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## CHAPTER II

### THE ENGLISH CARTHUSIANS

THE tragedy of the fall of the Charterhouses of England began with the martyrdom at Tyburn of the three Carthusian Priors, Blessed John Houghton, of London; Blessed Augustine Webster, of Axholme; and Blessed Robert Lawrence, of Beauvale, on May 4, 1535.<sup>1</sup> Of the forty-eight members who remained in the London Charterhouse after Houghton's death, thirty were choir monks, and eighteen lay brothers. On May 18, 1537, the Royal Commissioners came to their monastery and exacted the Oath of Supremacy from the Prior and twenty of his subjects. Of the twenty-eight others, seventeen died for the Faith,<sup>2</sup> and all the others were expelled with a small pension of £5 a year;<sup>3</sup> among these latter was Dom Maurice Chauncy, the principal authority for their history.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. MAURITIUS CHAUNCY, *Historia aliquot Martyrum Anglorum maxime octodecim Carthusianorum*, pp. 99-106. Monstrolii, 1888. English translation, pp. 54-60: London, 1890. HEIMBUCHER, *Die Orden und Kongregationen der Katholischen Kirche*, vol. I, p. 483. Paderborn, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> GASQUET, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 237. Here they were courageously visited by Margaret Giggs, the wife of Dr. John Clement and the adopted daughter of Blessed Thomas More. An interesting account of their imprisonment is contained in the Life of her daughter, Mother Margaret Clement, who was for thirty-eight years Prioress of the Flemish Canonesses of St. Augustine, in Louvain. Cf. J. MORRIS, S.J., *The Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers, First Series*, pp. 3-27. London, 1872.

<sup>3</sup> GASQUET, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 236.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Chauncy (also written Chamney, Chawney, Chaney, Channy, Cheyne, Chasee, and Chawsey) was born in the year 1513 at Ardeley in Hertfordshire. He was educated at Oxford, and later went into residence at Gray's Inn to study law. At the age of twenty he entered the London Charterhouse. When the Oath of Supremacy was forced on the English Carthusians, Chauncy was among those who signed it, and, as his later life shows, never ceased to repent his weakness in the trial which sent his Prior and seventeen monks to their death. After the final surrender of the Charterhouse on June 10, 1537, Chauncy was allowed to leave England, and went to Flanders where he entered the Charterhouse of Val-de-Grace, in Bruges, and remained there

We have no accurate record of the subsequent fate of all who were expelled from these three houses of the Order. "To repair to other monasteries of the English Province was quite out of the question; for all were on the eve of dissolution, and were destined within a year to share the fate of the Charterhouse of the Salutation of Our Lady by London. A few, though this was dangerous and difficult, escaped beyond the seas, to continue in a foreign Charterhouse their lives of penance, prayer, and praise, and to await the return of their country to the ancient faith."<sup>1</sup> When that restoration did take place on Mary's accession to the throne (1553), it found the remnant of the London Charterhouse gathered around their future Prior, Dom Maurice Chauncy, at the Carthusian monastery of Val-de-Grace, in Bruges, where they had already been received with generous hospitality by the Flemish Carthusians after their first flight from England in 1538.<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Pole's restoration of the religious Orders included the opening of the Charterhouse at Sheen; and in May, 1555, Chauncy and his fellow-monks returned from Bruges, going first to apartments in the Savoy Palace, where they were joined by several of the dispersed

until 1555, when he received orders from the General to return to England to re-establish the Rule. His zeal and his learning, together with the humility he always showed in consequence of his weakness under Henry VIII., won him the respect and admiration of all. He was chosen Prior of the restored monastery at Sheen in 1557, and governed the community until his death in 1581. The place of his death is given by GILLOW as the Charterhouse at Bruges, but Prior LONG'S *MS.* gives Paris as the place. (HENDRICKS, *The London Charterhouse*, p. 307. London, 1889.) He was the author of several treatises:—

1. *Historia aliquot nostri saeculi Martyrum in Anglia, cum pia, tum Lectu acunda, nunquam antehac typis excusa*, published at Mainz, 1550, with many subsequent editions: Munich, 1573; Bruges, 1583; Brussels, 1608; and recently, in 1883, with notes, at Montreuil. An English translation: *The History of the Sufferings of Eighteen Carthusians in England*, was recently published in London, 1890. (*V. Analecta Bollandia*, vi. 35; xiv. 249, 268; xxii. 51.)

2. *Vitae Marijrii Carthusianorum aliquot, qui Londini pro unitate Ecclesiae adversus Haereticos strenue depugnantes varie trucidati sunt*. Louvain, 1572,—a reprint by Chauncy of DOM PETER SUPOR'S, *De Vita Cartusiana*, Paris, 1522.

3. *A Book of Contemplaycon, the whiche is clepyd the Clowde of Unknowyng (Hari. MSS., 674, art. 4, and 959)* attributed by ANTHONY A WOOD to Chauncy (*Athenae Oxoniensis*, Ed. Bliss, 1813-1820, vol. I, p. 459), though by later writers it is considered to be the work of an earlier author (*D.N.B.*, vol. IV, p. 172).

<sup>1</sup> HENDRICKS, *op. cit.*, p. 240. STEPHENS, *New Commentaries on the Laws of England*, vol. II, p. 505. London, 1883. (*Stat. 5 Richard II.*, 1381, which remained in force until 1606.)

<sup>2</sup> DODD-TIERNEY, vol. II, pp. 156-157.

Carthusians; and later, in November, 1556, to their old home at Sheen.<sup>1</sup> The restored community numbered nineteen in all. For two years religious life was carried on with exact scrupulousness, but when Elizabeth threw off all disguise in her attitude towards the Protestant element of her Government, it was imperative that the religious houses should leave England at once or disband.<sup>2</sup> Through the influence of the retiring Spanish ambassador, Count de Feria, and his wife, Lady Jane Dormer, the Carthusians early in 1559 obtained permission to quit the kingdom unmolested.<sup>3</sup> Under the leadership of Dom Maurice Chauncy, they went back to the Charterhouse of Bruges, where they occupied part of the house with Chauncy as their Superior in spiritual matters, being supported by a pension from Philip II, and by donations from rich English Catholic exiles in Belgium.

The arrangement at the Charterhouse at Bruges was not altogether a peaceable one. The irregularity of the Spanish pensions rendered it difficult for the English Prior to meet his share of the expenses; and his subsequent election in the General Chapter of 1561 as Prior of the whole monastery led to some misunderstanding on the part of the Flemish members of the community. The house was overcrowded as it was, and their situation was made even more embarrassing by the desire of the English monks to erect a separate novitiate of their own in the monastery. The General Chapter of 1562 reminded Chauncy that his officials should be, if possible, Flemish; but acquiescence in this regulation did not settle the question, and in 1568 a separation was deemed necessary. The following year, a house was taken in the *rue Sainte-Claire*. Chauncy

<sup>1</sup> ZIMMERMAN, S.J., *Cardinal Pole, sein Leben und seine Schriften*, pp. 303-319. Regensburg, 1891. Cf. HENDRICKS, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> THOMPSON, *History of the Somerset Carthusians*, p. 187. London, 1845.

<sup>3</sup> Lady Jane Dormer, grandniece of Blessed Sebastian Newdigate, one of the Eighteen Carthusian Martyrs of 1535, and granddaughter of Jane Lady Dormer, the unflinching friend of the exiles in Belgium, married the Duke of Feria, December 29, 1558. Cf. DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B., *Blessed Sebastian Newdigate, Courtier, Monk, and Martyr*, p. 60. London, 1901; HENRY CLIFFORD, *Life of Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria*, edited by J. STEVENSON, S.J., p. 19 ss. London, 1887. (*Quarterly Series*.)

<sup>4</sup> "Carthusiani sub Cheseo, viro singulari, omnes in Flandria obtenta principis venia trajecerunt." *Publ. C.R.S.*, vol. I, *Miscellanea I*, p. 19. (*Sander's Report to Moroni*, 1561.) Cf. also *ibid.*, vol. II (*Miscellanea*), p. 62, *Persons' Memoirs*, p. ii, *Domesticall Difficulties*. London, 1906.

resigned his Priorship of Val-de-Grace, resuming his old title of Prior of Sheen, and from this time forward the English Carthusians always called their monastery Sheen Anglorum. During the nine years they remained at Bruges (1569-1578) the community was augmented by several students who left the English College of Douay to enter the religious life, and Chauncy endeavoured to draw more young men to his monastery by publishing a new edition of Don Peter Sutor's book: *De Vita Carthusiana*.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from his own interesting personality, Chauncy will always be best known among the pioneers of the Foundation Movement as the one to whom we are indebted for a very valuable letter from Cardinal Allen in defence of the pastoral methods used at Douay and Rheims as well as those in vogue on the mission in England. Whether Chauncy himself objected to these methods, or merely, as Allen's friend, repeated the charges in order to forewarn the English College Rector, we do not know for certain. At any rate, the Carthusian Prior is the spokesman for many of the older clergy who found the training at Douay-Rheims insufficient, who considered the priests too young, their disguises on the Mission derogatory of their high calling, and their attitude of kindly conciliation and peace highly detrimental to the progress of the Faith. It is an evidence of the severe trials Allen received from those who should have been his foremost supporters, and his reply to these charges forms a very precious page in English Seminary history. What adds to the suspicion that Chauncy was not loyal to his friend is the fact, as Allen seems to hint, that the Carthusian Prior had been embittered by a false report to the effect that Allen was plotting to have the pension granted to Sheen Anglorum by Philip II. transferred to what was surely at the time the more important work: the training of young priests for the active life

<sup>1</sup> KNOX, *Douay Diaries*, pp. 98, 99, 142, 156, 157. Proportionate to those who entered the Society of Jesus, the number of students of the English College, Rome, who became religious before 1622, was small. Only two are mentioned as having joined the Carthusians (H. FOLEY, S.J., *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, vol. VI, pp. 142, 184. London, 1880). It is a significant fact that of three students who left the English College of Lisbon to enter Nieuport, two returned on account of the severity of the Rule. CROFT, *Historical Account of Lisbon College*, pp. 176, 206, 234. London, 1902.

on the Mission. Allen denies this accusation with a humility that bares his soul to Chauncy:—"The quarrel is God's; and but for His holy glory and honour I might sleep at ease, and let the world wag and other men work!"<sup>1</sup>

The year 1578 marks the end of the first period in the history of the English Catholic exiles in Belgium. Not only does it chronicle the end of the Louvain School of Apologetics, the books and treatises of which were feared by the Government in its attack on the Church, but it saw also the expulsion of the English College from Douay. Don Juan's failure to cope with the political situation left the Low Countries at the mercy of a fanatical band of Calvinists and Lutherans, and, along with other cities, Bruges was captured by the Protestants in the course of this same year.<sup>2</sup> Chauncy's account of the siege of Bruges and the exile of his community appears to be lost, but Long's *Notice* contains a contemporary account written by John Suertes, who was sacristan at the Sheen Anglorum of Bruges at that time.<sup>3</sup> The soldiers who quartered themselves for six weeks in the monastery appear to have belonged to the party who murdered the twelve Carthusians at Ruremonde in 1572.<sup>4</sup> Later, when the Spaniards recaptured the city, the magistrates, for reasons that are not given, ordered the English monks to quit the city within twenty days. On April 23, 1578, they left Bruges to begin a long wandering of forty-eight years from town to town in Belgium and in France, seeking a place in which to settle, until finally, in 1626, the community went to Nieuport where they set up the Sheen Anglorum, and where they remained

<sup>1</sup> KNOX, *Allen*, pp. 31-37; A. BELLESHEIM, *Wilhelm Cardinal Allen und die Englische Seminare auf dem Festlande*, pp. 52-56. Mainz, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> PIRENNE, *Histoire de Belgique*, t. IV, p. 130. Brussels, 1911.

<sup>3</sup> This MS. (*Notitia Carthusianorum Anglorum*) by DOM JAMES LONG, Prior of Sheen Anglorum of Nieuport, 1750-1759, is now in the possession of the English Canonesses of St. Austin of Bruges. (Cf. HENDRICKS, *op. cit.*, p. 278, who made use of it as one of his chief sources.) A copy: *Acta S. Brunonis et historia Carthusianorum Anglorum a primo eorum in Angliam ingressu usque in presentem annum, 1754*, a Jacobo Long, is in the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels (MS. 4530, (555-576) f. 92). A modern French translation (1882) is in the possession of Canon de Schrevel of Bruges. The original has never been printed, but will find its way no doubt into the published series of the Catholic Record Society.

<sup>4</sup> DOM ARNOLD HAVEN, *Historica relatio duodecim martyrum Cartusianorum qui Ruremondae in Geldria anno 1572 agonem suum feliciter compleverunt*. Brussels, 1608. Reprinted with a compendium of Chauncy's History at Brussels, 1753.

in security until dissolved by Joseph II. in 1783. From Bruges they went to Lille, and thence to Douay, where they received scanty hospitality, being ordered to leave before four o'clock the morning after their arrival.<sup>1</sup> The journey was continued to Cambrai, which town they did not enter, having been warned that they would be cut to pieces if they did;<sup>2</sup> they then went on to St. Quentin, where they were housed by the magistrates and the people for several months.

They were in the most abject poverty. The annual pension of 1200 crowns granted to them by the Spanish Government in 1566 was never regularly paid,<sup>3</sup> and the small sum of 50 crowns a year they received out of the Papal grant (1560) of 500 crowns a year to the exiles hardly paid for the necessary food and clothing.<sup>4</sup> Chauncy had continually made appeals to Philip II. to help his community, but the unsettled state of Spanish finances rendered it impossible for the King's minister to keep pace with the royal generosity.

During their stay in St. Quentin, Chauncy appealed to Pope Gregory XIII., relating to him the shattered hopes of his community when Queen Mary died, their subsequent exile at Bruges, and the condition they were then in, making a plea for help from the Holy See and begging that the Holy Father would use his influence with the Governor of the Low

<sup>1</sup> KNOX, *Douay Diaries*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> MS. LONG, *Notitia Cart.*, Appendix VIII, quoted by HENDRICKS, *op. cit.*, 302.

<sup>3</sup> Shortly after their arrival in Flanders in 1559, Marguerite de Parme, Governess of the Low Countries, wrote to Philip II. on their behalf, and on December 8, 1559, 400 livres were added to the annual budget for their support. (Cf. GACHARD, *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, duchesse de Parme, avec Philip II.* (1559-1563), vol. I, p. 60. Bruxelles, 1867-1881.) The following year, August 27, 1560 (*ibid.*, vol. I, p. 262), a fresh demand was made, and on October 5, 1560, Philip II. ordered his agent at Brussels, Juan Lopez Gallo, to pay whatever was necessary for their support (*ibid.*, vol. I, p. 284). This opens up a situation, sad in its way, in the history not only of the Carthusians, but of almost all the exiles during Philip's reign: the king on the one hand writing to his agents in Belgium to assist them, and they on the other unable to correspond to the generous spirit of their sovereign. The Duke of Feria used every influence at his command to have this pension paid regularly (*ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 455, 466, 492), but help came slowly; though from 1562 to 1578, when the monks left Bruges, there are occasional notices in the registers of the Chambre des Comptes at Lille (Cf. FINOT, *Inventaire des Archives du Département du Nord*, no. 2554, ff. 307, 325, t. v. Lille, 1885), which lead one to believe that they were not wholly forgotten by the Government of the Low Countries.

<sup>4</sup> *Vatican Library, MSS. Regina Lat.*, 2020, ff. 445-446. Thomas Clement to Cardinal Sorlete Louvain, 1575 (?), in a list of the recipients of the 500 crowns given annually by the Holy See to the English exiles in Belgium, credits the *Conventus monialium Carthusianorum* with 50 crowns.

Countries to grant them a place where they could live together and perform the duties of the religious state.<sup>1</sup> Three months later, July 26, 1578, Gregory XIII. wrote to Don Juan of Austria recommending them warmly to his well-known charity, and beseeching the Governor to assign a place to them where they could dwell together.<sup>2</sup> Chauncy meanwhile had appealed in person to Don Juan, and before an answer had come from Rome the Governor had obtained a shelter for them with the monks of the Charterhouse of Louvain, whose Prior, Dom Peter de Mercia, was his personal friend.<sup>3</sup> Here they began community life on July 17, 1578, numbering at the time eighteen choir monks and two lay-brothers. Don Juan's death, October 1, 1578, left them without a protector, and Dom Peter made it difficult for them by refusing them food unless they could pay for it. It became necessary for the General and the Provincial Visitor to intervene to save them from being wanderers again. On September 29, 1579, Dom Peter died, and though the new Prior, William Beyeren, was as a father to the exiled English monks, the same source of misunderstanding which existed in the Flemish convent of Austin Canonesses at Louvain, and in the Bridgettine convent at Termonde, in both of which convents English and Flemish nuns lived under the one roof, together with the extreme poverty of the Louvain Charterhouse would have forced the English Carthusians to find another home for themselves, had it not been for Lady Hungerford and Sir Francis

<sup>1</sup> *Vat. Arch.*, *Nuns. d'Inghilterra*, vol. I, p. 125. Chauncy to Pope Gregory XIII. St. Quentin (?), April 27, 1578.

<sup>2</sup> "Monachi etiam Carthusiani . . . nuper e civitate Brugensi, in qua sustentabantur Catholici Regis munificentia, Angliæ illius furiae postulatione ejecti miserime vivunt in civitate Sancti Quintini, jamque amissis rebus omnibus sola ipsis spes salva est in tua praestanti humanitate et Catholici Regis munificentia, orant igitur ut eos commendemus Nobilitati tuae. Id vero facimus toto pectore, rogamusque ut jubeas locum aliquem ipsis assignari in quo possint simul vivere, etc." THEINER, *Annales Eccles.*, vol. II, p. 436. Pope Gregory XIII. to Don Juan of Austria, July 26, 1578. "Our Carthusians at Bruges, who have been driven hither and thither in different ways, at length have settled—in misery and in danger—at Louvain, that is at the very city whence, on account of fear at the impending dangers and the extreme dearth of all things, the rest of our countrymen have fled to Namur, Rhemes and elsewhere." BURTON, *Douay Diaries*, vol. II, p. 563 (*Rheims Annual Report*). Cf. also *Gallia Christiana*, vol. V, p. 4; DOREAU, *Henri VIII., et les martyrs de la Chartreuse de Londres*, p. 325. Paris, 1890.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronique de la Chartreuse de Louvain* (MS. 771a, *Archives Générales du Royaume*. Brussels), edited by Canon REUSENS, in the *Analectes pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique de la Belgique*, t. XVI (1879), pp. 210-212.

Englefield, through whose generosity they were able for a time to pay their share of the expenses in the Louvain monastery. Chauncy now decided to go to Madrid to appeal to the King for money to erect a separate English house. He set out from Louvain on February 24, 1580, arrived at the Spanish capital in the autumn of the same year, and was entertained by the Duchess of Feria. Philip II. gave him the necessary amount of money, and Chauncy started on the return journey full of hope for his beloved community, but got no farther north than Paris, where he died, June 12, 1581, at the age of 68.<sup>1</sup>

The death of Chauncy meant almost the dissolution of the little community. They held together, however, under the two subsequent Priors, but the withdrawal of the Pontifical pension by Sixtus V., who was then directing Papal resources towards the *Enterprise*, obliged most of the English Carthusians at Louvain to seek refuge in other houses of the Order. Their Prior, Dom John Arnold, the first student of the English College of Douay to become a Carthusian, realizing that gallant efforts alone would save the community, went to Spain to obtain from the King an increase of the annual pension which, indeed, seems to have been much smaller than that mentioned by Worthington.<sup>2</sup> In this he was successful; and with the alms he collected on the journey from English Catholics in whose hearts the Carthusians held a distinct place as the last relic of English monasticism, he was able to keep the remnant of the community intact at Louvain. Pope Sixtus V., in a Brief to Cardinal Cajetan, the Protector of the Carthusian Order, ordered the General, the Visitors and Priors of the Order to provide a proper house at Louvain for the English monks and to send there all who were living in the different foreign Charterhouses. It is difficult to believe that the Order at the time, especially in Spain and Italy, was so poor that something could not have been done to relieve the English from their misery.<sup>3</sup> The only part of the Pope's

<sup>1</sup> HENDRICKS, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> WORTHINGTON, *Catalogus Martyrum in Anglia ab anno 1570 ad annum 1612, cum Narratio de Origine Seminariorum, et de Missione Sacerdotum in Anglia*, p. 6. Douay, 1614.

<sup>3</sup> P. R. O., *Flanders Correspondence*, vol. XII, Brussels, January 11, 1615-1616. Turnbull to Walsingham, in reporting the proposed erection of the English Franciscan

orders which was fulfilled was the sending back of the English to Louvain. The increased pension from Spain, which was regularly paid for a time, kept them from starvation. Prior Arnold alienated many former benefactors of the monks by his participation in the Morgan-Paget dissensions. His second journey into Spain in 1589, while ostensibly to collect funds for the new monastery, was undertaken at the request of Morgan and his faction to intrigue against Allen and against the Spanish party among the exiles, which was led by Father Persons and some of the English Jesuits. The "poore unfortunate prior,"<sup>1</sup> as Allen calls him, died on his journey, leaving the burden of the proposed English house on the new Prior, Dom Walter Pitts, under whom the English community left Louvain and went for a short time to Antwerp, and later to Mechlin, where they settled in a large house in Bleek Street.<sup>2</sup> Many journeys were made by members of the community from Mechlin to Madrid for the purpose of collecting the Spanish pensions during the twenty-five years they remained there.<sup>3</sup>

When hopes arose for the cessation of the penal laws against Catholics in England on account of the projected marriage of the Prince of Wales (Charles I.) with the Infanta of Spain, the Prior of Sheen at that time, Dom Hallows,

monastery under Father Gennings, mentions that the Orders did not look favourably upon the English, and adds that "the clergymen of these provinces are most subject to the Synne of avarice, especially towards strangers." The explanation of this seeming neglect, however, is the state of the Order itself at that time. At the end of the sixteenth century the different houses were not centralized as they are to-day each Province remained separate from its neighbour, though under the jurisdiction of the Father-General and the Visitors. In each Province, each house regulated its own financial affairs, and the Order as such possessed no property. When a house found itself in want, in principle the Province came to its assistance. In the case of the English Carthusians, the General Chapter had only two means of helping them; to recommend them to the generosity of the Province in which they were at that time, or to send collectors around to the richer houses to beg alms in their favour. There is no doubt that this was done; but, owing to the disturbed condition of the Low Countries, it was impossible to relieve their distress.

<sup>1</sup> KNOX, *Allen*, pp. 322, 327, 394. Cf. TAUNTON, *History of the Jesuits in England (1580-1773)*, p. 225. London, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> HENDRICKS, *op. cit.*, p. 313; GODENNE, *Malines Jadis et Aujourd'hui*, p. 21 ss. Malines, 1910. VAN CASTER, *Les Rues de Malines*, p. 210 ss. Malines, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> P. R. O., *Flanders Correspondence*, vol. XI, f. 369.—Turnbull to Walsingham, Brussels, August 4-14, 1615. "The Prior of our English Carthusian Moncks at Mechlen, is by the councill of the Jesuits, to goe unto Spaine there to be a suitor for some revenues or meanes in these partes to mayntayne his cloyster."

obtained the consent of the General to send one of his community to England to look for a home to which the English Carthusians might return; but the breaking off of the match showed them, as it showed all the exiles, how futile it was to hope for a change for the better in the face of the bigotry still existing in their native land.

We have no means of computing the exact amount of the alms given the Carthusians during their long stay at Mechlin, but it must have been considerable; for, in 1626, they bought a large property at Nieuport in order to be nearer England and to receive postulants more easily. They were only ten in number when they left for Nieuport. Candidates for the religious life came from England and from the English College, Douay, and with the aid of some generous benefactors, one of whom gave £1000, Sheen Anglorum was soon in a flourishing state.<sup>1</sup> The high cost of living, however, brought about by the religious wars, exhausted their capital, and they were obliged to send a lay-brother to England to collect alms for their maintenance. From this time onwards the community flourished both in religious perfection and in numbers, although the decree of Propaganda forbidding students to enter religion, together with the Alumni Oath of 1624, made it very difficult for Pontifical alumni to join the Order.<sup>2</sup> During the first years of residence at Nieuport, the English Charterhouse was subject to the General of the Order as well as to the Provincial Visitor of Belgium. An attempt seems to have

<sup>1</sup> *Publ. C.R.S.*, vol. X (1911), *The Douay College Diaries, 1598-1654*; edited by E. H. BURTON, D.D., and T. L. WILLIAMS, M.A., vol. I, p. 115. London, 1911. See also the case of one Robert Edmunds, who had entered the English Carthusian Novitiate at Mechlin, but who was not judged sufficiently fitted for the life, and was sent by the Prior to Douay to try his vocation there, November, 1602; he left Douay beloved by all, April 2, 1603, "jam expertus quod non possit in literis proficere." to return to England. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-49. Later, students and priests left Douay from time to time to join the Carthusians at Nieuport. (Cf. *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 305; vol. II, pp. 444, 447.) The most noteworthy example is that of Edmund Ireland (*vere Dutton*), to whom we owe the *IV Douay Diary* (*ibid.*, vol. I, pp. xi, xxii), and who, as Procurator of the English College (1641-1647), restored its financial condition to a flourishing state. GILLOW (*Dict. Eng. Cath. Biog.*, vol. III, p. 548), states that he died at Nieuport, April 1, 1652. There is no mention of his death in the Douay Diaries, but he is mentioned as living at Nieuport in March, 1652, when his nephew, Richard More, a student at Douay, went there to consult him on the question of receiving holy orders (*ibid.*, vol. II, p. 516).

<sup>2</sup> *Propaganda Archives, Scripta Varia, Decreta*, f. 349; *ibid.*, *Miscellanea Varia* t. VI (1621-1654), f. 161 (printed copy of the Decree of Propaganda, November 24, 1625). Cf. DODD-TIERNEY, vol. V, p. cclxxix.

been made by the Belgian Superiors (probably on account of the small number of the English monks), to have them accept Flemish postulants; and it appears they tried also to force Flemish Priors on the struggling community. The English Carthusians appealed to the Pope in June, 1654, and the Internuncio at Brussels was ordered to inform the Holy See about the juridic situation of the monks. He had some difficulty at first to learn anything about them, but through a Canon of the Cathedral Church of Ypres, Francis Persyn, he ascertained that the convent had always been governed by English Priors, by Vicars, and other officials, who were always English, though under the jurisdiction of the Visitors of Belgium in virtue of the brief of foundation by Sixtus V. Further, he was told that the Visitors attempted in many ways to get complete control of the English Convent by trying to incorporate it with the other Charterhouses in Flanders, and had made serious efforts to put Flemish superiors over the house. The English monks strenuously opposed this change, and knowing that they would not submit to it, the Internuncio agreed thoroughly with their attitude in the matter.<sup>1</sup> Whether Rome spoke in favour of the English monks is uncertain, but it would appear from the documents that the case was allowed to drag. The Prior, Thomas Gerard, resigned in 1654, and was succeeded by Dom Transam, whose manuscript history of Sheen Anglorum was known to Long. At any rate, we find the English Carthusians appealing to Cardinal Barberini, the Protector, begging that their difficulty be presented to Innocent X. (1644-1655), and that the brief of Sixtus V. giving them freedom of action in the management of the Convent, be confirmed, lest anything regarding the method of governing the monastery be changed.<sup>2</sup> No doubt this was

<sup>1</sup> *Val. Arch., Nunz. di Fiandra*, vol. 38, Internuncio Magnelli to Chigi, Brussels, December 5, 1654.

<sup>2</sup> *Vatican Library, Biblioteca Barberini*, t. 8621, f. 68, the English Carthusians to Cardinal Barberini, Nieuport, 1654. "Eminentissime et Reverendissime domine, Patres Carthusiani Angli, qui Neoporti in Belgio hodie monasterium habent, semen sunt, et soboles illius celeberrimi conventus Londinensis, qui fere totus sub Henrico VIII. gloriosam pro fide catholica mortem obiit. Sub initium regni reginae Elisabethae concesserunt Lovanium in Belgio; atque ob summam rerum inopiam paullo post in varia monasteria dispersi sunt. Catholici Angli aegre ferentes ex hac dispersione paulatim tanti conventus memoriam interire, supplicarunt bonae memoriae cardinalibus Henrico Caietano, et Guilielmo Halano, ut intercederent apud Sixtum V.

done, for all attempts on their liberty by the Belgian Superiors seem to have been abandoned. The English Carthusians played a very small part in the wonderful missionary activity of the exiles. They must be judged, however, in their own true sphere of contemplation. Their life went on from day to day, undisturbed by the political changes taking place around them in England and Belgium, and hardly an echo of those changes would have penetrated the cloisters at Nieupoort, were it not that their prosperity, like that of all the English foundations, rose and fell with the persecutions in England. On July 22, 1679, the Internuncio at Brussels writes to Rome to describe the great poverty to which all the monasteries and convents of the nations subject to the King of England were reduced owing to the persecution in England which had been renewed with increasing vigour, helped in a great measure by the Titus Oates plot. The monasteries and convents not only suffered privations, but their lamentable state was augmented by the number of those who came to them, refugees from England, while all the old sources whereby alms reached them from home were cut off. He had hopes, he writes, that the monks and nuns would have been helped by the superiors of their respective Orders, but there has never been any sign of help from that quarter, and now he writes urging the Papal grant of 20,000 florins which had been promised.<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough the Carthusians at Nieupoort do not figure in the list of English

quatenus ipsius auctoritate iterum collecti unum distinctum monasterium constituerent, ubi deinceps per tot annos in summa vitae sanctimonia cum omnium approbatione junxerunt. Iam vero Patres Carthusiani Belgae hanc unitatem evertere praetendunt, et superiores Belgas introducere, ex quo sensim deficiet Anglorum religiosorum successio, et memoria illius celeberrimi conventus Londinensis evanesceat. Quapropter non solum doctorum patrum, sed omnium etiam catholicorum Anglorum nomine, quibus illud monasterium et honori, et edificationi semper fuit, humiliter supplicatur, Emittentiae Vestrae, ut auctoritate sua procuret apud generalem ordinis Carthusiani, ne quid hac in re innovetur. Deinde etiam supplicatur, ut ad maius firmamentum solius negotij intercedere dignetur apud Sanctissimum Dominum Nostrum Innocentium X. ut benigne confirmet, et per breve speciale perpetuum robur adjiciat ijs, quae Sixti V. auctoritate gesta sunt, prohibendo omnibus illius ordinis superioribus, ne quidquam circa modum gubernandi illud monasterium immutent. Quod pro summa gratia accipient, etc. Quam Deus, etc."

<sup>1</sup> *Val. Arch., Nouv. de Flandre*, vol. 69 (1679), Abbé di S. Maria to Propaganda, Brussels, June 24, and July 22, 1679; *ibid.*, vol. 66 (1676-1682); vol. 71 (1681); vol. 72 (1682); cf. MORAN, *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, t. II, p. 282 (*An account of the sums distributed to English and Irish ecclesiastics and nuns by the Internuncio at Brussels*, May 17, 1686).

and Irish drawn up by the Internuncio, but they appear on the two lists of payments of 1682, having received in all 84 florins, the number of the community at that time being eight. In the *Status Monasterii Carthusianorum Anglorum Neoporti* of 1694, there are still but eight monks in the monastery.<sup>1</sup> Their unhealthy situation near the sea, together with the calamity which befel them the previous year when all the older monks were carried off by the plague, kept young men from joining them. Some of the younger fathers died also during this plague, and they feared that unless help came quickly the community would have to be dissolved. Again efforts were made by the Belgian superiors to make the convent Flemish, but the eight young monks who remained resisted the attempt, and elected one of their own number as Prior, in order to escape a foreign superior. The result was not favourable to the spirit of the monastery, for "young monks, neither fully formed to regular discipline nor acquainted with the spirit of their Order, were in charge."<sup>2</sup> In these straitened circumstances, the Novitiate suffered most, and the general of the Order decided to close it for a time, in order that the young postulants might be formed to the Carthusian ideal in other monasteries of the Order. In this the General was right, and it is due to the fact that the young novices of this period were trained in the Charterhouse at Brussels that the English community survived. In 1695, the English Prior was deposed, and a Flemish monk, Dom Van Herenbeck, from the Charterhouse of Val-Royal at Ghent, was sent to Sheen Anglorum as Prior. This arrangement was objectionable to the English monks, and in 1696, Dom Van Herenbeck returned to Ghent, and an English monk, Dom William Hall, was elected Prior. Dom Hall held office for three years and then resigned, to be succeeded by another Flemish monk, this time from Brussels, Dom Jerome Nyversele, who ruled the house a few months only, and was succeeded by one of the English monks, Dom George Hunter, who held the office from 1700 to 1715.

We now enter upon the period of decline in the Foundation Movement. From the beginning of the eighteenth century

<sup>1</sup> *Propaganda Archives, Miscellanea dei Collegi*, t. I (*Collegio Inglese, Ibernese Scottese, di Duaco, dall'anno 1568 al 1790*), f. 122.

<sup>2</sup> HENDRICKS, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

down to the French Revolution, vocations grew less frequent in the Monasteries and Convents, and they seem principally to have existed in a languishing state, although their religious fervour never slackened for a moment. The Carthusians are no exception to this lessening of numbers. In 1761, they numbered five choir monks and one lay-brother; and when the Edict of Suppression of a large number of religious houses in his dominions was signed by Joseph II., on March 17, 1783, Sheen Anglorum consisted only of eight members. The English Charterhouse at Nieuport was the only English foundation suppressed at this time.<sup>1</sup> The last Prior, Dom Williams, accepted a pension of 700 florins from the Austrian Government and resided as chaplain in the Convent of the English Canonesses of Bruges, having been permitted by the Bishop of Ypres to live as a secular priest. Very little is known of what became of the others after their departure from Sheen Anglorum, June 30, 1783. Dom James Bruno Finch, the last of the English Carthusians, found shelter at St. Monica's Convent, Louvain.<sup>2</sup> He came to England in 1794 and died there in 1821. The Prior, Dom Williams, went from Bruges to Bornhem in 1785, where he stayed with the English Dominicans, and in 1789, went to act as chaplain for the Austin Canonesses of St. Monica's, Louvain. After the death of Joseph II., steps were taken to recover their home at Nieuport, and the community returned there for a time, three in number.<sup>3</sup> The French Revolution scattered even this feeble remnant of the English Carthusians, and Prior Williams returned to England and died at Little Malvern in 1797.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LAENEN, *Etude sur la suppression des convents par l'empereur Joseph II., dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens et plus spécialement dans le Brabant*, pp. 419-464. Antwerp, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> *Publ. C.R.S.*, vol. V (*Miscellanea*), p. 93 n. London, 1909.

<sup>3</sup> *MS. Annals of the English Carmelites of Antwerp*, Lanherne, England, p. 80. "This year (1790), several religious men and women returned to their convents; the English Carthusians at Newport also took possession of theirs."

<sup>4</sup> HENDRICKS, *op. cit.*, 347; during the unfortunate discussion which arose at the suppression of the Jesuit College of Saint Omer in 1762, a charge was made against the Carthusians of Nieuport by some Jesuits in Lancashire to the effect that they had intrigued for its transference to the Secular Clergy. Against this Father Williams issued a strong protest, dated, Nieuport, February 9, 1753, in which he declares, "God be praised we are all innocent of ye base infamy laid to our charge . . . nor have any of us at any time ever mentioned in our letters to England ye least word relative to St. Omer's. This we are ready to testify upon oath if necessary" (GILLOW, *Dict. Eng. Cath. Biog.*, vol. III, pp. xiv, 408).

Dom Bruno Finch's death in 1821 closed the long history of the Charterhouse of Sheen, which dates from 1412, when it was founded by Henry V. The scanty remains of their archives and library, together with the seal of Sheen Anglorum, are now in the possession of the English Charterhouse at Parkminster, in Sussex.