



The Dissolution of S. Werburgh's Abbey

By THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE, M.A.

(Read October 7, 1947).

IN these days of nationalisation it may be of interest to recall an experiment in nationalisation in the 16th century which for its rapidity, ruthlessness and far-reaching effects puts into the shade any present day schemes of that nature. I refer to the Dissolution of the Monasteries, which was carried out in the space of four years by means of two short acts of parliament; which transferred thousands of acres of land to the State, which destroyed magnificent buildings and priceless works of art, and which deprived travellers of all classes, of the night's lodging they had become accustomed to rely upon, thus helping to immobilise labour at a time when increasing unemployment was driving more and more labourers on to the road in search of work.

The broad facts are well known and may be briefly summarised here. In 1536 the smaller monasteries—those whose income was below £200¹—were dissolved by act of parliament and their property transferred to the Crown. There was precedent for this. In 1414 Henry V had dissolved all alien priories, *i.e.*, small monasteries which were dependent on and paid tribute to their mother house abroad, and quite recently Wolsey had closed twenty-one houses² and used their revenues to endow the new colleges he was building at Oxford and at Ipswich. What was unprecedented in Henry VIII's action was the vast scale of the operation and the fact that he took the revenues in most cases for himself.

The reason given for stopping short at the smaller monasteries and not attacking the larger ones was a moral one. In the larger monasteries, said the Act of 1536. "(thanks be to God) religion is right well kept and observed." That the rich should be proof against temptation while the poor failed was contrary not only to general experience and the teaching of Scripture, but also to the evidence collected by the Commissioners who had not been warned to connect morality with income. The real reason, of course, was that in 1536 Henry was not sufficiently sure of his ground to brave public opinion by attacking the richer and more powerful houses, whose abbots sat in the House of Lords. But the ease with which the dissolution of the smaller houses was effected opened the Royal eyes and whetted the Royal appetite. There were still 200 monasteries left, containing 3,000 monks,³ and these, Henry now decided, should be dissolved too. He went about his work in the way we have come to associate with Hitler. He first lured his victim into a sense of security, assuring them that he was concerned only with their moral welfare, and then coerced or cajoled them into surrender one by one. At the beginning of 1538 he sent round commissioners, including the notorious Layton and Dr. Leigh, ostensibly to tighten up discipline but in reality, as subsequent events proved, to procure their surrender. The scheme worked well. All through the year surrenders kept coming in at the rate of five a month until it at last dawned upon the bewildered monks that they were all doomed. In the spring of the following year (1539) a subservient Parliament legalised the surrenders which had already taken place *and all that should take place in future*. In other words they handed over all the remaining monasteries to the King. Waltham Abbey was the last to fall, on March 23, 1540, and with its fall the great revolution was over. It only remained for the Court of Augmentations, created for that purpose, to count up and collect the spoil.

We are now to follow the fortunes of a single monastery, that of S. Werburgh's, Chester. Founded in 1093 by Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, it had become so richly endowed with land that it now ranked twenty-second in wealth among the monasteries of England, which numbered five hundred odd.⁴ We are fortunately able to estimate its wealth fairly exactly, for we have two surveys of it, one made in 1535, five years before the Dissolution, and one made in 1540 immediately after it. The first one is the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, made by order of the King to enable him to collect from the clergy the tenth of all their incomes, a new tax imposed as from January 1, 1535. Commissioners were sent round to find out the gross and net or taxable income of every benefice. To arrive at the net or taxable income they were to deduct from the gross income all annual and regular rents paid out, all synodals and proxies paid to the Archdeacon, regular alms distributed under the terms of a will, the fees of bailiffs and auditors, and in the case of a monastery the regular fee paid to the Lord Chancellor for permission to execute justice within the monastery.

The Commissioners for Chester were, as was usually the case, local men—Sir Piers Dutton and William Brereton. They had power to co-opt, and to appoint sub-committees, and the three Commissioners who visited S. Werburgh's were Sir Piers Dutton himself, Richard Sneyd and William Glaseour, all well-known names in Chester at that time. Dutton was mayor 1512-13, Sneyd was Sheriff in 1541-42, dying while in office, and Glaseour was mayor in 1551-52. He lived at Lea near Backford.⁵

An abstract of their report may be most conveniently presented in the form of an assessment for income tax, which in fact is exactly what it was.

	£	s.	d.
Income from rents, &c. - - -	720	12	6½
Income from tithes and offerings -	353	5	1
	£1.073	17	7½

Deduct for

Rents	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	12	4½
Procurations and synodals	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	0
Masses for the departed	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	16	4
Alms	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	0	0
Pensions	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0	0
Bailiff's fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	0	0
							£	70	11 8½

Net amount chargeable after deductions £1,003 5 11

Tax chargeable - - - - - £100 6 7½

This means that in modern money the gross income of the monastery was £26,850 and the tax paid was £2,508 . 5 . 7.

The full report gives a list of all the lands in the possession of the monastery with the names of the bailiffs in charge which is too long to print here, but some of the other items mentioned above are worth printing in full.

(Masses for the departed).

“ To the chaplain celebrating for the soul of
Robert, son of Jordanis de Worth - - - £4 6 8
To ditto for the soul of William, formerly
Bishop of Chester - - - - - 13 4
To ditto for the soul of John Coly - - - 4 13 4 ”⁶

(Alms).

“ Alms distributed to the aged poor in the
Supper of the Lord [Maunday Thursday] for
the souls of the kings of England founders
of that monastery according to ancient con-
stitutions and ordinances - - - - - 14 0 0 ”

(Pensions).

“ Pensions annually paid to Richard Daves
vicar of St. Oswald's by ancient augmentation 1 13 4
Pension annually paid to Peter Brereton
“ p'vo canonaco ” of S. John's, Chester - £3 0 0 ”

There are several very interesting things to notice here. In the first place it is evident that when money was left to a monastery for masses to be said for a departed soul the monks did not say them themselves but paid a secular

priest to say them for them, mass priests as they were called. A case of this occurred as early as the 13th century, when the monks employed two chaplains to celebrate in the Abbey for the soul of Sir William Burnell.⁷ It is probable that two out of the three persons mentioned above had been prayed for ever since the 13th century. Robert de Worth gave the vill of Chelford in 1267 to the Abbey and expressed a wish that his body should be buried there.⁸ "William, formerly Bishop of Chester" was probably the William whose name figures in the Abbey's calendar. His day was August 19 and he died in 1223. A chantry was founded in his memory in the monastery.⁹ We notice that he is called Bishop of Chester, though his real title would have been Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. This is a relic of the days when Chester had a bishop living in the City and S. John's was a cathedral. Though this was as long ago as 1073 it had invested S. John's with a semi-cathedral status and we can well imagine that Cestrians would cling to the title.¹⁰ John Coly, the third man to be prayed for, is probably the John Coly of Chester whose will, dated 1413, is set forth in Morris. He left many legacies to churches and religious bodies.¹¹

The synodals paid to the Archdeacon were in respect of the parishes appropriated to S. Werburgh's and served by a vicar paid by them.¹² The Archdeacon had no jurisdiction over the Abbey itself.

The second survey¹³ was made in 1540 immediately after the monastery was surrendered, and was made by the King's auditors in order that His Majesty might know the full extent of the spoil and see that none of it disappeared before it reached the Royal coffers. The survey differs from that of 1535 chiefly on the expenditure side, for there were certain payments made by the monastery which the King would have to continue and these had to be specified. It will be convenient to summarise it as a statement of account.

SURVEY OF 1540.

Receipts		Expenditure	
Rents etc. - -	£719 16 8½	Rents - -	2 10 6
Tithes etc. - -	361 0 2	Procurations and	
		Synodals	3 0 4
		Pensions - -	3 0 0
		Bailiffs' fees - -	34 10 0
		Auditor's annuity	12 0 0
		Vicars' stipend (5)	21 13 4
		Wm. Ardren	
		(for land)	4 0 0
		Annuities - -	114 14 0
			<hr/>
			195 8 2
		Net income ¹⁴ -	885 8 8½
			<hr/>
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£1080 16 10½		£1080 16 10½
	<hr/>		<hr/>

The rents were drawn from sixty-four manors, fifty-seven of which were in Cheshire and most of them near Chester. Great Sutton seems to have specialised in chicken farming, for we read that

“ The price of 300 hens and 3080 eggs of divers tenants there to be received, are worth by year £2. 12. 10.” (say £66. 0. 0.).

The tithes received from the parishes impropriated by the monastery were usually the great tithes, the small tithes being assigned to the vicar when the vicarage was “ ordained ” by the bishop, but in the case of seven churches the monks took all the tithes and paid a curate (as we should call him today) to do the duty. The seven churches were Bromborough, S. Oswald's, S. Bridget's, Ince, Shotwick, Wervin and Chelford, and the stipend of the priest who served them was £4. 6. 8. (say £100. 0. 0.). As the minimum wages of a labourer at this time were £5. 8. 0., it is evident that the priest must have had some other work to do, some other source of income. Wervin was a chapelry in the vast parish of S. Oswald, Chelford a chapelry in the still larger parish of Prestbury, and it is natural for these to be served by stipendiary priests, but it is

surprising to find that the monks were allowed to keep the other parishes in their own hands. The ruins of the chapel at Wervin, a hamlet about a mile on the Chester side of Stoak, still remain. It must have been a very small rectangular building and all that remains of it today are the east wall and part of the north wall. The arch of the east window fell in during the last few years and the ruin is now beyond restoration. Ormerod has a woodcut of it. (II, 776).

Bromborough was very nearly omitted from the survey for there is a note at the end

“ Md. after finishing this book he asketh the allowance of a priest’s wages in Bromborough by year—£4. 6. 8.”

Extra help was needed at S. Oswald’s, Chester.

“ the wages of the parish priest of S. Oswald’s asketh 6/8d. for meat and drink of a priest helping him in the time of Lent and at Easter, to hear confessions, as it hath been accustomed.”

The two largest items of expenditure—annuities and bailiffs’ fees—can best be explained by a peep into the business side of the monastery on the eve of its dissolution. We have got to realise that these institutions were not the peaceful and pious retreats that they may have been in their earlier days. Their vast wealth in the form of land made that impossible. The abbot had to be a shrewd business man, and “ every religious house had a crowd of persons of the squire class, wearing its livery, administering its estates, presiding over manorial courts, acting as stewards, bailiffs, gentlemen farmers, etc.¹⁵ Below are printed in two columns a list of the bailiffs of S. Werburgh’s in 1535 and 1540 respectively.

Manor	1535	1540
“ His fee ”		
(? Upton)	Otwell Worsley	Otwell Worsley
Barnshawe - -	John Matthew	Ralf Leftwich, gent
Boughton - -	Richard Spens	_____
Ince - - -	Christopher	Thos. and Humph-
	Wermingcham	phrey Hurleston

Manor	1535	1540
Tilston - - -	John Brassey	_____
Lawton - - -	William Lawton	Sir Wm. Brereton Knt.
Edenshawe - - -	_____	John Bressye
Irby - - -	Robert Brid'	Thomas Knight
Bromborough - - -	Ad' ap Richard	William Erwin
Sutton - - -	Ad' ap Richard	Ralf Huckenhall
Huntingdon - - -	Robert Hassall	_____
Neston - - -	Richard Abraham	Richard Abraham
Chester - - -	Richard Spens	Otwell Worsley
Abbot's Cotton - - -	_____	Robert Hoppe
Weston - - -	Robert Hall	Christopher Ayer
Saighton - - -	_____	Antony Venables, gent

There are two others who head the list in 1540 but who do not occur in the earlier survey, who are the most important of all, the Earl of Derby, High Steward, and the Earl of Shrewsbury, Steward of Weston, and at the end of the list comes one who was not a bailiff at all, "John Byrcheley, teacher of the children" who received £6 0. 0.

The High Steward was indispensable to a monastery. He was needed, writes Prof. Savine,¹⁶ "not for his work, but for his influence, and especially at critical times, when it would be important to have a strong man at the Court, in the Privy Council, in the waiting room of Wolsey or Cromwell." Lord Derby was appointed Steward or Seneschal for life by Henry VIII on November 20, 1509. Besides the fee of £2 yearly which was attached to his office he had a room reserved for him in the Abbot's house over what is now the Song School (according to the plan of the monastery printed by Lysons and probably emanating from Randle Holme III) and called Derby Chamber. Except for these two noblemen the bailiffs were mostly Cheshire men like Sir William Brereton for example, but it is surprising how few of them figure in both lists. Ralf Leftwich, gentleman, and Robert Hope were two of Abbot Clarke's servants and received a legacy of £2 at his death.¹⁷ The Hurletons or Hurlstons came originally from Hurleston in

Lancashire and at this time were living at Picton and in Chester City. A Roger Hurleton was one of the Commissioners for Church goods in Chester in 1553.¹⁸ Otwell Worsley was the Treasurer to S. Werburgh's and his brother Ralph was Comptroller of Customs in Chester and received an annuity from the Monastery; his monument is in S. Mary's, Chester. Hockenhull and Venables are well-known Cheshire names. Christopher Wermingcham was sheriff in 1520-1.¹⁹ Robert Hall figures in a Star Chamber case in the reign of Henry VIII with several others accused by the Dean of the collegiate Church of S. John's, Chester, of trespass and taking of tithe corn and hay.²⁰ Robert Hassall had the lease of a pasture at Saughton from the Abbey on October 30, 1538²¹ and Christopher Warmingham was a Chester goldsmith and was Sheriff in 1520.²² Edenshawe [Iddinshall] is near Tilston Fernall, and there is no doubt that John Brassey and John Bressye are one and the same person.

The annuitants were of a different class, as may be seen from the following list.²³

Lord Audley, Chancellor of England - - -	£40.	0.	0
Richard Page, knight to the late Lord Cromwell	13.	6.	8
John Boughton - - - - -	13.	6.	8
Thomas Wrothesley - - - - -	5.	0.	0
Ralf Worsley - - - - -	4.	0.	0
Humphrey Hurleton, learned in the law - -	2.	13.	4
Richard Colley, gent - - - - -	3.	6.	8
Robert Wermynghon - - - - -	2.	0.	0
Lancelot Woddeall - - - - -	2.	13.	4
Lancelot Broughton - - - - -	1.	6.	8
Robert Lawdrye (? Vawdry) - - - - -	2.	13.	4
Robert Lawys - - - - -	2.	0.	0
—— Ewent - - - - -	3.	6.	8
Henry Legghe - - - - -	1.	6.	8
Thomas Staundysshe, gent - - - - -	1.	6.	8
Robert Radford, priest - - - - -	4.	0.	0
Richard Spark, by letters patent enrolled - -	1.	0.	0
Richard Watkins of London, gent - - - -	4.	0.	0
John Mason, brother unto them by letters patent for term of life - - - - -	1.	6.	8

Edward Algriff, porter of the said late monastery	1.	6.	8
his meat (every week 4d.)	-	-	17. 4
bread and drink (weekly 10d.)	-	-	2. 7. 4
and for 4 loads of wood for winter	-	-	6. 8
	<hr/>		
	113.	11	4 ²⁴

The Lord Chancellor's office must have been a lucrative one if he received a fee of £40 (£1000) from every monastery. Thomas Wrothesley succeeded Lord Audley in 1544. Richard Page had no doubt been rewarded by his master at the Abbey's expense. The others may have been rewarded by the king in the same way, for "the King," writes Prof. Savine,²⁵ "had the right in 119 monasteries of sending one or more corrodians," or they may have bought their corrodies from an abbot who was in need of ready money. A corrody was originally an allowance of food and drink made by a monastery to someone for life in return for a money payment or by order of the king.²⁶ It generally included free quarters in the abbey, but by this time had probably been commuted for a money payment. The presence of a number of paying guests must have been very upsetting to the monastic discipline, but of those in the above list only Robert Radford, priest, had a room assigned to him, as far as we know, and, of course, the porter.²⁷

Not much is known about the rest of these corrodians. Humphrey Hurlton was no doubt one of the family above-mentioned, and Worsley we have already dealt with. Richard Colley, gent, was one of Prince Edward's servants, (see below p. 20). Mention is made in the Treasurer's Accounts of the Cathedral of a Vawdrey who was a Royal official at the Castle in 1547, and he may have been the same man who was Vice-Chamberlain in 1555 at the burning of George Marsh, and a Robert Vawdrey lived at Flookersbrook in 1574. Richard Spark is really the only one we can identify with any certainty; he was one of the churchwardens of S. Oswald's in 1552.²⁸

ABBOT BIRCHENSHAWE.

An account of the long reign of Abbot Birchenshawe is indispensable to a right understanding of the dissolution of the monastery, and is of interest for its own sake, for Birchenshawe was a powerful and colourful personality and one of the most outstanding of the abbots of S. Werburgh's. In the first place he was a great builder. Appointed in 1493, he added the west front to his abbey church, built the south-west porch, put a new roof on the north transept, pulled down the Norman south-west tower and began a new one into which he placed at least one bell, and completed the grange at Saughton. He also rebuilt the cloisters.

The west front was probably his first undertaking, being built about 1500. This information comes from the building itself, though it has not hitherto been noticed. On each side of the figure of the Virgin Mary is a royal coat of arms, which at first sight appear to be duplicates. Closer inspection, however, reveals a label of three points on the one on the right, facing the spectator. If the label is argent, the arms are those of Prince Arthur, the King's eldest son; if ermine, they are those of Prince Henry, but the stone is too worn for the tincture to be discerned. In either case they help to fix the date, for Arthur died in 1502 and Henry ascended the throne in 1509, so that the west front must have been finished before 1509 at the latest and probably before 1502. Prince Arthur stayed in Chester in 1498, which may have some bearing on the problem. Corroborative evidence is found in the statement in *Vale Royal*²⁹ that the foundation stone of the south-west tower was laid in 1508, for this would not have taken place until the west front had been completed.

The new tower which Birchenshawe began is now the Consistory Court. It could never have been more than one stage high and yet in 1553 the commissioners found two bells in it and reported that a third had been removed. It must therefore have had a wooden campanile added to it to take the bells.

But it is not only or principally for his building that Bichenshawe is remembered; he is chiefly remarkable for his vigorous insistence on his rights as Abbot and his readiness to quarrel with anyone who opposed them. In 1507, for example, the age-long rivalry between town and monastery flared up again. The Abbot flouted the authority of the Mayor by trying in his court two citizens who had been brawling in Northgate Street "without the Northgate," and binding them over to keep the peace. The Mayor appealed to the King and the matter went to arbitration, but the award, issued in 1509, was not in the Abbot's favour and so he refused to accept it.³⁰

Bichenshawe's next quarrel was with his own Father in God, the Bishop of Lichfield, who in 1516 accused him of unlawfully using the mitre, pontifical staff etc. The case was heard by the Auditor Apostolical at Rome, and resulted in the Abbot being excommunicated for refusing to produce certain documents that were relevant to the dispute. But papal excommunications which had once made Emperors tremble had by this time lost their terrors. A priest named Humphrey Bonner at the command of the Abbot mounted the pulpit in the church where the excommunication was promulgated and (the Pope wrote) "in contempt and derision of the Apostolical See" presumed to absolve his master, who himself "pronounced against the nuncio divers very insulting words." The Pope's reply was to hand over the case to Wolsey whom he had just made legate *a latere* in England, giving him permission to call in the secular arm if necessary.³¹ No doubt he was very glad to embrace this opportunity of getting out of an awkward situation without further loss of dignity. The whole incident is a revealing commentary of the attitude of English ecclesiastics to the Pope on the eve of the Reformation, and helps us to understand why Henry VIII met with so little opposition from his subjects when he finally abolished the power of the Pope in England.

It does not appear that Wolsey did anything in the matter, for the Abbot retained his office.³² Indeed, when he did lose it (in 1524) it was not for opposing the Pope, but for executing letters from him granting his monastery exemption from the jurisdiction of both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Lichfield.³³ For this offence Wolsey removed him from office, though a pardon was obtained for him from the King, dated July 19, 1524. The *congé d'élire* for the election of his successor was issued on March 14 of that year and Thomas Highfield was appointed, and elected a month later.³⁴ He had been Prior of Wallingford, one of the monasteries that Wolsey had dissolved, and his appointment to S. Werburgh's saved a pension.³⁵ Highfield died in October, 1527, and he was succeeded by Thomas Marshall on December 16. It was during Marshall's short term of office that the present cloisters were being built, for his initials (T. M.) can be seen on two of the bosses in the roof of the north walk, not so very far from those of Cardinal Wolsey. The arms of the first Earl of Derby are there also. But the cloisters must have been begun before he became abbot, for in 1526 William Danald in his will instructed his executors "to glasse one of the new windows in the cloister of S. Werburge."³⁶

Probably Birchenshawe began them, and he returned in time to see them finished, for on the fall of Wolsey on October 16, 1529, he was restored to office. Marshall must have retired to make room for him, and in 1533 was made Abbot of Colchester where he eventually met his death at the hands of the Royal tyrant, being hanged on December 1, 1539, *pour encourager les autres*. So far from Chester being proud of their martyr, his name has been omitted from the list of abbots which hangs in the cloisters which he helped to build.³⁷

We can well imagine that such a man as Birchenshawe would be very critical of what had been done in his absence and his correspondence with Cromwell reveals this. On November 1, 1532, he was in arrears with his quota of the

subsidy. "The Abbot of Whalley," he wrote to Cromwell, "collector of the subsidy, has divers times sent to me for £50 due to the King. I have paid him £30, and as soon as I can after Christmas I will pay the residue. My tenants are very poor and have been sorely treated in my absence by such as were deputed into my room to pay incomes and fines which were never asked before."³⁸

In 1534 one of his tenants, John Denwall, complained of him to Cromwell, because he had detained from him ground called the Ley Acres. "The truth is this," wrote the Abbot in reply on June 18. "Divers years ago, when I was put from my abbacy by the late Lord Cardinal, the pretended abbots in mine absence let to Denwall a parcell of the demesne lands of the Ley as a yearly tenant; afterwards for a term of years such lands as my predecessors and I kept in our own hands—for grazing fat cattle for maintaining the hospitality of the house. When I was lately restored by the King, I discharged Denwall and all who held part of the said acres and none complained but he." And so on.³⁹

The same year another complaint reached Cromwell, this time from a man named Christopher Clarke, alias Rogerson, who had been fifty years in the service of the Abbey as clerk,⁴⁰ butler and now porter. The Abbot had deprived him of his office and a piece of land on which he had built a house. His office was worth £5, besides livery, meat and drink, and the house cost 20 marks (£12. 10. 0., say £312. 10. 0.). He begged Cromwell to write to the Mayor, aldermen and justices of Chester on his behalf, and to tell the Abbot that he must abide by their decision.⁴¹ No doubt he remembered how the Abbot had refused to accept the award of 1509. The result does not appear, but as the porter at the time of the dissolution of the Monastery was named Edward ap Gryffyn, it would seem that the Abbot won as usual. However this may be, it is evident that this is another case of the Abbot undoing the work done in his absence.

This was not the first time that Birchenshawe had acted in this way, for in 1516/17 he ejected the family of Clarke, husband, wife and five small children, from a small holding "in the parish of S. Werburge," which had been let to them at 40/- a year, seized all the farm stock and had "the household stuffe" thrown into a "great pond of water." The family had to take refuge in their parish church (? S. Oswald's) where they remained for three weeks, "until the Abbot of his farther malyce commandyd the vycare of the churche to put them out of the same." Various commissions had been instructed by Wolsey to inquire into the case, but the Abbot had managed to put them off until his own dismissal in 1524. In the meantime the husband had died of worry.⁴² We can well understand that the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Clarke and five children "dossing down" on the floor of the South Transept (S. Oswald's Church) for three weeks would be rather embarrassing to the Abbot, but though we have not got his side of the story it would appear that he had acted in a harsh and high-handed manner.

On May 1, 1537, Cromwell took the initiative on behalf of William Snede to ask if he (Snede) might have the reversion of a messuage and small pasture within the City of Chester, now held by Dame Elizabeth Barrowe, widow, for a term of years of which twenty were unexpired. The Abbot politely refused on the usual plea that he wanted the land for maintaining the hospitality of the Abbey. William Snede was a well-known citizen, admitted freeman in 1496,⁴³ and the Abbot in his reply refers to him as "my friend." The interest of the letter, however, lies in the fact that it explains the origin of the name by which the Infirmary Field is known today, "Lady Barrowe's Hey."⁴⁴

A month later (June 7) the Abbot received another request from Cromwell asking for the manor of Huntingdon to be granted to Master Edgware or else the manors of Sutton and Ince. In reply the Abbot reminds Cromwell that Sutton has already been granted to William Arderne,

“ the King’s servant ” at the request of “ the King, the late Queen Jane⁴⁵ and Your Lordship,” and the manor of Ince to Richard Coley, late servant of Mr. Hennege and now servant to the Prince (Edward). “ Nothing remains but the manor of Huntingdon, without which hospitality cannot be kept.”⁴⁶ Hospitality was evidently the card to play, and the manor remained in the Abbot’s hands.

His last clash with the Mayor was in 1537 about the door in the City wall leading to the Kale Yard. The Abbot won, for on March 28 he got a grant from the King allowing him to keep “ the keys of the two little doors in the walls of the town lying between the east and north gates upon condition that the murragers shall have passage through them to view or repair the said walls.” *Two* doors is rather puzzling. The most probable explanation is that the second door was in the eastern wall of the Kaleyad bounding what is now Frodsham Street. In the reign of Edward II the monks had had to agree to destroy the “ great gate erected by them in their own proper wall ” and to make a postern gate instead. This gateway remained until the middle of the 17th century and traces of the wall in which it was placed may be seen to-day as one enters the Kaleyad from Frodsham Street. It is 2ft. 6in. thick. The two gates were a source of contention in the reigns of Henry V and Henry VI and this grant only confirms what had been granted in previous centuries.⁴⁷

The only occasion on record when this redoubtable Abbot adopted a humble attitude was when he omitted to pay Cromwell his half-yearly fee. As Vicar-General Cromwell appears to have received payment from every monastery in the land and from a great many other people as well, both ecclesiastical and lay. His income for one month in 1537 was £1,062 (£26,550), made up almost entirely of payments by individuals.⁴⁸ Apparently in this year Birchenshawe was late in paying, and in consequence received a visit from Cromwell’s agent, Richard Hough. It produced an immediate result. “ I am deceived and right sorry,” he wrote.

"I send by Sir Richard Hoghe your duty, and shall be better advised another time." What that "duty" was is made clear by Hough's own letter to Cromwell in which he says, "I have been to the Abbot of Chester and required of him your Lordship's fee. I send £10 which I received from him." This letter is dated January 27.⁴⁹ The money was entered in Cromwell's accounts on February 6 ten days later.⁵⁰

The remainder of Hough's letter is worth recording for the light it throws on the man and his times. He goes on—"I made the same request of the Abbot of Vale Royal, who promised that he would wait upon your Lordship, if he were able to write (? ride), and if not, would send it by a servant." He then reminds Cromwell that he had promised him the office of Rider of Delamere Forest. "Sir Piers Dutton is now come up to London who I believe will make great suit to continue it. It is but £4. 11. 3 a year."

But we must not picture Richard Hough spurring post haste all the way from Westminster to collect his master's fees, for in actual fact he was a Cheshire squire—I do not know why the Abbot prefixed a Sir to his name—one of the family which has given its name to Thornton Hough. Born in 1507, he would be 30 at this time and he lived till 1573.⁵¹ It was natural that Cromwell should employ him as his agent in Cheshire, for Hough was his son-in-law, if that is the correct term to apply to the husband of an illegitimate daughter. Three years later (July, 1540) he bought the empty buildings of the Grey Friars in Chester and he was evidently one of the greedy landowners of the period who joined in the scramble for Church property. He was also a man of violence, for on one occasion he "with a great number of evil doers" laid wait for John Massey, the customs officer or "Royal Searcher" for the Port of Chester, as he was going home to Puddington at five o'clock one afternoon, wounded him so severely that he was left on the ground for dead, and killed one of his servants. A compliant coroner, Henry Hockenhull, and a packed jury

saved him from the gallows. One Thomas Pillyn, whom we shall meet later, was one of his witnesses.⁵²

The dispute over the Kaleyard gate was Birchenshawe's last effort, for in January, 1538, the Royal Commissioner sent round for the disciplining of the surviving monasteries, arrived in Chester. He was the notorious Dr. Thomas Leigh, and his encounter with the redoubtable Abbot must have been awaited with interest not only by the monks and the City but by the whole County. At last the old man had met his match. On February 4 Sir William Brereton wrote to Cromwell,—“One Dr Legh, your commissary, coming hither, the Abbot of Chester resigned as aged and impotent, of which our whole Shire is very glad. I beg you will prefer Thomas Clerk, the Prior there, to his office.”. The Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of Chester wrote the next day in almost the same words. Their request was granted and Thomas Clerk became the new Abbot.⁵³

John Birchenshaw had no cause for complaint. He had been in office 44 years and must have been a very old man for those days. He received from the monastery a pension of £100 p.a. (£2500) and the services of a chaplain, three lay servants and five horses, the profits of two granges and all the debts due to the monastery. This last item was offset by his liability for all the debts owed by the monastery, which were considerable, and he was rather slow in paying them. For the last time (on September 5, 1538) Birchenshawe wrote to Cromwell, to whom the Abbey had appealed. “I have discharged above £400 (£10,000) of the debt since my resignation and yet cannot get true payment of my pension, but £10 is detained for the tenth to the King, and other sums for payment of debts for simony and usury, with which I am not charged.”⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that he wrote from Chester, and there we must take leave of him. He went on drawing his pension from the Court of Augmentations after the Monastery was dissolved up to and including the year 1542, so that we may conclude that he died in 1543 when his pension ceases.

THE DISSOLUTION.

The monks must have witnessed the departure of Dr. Leigh with great relief and with a conviction that the worst was over. They had been "visited" and still survived. "Surely the bitterness of death is past." But as the year 1538 went on and news reached them of the surrender of one monastery after another their fears must have revived. Then one day in July they would here that Combermere Abbey had come to an end. In August they would have seen for themselves the Friaries of Chester being surrendered to the Suffragan Bishop of Dover, himself once a friar. On September 3 the fall of Vale Royal would have convinced them that their own fall was now but a matter of time, and they set about preparing for the worst and seeing what they could save from the wreck. The method was to lease their manors for large admission fines but a low annual rental. On the supposition that they would be able to collect the fine but would not be there to collect the rents the worldly wisdom of this policy is obvious. At the same time they offered what would nowadays be called an attractive lock-up investment which was readily seized upon by the influential citizens of Chester, as we shall see.⁵⁵ The evidence for all this is contained in the Survey of 1540 already mentioned where all the lands of the monastery are recorded with the names of the people to whom they were leased and the date when the lease was made. It is not until one arranges these leases in the order in which they were granted that their significance is apparent. It is then seen that from September 1 to October 18, 1538, the monks leased or let no fewer than ten manors or properties, as follows:—

1. Sept. 1. Cellerer's Meadow near Stonebridge in the parish of S. Oswald, with all the tithes of hay and corn in the Bache, 6 acres, let by indenture to Thomas Gose.

- Sept. 6. The parsonage of S. Oswald with a tithe barn at Boughton with all tithes "lately in the Abbot's hands to the use of his house," let by indenture to William Sneyde (p. 19) and William Holcrofte.
- Sept. 8. Carter's Hey pasture let by indenture to Otwell Worsley, gentleman, for 51 years.
- Sept. 16. The parsonage of Ince, with the tithes, worth £6. 3. 4 p.a. let by indenture to Richard Cowley.
- Oct. 4. The parsonage of Neston Magna, Neston Parva, and Willaston, with the tithes of wool, lambs and offerings, worth £36. 9. 8 p.a. "lately in the Abbot's hands to the use of his house," let by indenture to Thomas Thomasew Esq.
- Oct. 8. The Manor of Sutton in Wirral, worth £16. 12. 2 p.a. let by indenture to Ralf Hucknal. "The late Abbot examined and sworn saith the said indenture was sealed and immediately delivered to the said farmer without any condition between them made."
- Oct. 10. The parsonage of Sutton in Wirral with all the tithes on corn in Bromborough and the manor called Bromborough Court, Burneston (Barnston), Eastham, Plumyard, Childerne, Thornton, Hutton, Overpool, Netherpool, Sutton Magna and Parva, with all the church at Bromborough, worth £61. 9. 0 p.a. let by indenture to William Goodman and Hugh Aldersey, "upon condition if the said monastery were not dissolved that then the said William and Hugh to redeliver the said indenture as doth appear by a certain obligation wherein they stand bound to the said abbot."
- Oct. 11. The parsonage of Shotwick with the tithes of corn and hay and a tithe barn of Great and Little Saughall, £6, and the tithe barn, corn and hay of Ledsham in Wirral, £9. Is worth yearly £15. Let by indenture to Thomas Stret and Ralf Radford.
- Oct. 18. A tithe barn at Shotwick, with the tithes on corn, hay, lambs, wool and fish, £1. 1. 8, and other tithes with the Easter roll and all other offerings, £4. 5. 2 worth £8. 7. 0 p.a., let by indenture to Thomas Pillyn.
- Oct. 18. The manors of Huntingdon and Cheveley let to Thomas Doctor Lee by indenture for 99 years.

Even this list does not contain the full story, for the document printed in Dugdale is stated to be incomplete, and an indenture of August 5, 5 Edward VI, from William Cliff, Dean, to John Calveley mentions four other leases made on October 2, 15, 25 and 30, 1538.⁵⁶ This brings the total of leases made in October up to ten, one every three days.

There must have been a press of business in the Abbey Exchequer during those two months, and Otwell Worsley, "clerk of the Exchequer," must have been a busy man, yet not too busy to secure for himself a pasture called "Carter's Hey," nor to provide a pension for himself when the crash came. There are two statements as to the salary that the Abbey was paying him. One in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1535) says it was £11. 6. 8. and was made up as follows:—

Auditor of the monastery <i>pro foedo suo</i> - - -	£3. 6. 8
For the County of Derby - - -	4. 0. 0
For Seneschal of the said monastery - - -	2. 0. 0
For the County of Salop and Derby - - -	2. 0. 0
	<hr/>
	£11. 6. 8

The other one is in the Survey of 1540 and gives details but no total. These details add up to £9. 19. 11. which is so unlikely a sum that probably something has been omitted.

Ready money - - - - -	£2. 0. 0
Meat and drink for himself and servant - - -	2. 13. 4
Chamber within the monastery - - - - -	10. 0
Fuel - - - - -	1. 0. 0
Provender for two horses - - - - -	1. 10. 4
Stabling for ditto - - - - -	6. 8
Pryce of 7 loves called Paynequarters	
4 gals a week of convent ale - - - - -	1. 6. 8
4 gals a week of second ale	
A gentleman livery - - - - -	13. 3
	<hr/>
	£9. 19. 11

On September 6, 1538, Otwell Worsley had this changed into a pension of £12 a year (£300), which was paid to him regularly after the dissolution of the monastery.

Worsley was himself one of the three Commissioners appointed to survey the Deaneries of Malpas and Wirral for the *Valor*. He was evidently an influential person.

Some of the other tenants are familiar to us. William Sneyde, for example, who a year ago was trying to get the lease of "Lady Barrowe's Hey" (p. 19), and Richard Cowley or Coley, who already had the parsonage of Ince and now adds the manor to it. The "Thomas Doctor Lee," who obtained the manor of Huntingdon with which old Abbot Birchenshawe had refused to part, must surely be the Dr. Thomas Leigh who had just visited the abbey. We know that he was in the neighbourhood while these matters were being arranged, for he dates a letter from Vale Royal on August 22⁵⁷ and he was not the man to neglect an opportunity of making a bargain. It will be noticed that his lease is nearly twice as long as any of the others.

Thomas Gose, who rented Cellarer's Meadow, was servant to Abbot Clarke and received a legacy of 40/- from him.⁵⁸ When the cathedral was founded he became the Minor Canons' cook. The remainder seem to have been prominent Chester citizens. Hugh Aldersey and William Goodman who were in league with the Abbot to help him to save his property had both been mayors, Goodman in 1532 and 1536, and Aldersey in 1528, and he was to hold that office again in 1541 and 1546. Ralf Radford and William Holcroft were also mayors, in 1543 and 1545 respectively. Ralf Hucknall we have already met as bailiff of Sutton (p. 12) so that he succeeded in getting the manor of which he had been in charge. Thomas Pillyn, the friend of Richard Hough, had obtained a lease of land from the Grey Friars when they were *in extremis* in 1538. He was enfranchised as a shoemaker on Dec. 3, 1533 and in 1555 made himself prominent at the trial of George Marsh, being among the priests and people who, "called on Marsh to recant with many earnest words." He became sheriff in 1561.⁵⁹ The letting of the parsonage of Sutton to Goodman and Aldersey was a clear case of collusion, and evidently

the auditor, William Wiseman, had his doubts about the letting of the Manor also.

The Survey is stated by Ormerod to be defective at the beginning and we can add to the list two other pastures which were leased about this time, one to William Glaseor, alderman, for 99 years situated somewhere in the Bache, and the other to William Goodman, alderman, "adjoining Pinchewer Hayes." We hear of them because six years later, in 1545-6, William Holcroft, squire, procured a band of four hundred "riotous persons," among whom we can recognise Thomas Gose and Thomas Pillyn, and broke down the hedges of the said pastures.⁶⁰

The remarkable thing is that according to Ormerod William Holcroft was Mayor at this time, and two of the "riotous persons" were the two Sheriffs, Richard Pole and Richard Grimsditch. Evidently it was no mere vulgar brawl when the Mayor and Sheriffs pull down the fences erected by two aldermen, and no doubt some question of common rights was involved.

We have little record of any events connected with the monastery in 1539, but as more and more houses were surrendered, the monks of S. Werburgh's must have felt that their doom was fast approaching. Especially would this be so when an obsequious Parliament passed the Act legalising the dissolution of all those monasteries which had been dissolved since 1536 and all those which should be dissolved in future. The same Act declared null and void all leases which had been made within a year of the date of surrender. Is it fanciful to see the hand of Dr. Thomas Leigh in the postponement of the surrender of S. Werburgh's until more than a year had elapsed since the signing of his lease of the manors of Huntingdon and Cheveley?

On November 18, 1539, the Abbot (Thomas Clarke) made a last effort to stave off disaster. He sent a servant, with of course the appropriate fee, to bear a letter to Mr. Wriothesley, who was receiving an annual payment of £5 from the Abbey at the time. He also invoked the aid of

Richard Tomyow, Cromwell's steward. Tomyow, who no doubt also received a fee, asked Dr. Bellasis, one of Cromwell's most prominent officials, to help. He supposed, (he wrote to him) that the purport of the letters from the Abbot was to know what would become of the monastery and whether any suit would serve to stay the dissolution "by alteration, as many shall be."⁶¹ The only likely alteration would be to change the abbey into a cathedral, and the Abbot might have spared his pains, had he but known, for this was already decided upon. It was Cromwell's custom to jot down on a piece of paper⁶² a list of things he wished to remember, and one of them undated, but about this time, was "For the joining of St. Asaph with Chester and Wenlock"⁶³, which shows that the formation of a new diocese had already been debated. A little later we find several rough drafts in different handwritings of "A scheme for the Foundation of Bishoprics and Colleges".⁶⁴ In one of these Chester is joined with Wenlock and made into a College with a Provost and four Prebendaries. Another draft makes Shrewsbury-cum-Wenlock the Bishop's see with a President and six Prebendaries, but this is afterwards cancelled. However, all these plans and speculations in high circles were unknown to the monks of S. Werburgh's, whose anxieties must have increased as they heard of the judicial murder by hanging of their former colleague, Thomas Marshall, Abbot of Colchester, on December 1.

On January 20, 1540, the end came. Four Commissioners, of whom Dr. Leigh was one, arrived. Abbot Clark handed over the monastery with all its lands, and he and the Prior, Nicholas Bucksey, were rewarded with the promise of the posts of Dean and Prebendary respectively in the new Cathedral when it was founded. The other monks received a pension and presumably departed from Chester, though one of them, John Mayer, turns up again on the Cathedral staff in a subordinate capacity as Deacon or Gospeller.⁶⁵

It is with some curiosity that we wait in imagination for the monks to file out of their old home and count them as they go. Though it is one of the richest monasteries in the land, there are only ten of them together with the Abbot and Prior and two novices, fourteen souls in all. A good deal of sympathy has been bestowed on the monks thus suddenly turned loose upon the world. But they could, if they wished, obtain their "capacity" from the Archbishop to serve as secular priests in a parish, or they could accept a pension, as these men did, graduated according to seniority and length of service. And sometimes they seem to have done both.

Here are their names with the amount of pension they received.⁶⁷

Robert Wyngham, prior of the cell of Holbroughe (Hilbre)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£6.
John Taylor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£6.
John Standeley, sub-prior	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£6.
Hugh Matthew	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£6.
John Mayer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£6.
Richard Whitehed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£7.
Richard Robinson	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£5. 6. 8
Randall Fynchett	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£5.
John Gostilowe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£5.
Thomas Rutter, novice	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£2. 13. 4
Richard Downe, novice	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£2.

It will be noticed that the pension list contains nine monks, and not ten, as stated above. The tenth monk, William Milner, did not come on to the roll until June 26, 1543, when he received a pension of £5, but his name does occur in the list of Petycanons in the Cathedral Treasurer's accounts for 1541 and 1542. It would appear, therefore, that he resigned that post in 1543 and then applied for his monk's pension and got it. And yet after all there were not ten monks in the monastery, for two of them lived on Hilbre Island off West Kirby. S. Werburgh's had had a cell established here from before the time of Richard I.⁶⁸

An old man of seventy giving evidence in a law suit in 1575 stated that "he doth well remember the said two monks in the Abbot's tyme had a fysshing boate, and did use to take hearings and other fysshe by their servants." Another witness said that when he was the Abbot's page boy he "was wont to go to Helbric, and there to lie for the space of a fortnight together at certain tymes,"⁶⁹ a pleasant holiday by the sea.

In the "Chapel of the Blessed Mary of Hildeburgheye" a lamp was kept burning to guide vessels into Hoyle Lake, a very primitive form of lighthouse. As long ago as the reign of Henry III (1236) 10/- was being paid by John Scot, Earl of Chester, to maintain this light, and the payment was continued by the Crown annually on the Feast of S. Martin. Now the 10/- was to be transferred to the Cathedral and presumably the mariners would have to go without their guiding light.⁷⁰

The pensions do not appear to have been very big.⁷¹ £6 would mean about £160 to-day, but the monks were able, and were probably expected to add to their pension by their earnings. We have seen that John Mayer did so, being paid £8 per annum for his services as Deacon or Gospeller, making £14 (or £360) in all, and he probably had free quarters in addition.

One is naturally curious to know what became of these Chester monks now turned loose upon the world, and it so happens that we can ascertain this from the Augmentation Office accounts. Either they were elderly men or they found the world too hard for them after their cloistered life, for if we except those who transferred their services to the new cathedral and the two novices, only three of them (Robert Wingham, William Milner and John Gostilowe) were still drawing their pensions in 1547. According to Ormerod, John Standeley and Richard Robertson died in 1543 and Hugh Matthew in 1546. As neither John Taylor nor Randall Fynchett figure in the accounts for 1547 the assumption is that they had died too. Richard Whitehed

was another who died in 1543, but not from natural causes, for he was killed in a brawl in London by "Roger Hurlton, alias Hurston, of London, alias Roger Hurlton of Chester." A royal pardon was granted to Roger on April 24, 1543, on the ground that he had acted in self-defence "as appears by the inquest taken in the parish of S. Mary Mounthawte, London, 21 March last."⁷² This is not surprising, for Whitehed seems to have been a quarrelsome person. On July 26, 1538, he had to be bound over in the Mayor's court in Chester to keep the peace with Nicholas Bucksey, and Rad. Bostock was bound over to keep the peace with him.⁷³ We can only guess what old quarrel flared up again when he met Hurlton in London.

John Gostilowe was made Rector of Wallasey in 1549 and remained there till his death in 1579.⁷⁴ He was still drawing his pension in 1556. We have thus accounted for everyone except Wingham, Milner and the two novices, and these also were drawing pensions in 1556.⁷⁵

It was not only the monks who were pensioned, for the King honoured at any rate some of the pensions or annuities which the Monastery had granted to certain individuals, as we have seen in the case of Otwell Worsley. According to Dugdale⁷⁶ payments were still being made in 1555-56 to ten of those named in the list made by the King's auditor in 1540. They are

Ralf Worsley
 Richard Colley⁷⁷
 Robert Wermynghton
 Robert Vautre
 Robert Lewis
 Thomas Gwent
 Geoffrey Lee
 Robert Staundysshe
 Robert Radford, priest
 Edward ap Gryffyn, porter.

To these must be added John Bircheley, "teacher of the children," whose name occurs at the end of the list of bailiffs in 1540. He was one of the three who had rooms

in the monastery. He drew a pension of £6 for life, and subsequently added to it a salary of £6. 13. 4d. as Cathedral organist, making £12. 13. 4. in all (say £330). The second man to lodge in the monastery was Robert Radford, who had the use of two rooms adjoining the Abbey gateway. The third was Edward Algriff, alias ap Gryffyn, the porter, who received a pension of £4. 14. 8. He was still in the service of the Cathedral in 1578.⁷⁸

Thus ended S. Werburgh's Abbey on January 20, 1540. It remains to draw a few conclusions about the Dissolution of the Monasteries from this detailed study of one of them.

1. The Dissolution of the Monasteries in many cases made no immediate difference to the people who lived on their lands. We are often told that the monks were easy-going landlords and that the greedy laymen who took their place by their application of business methods (which means enclosures) increased poverty and unemployment. Nobody could call Abbot Birchenshawe easy-going, but he may have been exceptional. But generally speaking, though unemployment may have been increased in later years, at the time there appears to have been little change, for most of the land was already in the hands of laymen, whether as bailiffs or lessees. It was the same with the tithe payers. Most of the tithe was already leased to laymen, who would go on collecting it in the same way as of yore. Thomas Gose, for example, the Abbot's servant and now to become the Minor Canons' cook, would still go on collecting the tithes of the Bache.
2. The next thing we notice is the tremendous power wielded by Thomas Cromwell. No matter was too big and no detail too small for his attention, for even the porter of the Abbey Gate could write to him.

3. The despotic power of the Abbot is also well illustrated. He was a baron with a seat in the House of Lords while the monks ranked as squires. His pension was £100 and much else besides while the monks received £5 or £6. He lived in his own house, with other houses such as Saughton and Ince to which he could withdraw, and the monks might not see him for months on end. The fact that Birchenshawe at his retirement was personally responsible for all the money owing to the Abbey and all the money owed by the Abbey shows that he held all the financial administration entirely in his own hands.
4. Finally, we may ask what light the history of S. Werburgh's throws on the reasons for the Dissolution. One cannot generalise from a single instance, but there is not in the case of this Abbey the slightest suggestion that either morals or religion had anything to do with it. It has been said that Henry VIII was influenced by the fact that the monasteries were strong supporters of the Papacy. The attitude of Abbot Birchenshawe towards the Pope does not bear this out, and when the Abbot did try to use a Papal decision in his favour he was firmly and effectively dealt with by Cardinal Wolsey. Nor had the New Learning anything to do with it for the services in the cathedral, as we shall see later, were just as mediæval as those in the Abbey church so long as Henry VIII was alive. As regards morals, no charges were brought against the Chester monks and it is hardly likely that the Abbot would have been made Dean of the Cathedral and Bucksey Prebendary if they had not been perfectly respectable members of society. There was only one reason apparent for the dissolution of S. Werburgh's and that was its wealth.

NOTES.

- ¹ Throughout this paper I have multiplied by 25 to arrive at pre-War (1939) values.
- ² G. Baskerville, *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries*, 103.
- ³ Baskerville, 182, 185.
- ⁴ A. Savine, *English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution*, 3.
- ⁵ Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Period*, 582.
- ⁶ The curious reader who adds up the sums paid for masses and finds an error of 3/- must blame the Commissioners.
- ⁷ Tait, *Chantulary of Chester Abbey*, I, *Chetham Soc.*, 224-5, quoted by Moorman, *Church Life in England in the 13th century*, 318-9.
- ⁸ *Chetham Soc.*, LXXXII, 320.
- ⁹ *Record Soc.*, LXIV, 98.
- ¹⁰ A. Hamilton Thompson, *Ford Lecture for 1933*, 79.
- ¹¹ Morris, 350-1
- ¹² Ormerod, *Hist. of Chesh.*, Helbys's Edit., I, 291; Dugdale, *Monasticon*, II, 380.
- ¹³ Printed in Dugdale, II, 392.
- ¹⁴ The Survey makes the net income £889 18s. 0d.
- ¹⁵ Baskerville, 61.
- ¹⁶ Savine, 253.
- ¹⁷ *Chetham Soc.*, XXXIII, 125.
- ¹⁸ Morris, 150.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 582.
- ²⁰ *Cheshire Sheaf*, 3rd Ser., V, 52.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, XXIV, 37.
- ²² *Ibid.*, XXIX, 77.
- ²³ Dugdale, II, 392.
- ²⁴ £114 14 0 in the original.
- ²⁵ Savine, 242.
- ²⁶ *Calendar of Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, IV, No. 297 (14). On April 14, 1524, Robert Myllyngton was granted a pension "which the new Abbot (Thomas Highfield) is bound to give at the King's nomination".
- ²⁷ In the letters patent founding the cathedral mention is made of "two cubricula lately in the tenure and use of Robert Radford, clerk, situated between the said new kitchen and the gate of the said late monastery". Dugdale, II, 395.
- ²⁸ Morris, 153
- ²⁹ Ormerod, I, 234
- ³⁰ Morris, 134, where the award is printed in full.
- ³¹ *L. and P.*, II, pt. I, No. 269, and Dugdale, II, 390, where the Pope's letter is printed in full.
- ³² Ormerod is mistaken in thinking that he was dismissed on this occasion.
- ³³ *L. and P.*, IV, pt. I, No. 546 (19).
- ³⁴ *Ibid.* No. 160.
- ³⁵ Baskerville, 108, note.
- ³⁶ *Sheaf*, 3rd Ser., XX, 71.
- ³⁷ He was also known as Thomas Beche, which fact led Dugdale to think they were two different people. See Gasquet, *The Last Abbot of Glastonbury*, 159, note.

- ³⁸ *L. and P.*, V, No. 1506.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.* VII, No. 854.
- ⁴⁰ An interesting example of the origin of surnames.
- ⁴¹ *L. and P.*, VII, No. 1630.
- ⁴² *Star Chamber Cases*, pt. I, *Record Soc.*, LXXI, 74.
- ⁴³ *Chester Freeman Rolls*, pt. I, *Record Soc.*, LI, II. See also below, p. 19.
- ⁴⁴ Hemingway, *Hist. of Chester*, I, 354, note.
- ⁴⁵ Jane Seymour died in 1537.
- ⁴⁶ *L. and P.*, XIII, pt. I, No. 1145. Cf. Survey of 1540 in Ormerod, I, 276.
- ⁴⁷ Morris, 241; *Chester Archæol. Jour.*, O.S. III, 474; *L. and P.*, XIII, pt. I, No. 613.
- ⁴⁸ *L. and P.*, XIV, pt. II, 782.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.* XIII, pt. I, No. 153.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* XIV, pt. II, No. 318.
- ⁵¹ *C.A.J.*, N.S., XXIV, pt. I, 58.
- ⁵² *Record Soc.*, LXXI, 113-4, 122-3.
- ⁵³ *L. and P.*, XIII, pt. I, Nos. 218, 224.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* XIII, pt. II, No. 284.
- ⁵⁵ The Grey Friars had done just the same. Their house in Chester fell on August 15, 1538. On April 30 of that very year they leased a toft to Ralph Rogerson for 80 years at a rent of 2/- a year, but with an entrance fine of £1. That is to say, they pocketed ten years rent. See *C.A.J.*, N.S., XXIV, pt. I, 37-8.
- ⁵⁶ *Sheaf*, 3rd Ser. I, 7.
- ⁵⁷ Thomas Wright's *Suppression*, 244.
- ⁵⁸ *Chetham Soc.*, XXXIII, 125.
- ⁵⁹ *C.A.J.*, N.S., XXIV, pt. I, 56.
- ⁶⁰ *Record Soc.*, LXXI, 102-3.
- ⁶¹ *L. and P.* XIV, pt. II, No. 543.
- ⁶² On what Hamlet called his tables. "My tables! Meet it is I set it down." Act I, Sc. V.
- ⁶³ *L. and P.*, XIV, pt. II, 16, 259.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.* No. 429, printed by Henry Cole in 1838, a copy of which is in the Cathedral Library.
- ⁶⁵ Treasurer's Accounts.
- ⁶⁷ *L. and P.*, XVI, 745 (15).
- ⁶⁶ Ormerod, II, 501.
- ⁶⁹ *Sheaf*, 3rd Ser., I, 6.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3rd Ser., VII, 43.
- ⁷¹ Not very much larger than a labourer's wage, which is stated to have been £5 8s. 0d. at this time. See Thorold Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages* (1884), II, 388. The porter's wages were £4 8s. 4d. and a house (Treasurer's Accounts).
- ⁷² *L. and P.* XVIII, pt. I, No. 476 (5). A Roger Hurlton was one of Edward VI's Commissioners to take inventories of Church ornaments in Chester in 1553. Morris, 150.
- ⁷³ Morris, 136, note.
- ⁷⁴ *Sheaf*, 3rd Ser., III, 27.
- ⁷⁵ Ormerod, I, 277.
- ⁷⁶ Dugdale, II, 376, note.
- ⁷⁷ For Richard Colley see p. 14.
- ⁷⁸ Archbishop of York's Visitation, 1578.

