[1] though in the friars' churches it was used merely as an entry into the cloister precinct and not as an additional chapel. The complete separation of the quire from the nave was effected by two parallel walls enclosing the passage just mentioned and forming the main support for the lantern and spire above. In these walls single arches opened into the quire and nave across which the screens were erected. The usual monastic arrangement of having two doorways opening into the nave through the rood-screen which formed a reredos for an altar in the nave, probably gave place at Greenwich as in other friars' churches to a middle door opposite that into the quire and opening through the arch in the base of the western wall of the tower.

It was in the rood-loft in the friars' church at Greenwich that friar Elstow in 1532 delivered his attack on Dr. Curwyn, afterwards bishop of Oxford, in the king's presence for having supported Henry in the question of his divorce.[2] A passage in an account of the christening of queen Elizabeth in this church perhaps refers to the 'walking space.' It reads, 'between the quire and the body of the church was a close place with a pan of fire to make the child ready in.'[3]

The church probably had a series of three-light windows on the south side overlooking the cloister corresponding to those on the north shown in Wyngaerde's sketch. Some very curious instructions evidently intended for the glass-painter who was to design the glass for one of the windows have survived and are now in the British Museum.[4] The window in question was probably the great east window, which must have been of considerable size judging from

[1] e.g. some Cistercian churches and possibly the church of the Austin canons at Lesnes, in Kent.

[2] Stow's *Annals* (1615), p. 561.

[3] Harl. MSS. 3504, f. 228. Stow's *Annals* (1615), p. 568.

[4] Egerton MSS. 2341, A and B: printed in full in Hasted, *Hundred of Blackheath* (ed. Drake), p. 86, n. 6.

the number of figures it was to contain. The directions are written on two small rolls, and in the margin of each are shields, some of which are blazoned while others are left blank as though the design was never completed. In the lower part of the window were to be placed the figures of sixteen kings and saints with their coats of arms. The descriptions of these are contained in the first roll and are interesting as showing with what caution figures in stained glass should be accepted as portraits even of contemporary persons. Among the figures appeared that of Henry VII: 'Make his ymage but halff body to the waste lyke a yong kyng in his roobis of astate and apparell lyke a kyng crowned wyth a closse crowne imperyall wyth a septure in his left honde and a rounde ball wyth a crosse thereon in his ryght honde and under his waste a roll to sett in his name and his style of his astate . . .' The roll concludes as follows: 'Here afore in this byll ar all the images of seyntes yt shall be made in ye v panes of the wyndow in the grey fryers at Grenewych an in no parte in the over fourme or storye above the heyest steybarre.' The second roll contains the descriptions of fourteen persons 'yt shalbe sette in ye over fourme and storie of ye wyndowe above ye heyar steybarre at ye grey fryers at Grenewych and they be set in no parte amonges ye seyntes in ye v panes yt are under ye seyd steybarre but all in ye seyd storie and fourme.' In this upper portion of the window Henry VII was to appear again, this time a full figure with his queen, Elizabeth of York—doubtless in recognition of him as founder of the convent.

Of the domestic buildings which lay to the south of the church practically nothing is known. They were certainly on a very small scale, and probably consisted of little more than a dorter and frater, though there appears also to have been a chapter-house[1] where the provincial held his periodical visitations and much of the business of the convent was transacted. Unlike some of the larger Franciscan houses, such as London and Hereford, Greenwich never possessed a building set apart as a library, though the friars had access to the royal library in the

[1] 'Father forest rehersed before us all yn owre chapter howse suche thyngys that yow spake to hym' (letter from Richard Lyst, lay brother of Greenwich, to Thomas Cromwell, dated 18th Feb. 1533-4. B.M. Cotton MSS. Cleopatra, E iv, ff. 33, 34).

palace, which they seem to have regarded to some extent as their own.[1]

To the south of the buildings were the gardens and orchard belonging to the friary. These were no doubt for the most part cultivated by the friars themselves, though hired labourers were occasionally employed sometimes at the cost of the king.[2] On account of their poverty and the revival of the primitive rule of the early Franciscans the friars probably began by surrounding their property with a ditch or rough fence. The walls shown in Wyngaerde's drawings were no doubt built about 1509, out of the £200 left by Henry VII in his will to the friars of Greenwich 'for the closing of their gardyne and orcharde with a brikewall.'[3] Henry also bequeathed £200 to the prior of Charterhouse in trust for the Greenwich friars, 'as he knew they had been many times in danger of ruin for lack of food.' On 6th June, 1509, a warrant was granted authorising the payment of 500 marcs (£333 6*s*. 8*d*.) in respect of the legacy of Henry VII for repairs to the five houses of the observants.[4] Henry probably regarded the Greenwich house as under his special care, which would account for the generous provisions of his will.

The main entrance from the river would have been through the walking space between the nave and the quire of the church, access thus being obtained either direct into the cloister or into the intervening space which existed in some friars' churches, such as the Dominican church at Norwich. At Greenwich there was a water-gate which gave access immediately on to the river, though its exact position with regard to the church is uncertain.[5] The royal accounts for 1542 mention 'repairing the gates sometime the friars next Thames side with two doors next the church.'[6] There was another entrance from the friars' road on the west.

We must now pass on to give some account of the

[1] ibid. 'And this comynycacyon . . . was yn owre howse yn owre lybyrary.' See also *Chronicles of Greenwich*, L'Estrange i, 171.

[2] 'To hym that laboreth in the freres garden at Grenewyche in reward 20*s*.' (Royal accounts, 1509, Chapter-house Book, A 5-18).

[3] Will of Henry VII, Astle, p. 30.

[4] Letters and Papers, Henry viii (2nd ed.), i, nos. 58 and 115.

[5] Royal accounts, 1542, Add. MSS. 10109.

[6] ibid.

historic ceremonies which took place in the friars' church, and which form the greater part of what is known of the subsequent history of the foundation. Although in existence for scarcely half a century the observant house at Greenwich witnessed several royal functions of great magnificence. It is probable that the king retained considerable control in the management of the convent throughout its existence. The friars' church seems invariably to have been used by the court on all important occasions, and the king frequently attended the ordinary services of the friars in preference to his own private chapel which was situate in the east wing of the palace.

On 22nd June, 1491, Henry VIII was born at Greenwich,[1] but at this date, as we have seen, the friars' church was probably unfinished and the christening seems to have taken place in the parish church of St. Alphege. The first important ceremony to be performed in the friars' church after its consecration was the christening of Henry's younger brother Edmund, created duke of Somerset.[2]

Catharine of Aragon, who was herself a member of the third order of St. Francis, or Frères de la Penitence as they were called, was an ardent supporter of the Franciscans and particularly of the Greenwich observants. She was married to Henry VIII at Greenwich on 11th June, 1509, scarcely a month after his accession to the throne, possibly in the friars' church.[3] Her interest in the Greenwich friars continued throughout her life, and it is said that she was accustomed to rise at midnight to attend matins and lauds in their church 'to the great edification of her subjects.'[4] She subsequently appointed the famous Greenwich friar, John Forest, to be her confessor, and his devoted loyalty to her during the last years of her life did much to bring about his own ruin. Her daughter Mary was born at Greenwich on Monday, 18th February, 1515-16, and baptized the following Wednesday in the friars' church, which was decorated with costly hangings for the occasion. 'From the court

[1] Stow (1615), p. 475.

[2] ibid. p. 482. *Grey Friars Chronicle* (Camden Soc.), 26. *Monumenta Franc.* ii, 182. Holinshed (1808), iii, 528. He died five years later.

[3] According to some authorities it was in the royal chapel in the palace (L'Estrange, *Chronicles of Greenwich*, i, 135).

[4] Davenport, *Hist. Minor. Prov. Ang. Fratrum Minorum*, 41; *Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica* (Parkinson), 218.

gate to the church door of the friars, rails of great height were erected and hung with arras, the way was gravelled and strewn with a good thickness of rushes.'[1] It was usual at that time for the baptismal service to begin in the porch, the absence of which at Greenwich, as in most of the friars' churches, necessitated special arrangements being made, and we are told that 'a substantial wooden house was reared at the church door . . . where the princess received her name Mary.'[2] The silver font often referred to in royal christenings was brought for the occasion from Canterbury.[3] Cardinal Wolsey was present and acted as godfather.

Different scenes were occasionally witnessed, though there seem to have been few burials in the observant church compared with the extreme popularity for this purpose of Franciscan churches such as London or Canterbury, at a somewhat earlier date. In 1512, Muriel, wife of Sir Thomas Knevet and daughter of the duke of Norfolk, was buried here. Her body was brought by water from Lambeth to Greenwich. Two other barges followed, in one of which were sixty poor men in black gowns with hoods, bearing sixty torches which burnt all the way from Lambeth. The procession landed at the friars' stairs. Here they were met by the guardian and other friars, who conducted them to the church where the body was laid to rest on 21st December, 1512.[4]

In 1529, Elizabeth, wife of Thomas lord D'Arcy, was buried here.[5] Her son, Sir Arthur D'Arcy, married the daughter and heiress of Sir Nicholas Carew, steward of the manor of Greenwich who was subsequently buried in the same vault.

Henry VIII's attitude towards the Greenwich friars was at first that of a zealous supporter. In March, 1513, he wrote from Greenwich palace to pope Leo X that he could 'not sufficiently commend their strict adherence to poverty . . . no order battled more assiduously against vice.'[6] Their influence with him was considerable,

[1] Harl. MSS. 3504, f. 232 (pencil 226); Hall's *Chronicle*, 1810, p. 584.

[2] ibid.

[3] £1 was paid for its transit (L. and P. Henry viii, 2, p. 1470).

[4] Funeral Certif. College of Arms, i, 3, p. 36.

[5] Dugdale's *Baronage* (1675), vol. i, pedigree at p. 373.

[6] B.M. Add. MSS. 15387, f. 17; L. and P. Henry viii (2nd ed.), i, no. 2715.

and it was at the request of the Greenwich friars that he granted a yearly pension of a thousand crowns to the observants who kept the holy Sepulchre in Palestine.[1]

About 1527 Henry had become infatuated with Anne Boleyn, and was in consequence endeavouring to maintain that the dispensation procured for his marriage with Catharine was technically insufficient. The ensuing proceedings in connexion with the projected divorce and the consequent breach with the pope had many far-reaching results, and it was the attitude which the Greenwich friars took in this dispute which ultimately brought about their downfall. Even before this date we have an instance of the refractory nature of these friars. Cardinal Wolsey had been appointed the pope's legate for the purpose of visiting the monasteries of the various orders, but in 1525 he met with opposition from the Greenwich observants, who refused admittance to his representative.[2] They appear to have claimed that the English observants were exempt from the jurisdiction of the pontificial legate—a contention which is somewhat supported by the fact that the pope does not appear to have intervened on the cardinal's behalf. On 16th January, Doctor Ally and Doctor Henry Standish, bishop of St. Asaph[3] (the latter a learned Franciscan, who was at one time guardian of the convent in London and provincial of his order), and other officers acting as Wolsey's deputies, 'dyd begynne their visitacioun at the obseruanttes of Grenwych and thenne was departyd many of them unto other placys; but a-gayne that day that the byshoppe of Sent Asse with his company shulde come a-gayne many of them ware come home a-gayne or elles they had bene put owte at that tyme; and one of that owse, John Forrest, was commandyd to preche at Powlles crosse the Sonday after and there pronuncid them alle a-curst that wente owte of the place; and thenne some of them came home and ware put in the porteres warde in the cardnalles place . . .'[4]

[1] Pat. roll 7 Hen. VIII (23rd Nov. 1516); *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 218; Wadding, *Annales Ord. Min.*

[2] *Chronicle of Grey Friars* (Camden Soc.), 31; Letters and Papers Hen. VIII, 7, n. 1607; *Monumenta Franciscana*, ii, 190; Hall's *Chron.* (1810), p. 691; Fuller's, *History of English Church* (ed. Brewer, 1845), iii, 363 note u; *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 224; *Grey Friars of London*, Kingsford, 24.

[3] He died 1535 and was buried in the Grey friars church in London.

[4] *Chron. of the Grey Friars* (*Mon. Franc.* ii, 190).

At this time William Renscrofte, a lay brother of Greenwich, was sent to the Grey friars in London to prison where he long remained, but at last submitted and was assoiled. This was the first of many cases of an observant friar being forcibly detained in a conventual house. It appears that Renscrofte subsequently died in prison under somewhat mysterious circumstances.[1]

From this time onwards the question of the king's divorce came more and more to the fore. The Greenwich friars for the most part sided with the queen, though a few probably from somewhat base motives were equally enthusiastic for Henry. The house was split into two factions, and the bitterness of the feelings which were thus engendered may be gathered from some letters now in the British Museum[2] written by members of the house at that time. The leader of the queen's party was Forest, a man of fearless though somewhat domineering character, while one of his bitterest opponents seems to have been one Richard Lyst, a lay brother of Greenwich. Four of the latter's letters addressed to Thomas Cromwell, and one to Anne Boleyn herself as marchioness of Pembroke, in which he complains bitterly of Forest and his faction, testify to the divergence of opinions which then prevailed among these friars. He writes, 'I was yn som trowbyll by the reason of the pyttyows chans happyned amonge us and trewly as yet my trowbyll doth contynnew and rather yncrease than mynyshe yn so moche that skant ii nyghts yn a weke I can take my naturall rest.'[3] As a result of this treatment some of the friars seem to have deserted the convent, for in February, 1533-4, Lyst writes, 'Also yow shall undyrstand that wythyn lesse than thys iij quarters of a yere past there ys v of owre brethers gon over the wall owt of owre relygyon, iij of them owt of thys howse and ij owt of Rychemond.'[4] In one letter Lyst asked Cromwell to help to reform Forest and to get him removed from Greenwich, either to Newark or to Newcastle, while at the same time Forest and the warden of the house were endeavouring to expel Lyst and send him to Southampton. John Lawrence was another of the

[1] Cotton MSS. Cleopatra, E. IV, f. 33.
[2] ibid. ff. 9, 28, etc.
[3] ibid. f. 31.
[4] ibid. f. 33.

Greenwich friars who sided with the king, and whom, according to Lyst, Forest had endeavoured 'to expulse owt of owre convent of grenwiche'[1] but apparently without success. At first Henry endeavoured to conciliate the Greenwich friars. In 1531 he presented them with a pulpit for their church,[2] and as late as February, 1533-4, it is recorded that Forest was granted an interview with the king as a result of which 'the kynges grace dyd sende hym a grete pece of beffe from his owne tabull.'[3] These gifts were, however, in vain, for shortly afterwards John Lawrence writes that 'dyvars yn owr convent of grenwytch dyd hyly favor ye kynge and allso hys cawse [but] he (i.e. Forest) hath so dysswadyd theme to contrary y^{t} for fere and throw hys flattrynge they ar nowe for y^{e} most parte of a contrayry opynyone.'[4]

During its last years the Greenwich house and probably the order generally seem to have contained men who represented both extremes of religious views which were at that time becoming prevalent. We have seen that men like Forest to whom allegiance to the Pope and the old articles of faith meant everything, and who would rather die than acknowledge the king as supreme head of the church, now met with considerable opposition. On the other hand some of the early reformers have been identified with the order. William Roy, Tyndale's amanuensis, in his translation of the Bible, was a friar of Greenwich.[5] There is indeed some evidence to suggest that William Tyndale himself was at one time admitted into the Greenwich friary,[6] though this has been doubted by some authorities on the ground that the known facts of his life are not compatible with his having ever taken monastic vows.[7] There were, however, already many men of advanced views among the Franciscans.

The observants were the first to feel the wrath of

[1] ibid. f. 32.
[2] L'Estrange, *Chron. of Greenwich*, i, 242.
[3] Cotton MSS. Cleop. E. IV, f. 35.
[4] ibid. f. 164.
[5] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*
[6] A volume entitled 'Sermones discipuli de Tempore et de Sanctis una cum promptuario exemplorum,' dated 1495, and now in the cathedral library of St. Paul's, London (13. D. 16), apparently once belonged to the Greenwich friars. On the title-page is the following inscription in an early hand, 'Orate charitative pro[anima] Johis Tyndall qui dedit hunc librū conventui de Grenwych fratrum ninorum de observancia die professionis sui filii fratris Willielmi anno domini 1508.'

[7] *William Tyndale, a Biography*, R. Demaus (ed. R. Lovett, 1886), p. 48.

Henry's resentment for the part they took in opposing his marriage to Anne Boleyn. One of the first publicly to reproach the king was friar Peto, provincial of the order.[1] When preaching before the king in the friars' church he openly declared his second marriage to be illegal. The king kept his temper and allowed Peto to depart, but commanded Dr. Curwyn to reply on the following Sunday. On this occasion Peto was away at Canterbury, so Elstow, another of the Greenwich observants, spoke on his behalf, and was only stopped by the king commanding him to hold his peace. The following day Elstow and Peto appeared before the Privy Council, but they seem to have been dismissed and allowed to leave the country.[2] This episode was undoubtedly one direct cause of the suppression of the house.

The friars' church was, however, to see one more ceremony more sumptuous than any before. This was the christening of the princess Elizabeth. In 1533 pope Clement VII declared Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn invalid, and threatened the king with excommunication. Henry replied by forbidding any one, under severe penalties, to call Catharine queen. He sent away his daughter Mary as illegitimate to live with her mother, and caused Elizabeth, who was born at Greenwich on Sunday, 7th September, 1533, to be baptised the following Wednesday in the friars' church as his first-born legitimate child. The ceremony is minutely described in the manuscript in the British Museum already mentioned,[3] to which Stow seems to be indebted for his account. 'The maior, sir Stephen Peacock, in a gowne of crimosin velvet with his collar of esses and all the aldermen in scarlet with collars and chaines and all the councell of the cittie with them tooke their barge at one of the clock and the citizens

[1] According to Parkinson he was guardian of the Greenwich house, but there appears to be no authority for this. The name is variously spelt Peto, Petow, Peytow and Peytoo.

[2] Stow (1615), p. 561; *Coll. Anglo-Min.* p. 231; *Cambridge Mod. Hist.* ii, 438. This episode is generally assigned to 1532, just before Henry's second marriage, but some have placed it as late as 1534. In 1531 William Cursun, who styled himself vicar of the observants in Greenwich, wrote to Sir John Dyve in Bedfordshire on Wednesday in Whitsunweek (i.e. 31st May), stating that their warden was in custody at the Greyfriars in Bedford under the king's orders, and asking for news of him (*Beds. Notes and Queries*, i, 191). The warden was probably Elstow, who may have been sent to Bedford prior to his leaving the country, in which case the episode with Dr. Curwyn would appear to have taken place in 1531.

[3] Harl. MSS. 3504, f. 235 (pencil 228).

had another barge and so rowed to Greenwich, where were many lords, knights and gentlemen.'[1] The silver font was again brought from Canterbury and stood in the middle of the church on three steps covered with fine cloth, while over it was a canopy of crimson satin fringed with gold. The bishop of London and other bishops and mitred abbots met the child at the church door, where she received her name.[2]

This splendid ceremony in honour of the child of a queen whom the friars refused to recognise, foreshadowed their doom. As early as 1532 Henry had apparently intended to remove the friars from Greenwich to Christ church in London and to found a college in their place.[3] He now resolved to pave the way for the suppression of the monasteries by suppressing the observants.

This step was taken as the result of an enquiry held in April of 1534 by George Browne, who was appointed provincial of the Austin friars, and John Hilsey, provincial of the Dominicans. The king had commissioned these two men to visit the houses of all the friars, to enquire generally into their mode of life and to examine the friars individually in their chapter-houses concerning their obedience to the king, when each friar was required to take the oath of allegiance.[4] The observants generally refused though the conventuals for the most part acquiesced. Father Forest was already in prison for denying the king's supremacy.[5] In the following June two cartloads of friars were driven through London to the Tower.[6]

At length Henry determined finally to rid himself of these troublesome friars. The Greenwich house was suppressed on 11th August, 1534,[7] when Chapuys the ambassador wrote to the emperor Charles V that 'of the seven[8] houses of observants five have been already

[1] Stow's *Annals* (1615) p. 568.

[2] Harl. MSS. 3504, f. 235; Hall's *Chron.* (1810).

[3] Cotton MSS. Cleop. E. IV, f. 31.

[4] L. and P. Hen. VIII, 7, no. 587 (18); *Arch. Cant.* xxxiv, 87; Wright, *Suppression*, 42.

[5] *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 228; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; Nicholas Sanders says Forest was imprisoned the year before (i.e. 1533), *De Schismate Anglicano*, bk. 1. Although sentenced to death in 1535, his execution was postponed until 22nd May, 1538, when he was burnt at Smithfield (Stow, 574; *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 243; Baker's *Chronicles*, 286; *Chron. of Grey friars* [*Mon. Franc.* ii, 201]; Hall's *Chron.* 825). He had entered the order about 1494, presumably at Greenwich.

[6] L. and P. Hen. VIII, 7, no. 856.

[7] Stow's *Annals*, (1615), p. 570; Kilburne, *Survey of Kent*, 115; *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 233; Collier, *Eccles. Hist.* (1852), iv, p. 248.

[8] The seventh may have been that in Guernsey.

emptied of friars because they refused to swear to the statutes made against the pope. Those in the two others expect also to be expelled.'[1] Some went apparently unwillingly to conventual houses, where they were detained in confinement. Many were thrown into prison[2] while others were put to death under various pretexts. Probably, however, one or two of the friars who had supported Henry were allowed to remain on at Greenwich for some years more.[3] Stow records[4] that the other observant houses at Canterbury, Richmond, Newark and Newcastle were suppressed at the same time as that of Greenwich, and that Austin friars were put in the place of the observants. There does not seem to be any evidence, however, that Austin friars ever came to Greenwich, and the Canterbury house at any rate certainly survived for another four years under the rule of a conventual warden.[5] The probability is that for the next twenty years the friary buildings were left untenanted or were put to such occasional use as the needs of the palace demanded.

The friars' departure was undoubtedly a loss to Greenwich. Even the austere observants had to some extent won the affection of the local people as the bequests in their wills indicate. In return for most of these gifts the friars were expected to offer masses for the soul of the donor, and there are several records of royal gifts for a similar purpose.[6] For singing two masses daily from Easter, 1508, to Easter, 1509, they received £13 6*s*. 8*d*. and when Henry VIII visited Greenwich in April, 1510, on the anniversary of his father's death, they received £8 6*s*. 8*d*. for 500 masses.[7] Occasionally the money was given for an express purpose such as the purchase of wax,[8] and more rarely the gifts were in kind.[9]

During the period which elapsed before the return

[1] L. and P. Hen. VIII, 9, no. 1057.

[2] About 200 observants were imprisoned, and languished for several years: but for the intercession of Sir Thomas Wriothesley they would have been put to death. Some were eventually released and went to the continent or to Scotland (*Coll. Anglo-Min.* pp. 233 and 238).

[3] Roger Hurlton, one of the Greenwich friars who sided with the king, dates a letter to John Lawrence 'att o^r^ convent in Grenewych' 25th November, 1537, though the date may possibly be incorrect as the year seems to have been added by a later hand (Cotton MSS. Cleop. E. IV, f. 165).

[4] *Annals*, 570.

[5] *Grey Friars of Canterbury*, Cotton, 58.

[6] 'to the same freres of Grenewyche for a trentall of masses, 10*s*.' (Royal accounts 1509, Chapter-house Book, A 5-18).

[7] L. and P. Henry iii, 2, p. 1445.

[8] In 1512 the friars received £2 8*s*. from the king for 100 lbs. of wax (ibid.).

[9] See will of John Herst, 1499, appendix.

of the friars to Greenwich their buildings gradually fell into disrepair. It is unlikely that Henry was married to Anne of Cleves, who arrived at Greenwich on 3rd January, 1539-40,[1] in the friars' church, for it was in all probability already dismantled. The following year a gruesome scene was witnessed near the empty friary, now forming part of the palace. 'The ix daie of June,' says Hall,[2] 'wer Damport and Chapman twoo of the kynges garde hanged at Grenewiche by the friers wall for roberies in example of all other.'

On the death of Edward VI at Greenwich on 6th July, 1553,[3] an effort was made by the supporters of Lady Jane Grey to keep the fact secret until Mary had been safely secured. The plan failed and Mary was proclaimed queen on 19th July. It is possible that the scattered remnants of the English observants who still survived began to return at once, some from abroad, some possibly from Ireland.[4] In her endeavours to destroy the work of the two preceding reigns Mary had the enthusiastic support of cardinal Pole.[5] The restoration of the old religion received parliamentary as well as papal sanction, though Pole's attempt to restore the monastic lands and refound the monasteries met with but little success. Mary however remembered the loyalty which the observants had shown towards her mother, and some two years after her accession she resolved to recall those of the order who were still in exile, and refound their house at Greenwich at her own cost. On 7th April, 1555, being Palm Sunday, the friars were formally reinstated[6] by Maurice Griffith, the new bishop of Rochester, who had himself been a Dominican friar.[7] Peto and Elstow were recalled from abroad, their attainder was repealed, and the former was appointed one of the queen's confessors, while the latter resumed his old office of guardian of the convent.[8]

In August following the queen and her husband came

[1] *Chronicles of Grey Friars* (*Mon. Franc.* ii, 202).

[2] *Chronicles*, (1810), p. 842.

[3] *Chronicles of Grey Friars*, *Mon. Franc.* ii, 240.

[4] Burnet, *Hist. Reformation* (ed. Pocock, 1865), ii, 506; *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 249 and 251; Heylin, *Hist. of Reform.*

[5] *Cardinal Pole*, K.B. McFarlane (1924), pp. 19-38.

[6] *Chronicle of Grey Friars* (Camden Soc.), 95; *Monumenta Franc.* ii, 257.

[7] For his will see appendix.

[8] Burnet, *Hist. Reform.* (1865) ii, pp. 506-7; *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 249.

to Greenwich where their first thought was to visit the newly-founded house. Henry Machyn records their arrival in his diary: 'The xxvj day of August cam from Westmynster, rydyng thrugh London unto Towrs-warff, the kyng and the quen and ther thay toke ther barge unto Grenwyche and landyd at the long bryge . . . and up to the frers and ther thare graces mad ther praers and at her grace['s] landyng received ix or x suplycasyon(s) and so bake agayn to the court with a c. torchys bornyng.'[1]

The following year the friars' church was the scene of a ceremony rivalling in splendour those it had witnessed in former days. This was the consecration of cardinal Pole as archbishop of Canterbury. On 21st March, 1555-6, the same day that archbishop Cramner was burnt at Oxford, Pole sang his first mass in the friars' church,[2] and, the next day being Passion Sunday, he was consecrated in the conventual church of the friars minor of the observance of the order of St. Francis of Greenwich, by Nicholas, archbishop of York, primate of England and legate of the apostolic see and lord chancellor of England, assisted by six bishops. The archbishop of York said mass at the high altar in the presence of the queen, while among others there, were the marquess of Winchester the lord treasurer, Henry earl of Arundel lord high steward of the household, Lord Paget the lord privy seal and many others.[3] The event is recorded by Machyn, who notes that on 'The Sonday xxij day of Marche was at the Grayffrers at Grenwyche was my lord cardenall Polle was consecratyd with x byshopes mytyred—the iij yer of the quen Mare.'[4] Three days later Pole was confirmed in the church of St. Mary-le-bow, London.

The queen did not forget her foundation at Greenwich. Only a few months before her own death she granted 'unto the warden and freers of Grenewich towards their relief and succor of fewell one acre of wood in our wood called Westwood in the parishe of Lewesham.' The warrant contains peremptory directions to the crown bailiff; 'we will and commande yor to permyt and suffer

[1] Camden Soc. xlii, p. 93.

[2] Stow, *Annals*, 628; *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 250; Fuller, *Church History*, ii, bk. 8, p. 15; Canterbury Registers.

[3] Strype, *Memorials* (1822), iii, 473.

[4] Camden Soc. xlii, pp. 102 and 348.

them frelie to have and enioye the benefite of this our said wyshe without anie your let deniall or contradiction whereof faile yo not. . . . Given under our signet at our pallais of Westm. the fyrste daie of ffebruarye the fourth and fyveth yeres of our reignes.'[1] Westwood was a large wooded area of about 500 acres, where Sydenham and Forest Hill now are, and seems to have been considered by the crown as a portion of the demesne lands of the manor of Lewisham.[2] The friars were not however to retain their property for long, for Mary died on 17th November in the same year and, with her death, the counter-reformation in England came to an end. One of Elizabeth's first acts on her accession was the final suppression of those houses which had been refounded by her sister. Among the first to fall were the black friars in Smithfield and the observants of Greenwich.[3] Machyn records briefly in 1559, 'The xij day of June (sic) the frers of Grenwyche whent away.'[4] The friars mostly went to the continent, some to Flanders and Lower Germany,[5] though some few seem to have remained in England in a state of great poverty. The friary buildings were annexed to the palace and used as additional lodgings for guests or servants. In 1574 the accommodation of the palace was taxed to the utmost, and among those 'lodged in the friers' were 'the Ladye Sydney, Mr. Foskewe, the gentlemen ushers, quarterwaytters, Sir Henry Leye, Mr. Dier with many others,' from which it would seem that the accommodation was then fairly extensive.[6]

During the Commonwealth part of the old palace and adjoining property was sold. Parliament contracted to sell the friary buildings to Uriah Babington, and by his order they were conveyed to Richard Babington of Great St. Helens and Thomas Griffin of Great St. Bartholomew's, London. The description of the property was based on a survey made in December, 1652, and the conveyance was enrolled in the Augmentation office on 12th March, 1652-3. The buildings which had probably been allowed

[1] Cotton MSS. Titus, B. 11, f. 121 (f. 106 in pencil).
[2] *History of Lewisham*, Duncan, 44.
[3] Stow, *Annals* (1615), p. 639; Davenport *Hist. Min.* p. 54; Fuller; Sanders.
[4] Camden Soc. xlii, p. 204 (the entry in the diary appears under July).
[5] *Coll. Anglo-Min.* 254.
[6] B.M. Lansdowne MSS. 18 f. 73, 4.

to fall into bad repair were estimated at an annual value of four pounds, ten shillings, while the materials were valued at £686 8*s.* 0*d.* in all. The property is described as 'all those severall buildings with the appurtenances commonly called or knowne by the name of the priory buildings (being parcell of that capitall messuage commonly called Greenewich howse, scituate and being in the towne and parishe of Greenewich in the said county of Kent) lyeing betweene the waye from the watersyde to Greenewyche parke and the west parte of the walle of the great garden, otherwise called the common garden, with a stillhouse thereunto adioyneing and belonging And all that garden with the appurtenances inclosed about with a bricke wall and lyeing on the south of the said buildings commonly called or knowne by the name of the privie garden conteyneing from east to west in length one hundred and eighty and fowre foote of assize and in breadth one hundred sixtie and eight foote of assize bee the same more or lesse with a leaden cisterne in the middst thereof. And alsoe all that ground whereon the said buildings doe stand with the appurtenaunces and soyle thereof conteyneing by estimacon one acre twoe roodes and sixe peirches bee the same more or lesse.'[1] The west and north sides of the wall of the privy garden were only valued with the buildings themselves.

During this period the friary buildings, in common with the rest of the old palace, rapidly fell into ruin. In February, 1654, Babington was authorised to prevent the defacing of Greenwich house and the destruction of the materials.[2] With the Restoration such of the royal property in Greenwich as had been sold reverted to the crown, but the palace was then beyond repair, and Charles II resolved to pull it down and rebuild it on a more magnificent scale. The first wing of the new palace was begun in 1664[3] and involved the demolition of a number of buildings in order to make room for the new work. Probably the year before the remains of the friary buildings were finally swept away, and their exact site is now marked by the new building then erected (plate 1).

[1] P.R.O. Partic. for Sale, Commonwealth, H.7, no. 3; Close Roll, 1653, p. 31, m. 22 (enrolled 4th Oct.).

[2] L'Estrange, *Chronicles of Greenwich*, ii. 49.

[3] Pepys' *Diary* under date 4th March. 1664.

Immediately to the west of the friary was the old friars' road running from the waterside southwards to Greenwich park. At its northern end was the friars' wharf,[1] which is clearly shown in Wyngaerde's sketch (plate 11). The western wing of the old palace came close up to the eastern boundary of the friars' precinct, but to the west on the further side of the friars' road, there seems to have been a number of buildings clustered together on the river bank. In 1520 Thomas Fardyng, gentleman of the chapel of king Henry VIII, mentions in his will his house in Greenwich called 'the house next the friars.'[2] At a somewhat later date Tavern row ran from the friars' wharf westward. Here stood the Rose tavern, which was pulled down in 1664 when the new palace was begun. The old Ship tavern, purchased and demolished at the same time, stood to the south. The northern part of the friars' road was evidently closed while the work was going on. Among the charges for work done in June, 1664, appear 'carpenters and masons, fitting and setting 110 feet of fencing and a pair of gates against the end of the fryer's road . . . pulling down the Rose tavern, 70 feet by 16 feet, and three storey high.'[3] The friars' road was probably the most important thoroughfare in Greenwich in Tudor times. The royal accounts for 1543 record the making of new rails and bars for the king's bridges and the friars' lane.[4] On the opposite side of this road to the friars' church was the royal armoury, erected about 1514.[5] Further still to the west, between Stableyard street and the road marked on a later map as 'way to the stable,' was the old king's stables which have already been mentioned in connexion with the site of the rood chapel.

The friars' road continued to recall the Greenwich friars for many years. The southern portion between Romney road and the park was transferred to the Crown in 1697 and another road substituted slightly to the west. The west wing of King William's building in the royal

[1] Possibly the wharf mentioned as belonging at a later date to the Rose tavern (State Papers Dom. Chas. II, 1663); on 7th May, 1514, Henry VIII paid for repairing the friars' wharf (L. and P. Henry viii, 2, p. 1464).

[2] Rochester Consistory Court, 1520, Reg. vii, 205.

[3] 'Charges in doing the workes at his Mats new buildings in the garden at Greenwich, 1664' (Harl. MSS. 1618).

[4] B.M. Add. MSS. 10109.

[5] Hasted, *Hundred of Blackheath* (ed. Drake), p. 64, note.

hospital now stands on part of the northern half of the friars' road; the base-court of King Charles building was erected on its northern extremity. The substituted road to the south was again moved further to the west in 1747 and extended to the river in 1750, thus forming an approach to Ship dock. This latter road was also incorporated within the hospital grounds between 1845-1850 when King William street was made the western boundary. The last record of the friars had now disappeared and not a vestige remained to mark the site of their habitation.

It only remains to refer to the seal of the convent which was kept by the guardian of the house during his term of office. Parkinson has stated[1] that the seal of the Greenwich house was the Holy Name of Jesus, though without giving any authority. Among the collection of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, now the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, there is stated to be an impression made from a matrix which had been lost, of what was probably the original seal of the Greenwich house. It is of pointed oval shape and represents the assumption of the blessed Virgin, who is supported by four angels, and has a radiant nimbus around her head: on an escutcheon beneath are the arms of France and England quarterly. Around the edge are the following words separated by quatrefoils: 'Sigillum Gardiani Grunwucensis.'[2] This impression is said to have come from the Dominican house at Kilkenny. It is not unlikely that the original seal of the Greenwich friary was carried to Ireland by one of the friars on the first suppression of the house.[3]

[1] *Coll. Anglo-Min.* pt. ii, p. viii.
[2] *Arch. Journal*, xxiii, 54.
[3] Since this paper was in print, *V.C.H. Kent*, vol. ii, has been published, but it has not been possible to make any use here of the article on the Greenwich friary therein.

APPENDIX.

The following extracts are from wills which refer to the Greenwich friars proved in the Prerogative court of Canterbury and the Rochester Consistory court between the years 1482 and 1534, with one subsequent will which refers to the house refounded by Mary. Both series are now at Somerset House. The list does not profess to be complete, but contains all which have so far come to light. The absence of bequests to the friars in Mary's reign is noticeable.

1485. Richard Tylle of Sellyng by his will dated 17th December, 1485, desired 'to be buried in the church of Sellyng before the Roode if I die there . . . to the house of Grey friers preachers in Canterbury, xl*s.* to the Austin freers in Canterbury and to the freers preachers there and to the houses of the White friers at Sandwich, xx*s.* each; Also to the building of the Observance house at Greenwich c*s.*'
Proved at Canterbury (Consistory Court, Reg. 3).

1493. Elliot Alfons left to the Greenwich friars 20*s.* for their 'vitaille' or for the building of their church. (P.C.C. 27 Vox).

1496. Thomas Vstwayte of East Greenwich, esq. by his will dated 9th August, 1496, desired to be buried in the chapel of our Lady in St. Alphege. He left 'to the blessid hous of Saint Frauncess in Est Grenewich vj$^{s.}$ viij$^{d.}$' and also 'to the rep.' of the chapell of Alhalowen in Est Grenewich and for the lightes in the same chapell iij$^{s.}$ iiij$^{d.}$'
Proved 18th September. (P.C.C. 7 Horne).

1498. Richard Pode left to the friars of Greenwich 20$^{d.}$ (R.C.C. v, 319).

1499. John Herst of East Greenwich, late citizen and tailor of London, left 'to the Gray freers observante in Est Grenewich' half an oxe and a torch such as I have. Proved 1500. (P.C.C. 1 Moone).

c. 1500. Micall Walis of Woolwich mentions the friars of Greenwich.
(R.C.C. v, 369).

1506. John Rolfe, by his will dated 5th October, 1506, desired to be buried by the altar of the blessed Trinity in the parish church, and left to the friars observant of East Greenwich for a trental of masses in their conventual church 10*s.* (R.C.C. vi, 221).

1506. Thomasyn Sheby, or Seby, by will dated 26th May, 1506, desired 'to be buried in the church of Grenewych in the ile besyde the Trynite autir' and left to the friars of East Greenwich for a frontal a diaper towel 12 yards long. (R.C.C. vi, 191).

1510. Agnes Newark, widow, desired to be buried in the aisle of the parish church before our Lady of Pity. She gave to the friars of Greenwich 10*s.* for a trental of sermons. (R.C.C. vi, 292).

1510. Richard Chamberleyn of Woolwich, by his will dated 26th August, 1510, left 'six kylderkyns of bere to ye freers of Grenewich to pray for my soul.' (P.C.C. 37 Bennett).

1515. Alice Newman, relict of William Newman, by her will dated 12th April, 1515, left to the friars observant of Greenwich, 10*s.*
(R.C.C. vii, 101).

1515. Richard Carpenter, servant of the king and yeoman of the pantry, in his will dated 2nd September, 1515, left to the friars of Greenwich 10*s*. (R.C.C. vii, 43).

1517. Edward Skerne of East Greenwich, esq., by his will dated 17th July, 9 Hen. VIII (1517), desired to be buried 'in the church of East Greenwich before the blessed Ladye of Pitye or else before our Lady in our Lady's ile where I was wont to sit' . . . '13*s*. 4*d*. to the freres of Greenwich to pray for my soul; a trental to be said in the roods for 10*s*. by some honest priest that lacketh a service.'
Proved 17th September, 1518. (P.C.C. 10 Ayloffe).

1520. Margarete Thatcher, wido, 'To be buried in the church of Saynte Alphe in Grenewich before the figure of Saynte Clement in the bodie of the churche where as late my husbounde was buried.' She desired five trental of masses for herself, her husband and children, to be said in Greenwich church, in the friars observants there, in the king's chapel at Westminster, in the Savoy and in the Crutched Friars, and a priest was to be two years singing masses continually in Greenwich church for the said souls. (R.C.C. vii, 210).

1521. John Hent, esq., by his will dated 2nd July, 1521, desired to be buried among the friars minors in Greenwich to whom he gave 20*s*. (P.C.C. 13 Mainwaring).

1524. John Stile, armourer unto the king's grace, by his will dated 16th May, 1524, left to the friars of Greenwich 26*s*. 8*d*. (R.C.C. vii, 352).

1525. William Derlyngton, M.A. vicar of Greenwich, in his will dated 8th November, 1525, left to the friars' observant of Greenwich 30*s*. (R.C.C. viii, 85) proved in the Prerogative court 1527 (21 Porch).

1525. Thomas Keys. 'My land called Crokers in Lewisham, which I late purchased, shall bear and pay for 40 years after my decease 16*s*. 8*d*. for an obit in Lewisham church, and 15*s*. during the same time to be paid to the friars of Greenwich for an obit.' (R.C.C. viii, 60).

1528. Philipp Aldewyn: 'To be buried in Saynt Frauncess church in Grenewich.' (R.C.C. viii, 180).

1529. Richard Piry of Grenewich: 'my bodie to be buryed in the church of Grenewich. . . Item to the ffreres of Grenewich for a trentall to be saide there—x*s*.' Proved 1st December (R.C.C. viii, 227).

1558. Maurice Griffith, bishop of Rochester, in his will dated 7th October, 1558, desired 'to be buried in the parish church of Sainte Magnus the Marter yf hit fortune me to die yn London or Southwarke and yf in Kente then yn the cathedrall churche of Rochester,' and left 'to the poore fryers of Grenewyche yn Kent v^{li}.' The will was proved 28th August, 1560, after the final suppression of the Greenwich house. (P.C.C. 45 Mellershe).