











ST. THOMAS BECKET.

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THE  
LIFE AND MARTYRDOM  
OF  
SAINT THOMAS BECKET,  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION.

BY

JOHN MORRIS,

PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

*Crimen nostrum est assertio ecclesiasticæ libertatis; eam namque  
profiteri læsæ majestatis reatus sub persecutore nostro est.*

ST. THOMAS TO STEPHEN, CHANCELLOR OF SICILY.



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SPRECKELS



# PLAN OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

IN THE TIME OF ST. THOMAS,

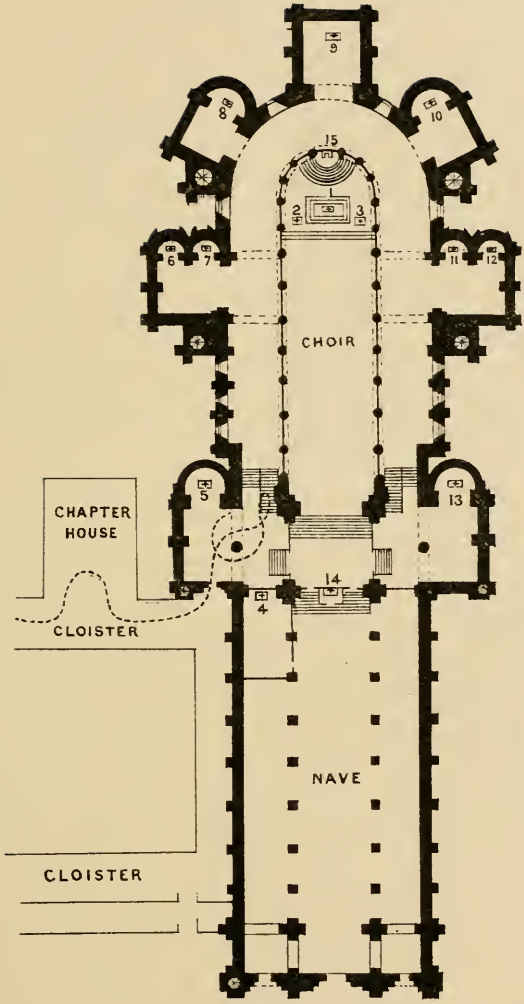
*reduced from Willis and Stanley.*

It may be permissible to express a doubt whether these authorities are correct in giving a square end to the chapel of the Blessed Trinity. Built as it was by Prior Conrad, in the time of St. Anselm, it will surely have ended in an apse.

The course taken by St. Thomas at his martyrdom is marked by the dotted line. It will be seen that at the last he was so close to the altar of St. Benedict, that when he fell on his right side, or to the north, he must have been before the altar. The apses still remaining in the eastern transepts show how near the altar was to the line of the transept wall.

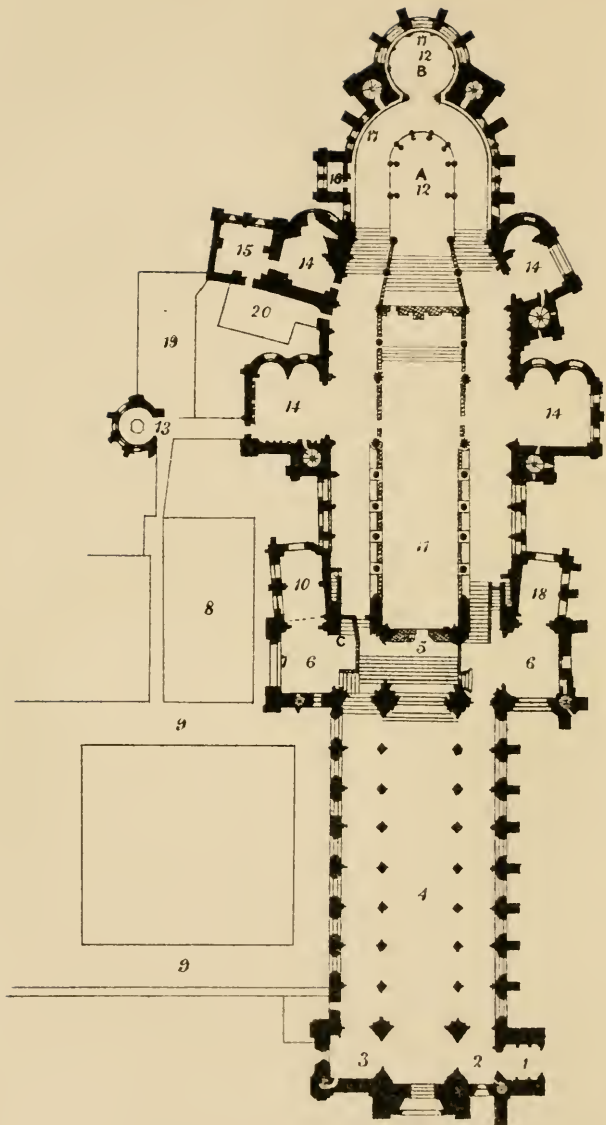
## ALTARS.

1. Christ's, or the High Altar; below, in the Crypt, Our Lady Undercroft.
2. St. Elphege's
3. St. Dunstan's
4. The Lady Altar.
5. St. Benedict, with St. Blaise above.
6. St. Martin, with St. Mary Magdalene below.
7. St. Stephen, with St. Nicholas below.
8. St. Andrew, with Holy Innocents below.
9. B. Trinity, between the shrines of St. Wilfrid on the north and St. Odo on the south, with the altars of St. John Baptist and St. Augustine below.
10. SS. Peter and Paul, afterwards St. Anselm, with St. Gabriel below.
11. St. John the Evangelist, with St. Paulinus below.
12. St. Gregory, with St. Ouen and before it St. Catherine below.
13. St. Michael, with All Saints above.
14. Holy Cross on the steps at the head of the nave.
15. The Patriarchal Chair.











THE PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE IN THE CATHEDRAL BEFORE  
THE REFORMATION.

A. The Shrine and Altar of St. Thomas: his tomb below  
in the Crypt.

B. The Crown of St. Thomas.

C. The Altar at the Sword's Point.

APPROXIMATE DATES OF THE PRESENT BUILDING.

Taken from *Christ Church, Canterbury; a Chronological  
Conspectus of the existing Architecture.* By W. A. Scott  
Robertson, Hon. Can. 1881.

1. South porch, 1422.
2. Oxford Steeple, 1440 to 1452.
3. North West Tower, 1832 to 1834.
4. Nave, 1379 to 1400.
5. Central Tower, 1495 to 1503.
6. Western Transepts, 1382 to 1400.
7. Stained glass in north window of Martyrdom, 1470  
to 1480.
8. Chapter House: doorway and arcading, 1304.  
Windows and roof, 1382 to 1400.
9. Cloisters: Vaulting and screens, 1397 to 1412.  
North wall, mural arcading, two doorways  
and triple arcading of doorway into  
Martyrdom, 1226 to 1236.  
Doorway into Martyrdom, inserted 1486  
to 1489.
10. Lady Chapel (Dean's Chapel), 1449 to 1468.
11. Choir arcades and vaulting to east end of Eastern  
Transepts, and upper portion of exterior walls of Choir  
(William of Sens), 1175 to 1178. Crypt, 1096 to 1100.
12. Trinity Chapel and Becket's Crown, with crypts  
beneath them (William the Englishman), 1179 to 1184.  
Black Prince's chantries in the crypt, 1370 to 1379.
13. Baptistery, lower part, 1165, upper, 1397 to 1412.
14. Choir aisles, Eastern Transepts, St. Andrew's and  
St. Anselm's Chapels, 1100 to 1115.
15. Treasury, now Vestry of Dean and Chapter, 1135 to  
1165.
16. Henry IV.'s Chantry, 1425 to 1435.
17. Stained glass in two windows of north aisle of Choir,  
three lights in Trinity Chapel north aisle, and in central  
window of Becket's Crown, 1226 to 1236.
11. St. Michael's Chapel (Somerset or Warrior Chapel),  
1397 to 1412.



## PREFACE.

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THE first edition of this book was published in 1859, and for twenty years it has been out of print. In this interval much has been done to promote a knowledge of the life of St. Thomas of Canterbury. Six volumes have appeared in the Rolls Series, entitled *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, admirably edited by the late Canon James Craigie Robertson. Unfortunately the collection is not yet complete, and it would have been very greatly to the advantage of the present work, if at least the concluding volume of the letters had been published. In 1859 the only edition of the biographies and of the cor-

respondence accessible, excepting that of Lupus, was the voluminous but incorrect and confused edition published by Dr. Giles. To that edition all references then were necessarily made, but now they have all been carefully transferred to the Rolls edition, as far as it extends.

The student of the life of St. Thomas, when using the letters as edited by Dr. Giles, was absolutely without assistance in the chronology. All who have the pleasure of working with Canon Robertson's edition in their hands, have the advantage derived from the chronological order in which the letters are arranged, together with the help given by most painstaking and intelligent editing. The labour of comparing the whole life of St. Thomas with the Rolls edition has been considerable, but it has been well repaid by the correction of some errors, and of one important disorder in the chronology.

In addition to the help derived from Canon Robertson's edition of the original documents, two or three further errors have been now rectified, which were pointed out by him in his *Becket, a Biography*.

Each successive volume of the *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, has given a full account of the authors of the various biographies there published. The editor reserved to the close of his labours the necessary work of arranging these writers in their proper order, as that followed by him in the publication of the volumes was quite arbitrary. This purpose he did not live to carry into effect, but the work has since been excellently done by Mr. Eirikr Magnusson, sub-librarian of the University of Cambridge, in his Preface to the *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups*, also in the Rolls Series. That order has been adopted in the following account of the biographers of St. Thomas.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. xix.

A fresh set of notes in the Appendix, and the insertion of much matter that after the publication of the first edition was inserted by the present writer in the *Dublin Review* for November 1860, have made this new edition half as large again as its predecessor.

The statements in this book are to be regarded as resting on the authority of one or more of the nine biographers of St. Thomas first mentioned in the following account of them; and it has not been thought necessary to burden the pages of the work with references to show from which of them each statement has been derived. All other authorities, and more particularly the letters, are quoted throughout the book.

## THE BIOGRAPHERS OF ST. THOMAS.

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THE life of St. Thomas of Canterbury is exceptionally well known. More than seven hundred years have elapsed since he died, and yet his history stands out before us with a distinctness and minuteness that is extremely rare among the records of great men. The witnesses to the facts are both numerous and trustworthy. They wrote of matters of which they had personal knowledge, and their writings were in the hands of those who were the most capable of judging of their truthfulness. The universal and vehement interest taken in all that concerned St. Thomas, while later on it may have caused an embroidery of legends to be attached to his name, would ensure attention to the minutest details while the story was yet fresh, and this is a guarantee for accuracy and care. The substantial agreement of several writers, evidently independent of one another, is a further assurance of fidelity. The personal character of the writers is above suspicion, and their ability manifest; and lastly, all that skilful editing can do for them has happily been done, and that too at the public expense.

I. Benedict, a monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, is said by the editor of the *Quadriloguc* (about 1220) to have been on the day of the martyrdom among the Saint's more intimate friends, and to have recorded those things of which he was an ear or eye witness. He wrote only of the martyrdom and of the subsequent miracles. No copy of his narrative of the martyrdom exists, but considerable fragments have been preserved in the *Quadriloguc*. The miracles are now in six books. Of these the last two are by another hand, as events are there related which happened after Benedict's death. He died in 1193 or 1194 at Peterborough, of which house he was made abbot in 1177. The fourth book of miracles is of about the date of Benedict's election as Abbot of Peterborough, for it mentions the great fire at Rochester, which occurred in the April of that year. But the work is not in strict chronological order, for after the passage relating to the fire, a letter is inserted addressed to Odo as Prior of Canterbury; but Odo was made Abbot of Battle, and Benedict himself became Prior of Canterbury in 1175. The first three books of miracles, according to Mr. Magnusson, formed the original volume, and all that is related in them happened during the seventeen months that followed the martyrdom. In July, 1172, William was charged to record the miracles in addition to Benedict, who had fulfilled that office from the beginning. By this fact Mr. Magnusson ingeniously dates not Benedict only but Fitzstephen. For Fitzstephen



says that there was a Codex which was read in the Chapter at Canterbury, which related the miracles wrought in England, and he adds that those in France, Ireland, and elsewhere had as yet no historian. This Codex was Benedict's volume, ending then with the third book; and Mr. Magnusson concludes that Benedict's three books were written before Fitzstephen's *Life of St. Thomas*; and further that Fitzstephen wrote before William of Canterbury began, that is within the first seventeen months. The argument is pressed perhaps a little too closely, as there would be but one Codex until William had made some progress with his work. Afterwards Gervase speaks of two volumes of miracles, Benedict's and William's, and the mention of one by Fitzstephen may fairly be taken to mean that there then was but one.

Mr. Magnusson gives a second indication of the date of Benedict's volume. In the second book of the miracles Benedict quotes a letter from Robert of Cricklade, Prior of St. Frideswide's, Oxford, narrating the cure of a hurt in his leg that he had received about twelve years before in Sicily. The register of St. Frideswide's (now in C.C.C. Oxford), evidently written by this Prior, says that Pope Adrian IV. confirmed the privileges of St. Frideswide's. Assuming this confirmation to be what took Robert of Cricklade abroad, the lapse of twelve years from the time of Adrian IV., who reigned from 1154 to 1159, would bring us no later than 1171-72, as the date of the letter to Benedict;

and this date tallies with the conclusion drawn from Fitzstephen.

II. William Fitzstephen gives his own credentials.

I was the fellow-citizen of my lord, his cleric, and one of his household. Called by himself to a share of his anxieties, I was dictator in his chancery; when he sung Mass, I was the subdeacon of his chapel; when he sat to hear causes, I read the letters and documents that were presented; and I conducted some causes at his bidding. I was present with him at the Council of Northampton, where matters were transacted of such high importance; I saw his martyrdom at Canterbury; and of many other things which are here written I was an eye and ear witness, while others, again, I learnt from those who witnessed them.

There is a very curious point connected with Fitzstephen's book. The life is as favourable to St. Thomas as any of the others, but it is not alluded to by any of them; and more remarkable still, Fitzstephen himself is not mentioned once, though at least on two very important occasions he was by St. Thomas's side. Though Herbert of Bosham professes to give a full list of the Saint's companions, and mentions several who had far less to do with him than Fitzstephen, of Fitzstephen himself he says nothing. Mr. Magnusson would account for this singular silence by supposing that Fitzstephen's work, though written one of the first, was not published till after the death of Henry II., of whom he speaks

with much severity. He considers that Mr. Foss, in his *Judges of England*, has succeeded in identifying Fitzstephen with a person of that name who was made Sheriff of Gloucestershire in the first year after the death of St. Thomas, and afterwards acted as Judge itinerant, probably till his death in 1191. But though this might in some way account for the silence of the other writers about Fitzstephen's book, how would it account for their making no mention whatever of himself? Some little mystery still attaches to the circumstance.

III. John of Salisbury is placed third by Mr. Magnusson, because Roger of Pontigny refers to two books only, John's, who was not yet a Bishop, and Benedict's, who was then Prior of Canterbury. As Benedict became Prior in 1175 and John was made Bishop of Chartres in 1176, this times the book with much exactness. It is unnecessary to give here any summary of the life of this most distinguished scholar, as his name appears frequently in the following pages. He was an invaluable friend to St. Thomas, and an honest and trusted admonitor.

IV. Edward Grim, a secular clerk of Cambridge, was present at the martyrdom, and has become famous by his having been wounded in defence of the Saint. His life, which bears a strong resemblance to Garnier's and Roger's, was finished after 1175 and before 1177, as he speaks of Benedict as Prior.

V. Roger of Pontigny was probably the author of the Life which is printed as anonymous by

Canon Robertson. Mr. Magnusson leans to the opinion that it really is Roger's, and Canon Robertson hardly thinks it improbable. Thomas of Froidmont says that the Saint had as his attendant at Pontigny a monk named Roger. The writer of this life was at Pontigny when St. Thomas arrived there, and he speaks of the monks of Pontigny as his brethren. He writes as a foreigner, translating Garnier's *en Engleterre* by *in partibus illis*, and explaining that hides of land are so called *patrio nomine*. He once writes *Lundrensis* for *Londoniensis*, which an Englishman would not have done. He mentions John of Salisbury as a distinguished man, but not as Bishop, and Benedict as Prior, which gives 1175-76 as the date of the book. The writer tells us that he was ordained priest by St. Thomas. That he had Garnier before him as he wrote is shown by his rendering *tutus et capuciatus*, where *tutus* has no meaning, for Garnier's description of St. Thomas's falling into the millstream *tut encha-peronez*, "with his hood completely over his head." This seems to show that Mr. Magnusson has dated the book a little too early, for Garnier's Life was not finished till 1176.

VI. William of Canterbury entered the monastery of Christ Church during St. Thomas's exile, and he was admitted to the habit and ordained deacon by the Saint a few days before the martyrdom. He was present in the Cathedral at the martyrdom, and he ran up into the choir in fright when he heard Fitzurse call out "Strike, strike!"

William wrote a Life of St. Thomas, in addition to his collection of miracles. With the exception of the passages from the Life extracted by the compiler of the *Quadrilogue*, this book was entirely unknown until it was published by Canon Robertson, in part in the *Archæologia Cantiana*, and in full in the Rolls Series. The manuscript is the only remaining book of those bequeathed by William of Wykeham to his College at Winchester. In his will he speaks of it as "the book on the Life of St. Thomas, called *Thomas*."

At the end of seventeen months after the martyrdom, William was set aside to help Benedict in the compilation of the miracles, and his book when written was preferred, even by Benedict himself, to Benedict's own. William was sent, with his book, to King Henry at the King's request, but he must have reckoned on the improbability of its being read by the King, or translated to him literally, for there are many things in it that would not have pleased him. Again and again William blames the invasion of Ireland, as<sup>1</sup> "disquieting without cause unarmed neighbours, a people, which though uncivilized and barbarous, honours the true faith and observes the Christian religion." The King's visit to Canterbury when he asked for the book was in 1174, and the work seems to have been finished shortly after Odo's appointment as Abbot of Battle in 1175. The Life is thought to have been written in the following year.

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, i. p. 364.

VII. Garnier de Pont S. Maxence, or, as he calls himself, "Guernes li clers, de Punt de Saint Mesence nez," wrote in French verse his Life of St. Thomas between the second and the sixth years after the martyrdom. In return for his poem he received from "l'abesse, suer saint Thomas," Mary, who became Abbess of Barking in 1173, a palfrey with its trappings; and, as to the Nuns of Barking, he says:

et les dames m'ont fet tut gras  
chescune d'eles de sun dun.

The following verses will give a further specimen of the language and versification, while at the same time they are interesting as giving the date of the composition of the Life and its claim to credit:

Guernes li clers del Punt fine ici sun sermun  
del martir saint Thomas e de sa passiu.  
e mainte feiz le fist à la tumbe al barun.  
ci n'a mis un sul mot se la verité nun.  
de ses mesfaiz li face li plus deus ueir pardun.

Ainc mais si bons romanz ne fu faiz ne trouez.  
à Cantorbire fu e faiz e amendez.  
n'i admis un sul mot qui ne seit ueritez.  
li vers est d'une rime en cinc clauses couplez.  
mis languages est bons: car en France fui nez.

L'an secund que li sainz fu en iglise ocis,  
comenchai cest romanz et mult m'en entremis.  
des priuez saint Thomas la verité apris,  
mainte feiz en ostai co que io ainz ecris,  
pur oster la menconge. al quart an fin i mis.

Garnier was edited by Immanuel Bekker (Berlin, 1838), and again by M. Hippeau of Caen

(Paris, chez Auguste Aubry, 1859). The last volume of the Rolls Series of *Materials for the Life of Archbishop Thomas Becket* is to contain the French lives.

VIII. Alan, originally a monk of Christ Church, went to Benevento, whence he returned in 1174. He was made Prior of Christ Church in 1179, Abbot of Tewkesbury<sup>2</sup> in 1186, and there he died in 1202. He collected the 529 letters which Lupus published, and he wrote a Life of the Saint as a preface to them, which is headed in the Vatican MS. *Prohemium auctoris infrascriptas epistolas recolligentis*. This Life was avowedly written to supplement the short Life by John of Salisbury, and it was in existence when Herbert wrote.

IX. Herbert of Bosham is mentioned so frequently in the following pages that little need be said of him here. He wrote a Life of St. Thomas and another book called *Liber Melorum*, in a terribly prolix and wearisome style, but Herbert could not fail to tell us many interesting things, and the work could not be spared, for all its tediousness. Before the Life has far advanced, he tells us that he was writing in the fourteenth year after the martyrdom, that is, 1184, and when he was finishing his book, Pope Urban III. was Pope, who died in 1187.

X. To the nine biographers already mentioned, may be added Gervase, a monk of Christ Church

<sup>2</sup> Alban Butler, misled by Baronius, calls him Abbot of Deoche.

at Canterbury, who gives St. Thomas a large place in his chronicle. He thus excuses himself :

No one should feel weary of whatever can be told with truth of so great a martyr. His holiness excited my affection, and his kindness attracted me : he granted me the habit in the very year in which he was consecrated Archbishop ; to him I made my profession, and from his hand I received holy orders. He also appeared to a brother of mine of his own name, to whom, amongst other sweet things, he said this in secret : “ I have done so much, I have done so much that the names of my monks, and of the clerics who are bound to them, might be written in the Book of Life.” And when the cleric, being anxious about himself, said to the Saint : “ My lord, how will it fare with myself ? ” the Saint, gently smiling, laid his hand on his head and kissed him.

Gervase mentions the writers who had preceded him, Herbert, John of Salisbury, Benedict, Alan, whom he speaks of as the compiler of the volume of letters, and William of Canterbury.

XI. We owe to a very unexpected source the knowledge that St. Thomas had yet another contemporary biographer, and the information comes to us from Iceland. Robert of Cricklade, Prior of St. Frideswide's in 1154, Chancellor of Oxford in 1159, wrote a Latin Life of St. Thomas, which, forgotten in his own country, became the foundation of the Icelandic tradition respecting our English martyr. Mr. Magnusson has given us in the Rolls Series the Thomas Saga, a fourteenth century compilation, with a literal English translation and an interesting preface. He identifies



Prior Robert of "Cretel," whom the Saga quotes, with Robert of Cricklade by the letter to Prior Benedict which the Saga gives, and which is recorded by Benedict also.

The most valuable portion of the Icelandic book is naturally that which professes to be taken directly from Robert of Cricklade. Two passages we will here give relating to St. Thomas's early life, which are expressly drawn from Robert, and they, with two other short and interesting extracts, will serve to close this Introduction. These passages, which are of sufficient importance and interest to be given in full, describe the relation of the Archdeacon Thomas to Archbishop Theobald, and his devout life and chaste habits when Chancellor.

Now whereas Thomas hath spent two years amidst courtly manners, and hath passed twenty years by four, he waxeth weary with such ways of living, in that he perceiveth how, in many things, the deeds of worldly lords turn straight against the right and the honours of learned folk. He therefore betaketh himself away from such a life, and seeketh Theobald, of good memory, Archbishop of Canterbury, who hath been named already, and secureth for himself a place in his service, more through his own device and working, than by any pleading or commendation of other folk. And within a short time he so brings his affairs about, that by reason of his wisdom and lowliness and faithful service, he is counted among the foremost friends and privy counsellors of the Archbishop, yea and right worthily so indeed, for Prior Robert writeth thereon an excellent discourse, and right profitable to many, how he had both the

wisdom and the will to honour his master. The Prior witnesseth that the Archbishop was a simple man, somewhat quick of temper and not as wary of word, if his mind was stirred, as the rule of meekness utmost demandeth. His eloquence too was of a kind that much lay thereon, in most cases, how matters happened to be taken up, if he chanced to hold converse with folk of might. But against either failing the blessed Thomas setteth his good will and wisdom, in such a manner that if in any matter the Bishop happened to wax wroth, Thomas giveth forth answers all the meeker, thus appeasing the heart of his spiritual father. So also on the other hand, if the speech of the Archbishop happened to fail him in aught, Thomas hastened to succour him, and clothed it in clerkdom in such a way that at once the discourse of the Archbishop appeared like a text with a fair commentary to it. Behold him, already now, a man of excellence, both as to lowliness of heart and zealous heed of the law. Formerly he fled from the kingly court for that one reason, that he might not see the evil deeds of the lay powers against the Church; but now he serveth his master in such strength of mind, that never was there found in him any pride at all, but he was the lower before God, the higher he was before men (pp. 36, 37).

Concerning the habits of St. Thomas as Chancellor :

So Robert writes that there was a certain person, a nigh kinsman of his [Robert's] who sought the King's Court about the time in which the story goeth. He had on hand certain affairs, on the happy issue of which he deemed that much might lay. He setteth his mind, as many a man in England

now listed, on first seeing the Chancellor Thomas, to expound to him the nature of his affairs and to pray him for some furtherance thereof. Now by reason of his reaching the town not till the day is far spent, a laudable custom forbiddeth him to go before such a mighty man on a late eventide, wherefore he betaketh him to his chamber. But in early morn, already when day was a-breaking, he bestirreth himself for the carrying out of his errands. Now the way taketh such a turn, that he must needs go by a certain church, and in the twilight he soon seeth lying before the door of the temple a man prostrate in prayer even unto earth. And when as he stands bethinking him of this sight, there comes upon him, as oft-times may happen, some sneeze or a kind of coughing. And forthwith starts he who lay kneeling on the ground, and rises straightway up, then lifteth his hands up to God and thus ends his prayer, and thereupon walks away thence to his chamber. The new comer was right eager to know who of the townspeople might follow such laudable ways, and therefore he taketh an eyemark against the lifting day-brow, both of his growth and the manner of attire he wore, that he might the rather know him if he should happen to see him afterwards. Nor did that matter long await a true proof, for no sooner hath he leave to see Chancellor Thomas, than he well perceiveth that the very growth and raiment which he had noted before, belongeth to no man but to him alone; for even now Thomas putteth off his overgarment, as if he had just entered into the room. This person testified to his kinsman Robert, when he came home, what virtue and godly fear he had found in the blessed Thomas, straightway against the thinking of most people; and hence it came to pass that the Prior put this deed into his writings [on St. Thomas] (pp. 51, 53).

The name of Prior Robert is not attached to the following passage, but it is short and certainly interesting.

At the time when Stephen had become King of England, the blessed Thomas cometh home from school. He was now two and twenty years of age, slim of growth, and pale of hue, dark of hair, with a long nose and a straightly featured face; blithe of countenance was he, keen of thought, winning and loveable in all conversation, frank of speech in his discourse, but slightly stuttering in his talk,<sup>3</sup> so keen of discernment and understanding that he would always make difficult questions plain after a wise manner (p. 29).

There is one more passage that we must give, as it clears up all difficulty respecting the Danegeld.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Magnusson is the first to quote a very apposite passage from the *Leges Edwardi Confessoris*, of which the following is a translation.

Of this Danegeld all the land was quit and free, of which churches had the property or lordship, even that belonging to parish churches, and they paid nothing in its stead, for they placed greater trust in the prayers of Holy Church than in defence of arms. And this liberty had Holy Church up to the time of William the younger, who asked aid from the Barons of the whole country to keep Normandy from his brother Robert, who was going to Jerusalem. And they granted him four *sot* from every hide, not ex-

<sup>3</sup> That St. Thomas stuttered somewhat, Mr. Magnusson says, recurs in all his personal descriptions in Icelandic records, but this is borne out by no other contemporary author (Pref. p. xcvi.).

<sup>4</sup> *Infra*, p. 112.

cepting Holy Church; and when the collection of these was made, the Church protested and demanded her liberty, but it availed her nothing.

In accordance with this, Thomas Saga says :

We have read afore, how King William levied a due on all the churches in the land, in order to repay him all the costs, at which his brother Robert did depart from the land. This money the King said he had disbursed for the freedom of Jewry, and therefore it behoved well the learned folk [*i.e.*, clergy] to repay to their King. But because the King's Court hath a mouth that holdeth fast, this due continued from year to year. At first it was called Jerusalem tax, but afterwards Warfare-due, for the King to keep up an army for the common peace of the country. But at this time matters have gone so far that this due was exacted, as a King's tax, from every house, small and great, throughout England, under no other name than an ancient tax payable into the royal treasury without any reason being shown for it. This kind of proceeding Archbishop Thomas nowise liked, saying that it is by no means seemly for the King to exact such money with the some boldness as any other King's taxes, but only according as circumstances and need should require for the peace of the folk of the land; but beyond this reason there was no duty which demanded the paying of such reserve taxes (i. p. 139).



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THE LIFE  
OF  
ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

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CHAPTER I.

GILBERT AND MATILDA.

1117—1143.

Birth and parentage of St. Thomas—the Saracen legend—his mother's dreams—his birth and baptism—his mother's devotions—he is sent to Merton Abbey, the London schools, and Paris University—his father a Norman—he is saved from death in a mill-stream—his mother's death—he becomes clerk to the sheriffs—reminiscence of a sickness in Kent—he enters the service of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

ONE of the most conspicuous and familiar objects in the neighbourhood of London is the high hill and pointed spire of Harrow. The church, which is now so marked a feature in the landscape, has not lasted as many years as the record of the tale we are about to tell. Its predecessor was doubtless as much in harmony with its site as that which we now see, for the taste of church-builders of that age was as unailing as if it had been an instinct. Guided by this landmark, two horsemen, in the year 1143, or thereabouts, made their way from London to the Court of Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury, which was at the archiepiscopal manor of Harrow-on-the-Hill.

The one was a plain serving-man, whose name was Ralph of London. The other was scarce distinguishable from him by his dress, as the simplicity of the times dictated to the son of an impoverished London merchant; but his tall handsome figure, and large bright eye, beaming with the happy anticipation of a new and congenial mode of life, his free and self-possessed seat upon his horse, and the air and bearing of a gentleman in his every movement, betrayed to an observer what the humble equipments of both and the familiarity of intercourse between them would have concealed, that the younger was the master, and the other his attendant. The somewhat awful interview with the Archbishop, on which so much depended, was postponed to the morrow; and they sought the shelter of a hostelry in Harrow. Doubtless an unusual bustle prevailed in the little village from the presence of the Archbishop with his train; still something in the appearance of our humble travellers seems to have attracted the notice of their hostess; for when the next morning came, she told her husband that she had dreamt during the night that one of the new-comers had covered their parish church with his vestments. The good man, who did not know who they were, said, "Perhaps it portends that one of them will be some day lord of this church and village." The figure which had impressed itself on the imagination of the dame was that of Thomas Becket, the future Archbishop of Canterbury and martyr.

This is by no means the only event in the early



annals of his life of an unusual character which his many contemporary biographers have placed on record. The tale, however, which is the best known connected with his parentage, is behind none of them in singularity, while it surpasses them all in poetic beauty; but, unfortunately, its romantic character is its sole claim to insertion. It is impossible to refrain from relating the legend, although its first appearance is in a compilation the date and authorship of which are equally unknown. It runs thus:

His father Gilbert was a citizen of London, who, in the flower of his youth, took upon him the Lord's cross, and set forth for Jerusalem accompanied by a faithful servant of the name of Richard. They fell into the hands of the Saracens, and were set to work as slaves in chains for an "Amirald,"<sup>1</sup> that is, an Emir or prince. Some year and a half had gone by, and Gilbert had made no little progress in the favour of his master, being constantly called to stand before his table, to be questioned on all that could gratify an Oriental curiosity respecting the countries and inhabitants of the West. His daughter was often a listener at these conversations, and her admiration for Gilbert was at length betrayed when she heard that he would willingly die for his faith. She offered to become a Christian, if he would make her his wife. Gilbert was a cautious soul; and, fearing some womanish craft, put her off with fair words. An opportunity of escape from his bondage at length

<sup>1</sup> From this we have our English word "Admiral."

came, of which he and his companions availed themselves. The poor maiden who was left behind, strong in her love, and forgetful of her people and her father's house, one night set forth alone in search of the Englishman who had fled. Her knowledge of any language but her own was confined to the two names "London" and "Becket;" and these, as she wandered on, she incessantly repeated. At length, associating herself with returning pilgrims, she reached the city, the name of which she had learned from Gilbert as that of his home. Following still the method that had brought her thus far, she was pursued by a crowd of idle children; when Richard, the serving-man, passing through the street, caught the sound of his master's name, and happily recognised her. Gilbert hardly seems to have been delighted at the news, though surely the poor thing's "womanish craft" was simple enough now; but his prudence being still predominant, he ordered Richard to place her under the charge of a matronly neighbour, while he betook himself to St. Paul's, to ask his Bishop's counsel. By the advice of the prelate, who happened to be in conference with his brother Bishops, after the maiden had been duly instructed in the Catholic faith, and solemnly baptized, the story says, "by six Bishops," he took her to wife. The legend does not end here; but adds, that on the day after the wedding Gilbert was seized with a longing desire to revisit the Holy Land; and his bride, having gained from him the cause of his sadness, gave her con-

sent to his departure, if only he would leave Richard to be her interpreter.

During his absence the son was born of whose life this story forms the introduction; whom, on his return at the end of three years and a half, he found all that his heart could wish. Thus far the fable,<sup>2</sup> which is not mentioned by one of the many contemporary biographers of our Saint. Their simple assertion is that he was the son of Gilbert and Mahalt or Matilda Becket,<sup>3</sup> citizens of London; and this is what he says himself in his letters when he had occasion to speak of his parentage.

Previous to his birth, his mother dreamed that the river Thames flowed into her bosom. Startled by so unusual a dream, she went to consult a learned religious, who, having forewarned her that dreams were not to be attended to, nor a woman's visions made much of, told her that in Scripture *water* signified *people*, but that he could not undertake to interpret her vision. She dreamt again that when she was visiting Canterbury Cathedral to pray there, her child prevented her entrance. This time, however, she did not

<sup>2</sup> See Note A at the end of the volume.

<sup>3</sup> The name of Becket appears very seldom. Edward Grim uses it twice, "Pater ejus Gillebertus, cognomento Beket," and "Ubi est Thomas Beketh, proditor regis et regni (*Materials*, ii. pp. 356, 435). The Lambeth MS. says: "Gilbertus quidem cognomento Becchet, patria Rothomagensis" (*Materials*, iv. p. 81). And Garnier calls the Saint's father "Gilebert Beket." Thus we have only one contemporary instance of the name being applied to the Saint himself. Usually he was called "Thomas of London." The form "à Becket" is a colloquialism of comparatively recent date.

return to consult her adviser, fearing lest he should reproach her with folly.

As the time of his birth drew near, it seemed to his mother as if twelve stars of unusual brilliancy had fallen into her lap. It is also said that she dreamt that she was bearing Canterbury Cathedral; and that, when the Saint was born, the nurse, as she held him, exclaimed, "I have an archbishop in my arms."

He was born on Tuesday, December 21st, in the year 1118; and after Vespers, on the same day, he was baptized by the name of St. Thomas the Apostle, whose festival it was. On the very day of his birth a fire broke out in his father's house, which did great damage to the city. A writer of those times says, that the only drawbacks to a residence in London were the prevalence of drunkenness and the frequency of fires.

He was still the subject of his mother's sleeping as well as waking thoughts. After his birth she dreamt that, on upbraiding the nurse for leaving her child uncovered in the cradle, she was told that a beautiful red silk quilt was over him; and that when she examined the beauty of its needlework, she found, on trying with the nurse to unfold it, that the room in which they were, the street, and eventually "the great space of the open plain of Smithfield,"<sup>4</sup> were too small to permit them to do so: a voice the while telling them that they tried in vain, for that all England could not contain it.

<sup>4</sup> "Smithfield" is "Smoothfield" according to Stowe (*Materials*, iii. p. 6).

It was an admirable thing for St. Thomas, and one that left a deep impression on all his life, that the mother from whom he received his earliest instructions should have been of a devout and gentle nature. He used himself to say, that with the fear of the Lord, he had learnt from her two prominent devotions. The one was a great love of the holy Mother of God, whom he was accustomed to invoke as the guide of his paths and the patroness of his life, and in whom, after Christ, he was thus taught to place all his confidence; the second was a great compassion for the poor. And for these two virtues he was always remarkable.

A pretty little story, showing how our Blessed Lady returned the affection of her young client, is recorded by Herbert of Bosham, one of his most intimate friends, to whom he himself told it. When quite a child, as he was recovering from a violent fever, it seemed to him that a lady, tall of stature, with a calm countenance and beautiful appearance, stood by his bedside, and having consoled him by a promise that he should get well, gave two golden keys into his hands with these words: "Thomas, these are the keys of Paradise, of which thou art to have the charge."

At an early age he was placed under the care of Robert, Prior of Merton, of the Order of Canons Regular, who was ever after his faithful friend and spiritual guide, his confessor while he was chancellor, and finally a witness of his martyrdom. While St. Thomas was under him, an event occurred which proves that not his

mother only, but also his father, had been taught by God the future greatness of their son. One day Gilbert went to see him; and as the boy came into the room, the father made a most humble reverence and obeisance to him. The good Prior, indignant at this, said, "Old man, you are mad; what are you doing? Do you throw yourself at the feet of your son? The honour you do to him, he ought to do to you." Gilbert answered the Prior secretly, "Sir, I know what I am doing; for this boy will be great before the Lord."

Though his father was but a London merchant, and his mother in all likelihood had never been out of England, there is a singularly Eastern tone in these stories characteristic of the times, springing in part, perhaps, from the intercourse with the Holy Land that frequent pilgrimages promoted. In many things Englishmen of those days showed much of an Oriental temperament, which their successors of the present time have not inherited.

The parents of the Saint, at the time of his birth, were in moderate if not affluent circumstances. His father was a Norman, who had been Sheriff of London. His friends, as far as we have any record of them, were all Normans.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Richier de l'Egle (Garnier, fol. \*5, l. 11; Grim, p. 359; Rog. Pont. p. 6) was a Norman baron, whose name appears amongst the barons present at Clarendon (Cotton. MSS. Claud. B. 2, fol. 25; Wilkins, *Leg. Anglo-Sax.* Lond. 1721, p. 322). Baillehache (Garnier, fol. \*6, l. 13; Rog. Pont. p. 10) was a Norman soldier, and Baldwin the Archdeacon and Master Eustace (Fitz-St. p. 15) were French ecclesiastics. Thierry (*Hist. de la Conquête*,

Frequent fires and other misfortunes, we are told, reduced Gilbert's family from the wealthy position it had formerly held; but the change of his circumstances does not seem to have alienated his old friends from him. A rich and well-born soldier of the name of Richier de l'Egle is particularly mentioned as having frequented his house, with no little influence on the mind of the youthful St. Thomas. He was especially fond of hunting and hawking, and from him St. Thomas acquired a taste which he never entirely lost.<sup>6</sup>

In company with Richier, an adventure befell him in which the hand of God may well be held to have interfered to save so precious a life. They were riding together, following their hawks, when they came to a rapid mill-stream, which was crossed by no better bridge than a foot-plank. De l'Egle, in the eagerness of sport, urged his horse over it, closely followed by St. Thomas, who had his cloak wrapt tightly round him, with his hood over his head. As he reached the middle of the bridge, his horse's foot slipped, and horse and boy together fell into the stream. He was drawn quickly down by the current, and was in

ii. liv. 9) imagined our Saint to have been of Saxon descent, and upon this error he built a theory. Lord Campbell has followed him.

<sup>6</sup> It is amusing to see, among the miracles recorded after the death of St. Thomas, that several relate to hawks, one of them to a splendid falcon called Wiscard, belonging to the King. The lord of Parthenay in Poitou on the loss of his hawk thus addressed the Saint: "Give me back my hawk, O martyr Thomas, for we know that once you were occupied with such pleasures, and felt pain at losses like mine." It is needless to say that the hawk was recovered (Will. Cant. pp. 528, 502).

imminent danger of being crushed by the mill-wheel. The man in charge of the mill, knowing nothing of what was going on, suddenly turned off the water. The shouts of De l'Egle, which the noise of the wheel had hitherto prevented being heard, now drew the attention of the miller, who rescued St. Thomas from his dangerous position.

There is another account of this occurrence, which says that he leaped into the water after his hawk, forgetful in his eagerness of his own danger. Either form of the story is in close accordance with the naturally ardent and impetuous character of the Saint. There is a local tradition, which says that the scene of this providential rescue is a spot now called Wade's Mill, between Ware and St. Edmund's College. His pious mother was much struck by this deliverance; and she added it to the other wonders on which she pondered, which led her to the conclusion that God had great designs in store for her son. One of her religious practices is very beautiful. She was accustomed at certain seasons to weigh her child, placing in the opposite scale bread, meat, clothes, and money, and other things which were necessary for the poor, and then to distribute all to those who were in want. In this way she always strove to commend him to the mercy of God and the protection of the Blessed Mary ever a Virgin.

It was a sad day for the Saint when he lost this watchful and loving mother. Matilda died when he was twenty-one years old; and Gilbert not long surviving her, he was left to his own re-



sources, — his father's means having become too restricted to leave him much of an inheritance. He had previously studied in the London schools as well as at Merton Abbey. Three great schools there were attached to the principal churches, and on feast days the scholars would hold their disputations in the churches where the feast was celebrated. On such occasions the boys of the several schools would meet and there would be a lively competition in verse, or in their knowledge of their grammar. Their sports were not less vigorous than their literary contests. Shrove Tuesday morning had its barbarous pastime. The boys would bring their fighting cocks with them, and the school would be turned into a cockpit under the master's eye. The afternoon of Shrove Tuesday was devoted to a general game at ball outside the city, while the Sundays in Lent were given up to tilting at the quentin, which game after Easter was played in boats on the river. Fitzstephen, who tells us all this, describes the summer and winter sports; in the latter the skating was on thigh bones fastened to the feet, an iron-pointed staff being held in the hand. Hawking and hunting there was in plenty for those that could afford it, the citizens having rights of hunting in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, the Chiltern Hills, and in Kent down to the River Cray.

In this boyhood spent in London, perhaps the sports had more than their share of the school-boy's time, for when he first went to the Court of the Archbishop, Thomas of London was con-

sidered to be less learned than his two competitors, Roger of Neustria, and John of Canterbury. They were, however, men of unusual ability and acquirements; and we are told that Thomas far excelled them in prudence and manner of life, and that he was not long surpassed by them in learning.

Our Saint had been sent for a time to the University at Paris; not, however, we may be very sure for the motive which has been recently assigned; for it could hardly be necessary for the son of the Norman Gilbert Becket, or for the companion of the "noble and very rich" Richier de l'Egle, to go abroad that he might lose his Saxon accent. He spent his twenty-second year,—that is, 1140,—without an occupation, in his father's house. This was after his return from Paris; for it was to his mother he principally owed his liberal education: and the account of the state of his father's means, after Matilda's death, does not seem such as to lead us to think that he could then afford his son the advantage of a foreign residence. He then went to live with Osbern Witdeniers,<sup>7</sup> a relation of his, and a very wealthy man, who probably held high office in the city, as St. Thomas is said to have been "clerk to the sheriffs." With him he lived

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Giles's edition of Grim (*Vita*, i. p. 8) says, "Octonumini cognomine." Garnier, as printed by Bekker from the MS. in the Brit. Mus. (fol. \*5 b, l. 22) gives "dit Deniers," but the MS. of the Bibliothèque Royale "Witdeniers." The last is proved to be the correct reading by the "Octo" of Grim; while the Latin should be read, "Octonummi," as the French shows. The name "Eightpence" has not reached our times.

for three years, keeping the merchant's accounts, and acquiring business-like habits which were eventually to benefit both State and Church.

It was not, however, a position much to his taste; but still it needed long deliberation, and much urging on the part of his friends, to induce him to apply for employment to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

We get a curious glimpse into St. Thomas's life, if not about this time, yet at least before he rose to wealth and dignity; and it comes to us in an equally curious manner. Amongst the miracles which took place by the Saint's intercession soon after his martyrdom, is the following, with the simply told narrative of which this necessarily desultory chapter may close. A poor girl of about fifteen had suffered agonies from a most fearful cancer. From harvest-time to the month of March it had grown worse and worse, and at length her illness seemed to have had a fatal termination. She lay in her bed without food, her limbs drawn up, her eyes opened and glazed, and altogether giving no sign of life. At length, towards nightfall, when she had been thus from Tuesday till Friday, a neighbouring woman who was very fond of her came in, and thinking her certainly dead, said, "How came you to let the poor child die in her bed? Why did you not place her on sackcloth, after the Catholic custom?" On this, the body, which had stiffened, was laid out in the courtyard of the house, covered with a sheet and surrounded with lights as usual. Her father, Jordan of

Plumstead, in the diocese of Norwich, worn out with his grief and his day's work, had dropped asleep; but thus awakened, he cried out, "Is Cecilia dead?" The woman replied, "She most certainly is dead." On which the father began: "O blessed Thomas, martyr of God, pay me now for the service I once so heartily did you; pay me now for my service; now I am in want of it. I served you heartily before you were raised to worldly honours; pay me now for my service. Remember, blessed martyr, when you were ill in Kent, in the house of Thurstan the cleric at Croydon, how heartily I served you: wine and beer and strong drinks you could not touch, and I ransacked the neighbourhood for some whey for you to drink. Pay me for my service. Then you had only one horse, and I took care of it. Pay me for my service. Remember, martyr, all the trouble I took for you: you are not so poor, that I should have served you for nothing." And so he spent half the night, saying, till he was quite hoarse, "Pay me for my service." The holy martyr heard him; and Cecilia moved her hand from under the sheet, and tried to speak. The next day she took some nourishment; on the third the cancer dried up; and in three weeks, without medicine of any kind, she was quite well. William,<sup>8</sup> the Bishop of Norwich, examined the priest of the place and many witnesses; and, on her going on a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to the shrine of the Saint at Canterbury, sent with her testimonial letters attesting the miracle.

<sup>8</sup> William Turbo, a Norman, consecrated Bishop of Norwich in 1146, died Jan. 20, 1174 (Gervase, Ed. Stubbs, p. 246).

## CHAPTER II.

### THE COURT OF CANTERBURY.

1143—1154.

St. Thomas introduced to Theobald—the Archbishop's Court—personal description of St. Thomas—ill-will of Roger de Pont l'Evêque—the legatine office—St. Thomas visits Rome—the primacy of Canterbury over York—St. Bernard's help—the Council of Rheims—St. Thomas revisits Rome—the succession to the Crown—the Saint's ecclesiastical preferment—his study of canon law at Bologna and Auxerre—Roger Archbishop of York and St. Thomas Archdeacon of Canterbury—death of King Stephen—Pope Adrian IV.

ST. THOMAS was introduced into the Archbishop's service under very favourable auspices. Not only had Theobald a personal acquaintance with the Saint's father, who was like himself a native of the village of Thierceville in Normandy, but Gilbert was familiar with priests and other officials of the Archbishop's Court and household, whom he had been in the habit of entertaining. Two brothers from Boulogne, Baldwin the Archdeacon and Master Eustace, interested themselves with the Primate in his favour. But St. Thomas was principally induced to place himself under Theobald's protection by the representations of one of the Archbishop's marshals called Baillehache, who had long been intimate with Gilbert.

The Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury was the centre of almost all the learning and ability

of the kingdom. Amongst those who composed it when St. Thomas joined their number was Roger the future Archbishop of York, John of Canterbury, afterwards Bishop of Poitiers and Archbishop of Lyons, as well as the men destined ultimately to hold most of the episcopal sees of the kingdom. As we have said, the early education of our Saint seems to have been of a desultory character; and he keenly felt his inferiority in learning to those by whom he was now surrounded. His natural genius being of a very high order, and his perseverance indomitable, it was not long before he rendered himself as fit as any of his competitors for whatever office or undertaking might be intrusted to him. He was remarkable for the acuteness of his bodily senses. It was matter of frequent comment through his life, that scarcely anything could be said in his presence, however far off, or in however low a tone, but he could hear it if he chose to listen. So, too, there was nothing which could affect the sense of smell, which would not immediately either offend or gratify him, from however great a distance. His eye was remarkably large and clear, and his glance so quick and comprehensive that nothing escaped him. He was unusually tall, with a prominent and slightly aquiline nose. His countenance was beautiful, and his expression habitually calm. The tradition of all later times has always drawn him without a beard, but this detail of his appearance is not mentioned by his biographers. The vivacity of his conversation and his fluency, combined with the refinement of his

language, spoke at once of the high qualities of his natural gifts, and of the tone of his education.

After a while, when Theobald came to know him thoroughly, and to value him as he deserved, he made him a member of his council, and trusted him highly; but at first his position in the Archbishop's favour was endangered by the jealousy of one whose hostility continued through life, even when they both of them filled archiepiscopal sees. Roger de Pont l'Evêque showed his jealousy of the Saint on their first being thrown together by derisively calling him *Clerk Baillehache*, from the name of the man at whose instance he had joined the Archbishop's household. The allusion to an axe in the Norman name leads one of his biographers to say, that "he would one day prove to be an axe to hew Roger and his accomplices from the company of the just." Twice he was the cause of the Saint's banishment from the Archbishop's Court, ere he was yet firm in the favour of that prelate. On each occasion he was restored to his position by the influence of Walter, the Archbishop's brother, then Archdeacon of Canterbury, who was his steady friend through life.

In a short time his noble qualities so endeared him to the Archbishop, that he employed him in the conduct of the most delicate and important matters. King Stephen was seated on the throne of England; and his brother, the well-known Henry of Blois, was Bishop of Winchester. Pope Innocent, who had celebrated in 1139 the General Council of a thousand Bishops, called

the Second of Lateran, which was attended by Theobald and four other English bishops, had made Henry of Blois his legate in England. In virtue of this authority, Henry held two synods in the year 1142, a little before the time when St. Thomas joined the Archbishop. However, the possession of the legatine power by a suffragan was not found to work well, and the two prelates interested went to Rome to submit the question to the Holy See. This was in 1143, the year in which Pope Innocent died. The political state of Rome was most unsettled; and as the Sacred College felt the danger of an interregnum, the Chair of Peter was vacant only a day. However, Pope Celestine II. reigned but six months; and, after another vacancy of one day, Lucius succeeded.

When St. Thomas visited Rome in company with Archbishop Theobald, the Holy Father was probably at the Vatican, under shelter of the Castle of St. Angelo, which was in the hands of those who were faithful to him. Trastevere then, as ever, prided itself on its fidelity; while the rest of the city was in a very turbulent state. Such a position of affairs can hardly have been favourable to the discussion of the business which led them to Rome. Theobald was doubtless successful, for we have no further mention of Henry as legate; and the Archbishop presided in that capacity over the next council which was held in England. As, however, this synod was not before the year 1151, we do not know whether his success was immediate.



It would be very interesting to know where St. Thomas lodged in the Eternal City; but we have nothing to guide us to the spot. The hospital, the munificent foundation of John and Alice Shepherd, was not founded for the next two hundred years; it was then dedicated, as its successor the English College now is, to the Blessed Trinity, in honour of our Saint. The Anglo-Saxon establishment, of which the memory is preserved in the name of Santo Spirito in Sassia, and with which are connected the names of Ina, Ethelwolf, Alfred, and Canute, still existed,<sup>1</sup> but in great poverty. The other English foundations were all of a later date than St. Thomas's visit.

There was another matter of considerable importance, the management of which may very probably have been intrusted by Theobald to St. Thomas. It was one which rose into still greater consequence when the Saint had succeeded his master and patron in the see of Canterbury,—the precedence of that church over the archbishopric of York, and the claim of the northern metropolitan to have his cross borne before him in the province of Canterbury. In St. Gregory's letter, dated June 22, 601, which is extant in Venerable Bede,<sup>2</sup> the Pope decreed that St. Augustine was to be Superior of the whole island, but that after his death, the two metropolitans of London (as he intended) and York were to be independent of one another, taking

<sup>1</sup> See Note B.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccl. Gentis Anglor.* i. c. 29.

precedence by priority of consecration. On this letter York rested all its claim to a complete exemption from the authority of Canterbury. But it is clear that the rule given in that letter was reversed by St. Gregory himself and by many subsequent Popes. This may have arisen from the fact that four Archbishops of Canterbury passed away before there was an Archbishop of York. St. Paulinus received the pallium in 633, shortly after he had consecrated St. Honorius Archbishop of Canterbury, and Pope Honorius I. sent at the same time instructions that when an archbishop of Canterbury or York should die, the survivor should consecrate the new Archbishop. But Pope after Pope had enacted that York should be subject to Canterbury. In the time of Lanfranc, Pope Alexander II. referred the matter to a Synod of the whole of England to be discussed and determined. In that Synod the history of the Church of York by Bede was read, and it showed that from the days of St. Augustine to those of Bede, Canterbury was supreme over York and the whole island, that the Archbishop of Canterbury had ordained and held councils in York, had summoned the Archbishop of York to his Synods, and had sat in judgment upon him. Further, the decrees of Popes St. Gregory the Great, Boniface, Honorius, Vitalian, Sergius, Gregory II., Leo, and "of the last Leo," that is, St. Leo IX., were read, and by them the claim of Canterbury was established. The Archbishop of York, having nothing to allege but the single letter of St. Gregory, submitted

and excused himself on the plea that he was not aware that the case in favour of Canterbury was so strong. This was in the year 1072.<sup>3</sup> Since that time other Popes confirmed the Primacy to other Archbishops of Canterbury, using the formula, "as it is known that your predecessors have had by authority of the Apostolic See from the times of Blessed Augustine." Thus Paschal II. to St. Anselm; thus Eugenius III. to Theobald, as the result, no doubt, of the embassy to Rome of St. Thomas; and thus, later on, Alexander III. to St. Thomas himself, when Archbishop,<sup>4</sup> as the Register preserved in the Archives of Canterbury Cathedral still shows.

In these negotiations Theobald received powerful assistance from St. Bernard. When, in the reign of Innocent, he had wished to visit the Holy See, and had been prevented, St. Bernard wrote a letter<sup>5</sup> to the Pope, in which he spoke very highly in his praise. The death of Lucius in 1145 was the occasion of the election of Bernard, a Cistercian abbot, who became famous as Pope Eugenius III., not less by his own deeds than through the writings of his saintly namesake. In the very first letter which the holy Abbot of Clairvaux addressed to the new Pope, he took the part of the Archbishop of Canterbury, against the prelates of York and Winchester, in what he there styles "the ancient quarrel relating to the legatine office." It is pleasant to think that it

3 Wilkins, *Concilia*, i. p. 326.

4 *Materials*, v. p. 324.

5 Epp. cxxi. cxxxviii. Ed. Horst. Lugd. 1687.

is extremely probable that St. Thomas may, in his journeys to and from Rome, have called at Clairvaux to see his powerful advocate St. Bernard, and be himself the bearer of his letters to the Holy See; and that thus a personal affection may have sprung up between those two Saints.

The turbulence of Rome still continuing, Pope Eugenius visited France; and in 1148 he left Paris, where King Louis had given him a royal reception, for Rheims, to which city the Bishops of the Universal Church had been summoned by mid-Lent to celebrate a council. Owing to the influence of Henry of Winton, who was perhaps angry at the loss of his legateship, and who wished to subject the Archbishop to the anger of either the King or the Pope, King Stephen refused Theobald permission to attend the council. The Archbishop, however, managed to escape the guards who had been set to prevent his leaving England; and alone of all the bishops of that country, except three, whom the King sent to excuse the rest, he attended the synod. He was accompanied by St. Thomas, who himself has recorded that Theobald was received with much honour by the Pope, and thanked by him in full synod, "because he had come to the council rather swimming than sailing."

The King forced Theobald to leave England again after his return from the council; and he stayed at St. Omer, where he consecrated Gilbert Foliot Bishop of Hereford, with the assistance of the Bishops of Amiens and Cambray. From this place, by the authority of Pope

Eugenius, England was placed under an interdict, until, by the mediation of some of the bishops and nobles, the King made his peace with the Archbishop.

St. Thomas had at this time another journey to Rome, on a matter of the very greatest public importance. It was Stephen's wish that his son Eustace should be crowned king during his own lifetime, in order to secure the succession. This was contrary to the understanding that the crown was to remain with Stephen for his life, and then was to descend to Henry. The proposed coronation of Eustace was expressly forbidden by the Pope; and the chronicler<sup>6</sup> tells us that this prohibition, which secured the crown without dispute to Henry, had been gained by "the subtle prudence and cleverness of one Thomas, a cleric of London, whose father was called Gilbert, and mother Matilda." Gregory, the Cardinal-Deacon of St. Angelo, foreseeing the career of Henry II., had recommended a different course, saying that "it was easier to hold a ram by the horns than a lion by the tail." When it was found that Theobald was inflexible in his obedience to the Pope's command, Stephen sent Roger de Pont l'Evêque to Rome; but his embassy was unsuccessful. The negotiation respecting the coronation of Eustace took place in 1152. In the following year Eustace died, and the succession was secured to Henry by the Convention of Winchester in November, 1153.

Meanwhile St. Thomas was advancing in eccle-

<sup>6</sup> Gervase, p. 150.

siastical preferment. He was presented by John, the Bishop of Worcester, to the church of St. Mary Littory;<sup>7</sup> a term which one author has understood to mean Shoreham, and another St. Mary-le-Strand. As a reward for his service, the Archbishop gave him the church of Otford. He afterwards had a prebendal stall in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and another at Lincoln. His biographer also says that the Archbishop gave him leave to go beyond the sea, and that he studied the canon law for a year at Bologna, where the celebrated Gratian was his instructor, and afterwards at Auxerre. Here it was that he imbibed that exact knowledge of the Church's laws and rights, which enabled him in after years to fight her battles as a less skilful lawyer could hardly have done.

When Walter, the Archbishop's brother, was made Bishop of Rochester, in 1147, Roger de Pont l'Evêque became Archdeacon of Canterbury, and on the 10th of October, 1154, Theobald consecrated him Archbishop of York; and so he became successor to St. William, as that Saint had foretold. The archdeaconry of Canterbury thus rendered vacant, Archbishop Theobald conferred upon St. Thomas, the highest dignity in the Church in England after the bishoprics and abbacies, and worth one hundred pounds in silver. He succeeded Roger in another piece of preferment of value and ecclesiastical rank, being made

<sup>7</sup> Matthew of Westminster (Annal. ad ann. 1155) says that before he went to Archbishop Theobald, he had received from the Abbot of St. Alban's the benefice of Bratfield.

the Provost of Beverley. At this time the Saint was ordained deacon.

The close of the year 1154 is remarkable in English annals for the death of King Stephen, and for the election of the only Englishman who has ever sat in the Chair of St. Peter, Nicholas Breakspeare, a native of St. Alban's, who took the title of Pope Adrian IV.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

1155—1161.

Coronation of Henry II.—St. Thomas made Chancellor—his office—he expels the Flemings—restores the Tower—his magnificence—hospitality—recreations—intimacy with the King—his austerities—purity—devotions—his embassy to France—war of Toulouse—and in the Marches—personal deeds of valour—friendship of King Louis—conversation with the Prior of Leicester.

ON the 19th December, 1154, Henry II., in his twenty-first year, was crowned King of England at Westminster by Archbishop Theobald, the Legate of the Holy See. He could not fail to be aware of the part which had been taken by St. Thomas to secure his succession. Through his influence the Holy See had forbidden the Archbishop of Canterbury to crown Eustace; and he doubtless took a leading part in the negotiation by which the Primate and the Bishop of Winchester had procured from Stephen an acknowledgment of the right of Henry to succeed to the Crown. We are therefore not astonished to learn that, when St. Thomas was put forward by Archbishop Theobald as worthy of high place about the young King's person, he should at once have been promoted to the chancellorship of England. This was in 1155, when he was thirty-eight years



old, and consequently considerably the King's senior.

The dignity of the office which he now filled was such, that the famous Peter of Rémy, calls him "second to the King in four kingdoms." The Chapel Royal was in his care; he had the custody of the Great Seal, and with its reverse we are told he was at liberty to seal his own documents; his place in the councils of the Sovereign was most important; and by an abuse which then prevailed, he administered the revenues of all vacant bishoprics and abbacies.

The talents of St. Thomas had now full scope to manifest themselves. Within three months of the King's coronation, an evil which had its rise in the disturbed reign of Stephen was vigorously remedied. Many foreign adventurers, principally Flemings, of whom the most notorious was William de Ipres, created by that King Earl of Kent, were driven out of England; and the destruction of many castles which had served to harbour wrong-doers in troubled times restored a sense of security to the country. The Chancellor showed similar energy in the restoration of the Tower of London, which had become dilapidated. It is recorded as a marvel, that so many hands were employed, that the work was completed between Easter and Whitsuntide.

There can be no doubt that St. Thomas had a singular taste for magnificence; and now, not merely were the means for its gratification abundantly supplied, but it became almost a duty in consideration of the position which he filled.

Probably in all history there is no parallel to the place he held as the favourite of his Sovereign. Preferment of all kinds was heaped upon him; indeed there was nothing he might not have had if he had chosen to ask for it. To the ecclesiastical offices, of which he already held so many, there was added the deanery of Hastings; and among those of a more secular character, he received the wardenship of the Tower of London, with the military service attached to it; the Castlery of Eye, with its honour of seven-score soldiers; and the Castle of Berkhamstead. Thus the Chancellor had feudal rights over considerable territories and bodies of men; and it would seem that many nobles and knights voluntarily submitted themselves to him as "his men," in the language of the times, and paid him homage, saving their fealty to the King. His retinue was further swelled by the presence in his household of the sons of many of the nobility, who were sent to learn from him and from those whom he attracted about him how to fit themselves for the Court and the battlefield. A little later King Henry intrusted to him the education of his eldest son, perhaps as the greatest possible mark of confidence.

Everything about him was of the most costly description; his purveyors were reckless of expense in providing for his table, and the very bit in his horse's mouth was wrought in silver. His hospitality was unbounded. His own table was never without guests of the highest rank; while in the lower part of the hall room was found, not

only for his own large retinue, but also for very many who stood in need of his hospitality when frequenting the King's Court. It is a curious trait of the manners of those times, that every day his dining-hall was strewed with fresh straw or hay in the winter, and in the summer time with rushes or green boughs; for the floor had to serve as a seat for those guests who thronged the hall in greater numbers than the benches round the walls could accommodate. When the guests had dined, a plentiful meal was set before vast numbers of the poor who took their places, towards whom his open-handed generosity was so remarkable, that worldly people counted it almost superstition. The wretched and the oppressed were admitted to him without delay; and in his judicial capacity he was renowned for the justice done and the mercy shown to poor suitors.

The King's household could scarcely bear comparison with that of his clerical Chancellor; his very magnificence, however, was made to redound to the glory of his royal master. On one occasion ambassadors came into England from the King of Norway. As soon as the Chancellor heard of their arrival, he sent officials to bring them to the Court with all honour, and at his own expense.

The importance of Henry's continental dominions rendered it necessary that the Court should be held on either side of the Channel. The Chancellor fitted up three ships in a style worthy of the King's acceptance, and offered them to him

as a present. When he himself would cross, six or more ships sailed in company; and any one who was waiting for a passage was sure to be able to obtain it in the Chancellor's train.

His recreation, after the many and varied duties of his office, was of that description in which the Norman nobles were accustomed to indulge, and for which he had long ago acquired a taste. His amusements were thus in his horses, hounds, and hawks; forgetful of his place in the Church's hierarchy, and giving him much cause of self-reproach in his after-life. He was also fond of the game of draughts.

There is something very characteristic in the light-hearted sportiveness of the familiarity that existed between him and his youthful King. They were more like two schoolfellows than a great Sovereign and his first Minister. Henry would sometimes enter the Chancellor's dining-hall on horseback, perhaps with an arrow in his hand, as he was going to or returning from the chase; and we can imagine the stir among the motley crowd of retainers as the King would at one time drink to his Chancellor's health, and then ride away again; or at another time, leaping over the table on the dais, seat himself by his side, and thus become an unexpected guest.

A story is told which puts before us the frolicsome terms on which they lived. One cold winter's day they were riding together in the streets of London, the nobles and their other attendants having dropped behind to a considerable distance, to leave them more free, when the

King spied a poor old man shivering, half-clad, in the cold. "Poor old fellow," said the King, "do you see how cold he looks? would it not be a famous alms to give him a thick warm cloak?" "A very proper thought, and a royal one too," replied the unsuspecting Chancellor. On coming up to the old man they stopped, and Henry quietly asked him whether he would not like to have a good cloak. The poor man did not know them, and did not believe that they could be in earnest. "You shall give this great alms," said the King, as he turned to the Chancellor; and so saying, laid hold of his beautiful new cloak of scarlet and gray, and tried to take it off his shoulders, so that quite a scuffle ensued. The attendants hastened up, lost in astonishment, and found the King and his Chancellor so struggling as to be hardly able to keep their saddles. It is needless to say who came off victorious; and the poor old man went on his way loudly praising God for his good fortune, and clad in the Chancellor's grand cloak by the King's own hand. The courtiers heard the story, and laughed long and loud, as in duty bound. Not that they forgot to offer the Chancellor their own cloaks in lieu of the scarlet and gray which had been given away. Enough, however, of these lighter matters; it is full time we turned to more serious thoughts connected with the time of the chancellorship of our Saint.

We have mentioned the luxury and prodigality of his table. It is true that he was a man of refined tastes, and perhaps fastidious delicacy;

the habits of his whole life had made him so: it is no less true that in the midst of such profuseness he was singularly moderate. He had, moreover, practices of austerity which would scarcely have been looked for under his splendid exterior. He often bore the discipline from the hands of Ralph, the Prior of Holy Trinity, when he was in the neighbourhood of London; and when he was at Canterbury, from the hands of Thomas, a priest of St. Martin's. Robert, the venerable Canon of Merton, under whom he had been brought up, was still his confessor; and he bore testimony to Fitzstephen, one of the Saint's most careful biographers, that all through this most trying portion of his life, in spite of the license of Norman manners and the snares of the Court, his life remained perfectly pure. An anecdote of one who suspected that it might be otherwise not only confirms this opinion of his virtue, but gives us also a glimpse of further secret austerities.

Once, when he was in attendance on the King at Stafford, the suspicions of his host Vivien the cleric were aroused by the attentions which he fancied were paid to the Chancellor by a lady of the name of Anice de Stafford, who was remarkable for her beauty, and whose reputation had suffered in consequence of her intimacy with the King. Wishing to ascertain the truth, he secretly, in the dead of the night, entered his guest's chamber with a lantern. The bed he found was undisturbed; but on looking round the room with his light, he saw the Saint asleep on the hard

floor at the foot of the bed, partially undressed. His sleep was the heaviness of exhaustion, and his inquisitive host was enabled to withdraw unobserved.

The good Canons Regular of Merton Abbey were taken into the King's favour now that a child of their house had become a royal favourite. Fitzstephen tells us that the King completed the Abbey Church and endowed it, and that he would sometimes spend the three last days of Holy Week with the community. After Tenebræ at midnight on Good Friday till three in the afternoon, he would visit the neighbouring village churches on foot, disguised in a cloak, with but one companion to show him the way. We should have thought the story more probable if it had been told of the Chancellor rather than of the King; but at least it does not seem rash to conjecture that the Chancellor accompanied his master.

One of the most important events of his chancellorship was his famous mission to ask the King of France to espouse his daughter Marguerite to Prince Henry, the heir-apparent of England since his brother William's death. The bridegroom-elect was a child of five years of age, and the little princess was but three; and it was thirteen years before the marriage was completed. This embassy was conducted with a magnificence of which we have but few parallels even in the records of such ceremonial occasions. His immediate retinue consisted of two hundred members of his own household, clerics, seneschals

and servitors, knights and esquires, as well as the sons of noblemen who were in his suite with their respective attendants, all gaily equipped. Huntsmen led hounds in leashes, and falconers carried hawks upon their fists. Eight wagons conveyed all the requisites for the journey, drawn by five high-bred horses; at the head of each horse was a groom on foot, "dressed in a new tunic." A spare horse followed each wagon. Two were laden with beer in casks bound with iron, to be given to the French, "who admire that kind of drink," as Fitzstephen tells us, adding that "it is wholesome, clear, of the colour of wine, and of a better taste." The Chancellor's chapel-furniture had its own wagon, his chamber had one, his pantry another, his kitchen another; others carried provisions, and others again the baggage of the party; amongst them, four-and-twenty suits of clothing for presents, as well as furs and carpets. Then there were twelve sumpter-horses; eight chests containing the Chancellor's gold and silver plate; and besides a very considerable store of coin, "some books" found room. The sumpter-horse which led the way was laden with the sacred vessels of the chapel, and the altar ornaments and books. Beneath every wagon was an English mastiff, and a monkey rode on each sumpter-horse's load.

The order of march was as follows: some two hundred and fifty young Englishmen led the way in knots of six or ten or more together, singing their national songs as they entered the French



villages. After an interval came the huntsmen with their dogs; then the wagons, iron-bound and covered with hides, rattled over the stones of the streets; at a little distance followed the sumpter-horses with their quaint riders. After another interval the esquires followed, carrying the shields of the knights and leading their chargers; then other esquires; after them the falconers, carrying their birds; afterwards senechals, masters and servants of the Chancellor's household; then the knights and clerics, all riding two and two; lastly came the Chancellor himself, surrounded by his intimate friends. "What must the King of England be," said the French as he went by, "if his Chancellor travels in such state?"<sup>1</sup>

The King of France, wishing to take upon himself the entertainment of his guest, issued orders at Paris that nothing was to be sold to any of the ambassador's followers. When the rumour of this came to his ears, he sent on people secretly to the villages round Paris, to Lagny, Corbeil, Pontoise and St. Denys, to purchase for him all that he could require. On his arrival, when he entered the Temple, where he was to lodge, his purveyors met him with the information that they had laid in stores sufficient to keep a thou-

<sup>1</sup> As St. Thomas passed through the territory of Limoges, he was entertained by Hugh of Meimac. Four years after the martyrdom Hugh was lying very ill and sent a candle of the length of his body to the Saint's shrine. The following night he was informed in his sleep that the martyr Thomas was his former guest the Chancellor, "to whom he had given whey in a silver goblet." He was cured (Will. Cant. p. 446).

sand men for three days. Such open-handed expenditure had never been seen in Paris before. On one occasion a dish of eels for his table cost a hundred shillings; and the "English Chancellor's dish" passed into a proverb.

The scholars and masters of the schools of Paris waited upon him, doubtless not forgetful that he had himself studied among them; and even the citizens who had debtors among the English students threw themselves upon his generosity. His prodigality in making presents was unbounded: he gave away nearly everything; all his gold and silver plate, and all the changes of clothing he had brought with him for that purpose: "to one he gave a gray cloak, to another one of furs; to this one a palfrey, to that one a charger;" no one left him empty-handed. What wonder that his embassy should have been perfectly successful?

It was not only in peaceful negotiations that the splendid liberality and the skilful diplomacy of our Chancellor were apparent, for in truth they were not less conspicuous in the time of war. In the siege of Toulouse, where there were assembled forces from Normandy, Aquitaine, Anjou, Brittany, and Scotland, as well as from England itself, the Chancellor's own troops were ever prominent. He was followed by seven hundred knights of his own household. Had his advice been adopted, the war would have been brought to a very speedy conclusion. The King of France had thrown himself into Toulouse with a very insufficient garrison. The Chancellor

proposed an immediate assault; but Henry, though he did not mind waging war against the King of France, who was his feudal lord in virtue of his continental dominions, yet scrupled to attack his person. In the Chancellor's opinion, Louis had laid aside all claims to the character of feudal superior when he went to war with the King of England. However, the French army was not long in reaching the scene. when the Kings of England and Scotland withdrew their forces from before Toulouse,<sup>2</sup> after they had taken Cahors and several castles. In order to retain these, the Chancellor, together with Henry of Essex,<sup>3</sup> the King's constable, volunteered to remain. Clad in breastplate and helmet, he headed his troops, and took three highly fortified castles which were reputed impregnable. He also crossed the Garonne; and when the whole province was confirmed in its obedience to the King, he returned to England in high favour and honour.

On a later occasion, when the seat of the war was in the Marches, between Gisors, Trie, and Courcelles, on the boundaries of the English and French territories, besides the seven hundred knights of his own household, the Chancellor brought into the field twelve hundred knights

<sup>2</sup> Gervase says that Toulouse was besieged from the feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24) to that of All Saints (November 1) 1159.

<sup>3</sup> This statement by Fitzstephen is hardly in keeping with that of Gervase, who says that Henry of Essex incurred perpetual disgrace for having let the King's standard fall in a battle in Wales in 1157.

and four thousand men, maintaining them at his own expense for forty days. Every knight received from him three shillings a day, to furnish himself with horses and esquires. The Chancellor's knights were the foremost in every enterprise in the whole English army. They used to sound the sally and the retreat on slender trumpets which were peculiar to their troop, and the sound of which soon became familiar to both armies. Their prominence was due to the Chancellor's personal courage and prowess. On his return from his embassy to France, he had taken prisoner Guy de Laval, a noted freebooter, and imprisoned him at Neuf-marché. We have seen him in his armour leading the troops in the neighbourhood of Toulouse; and now we hear of him engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter with a valiant French knight, Engelramne de Trie, whom he unhorsed, making a prize of his charger.

In spite of his valour when engaged in war against him, King Louis of France had almost as great a friendship for him as his own Sovereign. Once, when he was confined by a serious illness at St. Gervase in Rouen, the two Kings came together to visit him. One day, during his convalescence, he was sitting playing a game of chess, wearing a cloak with sleeves, which had, we suppose, a very secular air. Aschetin, the Prior of Leicester, on his return from Gascony, where the King's Court was, went to see him. It was always characteristic of our Saint, that he suffered his friends to speak to him as freely as they chose; even though it should be to find

fault with him. The Prior of Leicester accordingly began: "What do you mean by wearing a cloak with such sleeves as those? You look more like a falconer than a cleric. Yet cleric you are, in person one, in office many, Archdeacon of Canterbury, Dean of Hastings, Provost of Beverley, Canon of this place and of that, procurator too of the archbishopric, and as the current report goes at Court, Archbishop to be." In the course of the conversation the Chancellor said, "I know three poor priests in England, any one of whom I had rather see promoted to the archbishopric than myself; for I know my lord the King so intimately, that I am sure I should have to choose between his favour and that of Almighty God, if I myself were to be appointed." This interview happened after Theobald's death, a period which we have not yet reached; but it is here introduced as descriptive of the manner of his life during his chancellorship.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHANCELLOR'S POLICY.

1155—1161.

Military career of the Chancellor—Gilbert Foliot refuses the administration of London—second subsidies—the Chancellor interferes in behalf of the Archdeacon of London, of John of Salisbury, the Archdeacon of Rouen and the Bishop of Le Mans—difficulty of the position—Battle Abbey—judgments on the Chancellor's conduct.

IT would be neither easy nor justifiable to attempt to clear St. Thomas from all blame in the scenes we have just witnessed. The argument which would excuse him for his warlike occupations on the score of the manners of the age, is not, it is true, altogether without weight ; let the reader estimate its value for himself. Still, though this may palliate, it cannot justify so signal an infringement of the Church's canons. Beyond question it is not edifying to read of the Archdeacon of Canterbury—the first unmitred dignitary in England, a churchman by all the ties of his plurality of benefices, and a deacon in orders—as “clad in breastplate and helmet,” in successful tilt unhorsing the valiant Sir Engelramne, “with lance in rest and charger at gallop.” However, the most important view of the matter, that which his own conscience took, is sufficiently satisfactory. In after-days, when everything was

weighed by him in the balance of the sanctuary, his lamentation was, *De pastore avium factus sum Pastor ovium*. The worldliness of his former life was his principal regret, without any special remorse in reference to deeds of arms, which in our times would be held to induce irregularity, and to render an application to the Pope necessary for absolution.

The vigour and energy of character, which led him to promote the war by appearing in person at the head of his troops, induced him to co-operate with the King in more than one scheme for procuring funds to carry it on, which are quite indefensible in their nature. Towards the close of St. Thomas's chancellorship, the bishopric of London fell vacant by the death of Richard de Beaumes, a relative of Gilbert Foliot, the Bishop of Hereford. The see was soon offered by the Chancellor to Gilbert himself, who afterwards occupied it, but who now refused it in consequence of the disgraceful condition annexed to the offer of the translation. The letter is still extant in which Gilbert excuses himself to the King for his refusal. "The Lord Chancellor requests me," he says, "to undertake the charge of the bishopric of London, and with part of the income to maintain myself and my household as its Bishop, and to reserve the rest for my Lord the King, to be spent as the Spirit of God shall prompt him." It is greatly to Gilbert's credit that he should have refused to do what he well calls "a grievous injury to his soul." The revenues of the see, on its falling vacant, were confis-

cated to the King's treasury, by an abuse which had been forsworn in more than one coronation oath; and the charge of them was intrusted to the Chancellor, who administered the widowed see by the clerics of his household. It may be that this offer to the Bishop of Hereford was only "that he should take charge of the bishopric" as administrator during the vacancy of the see, which would of course render the proposal far less reprehensible, as it would be but retaining a part of what the King was accustomed wholly to confiscate; and it is not an improbable supposition that St. Thomas, who, as we know, used his influence with the King to prevent long vacancies, may in this instance have been able to gain nothing more liberal to the Church than the compromise here offered. Still it must be confessed that Gilbert's subsequent translation to this very see, and his evident indignation at the offer, render it probable that the transaction was as wrong as it at first sight appears to have been. As far, however, as the doubt is a fair one, it is but just that St. Thomas's reputation as chancellor and statesman should have its full benefit.

Another evil of the same kind, but more grievous, because its effects were more widely felt, was what Archbishop Theobald called, in a letter he wrote to accompany his will when he felt his end was approaching, "the custom of second subsidies, which our brother the Archdeacon [Walter, at this time Bishop of Rochester<sup>1</sup>] has imposed upon the churches." This

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 9.



“custom” was the imposition of an unjust and illegal tax upon the clergy for the prosecution of the war, a part of the great “scutage” raised by the King for the expenses of the Toulouse campaign.<sup>2</sup> In this there can be little doubt St. Thomas co-operated with Henry, for Theobald tells him that he cannot listen to him when he asks for the exaction of these subsidies without breaking a vow that he made when he thought he was dying. But the Archbishop attributes these subsidies to his own brother, years before, and he is far from saying that the Chancellor was responsible for them. John of Salisbury, than whom probably a better informed authority could not be cited, later on, when of course this proceeding was brought as a precedent or a reproach against St. Thomas, replied to the objection, “But perhaps it will be said that the imposition of the tax, and the whole, in short, of this disturbance, is to be attributed to the Archbishop,” as he was when this was written, “who then had complete influence over the King, and made this suggestion to him. Now I know that this was not the case, for he only allowed the measure to pass, he did not sanction it. Inasmuch, however, as he was the instrument of injustice, it is a suitable punishment to him that he should be persecuted now by the very person whom he then preferred to his Supreme Benefactor.”

There can be no doubt that Archbishop Theobald's object in recommending St. Thomas to the King, was the hope that he might be able to

<sup>2</sup> See Note C.

influence his master in those many matters in which the strong hand of the State had interfered from time to time with the liberty of the Church. Not that there was any specific understanding on the subject, but that St. Thomas's principles were well known to the Archbishop, and had been long tested in his many years of ecclesiastical service. The position he now held was one of great delicacy and difficulty. The King's temperament was fiery in the extreme; and opposition, or even a show of independence, drove him to great lengths. Beyond a doubt St. Thomas always had the liberty of the Church at heart, and through him, while he was Chancellor, she was spared much oppression.

We have some instances to detail in which the Chancellor used his powerful influence with the King in behalf of churchmen who had incurred his displeasure. The first case is that of Nicholas, Archdeacon of London. The cause of the King's irritation with him has not come down to us, but the arbitrariness with which he was treated is very characteristic of King Henry II. His relations were ordered into exile, and his house was seized to be sold for the King's benefit. The good Chancellor did not rest until, on the very day on which it came to his knowledge, he had obtained for the Archdeacon a free pardon and his recall.

John of Salisbury had letters from the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury to appease the anger of the King, and desiring the intervention also of the Chancellor, he wrote to Ernulf, the

Saint's secretary, saying that he knew that in the multitude of his occupations and Court duties the Chancellor would need some one to remind him of his friend's request, and begging Ernulf to do him this service. This Ernulf St. Thomas made his chancellor, when he himself became Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup>

Our Saint's good offices were employed in behalf of other dignitaries and in a more important cause. On the accession of Pope Alexander, and the breaking out of the schism, Hugh, the Archbishop of Rouen, at once espoused the cause of the rightful Pope, and sent his nephew and Archdeacon, Gilo, to his suffragan Bishops to induce them to profess the same obedience. The King was very angry that it had not been left to him to take the initiative in this great question. He did not dare to do anything directly against the Archbishop, who was much respected; but he ordered the house of Gilo to be pulled down. St. Thomas interfered, representing that, though the house belonged to Gilo, it was there that he himself was accustomed to lodge: endeavouring thus to save the Archdeacon's property without irritating Henry by opposition.

The next day the King heard that the Bishop of Le Mans had followed the example of the Archbishop of Rouen, and acknowledged Alexander to be the lawful Pope without so much as consulting him. The royal marshals went straight to the Bishop's hostelry, where they cut the halts and turned loose his horses: and having

3 *Materials*, v. p. 7.

carried his baggage into the streets, they deprived him of his lodging, and drove him in disgrace from Court. The King then had briefs prepared, giving orders that the Bishop's house at Le Mans should be immediately pulled down. As soon as he had signed them, he held them up in his hand before the large company of nobles and ecclesiastics who were present at his Court, saying, "It will not be long before the good people of Le Mans hear something about their Bishop." This was at Neuf-marché; and as the King of France was there also, the consternation produced by this violent conduct was very widespread. The Chancellor knew that it was quite useless to attempt at once to pacify Henry. The great thing was to gain time; so, on despatching the messengers, he privately instructed them to take four days for the journey, which was usually made in two. The next day the Chancellor sent some of the bishops to intercede with the King; but they found him inexorable; and later in the day some others went, and suffered a similar repulse. By-and-by the Chancellor went himself, and renewed his entreaties on the following day. When the King thought that there had been time for the execution of his commands, he gave way, and permitted counter-orders to be issued. These were at once despatched by a fleet messenger, who was warned, as he valued the Chancellor's patronage, not to rest either day or night till he reached Le Mans. He arrived just in time; the former messengers had already delivered their letters, but the Bishop's house was not yet

touched. Henry was afterwards glad enough to hear of the device which had thus saved him from the evil consequences of his own anger. Such anecdotes as these show us sufficiently clearly the character of the King with whom he had to deal, and lead us to wonder that during his chancellorship no greater injuries were inflicted on the Church.

From the extreme difficulty of his position we are hardly surprised at the statement made by his intimate friend, John of Salisbury,<sup>4</sup> that "he would, even with tears, tell the Archbishop and his friends that he was wearied of his very life, and that after the desire of salvation there was nothing he so longed for as to be able to disentangle himself without disgrace from the snares of the Court; for though the world seemed to flatter him in everything, yet he was not unmindful of his condition and duty, and thus he was obliged on the one hand to strive for the safety and honour of the King, and on the other for the needs of the Church and the bishops both against the King himself and against his enemies also, and by various arts to elude their various stratagems."

The Chronicle of Battle Abbey<sup>5</sup> gives an account of a matter in which St. Thomas, as Chancellor, was officially interested, and which has often been quoted as an example of his readiness at this period of his life, to side with the King against those principles of which he was afterwards the champion and the martyr. When, how-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, ii. p. 304.

<sup>5</sup> See Note D.

ever, the *ex parte* character of that chronicle is borne in mind, and the fragmentary shape in which the only speech of his in the cause of any importance has come down to us, there does not seem to be anything here to modify the judgment that the other acts of his chancellorship induce us to form.

Some modern writers have drawn from these facts conclusions most adverse to the character of St. Thomas. They say that one of two deductions is inevitable: either when he took the King's side in these acts of aggression on the Church he was sincere; and then the presumption is, that his sudden change of policy when made Archbishop was but a hypocritical scheme for furthering his own ambition: or he was insincere in the part which he played when Chancellor, the object of such double-dealing being to lead the King to think him hearty in his cause, and so to obtain his promotion to the coveted archbishopric.

This dilemma is as illogical as it is unjust. We have already shown that there is another manner of accounting for St. Thomas's conduct, which is historically far more probable than either of those thus objected. There is no reason whatever for supposing that his principles were not those of a true churchman during the intermediate time, spent in his chancellorship, between the days when he became the favourite of the Holy See as Archbishop Theobald's minister, and the later times when he was the Church's champion. If any of his biographers speak of a change in him

at his consecration, it is a change, not of principle, but of manner of life; from worldliness to asceticism, from the courtier to the ecclesiastic and the saint.<sup>6</sup>

And as for ambition prompting such hypocrisy, it must needs have been an ambition to fall instead of to rise, to become less instead of greater in any worldly sense: for what to an ambitious man was the primacy, especially if he was resolved to resign the chancellorship, when compared with the chancellorship itself, as it was when he held it? It is idle to say that he aimed at subduing the temporal order to the spiritual, and placing himself over both as the head of the nobler; for his subsequent struggle was for the canonical independence of the clergy, and not for their advancement to temporal power. And what could the Chancellor, and such a Chancellor, gain by desiring a change? Like Joseph in the house of Pharaoh, it was but in the royal throne that he was the King's inferior: knights and nobles swore fealty to him, reserving only their allegiance to the Sovereign; he was the head of all the administration of justice; he had the command of the army; he could dispose of the whole kingdom at his pleasure; he was supreme as the King's Prime Minister: would it not have been an ambition too short-sighted to be attributed to him, to throw away such a rule in the King's name in order to risk a contest with a powerful Sovereign for ever so brilliant a pre-eminence?

The truth undoubtedly is, that St. Thomas

<sup>6</sup> See Note E.

clearly understood and knew how to manage the King's passionate temper. He knew how hopeless it was to resist him in his paroxysms of rage, and we consequently find him allowing the storm to pass over without attempting to combat it. There were occasions when he stood by and sorrowfully saw things done of which he could not approve, but with which he was not called on by his position to interfere, and which prudence, and the fear of destroying his influence and his means of good, taught him, whether in mistaken judgment or not, to bear with patiently: and if there were occasions when he showed more of the statesman and courtier than of the dutiful son of the Church, these instances were but few in number, and not of such a character as to overthrow our conclusion that St. Thomas, though as yet no saint according to the high and heroic estimate of the Church, still showed in his difficult position as Chancellor the material of which saints are made.

With such copious information before us respecting his chancellorship, we cannot be surprised that the biographer<sup>7</sup> of those who have held that high office should call him "one of the most distinguished men of any race that this island has ever produced." Manifesting from his childhood a singular love for truth; his heart ever full of compassion towards the poor and needy; with the gentlest spirit of condescension towards the timid and the humble, yet showing an indomitable courage and will in resisting the oppressor

7 Lord Campbell's *Chancellors*, i. p. 59.



though bred in moderate circumstances, living amidst an unrivalled profusion of wealth and magnificence as if he had been accustomed to it from his cradle ; checking the rapacious tendency of a King and a Court against the Church, and yet, in spite of his natural vehemence of disposition, with such prudence that he has shared the blame of what he could not avert ; advancing daily in the fear of God and in Christian perfection, and yet so unaffectedly and unostentatiously that his very virtue is questioned ; leading an interior life of a sanctity that in some respects falls little short of the heroic :—we have before us one who, had he now died, and these details had reached us, we had justly regarded as one of the brightest and noblest characters in our history. How much happier we are, in being able to regard this as but the preface, the ushering-in of a far brighter and nobler destiny. In his after life the blemishes that we have observed are washed away. If he has been unjust to the Church, he atones for it by vindicating justice for her from the most violent and powerful. If he has forgotten the indelible character imprinted on his soul by Holy Orders, he is about to set to all men an example of the life a churchman should lead. If he has lived in too great magnificence for “the servant of a lowly Lord,” he does penance in the cowl of Citeaux. If he has had too great a love for popularity, or too much sense of human respect, he will shortly be mocked at and deserted, as well by bishop as by noble, in the Church's cause. And all the hardy virtues

we have seen in him hitherto will flourish in their native climate of adversity; he who is just will yet be justified, and he who is holy will yet be sanctified; and all will be crowned by a death which, as that of the saints, will be precious in the eyes of the King of the Martyrs and of the Divine Author and Guardian of the immunities of the Catholic Church.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE DEATH OF THEOBALD.

1158—1161.

Visit of the King and the Chancellor to Paris—Pope Alexander III.—Archbishop Theobald's failing health and anxiety—abuses—vacancy of bishoprics—new Bishops of Coventry and Exeter—Theobald's desire for the return of the King and the Chancellor—the Archbishop's death.

IN 1158 King Henry and his Chancellor crossed over into France, where they were magnificently received by King Louis at Paris.<sup>1</sup> The Saint's politic negotiations gained from the French King what was felt to be a very great advantage towards the consolidation of Henry's continental dominions. The latter Sovereign was permitted, as seneschal of the King of France, to enter Brittany and exercise martial law on all who were disturbing the peace of that country. This was the King of England's first entry into Brittany; and he took occasion of it to gain possession of Nantes. King Louis returned his visit; passing through Le Mans to Mont St. Michel, and thence to Bayeux, Caen, and Rouen, where he was received with a magnificence equal to his own. It was in the next year, 1159, that the war of Toulouse occurred, on which we have already dwelt so much. And in 1159, on the

<sup>1</sup> Gerv. p. 166.

death of the English Pope, Adrian IV., Alexander III., was elected in his stead on the 7th of September. Under this Pope the rest of the life of St. Thomas was spent, and by him he was canonized.

In 1160 Theobald began to feel that his long reign in the chair of St. Augustine was drawing to a close. We must dwell for a short time on the cares that beset him, and rendered his last days anxious; for they will serve excellently to put us in possession of the feeling that existed respecting the relations of the Crown to the Church when the see of Canterbury fell vacant.

One of the abuses against which the aged Prelate struggled, and, through his foresight in placing St. Thomas with the King, not without success, was the long vacancy of bishoprics; which, though involving churches in widowhood, and leaving the people without a pastor, was an easy and tempting manner of recruiting the royal treasury. His spirit, preparing to give an account of his stewardship, would indeed have been grieved if he could have foreseen what St. Thomas a few years afterwards thus described to Pope Alexander: "To say nothing of the way in which the King treats the Churches of Canterbury and Tours, of which you have heard, and of which I wish you knew still more, now for some time past he holds in his own hands seven vacant bishoprics in our province and that of Rouen, nor will he suffer pastors to be there ordained. The clergy of the kingdom are given up to his officials, to be trodden down and treated as a prey." It

became a current saying, during a seventeen years' vacancy, that Lincoln would never have another bishop.

Robert Wardlaw, Bishop of Exeter, died in 1159; and Theobald was very anxious that his see should be filled. He was a wealthy man, who had been presented in the first year of King Henry's reign; and John of Salisbury leads us to understand that his appointment had been uncanonical, if not simoniacal. This renders intelligible the following passage in a letter from Archbishop Theobald to the King; which is interesting as showing, as several others of his writings also do, the misgivings with which the Primate sank into his grave. "The children of this world suggest to you to diminish the authority of the Church, in order to increase your royal dignity. They are certainly your Majesty's enemies, and provoke the indignation of God, whoever they may be. It is He Who has extended your boundaries; it is He Who has advanced your glory. It is wicked in you to diminish the glory of your Lord and Benefactor; it merits chastisement, and the severest chastisement beyond doubt it will receive; nay, by God's grace there shall be no chastisement, for by His help it shall not be done. The Spouse of the Church addresses you by my mouth. Peter, the Shepherd of all, the Prince of the Apostles, addresses you; and all the saints earnestly beseech you, that if you would have them for the patrons and guardians of your realm and reign, you would permit a pastor to be ordained

according to the Lord for the Church of Exeter, and would strive to rescue it from shipwreck. It was the first in the kingdom to which you looked. See, I beg, my lord, what has come of it. You know whom He excluded from the Church, Who drove out those who sold doves; and God forbid that any one should enter in whom Christ shut out. I pledge myself a surety for St. Peter, that the honour which you show to him he will repay a hundredfold, even in this world." This, which sounds almost as a voice from the tomb, apparently produced but little effect; for the King would have appointed Robert Fitzharding, an illiterate and useless person, if the Canons of Exeter had not refused to elect him.

The Archbishop's wish, which he prosecuted with great fervour, was that the see might be given to Bartholomew, then Archdeacon of that Church; for whom, he said, he was willing to pledge himself to the King. It is edifying to be able to add that Bartholomew knew nothing of the application thus made in his behalf. Theobald pressed his request on Henry with the energy of a man who feels that he has no time to lose. He himself wrote to the Chancellor; and another still more urgent letter to St. Thomas was from John of Salisbury, who says that the Archbishop was beginning to be dispirited as to his personal influence with Henry. He was then ill in his bed. The letter adds that they had heard that the King had conferred the income of three vacant bishoprics on St. Thomas, but

that such a report had not caused them to doubt of his mediation; for they had none of them forgotten the advantages which Lincoln, York, and many other Churches had received at his hands. Theobald had the consolation of communicating, by means of his faithful John of Salisbury, this appointment to Bartholomew; and he sent for him, that he, with Richard, Bishop-elect of Coventry, might be consecrated, if not by him, at least in his presence. His brother Walter,<sup>2</sup> Bishop of Rochester, consecrated the Bishop of Coventry in the chapel into which Theobald was carried; but Bartholomew's consecration was postponed until he had done homage to the King. He crossed the sea, and returned with all haste, but Theobald had died before his arrival. The Bishop of Rochester consecrated him at Christ Church, Canterbury, at the request of the Prior and community.

In Bartholomew's election, the solicitude of Theobald's last moments was successful. Coventry had had an unusually short vacancy; but, in spite of all his efforts, he left London, Worcester, and Bangor without bishops.

As his end drew near, he felt the absence of the King and St. Thomas very deeply. His letters to both of them, pleading to be allowed to see their faces once more before he died, are very touching. Again and again he writes to the King: "We petition your Majesty that it may please you, as we believe it to be the pleasure of God, that you would return to your own peculiar

<sup>2</sup> Gerv. p. 168.

people. Let their loyalty move you, and the affection of your children, from whom the sternest parent could hardly bear to be so long separated; let the love of your wife move you, the beauty of the country, and that union of delights we cannot enumerate; and, not to forget my own case, let my desolation move you, for my age and sickness will not let me wait long for your desired coming. In this hope I wait; and with many a sigh I say to myself, 'Will not my Christ give me to see him whom at my desire He gave me to anoint?'" And then he begs that the King will at least send him his Archdeacon. "He is the only one we have, and the first of our Council. He ought to have come unsummoned; and unless your need of him had excused him, he had been guilty of disobedience before God and man. But since we have ever preferred your will to our own, and have determined to further it in all that is lawful, we forgive him his fault; wishing him to remain in your service as long as you need him, and ordering him to give his whole zeal and attention to your wants: but permit him to return as soon as ever you can spare him." And this he unites to his prayer for the Church of Exeter, beseeching with equal energy *de remittendo cancellario, et promovendo negotio Exoniensis Ecclesie*.

In the same tone he writes to St. Thomas, anxious beyond measure to see him, but warning him not to incur the King's displeasure; for he doubted his own influence, and he reminded him that favour for the sake of the dead, amongst whom he expected soon to be numbered, was not



to be relied upon. John of Salisbury at the same time writes to say that he had never known the Archbishop equally anxious about anything, so that they had even thought of forcing St. Thomas to return by threat of censures. But they had been induced to be patient by the report, the importance of which they would be the last to undervalue, of the perfect unanimity between the King and the Chancellor. "It is publicly said that you have one heart and one soul, and that your friendly familiarity is so strong, that you like and dislike the same things. The whole Court hangs upon your counsel."

The wish so fervently expressed was not gratified. What the dying Prelate longed to press upon the King and the Chancellor, if he had been permitted to see them, is sufficiently clear from the letters which accompanied his will. Besides the question of subsidies, he urged that none of his ecclesiastical arrangements should be interfered with, excommunicating any one who might venture to do so. Under a similar censure he forbade any interference with his Church of Canterbury, especially any alienation of its lands; he requested that the King would permit his property to be divided amongst the poor, towards whom he had during life always shown great charity; and he wrote most earnestly to Henry respecting his own successor. "I beseech you to hear me, as you would have God hear you at your last breath. I send you and your children a blessing from our Lord Jesus Christ; and do you, I pray, send my desolate ones your Majesty's

consolation. I commend to you the holy Church of Canterbury, from which, by my ministry, you received the reins of government, that you may defend it from the attacks of wicked men: and to me, who, though unworthy, have yet, by God's help, ruled it as best I knew how, give as successor such a pastor as may not be unworthy of so great a see, who may delight in religion, and the merits of whose virtue may find favour with God. Your faithful servant must give you counsel; and, before the Lord and His saints, this is my counsel: Seek not in this matter what is your own, but the Lord's; for I answer to you for Him, that if you will have a faithful care for His cause, He will greatly advance yours."

Theobald had been Archbishop two-and-twenty years when he died, on April 18, 1161. He was buried in the mother-church of England, soon to be rendered so famous by the death and relics of his immediate successor. Nineteen years after his death his tomb was opened, and his body was found to be entire and uncorrupt. His soul we trust is with God. His see was vacant for one year, a month, and fourteen days; and when next there was an Archbishop, it was St. Thomas of Canterbury.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NEW ARCHBISHOP.

1161—1162.

The Chancellor returns to England—the King resolves he shall be Archbishop—intimation to the monks—election at Westminster—Foliot's conduct—Archbishop-elect discharged of all liabilities—he goes to Canterbury—his ordination and consecration—feast of the Blessed Trinity—the pallium.

THE year of Theobald's death passed over quietly, the revenues of the see being as usual intrusted to the Chancellor's care. The free-spoken Prior of Leicester has already shown us that the current belief was that the Chancellor was to be Theobald's successor.

In the spring of 1162, King Henry determined to send St. Thomas over into England to provide against the incursions of the Welsh, and on other public business of importance. Just as the Chancellor was about to start upon his journey, he went to salute the King at the Castle of Falaise in Normandy. Henry took him on one side, and said, "You do not yet know altogether the cause of your journey. It is my will that you should be Archbishop of Canterbury." On this the Chancellor, looking down at his dress, which was gay, said with a smile, "What a religious man, what a saint you wish to place in that holy bishopric and over so famous a monastery! I am certain that

if, by God's disposal, it were so to happen, the love and favour you now bear towards me would speedily turn into the bitterest hatred. I know that you would require many things, as even now you do require them, in church matters, which I could never bear quietly; and so the envious would take occasion to provoke an endless strife between us." The King was utterly unmoved by this, and in the Chancellor's presence instructed the nobles who were to accompany him in his mission, that they were to intimate this his desire to the monks of Canterbury and to the clergy of the kingdom. He then turned to one of them in particular, Richard de Luci, whose position about the King's person was very confidential, and said to him, "Richard, if I lay dead on my bier, would you not strive that my eldest son Henry should be crowned King?" He replied, "My lord, I would with all my might." "I wish you to take as much pains," rejoined Henry, "for the promotion of the Chancellor to the see of Canterbury." A few years later the expressions that he had here used often recurred to the mind of St. Thomas as almost prophetic, and during his exile his companions frequently heard him allude to them or recount them. They accord precisely with what he had said to the Prior of Leicester.

In the month of May, 1162,<sup>1</sup> the King sent three Bishops, with Richard de Luci and Walter his brother the Abbot of Battle, to Canterbury, to summon the Prior and monks to hold an election. When they were assembled in the chapter-house,

<sup>1</sup> Gerv. p. 169.

Richard addressed the community, enlarging upon the King's filial devotion to the Church of Canterbury, which induced him without further delay to send them free leave to elect; and in conclusion pointing out to them the necessity there was that the object of their choice should be acceptable to the King.

The summons was to London, that they might there meet the Bishops of the province at Westminster;<sup>2</sup> and thither accordingly Wibert the Prior and the senior monks of the chapter betook themselves. The electors speedily came to the conclusion that their wisest course would be to consult the King's representatives as to the person who would be most acceptable to him. They did not immediately elect the Chancellor when he was proposed to them by Richard de Luci. It was not any repugnance to St. Thomas personally that led them to hesitate; but it was their feeling, as religious, that the successor of the Apostle of England should be a child of St. Benedict, as Theobald and the majority of those who had filled that throne had been. His intimacy with the King appears to have been regarded from two different points of view. Some thought that it was calculated to promote harmony between the Church and State; while others considered it dangerous, as destroying the independence which alone could hope to resist any undue encroachments of the civil power. Though doubtless the

<sup>2</sup> Gervase, who was admitted as a monk at Christ Church not long after this election, says London, and Herbert Westminster; Roger de Pontigny places the election at Canterbury.

expression of the King's will was contrary to that perfect freedom of election which the Church desires, and to which she has a right; yet, from all that has come down to us, it would seem that there was no such direct influence or intimidation of the electors used as would nullify the election, as there had been in Stephen's reign in the case of St. William of York. Quite enough there was to raise a suspicion of its canonical character, and this St. Thomas himself represented in the strongest terms a few years afterwards to Pope Alexander. However, as far as the forms go, all seems valid; and at the close of the election Wibert announced to the bishops and abbots, who, together with the priors of conventual houses, and the earls and other nobles, with the King's officials, were assembled together at Westminster by royal mandate, that they had elected as Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas, the King's Chancellor.

There was but one dissentient voice raised at this announcement. Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of Hereford, was the only one who was dissatisfied. The report was very widespread that he was himself ambitious of the vacant primacy. The belief in the justice of this charge receives much strength from the fact that when, after St. Thomas's martyrdom, the primacy once more fell vacant, he had again to defend himself from the same accusation in a long letter to the King. However, finding himself alone and unsupported, he changed his tactics, and became the loudest in praise of the election. For this reason some well-

informed writers deny that he ever disturbed the unanimity with which the name of St. Thomas was received. It must be borne in mind that Gilbert was not himself an elector; for it was the privilege of the community of Christ Church to elect the Archbishop, who was *ex officio* their Abbot also. Gilbert was present as one of the suffragan Bishops of the province.

St. Thomas was in consequence of the King's absence presented to his pupil, Prince Henry, then a boy in his eighth year,<sup>3</sup> who, even before his coronation, is sometimes called the young King; and he, as well as Richard de Luci and the other officials whom the King had commissioned, gave full assent to the election. Henry of Winchester, the brother of the late King Stephen, then said: "The Lord Chancellor, our elect, has now been long in the palace of the King your father, and has had the highest place in the kingdom, having had the whole realm at his disposal, so that nothing has been done save by his will: wherefore we beg that he may be given over to the Church of God and to us, free, and absolved from every obligation of the Court, from every complaint and calumny, and from all claims; so that from this hour henceforward, unshackled and free, he may attend to the things of God. For we know that the King your father has delegated to you his powers in this matter, and that he will ratify whatever you ordain." This petition was fully

<sup>3</sup> The Lansdowne MS. says that the Prince was ten years old, but he was born in March, 1155 (Gerv. p. 161).

granted, and St. Thomas was given over to the Church free from all secular obligations hitherto contracted. This release by the King was so well known and understood that at Northampton St. Thomas appealed to it as within the knowledge of all present; and, later on, John of Salisbury wrote, "Who is there who did not know that the King gave his Chancellor over, free from all administration and obligation, to the government of the Church of Canterbury?"<sup>4</sup>

The objections that St. Thomas had previously made to his appointment had been overruled by the arguments and authority of Henry of Pisa, Cardinal of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, who was the Pope's Legate in France. As soon, therefore, as the proceedings of the election were concluded in London, he set out for Canterbury, to be consecrated in the metropolitan church. He was accompanied by a great number of bishops and nobles; his position as the head of the English hierarchy, as well as Prime Minister of the Crown, naturally attracting multitudes, and rendering them anxious to do him all honour. During the journey he called Herbert of Bosham aside, who now appears for the first time personally in the history, though evidently already on familiar terms with the Archbishop-elect; and told him privately that in a dream that night a venerable person had stood beside him and given him ten talents. Herbert tells us that he attached no meaning to it at the time, but that afterwards he bethought him of the good servant in the Gospel

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 97.



who doubled the talents intrusted to him. The tenour of his meditations by day is betrayed to us by the dreams of the night. How to trade with his ten talents his meditations taught him, and he who was faithful over the few is now the ruler over many.

In the course of the same journey he bade Herbert always come and tell him in confidence what others might say of him, and if he thought him wrong in any thing, at once to point it out to him; "for," he added, "four eyes see more clearly than two." And Herbert thinks that he gave the same commission to others also. The Saint was, indeed, losing no time. The powerful will, which had made him without a rival in worldly matters, was now brought to bear with all its force on the work of his own sanctification. These glimpses of the passage of a noble soul to spiritual heroism are inexpressibly precious.

On Saturday in Whitsun week<sup>5</sup> he was ordained priest in Canterbury Cathedral by his old friend Walter, Bishop of Rochester, "the Vicar of the Church of Canterbury for ordinations and dedications." For the honourable office of consecrating the Primate in the solemn function which had been fixed for the following day, there were several claimants. Roger, the Archbishop of York, anxious we must suppose for his dignity, rather than desirous of showing any affection for the Archbishop-elect, though he was not himself present, sent messengers to put in his claim to

5 Gerv. p. 170.

perform the consecration. The bishops acknowledged that it was an ancient right of the see of York; but it was overruled in this instance, because Roger had made no profession of subjection or due obedience to the Church of Canterbury. A Welsh Bishop also put in a claim, on the ground that he was the oldest Bishop, having been the first consecrated of the living hierarchy. Walter of Rochester claimed the right in virtue of his being the chaplain of the Archbishop. Some spoke for the Bishop of Winchester, who was cantor or precentor in Canterbury Cathedral. The bishopric of London was vacant; but the chapter wrote to petition that the Bishop of Winchester, who was administering sacraments in London during the vacancy of the see, might be selected. This request was acceded to out of respect for the venerable Henry of Blois, Walter giving way under a protest that it should be accounted no precedent against the rights of the Church of Rochester.

Thus, on the octave of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, the 3rd of June, 1162, St. Thomas was consecrated a Bishop in the metropolitan church by Henry of Winchester, in the presence of nearly all his suffragans, as well as a vast multitude of abbots, religious, clerics, and nobles, Prince Henry himself being there. At the eastern end of the Cathedral was a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Trinity. Immediately after his consecration and enthronement in the ancient Patriarchal Chair behind the high altar, St. Thomas said Mass in the chapel of the Blessed Trinity,

behind the Throne—his “first Mass,” Gervase calls it, as indeed it was if we pass over the concelebrations in his priestly ordination and episcopal consecration. This chapel was his favourite resort when he was in Canterbury. Here he said Mass both before his exile and after his return. Here he would come to assist privately at the office of the monks in choir, and he would frequently retire to the same chapel for prayer. On a screen on the right of the high altar, between it and the chapel of the Blessed Trinity, lay St. Odo; on the left, St. Wilfrid; by the south wall of the chapel was the resting-place of Lanfranc, and by the north wall that of Theobald. Beneath the chapel was the crypt, containing on the south side an altar dedicated to St. Augustine, the Apostle of England, and on the north side the altar of St. John the Baptist. Between these two altars in the crypt St. Thomas was buried the day after his martyrdom, and there his body lay until the site of the chapel he had loved best in life was prepared to receive his shrine. The altar-stone was prized on which the Saint had said his first Mass, and of it an altar was made that was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist.

Practically on the day of his consecration St. Thomas said two Masses. This he was free to do, as the decree of Alexander II.,<sup>6</sup> familiar to him as included in the *Decretum* of his old master Gratian, did not forbid the celebration of two Masses if offered through devotion. This was

<sup>6</sup> Can. *Sufficit, De consecratione*, dist. 1.

not forbidden before the decree of Innocent III.,<sup>7</sup> subsequent to the time of St. Thomas. As to the festival of the Blessed Trinity, Alexander II.<sup>8</sup> says that while in some churches it was kept on the octave of Pentecost, and in others on the Sunday before Advent, the Roman Church kept no such special feast, being content with its daily devotions to that great mystery. That the festival was already observed at Canterbury in the Cathedral seems probable, as the monastery had this for a second title, letters being frequently addressed, even by the Popes, to the Convent of the Blessed Trinity<sup>9</sup> as well as to the Church of Christ at Canterbury. The title of a chapel would hardly be celebrated as a feast of the Church, as Fitzstephen<sup>10</sup> describes this, but the festival may well have been kept as a Titular Feast of the Cathedral. Gervase<sup>11</sup> is therefore speaking of the extension of the festival to the whole province of Canterbury, when he says that "Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury, when consecrated, instituted the principal feast of the Holy Trinity to be kept every year for ever on the day of the octave of Pentecost, on which day he himself celebrated his first Mass."<sup>12</sup> The feast

7 Cap. *Consuluisti*, *De celebratione missarum*.

8 Cap. *Quoniam*, *De feriis*, wrongly attributed to Alexander III. Bened. XIV., *De Festis*, cap. xii.

9 For instance, *Materials*, vi. p. 418.

10 Octava Pentecostes, *Ecclesiæ Cantuariensis festa die Sanctæ Trinitatis* (Fitzstephen, p. 36).

11 P. 171.

12 Stephen Birchington, a monk of Canterbury, who lived two centuries after Gervase, and has copied this phrase from him, is sometimes quoted as the authority for the statement.

was extended to the Universal Church by Pope John XXII. in the early part of the fourteenth century.

We return now to St. Thomas and the prelate who consecrated him.

From his high position both as brother of King Stephen and Legate for several years of the Holy See, the Bishop of Winton had gained a very wide experience of public affairs. Few were better fitted to judge of the course the new Archbishop would be obliged to pursue. His speech to the Prince is a very distinct intimation of the view that he had taken; but immediately after the consecration he expressed himself far more plainly.<sup>13</sup> “Dearest brother,” he said, “I give you now the choice of two things; beyond a doubt you must lose the favour of the earthly or of the heavenly King.” Raising his hands and looking up to heaven, as he knelt for the blessing of his consecrator, our Saint replied, with an earnestness that brought tears to the eyes of both, “By God’s help and strength I now make my choice, and never for the love and favour of an earthly king will I forego the grace of the Kingdom of Heaven.” When the news, years afterwards, reached Henry of Blois, that the head he had that day anointed had in that same church received the death-wound of martyrdom, he exclaimed, “Thank God that it was my privilege to consecrate him!”

St. Thomas was still but Archbishop-elect. He

<sup>13</sup> Girald. Cambren. ap. Wharton, *Angl. Sacra*, London 1691, ii. p. 420.

had received in his consecration the plenitude of the sacerdotal power; he had been raised to that order to which by Divine right priests are subject; but jurisdiction flows from the See of Peter only, and that jurisdiction which the canon law gives to Archbishops-elect St. Thomas as yet had, and no more. The symbol of the completeness of metropolitan authority, which is a delegation of power over brother-bishops from him who has power over all, is the pallium, which is blessed by the Pope on the eve of SS. Peter and Paul, and which, from the shrine where it is then placed, is said to be sent "from the body of blessed Peter."

Immediately after St. Thomas had been consecrated, he sent his messengers to Montpellier, where Pope Alexander III. then was. They were six in number, and amongst them was the Treasurer of York,<sup>14</sup> the Abbot of Evesham, one of the monks of Canterbury, and John of Salisbury. They were the bearers of letters from the Bishops, from the Prior and community, and from the King, relating what had been done, and praying for the pallium. It was readily granted by the Pope,<sup>15</sup> and solemnly received by St. Thomas on St. Laurence's day, the 10th of August, 1162, after the usual oath, at the high altar of his Cathedral. He went barefoot to meet those who were bringing this symbol of his dependence on the Apostolic See; a fitting act of devotion for the beginning of his reign as Archbishop of Canterbury.

<sup>14</sup> This was John of Canterbury, our Saint's old companion in the court of Theobald, whose name we shall frequently meet later on as the Bishop of Poitiers, his fast friend.

<sup>15</sup> *Diceto*, p. 534; *Gerv.* p. 172.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ARCHBISHOP IN HIS CHURCH.

1162.

Sanctity of the new Archbishop—change of circumstances—manner of life—hospitality to the poor—study of Holy Scripture—private prayer—Mass—his dress—affiliation to religious orders—the stole—Confirmation.

THE Sacrament of Holy Orders wrought a glorious work in the soul of St. Thomas. Hitherto we have called him Saint by anticipation; now it is his deserved, well-earned title. It does not seem too much to say, with the knowledge of the detail of his life as a prelate which has been preserved for our edification, that even if it had not pleased God to mark His love for him by conferring upon him the crown of martyrdom, he would have been held forth to us by the Church as a confessor, as so many of his predecessors in his see have been; and we should have still venerated, though with one honour wanting, St. Thomas of Canterbury. But, thank God, that honour too was not withheld, and in the brightness of the glory of the martyr the dignity of the confessor has been absorbed; so that while for the one we have the Church's unerring judgment, for the estimate of the other we are left to our convictions.

The change of external circumstances affecting

our Saint was very great. When the multitude of prelates and nobles who had attended the consecration had left Canterbury, he remained in the church to which he was now wedded. Hitherto he had lived at court and in camp the life of a Norman noble of the highest rank, surrounded by all the appliances of the greatest luxury and magnificence, as remarkable for worldly grandeur as for his unblemished life. Now he had suddenly become not only the first of the hierarchy of a great kingdom, but the resident superior of a large religious house. The internal government of the monastery of Christ Church was carried on by the Cathedral Prior; but the Archbishop was the head or abbot of the community.

The outlines of his life were derived from the Rule of St. Benedict, by which the monks were governed; but the manner in which those outlines were filled up was his own, and very characteristic of him. The first duty that was quite new to him was attendance at choir. Matins broke in upon every night's rest; for the recitation of this part of the Divine Office always occupied the dead of the night. When this was over, thirteen poor men were daily taken into a private room, where the Saint washed and kissed their feet, and then waited on them, serving up to them with his own hands a plentiful meal. They were dismissed about daybreak, each with four pieces of money. His object in selecting so early an hour for this act of humility and charity was that it might be strictly private, as well as that he



might not be hindered from performing it by other occupations. The custom was maintained even in his absence, for then one of the convent guest-masters took his place. We shall form some idea of the assistance the poor received from one of the greater monasteries, on learning that when these thirteen poor men left, on whom the Archbishop had attended in person, twelve others were treated by a guestmaster with equal hospitality, differing only from the first in this, that they did not receive the alms in money; and that later on in the morning, at nine o'clock, a plentiful meal was set before one hundred poor persons, who were then called "prebendaries" or pensioners.

At daybreak St. Thomas retired to his room; and after a short time given to sleep, he aroused himself promptly, and while others were resting themselves after the nightly interruption of their repose by the Divine Office, he was intent on the study of the Sacred Scriptures. That this study might be more fruitful as well as safe, he was attended at this hour by Herbert of Bosham, who tells us that his holy master had thus singled him out for this intimate intercourse with him. The Saint's devotion for the Holy Scriptures was so great, that often when out riding, he would draw up, and call Herbert to confer with him on some point of sacred learning. At such times he would say, "Oh that I could lay aside the cares of the world, and in peace and quietness attend to sacred studies! how carefully I would atone for the time I have lost!" In his full loose sleeves he would

carry a few pages, that so he might ever have by him the means of his favourite occupation, when he had a little occasional or accidental leisure. He surrounded himself by persons skilled in all kinds of ecclesiastical learning, from whose conversation he derived much profit. The result of this was seen in the quickness wherewith he prepared himself for that important portion of the duty of a bishop, preaching both to clergy and people.

After the striking exhibition of diffidence and humility shown in this reliance on the assistance of another, the instructor to whom the Saint showed such docility left him; and until nine o'clock no one was permitted to disturb his union with God under any pretext whatever. Of this precious time God and the saints and angels were the sole witnesses. At nine he came out of his room, either to say Mass, or to assist at it. "For he did not say Mass every day; and this was, as he himself said, not through negligence, but reverence."

While St. Thomas received the sacred vestments for Mass from the ministers, his changing countenance, and the tears in his eyes, betrayed how deeply his heart was affected at the solemn act of offering sacrifice, like a good pontiff, for his own sins and those of his people. During the early part of the Mass, which is called the Mass of Catechumens, to preserve himself from distraction while the ministers were singing, he would read some devout book. His favourite on these occasions was a little prayer-book composed, with

much unction and devotion, by his blessed predecessor Anselm of holy memory. He generally said one collect in the Mass, sometimes three, but very seldom more. He was careful that his Mass should be short; and Herbert, in whose words these interesting details are given, assigns, as the reason for his saying it rapidly, one with which he must have been familiar, inasmuch as it is given in the Rubric of the Sarum Missal when exhorting the priest not to dwell too long on his *Memento*, "for fear of distractions and suggestions by evil angels;" adding that thus he verified in the august sacrifice of the Gospel the words spoken of its shadow and type, "Ye shall eat it in haste; for it is the Phase, that is, the passover of the Lord." Those who were often present at his Mass bear witness to the tears and sighs the presence of his Lord drew from him, and to the very great devotion with which he celebrated. "When he was alone," says another of his intimate friends, "he shed tears in wonderful abundance; and when he stood at the altar, he seemed in very presence in the flesh to see the Passion of the Lord. He handled the Divine Sacraments with great reverence, so that his very handling of them strengthened the faith and fervour of those who witnessed it."

All his monks knew that Theobald's successor was sure to prove an able Archbishop; but many of them must have feared lest he should be a worldly one. The heartiness of his adoption of a strictly devout and religious life must have speedily removed all their misgivings; and yet,

singularly enough, there was one point which for a while offended them. But one thing recalled the magnificence of the Chancellor, and that was his dress. It may have been that he retained his gay attire in order to conceal the interior change that was taking place within him, and to secure himself from the observation of the Court. It was at this very Pentecost of his consecration that he first put on his hair-shirt; it was not, therefore, from a worldly feeling that he did not conform himself in dress to his new manner of life. The monks, however, might well be scandalized at the incongruity of his attending choir in his gay secular dress. With the freedom which he ever allowed and encouraged in his friends, in a manner so characteristic of his greatness of mind, one of the religious, who was more intimate with him than the others, reproved him for it, and undertook to relate to him a dream that one of the community had had regarding it. "Go tell *the Chancellor*," a grave and venerable personage had seemed to say to him, by the title he made use of marking his indignation, "to change his dress without delay; and if he refuse to do so, I will oppose him all the days of his life." To the reproof St. Thomas made no reply, but he burst into tears.

By the close of the year in which he was consecrated he had laid aside his valuable and coloured dress, with its foreign and variegated furs, and put on a black cappa, which was closed all round and reached his feet, and which was made of a material of little value, and was adorned with

lambswool instead of fur. This dress he was in the habit of frequently changing, in order that he might give away those that he had worn to clothe the poor. The black cappa he continued to wear all his life, with a surplice of fine linen over it. He is described as wearing it at Northampton, and he was in it when he was martyred. Some writers tell us that between the two habits, the one of penance, known as yet to none but his spiritual director, and the other, even more humbly ecclesiastical than his dignity required, he wore the dress of a monk; and they thus describe him as being at once an example to the cleric, the monk, and the hermit; but this would seem to be an anticipation of the Cistercian cowl which he received at Pontigny, blessed by the Pope, which also he wore at his martyrdom.

The black cappa with lambswool, and the linen surplice, was not the monastic habit of his monks of Christ Church. It was that of the Black Canons Regular, to which Order Merton Abbey belonged. When a boy there at school, he had doubtless worn the same habit as the religious among whom he lived. It was therefore natural that, being surrounded by a chapter of religious, and sitting on a throne which had been rarely occupied save by religious, when he sought to show even by his habit that he had devoted himself to the service of God, not being himself a Benedictine, he should resume that habit which he had worn when young, and with which were associated his recollections of strictness and holiness of life.

This variety of habit worn by the Saint has produced the very singular result that St. Thomas, whom the secular clergy venerate as a secular, is claimed by two religious orders as a regular. In the Martyrology approved by the Holy See for the Canons Regular, St. Thomas is mentioned as a Saint of the Order, to be kept by all its various branches; and it is said that, in order that he might serve God more freely and securely, he professed the Institute of the Canons Regular. The word "professed" can hardly mean more than that he was in some sense associated or affiliated to the Order. The Cistercians, in their Martyrology, give only the historical fact that our Saint, when "driven into exile from his see and from England for the defence of justice and of ecclesiastical immunity, took refuge at Pontigny, a monastery of the Cistercian Order, and there put on a cowl which was blessed by Pope Alexander III., in which cowl he was buried, when, after his return to England, he was slain by the sword by a band of wicked men in his own basilica, and so went to Christ and was adorned with many great miracles."

There is one detail more in the dress of the new Archbishop worthy of our notice, the more so as it is one of those episcopal practices of the middle ages, which survive now in the usages of the Sovereign Pontiff alone.

The Saint was accustomed to wear his stole openly and constantly; and his object was that he might ever be ready to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. He was remarkable for

his devotion to this sacrament, and for his readiness at all times to administer it. Bishops in those days would give Confirmation even on horseback. St. Thomas always alighted for that purpose,<sup>6</sup> but would often administer the sacrament in the open air. At several places, where he was known to have done so, crosses were afterwards set up by the roadside, and became famous for miracles. The custom of constantly wearing his stole he discontinued during his exile; but he resumed it on his return to his province, shortly before his death.

<sup>6</sup> Benedict, p. 164.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ARCHBISHOP IN HIS PALACE.

1162.

Public life—the dining-hall—the Saint's hospitality—his almsgiving—life amongst the religious—ordinations—confirmation of episcopal elections—his conduct as judge—his seal—his hair-shirt.

We have not yet followed our Saint through the whole of a day's occupations in his new home. We now pass from the more private acts of devotion to the public details of his life; we accompany him from the choir and the altar to the refectory and the episcopal chancery.

He may be said almost to have dined in public, so many sat down to table with him. He occupied the middle place at the dais at the end of the hall: on his right were placed his personal companions, whose character is well shown by the title by which they have come down to us, as his *cruditi*; on his left sat the monks and religious. His soldiers and other lay retainers dined at a separate table, lest they might be annoyed by having to listen to the book<sup>1</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> To read in refectory was one of the duties of the cross-bearer. Prince Henry is said to have waited at table, "when he chose." To do so was but to exercise one of the duties of chivalry, and he would share such duties with the sons of noble-



was read aloud during the Archbishop's dinner. He would not permit musical instruments to be played during the meal; a custom then so general, that in almost every dining-hall a gallery was built for the purpose: but he would occasionally interrupt the reading to discuss some question of interest, often a point from Holy Scripture, with his friends.

Though valuable plate of gold and silver was spread upon his table, as it had been under former archbishops, his heart was no longer set on magnificence. His temperance was worthy of note, and his moderation was the more striking from the necessity that the habits of many years imposed upon him that his food should not be coarser than that to which he had been accustomed. One day, a person who was dining with him remarked with a smile on the delicacy of his food; the natural warmth of disposition and energy of the Saint speak in his characteristic answer: "Certes, brother, if I am not mistaken, you take your bean with greater eagerness than I the pheasant before me." Herbert quietly bears witness that the rebuke was deserved. "This person lived with us awhile," he says; "and, though he did not care for delicacies, for he was not used to them, he was truly a glutton of grosser food." Of such things, however, he

men who were in the Archbishop's retinue. Herbert tells us, that while it was usual for the barons and earls to devote their eldest sons to the King's service, their second sons were intrusted to the care of the Archbishop of Canterbury (*Herb. Anecd. Bed.* pp. 110, 112).

eat very sparingly; and while he would taste the wine that was set before him, and the dishes that were brought to table; his principal food was bread, and his usual drink was water in which fennel had been boiled.

As he sat at table, his large clear eye would wander round the room; and if he saw that any one who had a claim to a more honourable position had by accident been seated in a low place, he would atone for it by sending him a share of his own cup and his own dish. He was also watchful that the domestics each performed their duty; and if any one were neglectful, he was certain to receive a reprimand in due time and place. The Saint was sure to notice the absence of any one of his own companions. If a stranger came to visit him, he did not place him amongst them, lest some word might be dropped in their conversation which it was not advisable should be overheard; unless it should happen to be some person remarkable rather for his piety and learning than for dignity, whom St. Thomas would invite by name. Others were honourably entertained at another table, where the Saint would send them frequent marks of his attention. Herbert adds, that it was the custom of his predecessors, which he followed, not to have any one about him as a cleric, much less as a counsellor, who was bound by special obligations to the King, in consequence of the difficulty such a person would feel if any misunderstanding should arise between the King and the Archbishop.

He never sat down without a number of poor

having places assigned to them in the refectory; and his table was the more liberally furnished that a plentiful meal might remain for distribution. He had always been renowned for the exercise of hospitality and for a profuse liberality, and the poor were not the losers by the reduction of splendour in his mode of life. A beggar never left his door empty-handed. Theobald, his pious master, had doubled the alms which his predecessors had been in the habit of distributing; St. Thomas doubled those of Theobald, and he devoted to these pious uses the tenth of all that he received from any source. He would also send to hospitals and poor colleges sometimes four or five marks, sometimes gifts of provisions. He caused his attendants to visit the sick and aged; of these many became his daily pensioners; and, as winter came on, he gave away an abundance of warm clothing.

These details of his bountiful almsgiving have led us away once more from the order of his day; we have brought it, however, nearly to a close. After dinner he retired with his friends into his private room, when a portion of time was devoted to conferences on ecclesiastical subjects. Occasionally, when he found that he required it, he would sleep for a little while in the afternoon.<sup>1</sup>

One of his favourite resorts was the cloister, where he might often be seen like one of the monks, perusing some book. The infirmary also

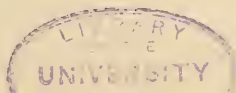
<sup>1</sup> The siesta of an Eastern Archbishop at Canterbury is mentioned by William of Canterbury, p. 437.

was very attractive to him; and he would delight in attending to the wants of the sick religious. He always had a great love for the religious orders, and this he would show by the respect and veneration monks ever received from him. In the Ember week in September after his consecration he held an ordination; and in no one of his duties as Archbishop was he more careful or anxious than in his choice of subjects for Holy Orders. His anxiety on another point soon appeared; for he would speak to his companions on his determination never to confirm the election of an unfit person to a bishopric; and he would regret, frequently and earnestly, the appearance of unfitness in his own case, saying, when his friends would console him by instances of others who under such circumstances had made excellent bishops, that they were miracles of the grace of God. On this point, however, his determination was not tried; the only two persons consecrated by him were well worthy of the episcopal dignity.

With a judicial office he was of course familiar; and that which he had held, in those early days of equity, was not unfit for an ecclesiastic. Now, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he was also a judge; and this, the highest Church court of the realm, was scarcely inferior in importance to the secular judgment-seat of the Chancellor. His qualities fitted him in a high degree for the office of a judge: his resistance to the injustice and insolence of the powerful was almost proverbial; and his impartiality was such, that Fitzstephen,

who was an official in his chancery, tells us that "the letters and prayers of the King himself were of no use to a man unless he had right on his side." With witnesses he was a patient and careful listener, and his questions were shrewd and penetrating. His judgments were promptly given; but of all his good qualities his integrity receives the highest praise, as if it were not in those times too common a virtue. If he was aware that a man had a cause pending in his court, he invariably refused to receive from him any present, even of the value of a farthing, except the offer were of articles of food, which could not well be refused. A similar course was enjoined, both publicly and privately, upon all his officials, except only the advocates who practised there. There is a story told of a certain abbot, who went from one to another who were in a position to help him with the offer of a present, which, to his astonishment, every one refused. Indeed the Archbishop had bound Ernulf, his chancellor, by oath to take no fee, with or without compact, for any portion of his work, down to the very use of the penknife.<sup>2</sup> Happily the good Abbot could rely on the justice of his cause; for he went away, we learn, successful in his suit, with his money in his pocket, and the words of Ecclesiasticus on his lips: "Blessed is the man who has not gone after gold." There was no fee for the sealbearer, nor for signatures,

<sup>2</sup> *Usque ad canifulum*, i.e. canif, knife (A.S. cnif.), an instrument for nipping (Skeat; Peter Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, c. 28; *Materials*, iv. p. 265).



nor for the notary; and there was nothing exacted for sealing-wax, paper, or seal. "For," says Herbert, "whose image and superscription does the seal bear, that it should be bought and sold?" The seal<sup>3</sup> that drew forth this remark, fragile though the substance was on which it was impressed, has come down to us.



It represents the tall, beardless figure of the Archbishop, fully vested, wearing a mitre of

<sup>3</sup> It is here reproduced from Mr. Gough Nichols's translation of Erasmus's *Pilgrimages*, 1849. The seal was also published in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, part i. vol. x. April, 1854.

unusual form, and having in his left hand a short pastoral staff, the crook turned inwards, and corresponding precisely with the description of that pastoral staff, of pear-wood, with the head of black horn, which was preserved for centuries among the relics at Canterbury. The inscription simply announced that it was "the seal of Thomas, by the grace of God Archbishop of Canterbury."

A few words must yet be added to this personal sketch on the subject of his mortifications. His self-denial with regard to food and sleep has already been mentioned, and a hair-shirt has been alluded to; but nothing has yet been said of the unusual severity of this instrument of penance. It was not merely a hair-shirt, but drawers of the same rough material, that he wore; and this mortification was increased in a very singular degree, if there is no exaggeration in the accounts which tell us that at the time of his martyrdom it was found to be infested with vermin. It is not that it was never changed, for two others were amongst his effects when they were ransacked by his murderers; and we are further told that its existence was during his lifetime known only to Robert of Merton, his confessor, and to "Brun son vaslet," whose business it was to wash and prepare it for him.

## CHAPTER IX.

### GILBERT FOLIOT.

1162.

The Archbishop resigns the chancellorship and the archdeaconry—reclaims alienated Church lands—William de Ros—the Earl of Clare—Tunbridge, Saltwood, and Hythe—the King returns to England—meeting of King and Archbishop—Christmas in London—translation of Gilbert Foliot to London—Foliot's antecedents—purpose of his translation.

A REPORT of the great change in St. Thomas's manner of life, misrepresented and distorted by the malice of the courtiers, reached the ears of King Henry in Normandy, and doubtless caused him some uneasiness. This feeling was increased by a message<sup>1</sup> which he soon received from St. Thomas, resigning into his hands the Great Seal and the office of Chancellor. By this the King was much mortified, probably because he regarded it as a proof that the Saint was laying aside whatever might be an obstacle to his freedom of action, in case any dissension should arise between the Crown and the Church. As a mark of his displeasure, he urged upon him the immediate resignation of the archdeaconry of Canterbury, and his delay in complying with the injunction the King never entirely forgave. It is to be presumed that the fear lest such a man

<sup>1</sup> Diceto, p. 534.



as Geoffrey Ridel should be a thorn in his side, was the cause of his retaining that high dignity for awhile.

At the same time there arose a still graver cause of dissension. The Archbishop had received from the King, according to the explicit statement of Fitzstephen,<sup>2</sup> leave to reclaim all estates of the Church of Canterbury which had been alienated by his predecessors or were occupied by laymen. He entered upon this course, in itself no attractive one, moved by a sense of duty; for he had sworn in his consecration oath to defend the property of his Church, which was, as he well knew, inalienable. In those cases where the injustice was notorious, he took possession, without any judicial process or sentence, of the estates which had been usurped. One of them was a fief with the feudal burden of seven soldiers, which had been taken possession of by William de Ros on the death of Archbishop Theobald. The clearness of the right here exercised is shown by the fact that his judgment was never reversed.

Another instance<sup>3</sup> was that of the Earl of Clare, who was related to most of the noble families of England. The Archbishop claimed his homage in virtue of Tunbridge and its honour, a league around which was called the ban-league or lowy. The Earl offered to pay the homage, if he might leave unmentioned the plea on which

<sup>2</sup> Fitzstephen, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Diceto, p. 536, gives the date as 22nd July, 1163, which would be after the Council of Tours.

it was due; which offer the Archbishop refused. A claim was also made, not only to Saltwood and Hythe,<sup>4</sup> but to the custody of Rochester Castle, the deed of grant of William the Conqueror being produced. Some of the parties who were offended by these proceedings crossed over to the King to complain of the Archbishop, but by no means violently; for they felt that Henry was still the friend of St. Thomas, and they regarded him as still too powerful at Court to be offended or injured with impunity.

The meeting between King Henry and the Archbishop proved that the courtiers had been wise in their caution. A few days before Christmas in the year 1162, that of the consecration, the King returned from his continental dominions, and landed at Southampton. He was met by his son Prince Henry and by St. Thomas. The manner in which the Archbishop was received spoke of all the former affection which had subsisted between them. The Prince and St. Thomas entered together into the room where the King was; on which Henry embraced the Saint with his ancient cordiality, seeming almost to neglect his son in his joy at seeing his old friend. It must be remembered that if the new and edifying life the Saint had adopted caused the King to entertain misgivings, as no doubt it did, it also caused a very general feeling of satisfaction at his elevation, which reflected credit on the King's choice; and thus his vanity was flattered.

<sup>4</sup> Gerv. p. 174.

After a short interview on the first day, the Archbishop left the King, who was wearied with his voyage; but on the day following they began the journey to London, riding together the whole way engrossed in private conversation. St. Thomas spent Christmas in London, as he had not time to return to his own see for the festival; and he celebrated Mass in St. Paul's Cathedral, there being at that time no Bishop of London.

One of the earliest ecclesiastical acts performed after the King's return was the translation of Gilbert Foliot to the vacant see. To the postulation (as it is technically termed) of the Chapter of London, of which Ralph de Diceto, the chronicler, was then Archdeacon, the Pope assented, dating his letter from Paris, the 19th of March;<sup>5</sup> and as the Apostolic mandate was warmly seconded by a letter from the King, and most affectionately and urgently by another from St. Thomas, Gilbert was enthroned in St. Paul's Cathedral on the 28th of April, 1163, a few days only before he left England in the train of his Metropolitan for the Council the Pope had summoned to assemble at Tours on the 19th of May.

Gilbert, however, plays far too important a part in our history for us to miss the opportunity, given us by his promotion to the highest ecclesiastical position he was destined to attain, of saying a few words drawn from his own writings respecting his previous life. It will then be seen that it was quite natural for St. Thomas to congratulate himself, as he does, on the nearness of

<sup>5</sup> Diceto, p. 534.

the new Bishop of London to Canterbury, and that he was quite justified in hoping to find in him a powerful assistant in the Church's cause.

Gilbert Foliot is commonly called a Cistercian monk, whereas he was truly of the Order of Clugny. His first religious promotion was to be Prior of the famous house in which he had made his profession. He was then made Prior of Abbeville. He attended the Abbot of Clugny to the great Second Council of Lateran in 1139, under Pope Innocent II., where Archbishop Theobald was also present. In the same year he was made Abbot of the great Benedictine Abbey of St. Peter at Gloucester. He was now in a position of considerable influence, and his correspondence shows that he was quite conscious of it. Amongst his letters while Abbot of Gloucester, we have one to Pope Celestine II. in behalf of Nigel, Bishop of Ely; another to Pope Lucius II. for Jocelin, Bishop-elect of Sarum; a third to Pope Eugenius III. in behalf of Roger de Pont l'Evêque, though a cleric in the court of Archbishop Theobald; to whom also, in a fourth, he writes for the Bishop of Lincoln; a fifth requests that the Pope would command the Bishop of Salisbury to bless the Abbot of Cernely; in a sixth, he commends the Abbey of Malmesbury to Pope Eugenius; in another, he boasts to the Bishop of Llandaff of the effect of his intercession; and again, he writes to the Pope for the Bishop-elect of Arras. On another occasion, he speaks of the many and important affairs wherewith he had been intrusted by the Pope. In similar terms he writes to the

Empress Matilda and to Archbishop Theobald. In all this, too, his principles were most strictly those of a churchman. The instances in which he asks for the exercise of the spiritual sword are almost too numerous to quote: he maintains inviolate all Papal privileges; he warmly praises the Holy See; and sentences like the following, which is taken from a letter to the Empress Matilda, are of frequent occurrence in his correspondence: "Let not your serenity be disturbed, if we obey the Apostolic mandate, to depart from which we judge to be as a sacrilege. In all things, therefore, in which we can and ought, we are prepared to obey your commands. But if in anything Church authority is offended, we have a full excuse, when that is exacted from us which we ought not to do." His abilities were of a high order, as his correspondence shows; and his talents and leading position were aided by a great reputation for personal austerity and sanctity of life.

It was but natural that such a man should be advanced to the episcopacy. He was consecrated<sup>6</sup> Bishop of Hereford, on the 5th of September, 1148, at St. Omer, by Theobald, during the time when the Archbishop was exiled by King Stephen for having assisted at the Council of Rheims in spite of the King's command to the contrary. We have his letter of thanks to Pope Eugenius for his consecration. He had previously been made by the Pope vicar or administrator of the church of Hereford; and he had given an

<sup>6</sup> Gerv. p. 135.

early example of vigour, by placing it under an interdict on account of the contumacy of the Earl of Hereford. His correspondence in this, his new dignity, is of the same character with that which has gone before. He thus writes to the Pope: "We know, dearest Father in Christ, we know that not to obey the Apostolic commands is to apostatize, and that it is truly like a sacrilege to oppose your will. Far be it from one of the faithful, far be it from a Catholic, far be it especially from a son, who is bound in many ways, and subject to you by the benefits which he has received from your munificence." He writes with great boldness in favour of the freedom and privileges of the Church, and in one instance he threatens to excommunicate an official for summoning the Dean of Hereford before his tribunal. In two cases we find him exercising powers as Papal delegate; and, later, he was made vicar of the diocese of Worcester. One of his last acts as Bishop of Hereford was to petition the Holy See to authorize the translation of the body of St. Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey.

Fitzstephen says that the King's object in asking the Pope to place Gilbert at London was, that he might have his advice against the Archbishop. This does not, however, appear to be a probable motive, and must have been suggested to the historian by the part subsequently taken by Gilbert. If the King foresaw that he would be on his side in the coming struggle, he must have been singularly clear-sighted. At least the

Bishop's antecedents were not such as to lead him to expect it; and, in his letter to him, he mentions only the excellent advice which he had heretofore frequently received from him, "for the dignity of his own person, the state of his kingdom and public business." It is also mentioned in Pope Alexander's letter that the King wished to make him his confessor. St. Thomas urges upon him his new dignity with warmth and affection. "To this we earnestly beg our brother's attention, that the contemplation of our love may be a more affectionate invitation than the necessity of obedience; that thus he who is united to us by sincere love may by neighbourhood be conveniently at hand for our wants and those of the Church of God." And in another letter, apparently after some remonstrance on Gilbert's part, St. Thomas writes to him still more flatteringly, telling him that he had been chosen because of his experience and conduct as Bishop of Hereford, and that he looked for the greatest assistance for the Church of Canterbury from him. He also expresses his regret that he cannot remain in London to receive him with due honour.

His reputation for austerity of life rose with him from dignity to dignity; so that the Pope himself, in the September following this translation, in a letter written from Bourges, after urging upon him to give the King good counsel, begs of him to mitigate his austerities for the sake of his health, which was so valuable to the Church. "We have heard and learnt from many

trustworthy persons that you weaken and afflict your flesh above what is fitting and expedient, neither eating meat nor drinking wine for your health's sake. It is to be feared that if you take from your frame what is necessary for it, you will succumb under so great weakness; and from your loss, from which God defend us, the Church of God would suffer a great injury, while from your life and conversation she has gained no slight advantage." The new Bishop of London gave an early proof that St. Thomas had not been mistaken in his estimate of his zeal, by writing a very warm letter to Pope Alexander, praying him to preserve the ancient primacy of Canterbury over York, and especially not to suffer the archiepiscopal cross of the latter see to be borne in the province of Canterbury.



## CHAPTER X.

### A LULL BEFORE THE STORM.

1163.

The Saint and the King at Canterbury and Windsor—St. Thomas resigns the guardianship of the Prince—he attends the Council of Tours—canonization of St. Anselm—consecration of Reading Abbey—translation of St. Edward the Confessor—consecration of the Bishops of Worcester and Hereford.

CANTERBURY was now the home of St. Thomas, and since he had resigned the Great Seal, he was no longer obliged to be in attendance on the Court. Whatever uneasy feeling may have remained on the mind of the King in consequence of that resignation, to all external appearance their friendship was still unbroken, and another token of it was given by a visit which Henry paid to St. Thomas at Canterbury previous to his departure from England for the Council of Tours. The King assisted at the Palm Sunday procession; and the historian of Canterbury records<sup>1</sup> that there occurred a storm so violent, that the canopies which were erected, as usual, through the streets to shelter the procession were blown down. The Saint probably returned to London with the King; for he attested the letter,<sup>2</sup> dated

<sup>1</sup> Gerv. p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 24. The copyist of the MS. in the Bodleian, misled, no doubt, by the initial, has substituted the name of Theobald for that of Thomas. Henry was not at Windsor between the death of Richard de Beaumes and that of Theobald.

from Windsor, in which Henry urged Gilbert Foliot to consent to the translation which the Pope had authorized. This must have been early in April, and Easter Sunday in that year—1163—was the 24th of March.

As we are told that the Archbishop took this opportunity to restore the young Prince, now a little more than eight years old, to the King his father, it would seem as if up to this time he had continued to be responsible for him as his tutor and guardian. After spending some days in familiar intercourse with them both, St. Thomas went to Romney on the coast of Kent, which was one of his own villages, to wait for a fair wind. He was detained for a few days, and then crossed over with a splendid retinue to Gravelines on the Flemish coast. Herbert of Bosham was one of his attendants, and records with what enthusiasm he was everywhere received. On landing he was met by Philip Earl of Flanders; and on the next day the nobles of the country came to do him honour and to vie with one another in offering their services. With similar honours he passed through Normandy and the continental dominions of the King of England, being everywhere received as if he were the King himself. He arrived at Tours three days before the opening of the council. As he approached, the whole city went out to meet him, and not the citizens only, but also the dignified ecclesiastics who were assembled from all parts of Christendom. The very Cardinals themselves broke through the Roman etiquette and went out some distance, leaving but

two of their number with the Holy Father. St. Thomas went straight to the palace of the Pope; but the crowd of those who followed him was so great, that his Holiness was obliged to leave the room in which he was for one of the great halls for the reception. He was received with the greatest kindness by the Holy Father; and the interview is the more interesting, as Pope Alexander III. had never before seen him, whom it was his privilege afterwards to canonize. This audience was but short, as the Saint was suffering from the fatigue of his journey. He went with his retinue to the King's castle, which was near the Pope's palace, and had been prepared for his reception.

On the following day the Archbishop was visited by great numbers, both of ecclesiastics of all ranks and countries and also of nobles, but more particularly by all who held office under the King of England, knowing the favour with which he was regarded by that monarch. The Council was attended by 17 Cardinals, 124 Bishops, and 414 Abbots. The English hierarchy was represented more numerous than usual, but three<sup>3</sup> being unable to attend, the Bishops of Winchester, Bath, and Lincoln. The Archbishop of Canterbury with his suffragans sat on the Pope's right hand; and on his left was Roger de Pont l'Evêque, Archbishop of York, with the Bishop of Durham his only suffragan, Carlisle being then vacant. The synod was held in the church of St. Maurice, on the 19th of May, being the octave of Pentecost,

and consequently the anniversary of St. Thomas's consecration. The sermon was preached by a prelate who played an important part in the future events of this history, Arnulph Bishop of Lisieux. The most important act of the council was the solemn excommunication of Octavian the Antipope and his adherents. Several of the privileges of the church of Canterbury were renewed at the prayer of St. Thomas.

It is highly significant of the tone of mind of our Saint at this time, and a proof of his quick-sighted anticipations of the struggle that was in store for him, that he should have felt so great a devotion for his holy predecessor St. Anselm. We have already heard of his attachment to the writings of this saintly doctor; but his interest in his memory was no doubt strengthened by the circumstances of his life and conflict with William Rufus, with which St. Thomas had the keenest sympathy. To promote his canonization, therefore, he determined to petition the Pope in the Council of Tours; and with this view he caused John of Salisbury to write the *Life of St. Anselm*, which is still extant among his works. After his return to England, he received from the Pope apostolic letters,<sup>4</sup> dated Tours, June 9th, in which

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 35. Pope Alexander VI., on the 4th October, 1494, following the example of Pope Innocent (probably VIII.), instituted another commission to report to the Holy See at the request of King Henry VII. (*Spelman, Conc. Orb. Brit.* ii. p. 721). By whom St. Anselm was ultimately canonized is not known. Clement XI., by a decree S.R.C., 8th February, 1720, "at the prayer of King James III.," raised the feast of St. Anselm from a semi-double to double rite for the Universal Church, assigning to him the Mass of a Doctor of the Church.

he says that he had received so many petitions for canonizations (among which was the cause of St. Bernard), that he had deemed it prudent to delay. He now, however, conferred upon St. Thomas special powers to convoke the Bishops and Abbots of the province, and having examined with them the life and miracles of St. Anselm, to proceed by their advice in the canonization as especially delegated by the Holy See. The subsequent troubles prevented any such proceeding.

Not very long after his return from the Council of Tours, the Archbishop consecrated with much pomp and solemnity the well-known abbey of Reading.<sup>5</sup> This noble foundation, which was due

<sup>5</sup> A letter recorded by William of Canterbury (*Materials*, i. p. 415) deserves insertion here for the sake of the glimpse it gives of old Marlow bridge. "Brother Anselm of Reading to his beloved lord in Christ, Jeremy, monk of the Holy Trinity at Canterbury, greeting. I am bound by the number of miracles that have taken place to let you know how illustrious the martyr Thomas has become amongst us. Take a story in brief of which I am an eye-witness. By order of my lord William Abbot of Reading I went to Wycombe, having his orders to return to Reading the same day. Having done the business for which I had been sent, I was on my way home, and was crossing the Thames at Marlow by the bridge. I was on foot and my horse was before me, when about half way across the bridge the horse's hind quarters fell through a hole in the bridge, up to his flanks, his hind legs hanging beneath the bridge. The bystanders ran up and tried with poles to lift the horse, but the few who could get at him could not lift him, and the frailness and shape of the bridge would not let more come to my aid. Those who had in vain tried to help me went away, leaving me with the advice that I should enlarge the hole and let the horse fall into the river. But the day was waning, I had my lord's orders, night was at hand, and the way long. So being left alone with God and finding no one to help, in the bitterness of my soul I turned with many sighs to the blessed martyr Thomas, whose relics I bore round my neck, and began to invoke him. A won-

to the munificence of King Henry I., who was there buried, held a place scarcely second to any amongst the glorious religious houses of England; and certainly among the events of its history none are more interesting than its consecration by St. Thomas of Canterbury. It was founded to receive the famous relic of the hand of St. James the Greater, which was brought from Germany by the Empress Matilda, together with the imperial regalia. The precious treasure has survived the destruction of the abbey built to receive it, and is now preserved at Danesfield, near Great Marlow, happily in Catholic hands.<sup>6</sup>

Later in the same year, 1163, our Saint's natural love of magnificence was again instrumental in throwing lustre on the great functions of the Church. Of this we have a more detailed and minute account than of the former. Pope Alexander had not long before canonized an English saint. On the 7th of February, 1161, apostolic letters<sup>7</sup> from Anagni placed St. Edward in the list of holy confessors, whose title he had earned, as it were, as his surname. On the receipt of these letters, Laurence, Abbot of Westminster, caused the appropriate Mass to be sung in honour of the newly canonized saint, as had

derful thing then happened. In a way that I cannot describe, without human help, at my invocation of the holy martyr, the Lord put my horse on his feet and directed my steps, and put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our Lord, Who is above all things blessed for ever."

<sup>6</sup> See *The Month* for February, 1882.

<sup>7</sup> Surius, *De prob. SS. vitis*, Jan. 5; Colon. Agrip. 1618, vol. i. p. 78.

already been done by a Cardinal in the presence of the Pope. He would at once have proceeded to translate the holy relics, if the King, who was then abroad, had not expressed his wish that this ceremony might be delayed until he could himself be present.

On the day being fixed, in the October after the King's return to England, the Abbot made the necessary preparations. He considered it needful that the tomb should be previously opened. Several times he essayed to do this, and each time his heart failed him through reverence for those most august relics of a temple of the Holy Ghost. At length, one morning after Matins, the Abbot, the Prior, and several of the monks who had been specially chosen, remained in the choir when the other religious retired. Having prepared themselves by fasting, they now added prayers, and litanies, and psalms. The Abbot and Prior, taking two of the monks with them, and leaving the rest in prayer before the high altar, went barefoot and vested in albs to the tomb of St. Edward; and when it was opened, they saw the sacred body clad in a robe of cloth of gold, with purple shoes, and wearing a coronet of wrought gold upon his head. A long white beard, slightly curling, rendered his appearance very venerable. When they had recovered from the awe which first struck them, the other monks who had been left before the altar were called; and they found that the body, which had been buried there very little less than a century, had been preserved by God from all corruption. The

vestments were stained by the stone which they had touched so long, and the dust had fallen in, but this was easily wiped away. They lifted him from where he lay, and wrapped him in a precious silk; and then they laid him in a new wooden chest or shrine as they had found him, save that the Abbot Laurence took the ring from his finger as a precious relic.

The 13th of October was the day chosen for the translation; and this day ultimately became the festival of St. Edward, when, at the instance of Cardinal Howard,<sup>8</sup> the feast was extended by the Ven. Pope Innocent XI. to the Universal Church; for the 5th of January, the day on which St. Edward died, was the vigil of the Epiphany.

Besides the Archbishop of Canterbury, there were present eleven of the suffragans, as well as three Bishops from Normandy. The nobility were headed by eight English earls. When the great personages present had satisfied their devotion by gazing upon the holy treasure, it was carried in solemn procession through the cloisters on the shoulders of the King and nobles, before it was placed by the hands of St. Thomas in the shrine in Westminster Abbey, which still preserves it for us. The Archbishop left amongst the treasures of the church, as an offering to St. Edward, an image of the Blessed Virgin wrought in ivory.

<sup>8</sup> The decree S.R.C. of 29th May, 1679, ordered the feast of St. Edward to be kept by the Universal Church on the 9th October; but it was followed by another decree S.R.C. on 6th April, 1680, assigning the 13th for the festival.



There is but one more event to record in which St. Thomas and King Henry harmoniously co-operated. We have seen how, even in the days of his chancellorship, St. Thomas had used all his influence with the King to restrain him from the crying sin and tyranny of the Norman monarchs, the usurpation of vacant bishoprics. It is not to be supposed that now he was Archbishop, he should feel less warmly on the subject. He therefore urged upon Henry the duty of permitting the vacant sees to be filled by canonically chosen pastors. He was successful; and he had the gratification of consecrating two worthy prelates on the only occasions when he was called upon to perform this important part of his duties as Metropolitan: Roger, the son of the Earl of Gloucester, was made Bishop of Worcester; and Robert de Melun, an Englishman, who had earned his surname by the success with which he had conducted his schools on the Continent, and who had had John of Salisbury and other famous men amongst his disciples, was made Bishop of Hereford in the place of Gilbert Foliot. They were consecrated in Christ Church, Canterbury, after due profession of canonical obedience, Roger<sup>9</sup> on the 26th of August, and Robert de Melun<sup>10</sup> on the 22nd of December. Before the latter date, however, important events had occurred, which influenced in the highest degree the whole future life of our Saint.

<sup>9</sup> Diceto, p. 536. The Tewkesbury Annals say August 23. Gervase, however (p. 182), says that Roger's consecration was after Easter in the following year.

<sup>10</sup> Gerv. p. 176.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FIRST WRONGS.

1163.

Resignation of the chancellorship—resumption of Church lands—sermon before the King—excommunication of William of Eynesford—Clarembald, Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's—the Council of Woodstock and the sheriffs' tax—crimes of Churchmen, Philip of Brois and four others—their punishment.

THE storm did not break altogether without warning. The conduct of the courtiers had resembled the vane, which before a gale shows the variableness of the wind. The large isolated drops, too, had fallen; for no little offence had been taken at some of the actions of the Primate. And yet in these cases St. Thomas was clearly in the right. Surely he is not to be blamed for having “afforded the only instance which has occurred of the chancellorship being voluntarily resigned, either by layman or ecclesiastic.”<sup>1</sup> If love of power had been his passion, by retaining the chancellorship, and uniting with it the highest ecclesiastical position in England, he might have held, without a single act of meanness, or the practice of one of the low arts by which men so often rise, the very highest place possible of

<sup>1</sup> Campbell's *Chancellors*, i. p. 97.

attainment by an English subject. But God had other work in store for him; the freedom of the Church was in danger, and he was the champion raised up in its defence. His eyes, so clear-sighted naturally, were enlightened by Divine grace; and as he saw his work before him, he set himself manfully, aye and like a Saint as he was, to perform it.

Another act, or rather chain of actions, besides the resignation of the Great Seal, had irritated the Court. St. Thomas had recalled all grants of Church lands made by his predecessors; and had taken steps to vindicate to the Church all the property that had been still more unjustly, because arbitrarily, taken from her. The ground of this proceeding was, that previous Archbishops had exceeded their powers in granting Church lands, so that their alienation was invalid; for they were the stewards only, and not the lords or owners, of the Church's patrimony, which, having been given to God, could be alienated only by the Pope as the Vicar of Christ. It would be but special pleading to defend St. Thomas in this matter, by saying that he had received the royal license to recall these grants, for he knew that the King, with all the weight of the civil power, could not sanction or validate such alienations of Church property; but still it is right to record that the King was aware of St. Thomas's intentions, and permitted them, and that consequently to make them a ground of quarrel or complaint would be most unjustifiable. Thus far, however, the courtiers alone

have to be accused. The King seems not to have allowed anything that had yet happened to create more than a passing irritation against his former favourite; though he probably felt a strong suspicion that matters would not rest here.

Such an anticipation was well founded. All had not been done that was required to vindicate for the Church what was her own; nor was it likely that a Prelate, who had begun his career as nobly as St. Thomas had done, would rest contented as if his work were finished, when it was, in truth, but scarcely begun. His next acts brought him into direct collision with the King, but in no rash or injudicious manner; for he gave way up to the very confines of duty, and much beyond what we should have expected of him. It seems to have been preceded by another warning. It is related that he preached a very eloquent sermon before the King, the subject of which was the distinction between the spiritual power and the temporal, and the immeasurable superiority and higher order of the one over the other. This was a truth which courtier-bishops had not too often preached, and one, moreover, not likely to be acceptable to a King of the despotic Norman race. Its proclamation by an Archbishop of Canterbury must have recalled to many minds the preaching of St. Anselm; and to some it must have brought a presentiment of the recurrence of that famous contest in which the weak had overcome the strong, in accordance with the promise made to the Roman Church,

“Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; and on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.”

It was a privilege of the Archbishop of Canterbury to present to all benefices in country places belonging to his barons or monks. In the exercise of this power, he conferred the church of Eynesford upon a cleric named Laurence. William of Eynesford, the lord of the manor, expelled Laurence's people; for which St. Thomas excommunicated him. The King immediately wrote to the Archbishop, bidding him absolve him. The answer might have been anticipated, that it was not for a King to decide who should be absolved, any more than who should be excommunicated. The King was so angry at the answer, that he would not see the Archbishop, nor communicate with him, except by messengers; and, for the sake of peace, St. Thomas absolved the offender. The King, who was then at Windsor, said, when he heard of it, “Now he no longer has my favour.”

Another question, in which Henry seems to have taken part against the Archbishop, arose somewhat earlier. Clarembald had been elected Abbot of St. Augustine's at Canterbury; but on his application to be blessed to that dignity by the Primate in the usual manner, he stipulated that it should take place in his own abbey church, and not in the cathedral; and that it should be without any profession of subjection or canonical obedience. St. Thomas refused to perform the ceremony, and Clarembald appealed to Rome.

The King seems to have been inclined to favour the Abbot-elect.<sup>2</sup>

A more important matter, and one which an impetuous monarch would feel far more deeply, occurred soon after. In it St. Thomas appears as the opponent of despotic tyranny, and in a singularly favourable light to modern eyes. A species of tax had sprung up through custom, which, in its origin, seems to have been little else than a kind of black mail, a composition with tyrannical officials. It consisted of two shillings on every hide of land, which was paid to the sheriffs, on the condition that they should defend the contributors from the exactions of their subordinates.<sup>3</sup> At a council held at the royal palace of Woodstock, the King demanded that this tax should for the future be paid into the treasury, by which means a very large revenue would be obtained. None dared to speak but the Archbishop, who firmly but quietly told the King that the tax in question was but a voluntary offering, which his sheriffs should receive as long as they did their duty; but that if they did not

<sup>2</sup> Diceto, p. 534. Thorne, a monk of St. Augustine's, says in his Chronicle of that house (p. 1815) that Clarembald was intruded by the King.

<sup>3</sup> Canon Robertson says that the words of Roger of Pontigny mean that the sheriffs were to defend the nobles against, not "the subordinates of the sheriffs," but "their, the earls' and barons', vassals." No other writer so understands the words, nor is it easy to see what need there was to protect nobles from their own vassals. The contribution was for freedom *a gravaminibus et calumniis*, "from exactions and vexatious trials in the sheriffs' court." *Ne que nul n'en deussent empleidier ne greuer*, is Garnier's expression for the same.

do so, it should not be paid; and by no law could its collection be enforced. The King, in one of his sudden and characteristic fits of anger, exclaimed, "By God's Eyes it shall be enrolled." St. Thomas answered, "By the reverence of those Eyes by which thou hast sworn, my lord the King, not a penny shall be paid from my lands, nor from the rights of the Church." On the constancy of the Archbishop it appeared to depend whether the country and posterity should be illegally burdened or no. "This is the first case," says Dr. Stubbs,<sup>4</sup> "of any opposition to the King's will in the matter of taxation which is recorded in our national history; and it would seem to have been, formally at least, successful." The success was however in all probability only temporary. In 1170 the King held in London what is called the "Inquest of Sheriffs," in which, by an extraordinary act of authority, he removed all the sheriffs of the kingdom from their offices, and substituted for them officers of the Exchequer. Dr. Stubbs says that this tax "can hardly have been anything else than the Danegeld," and it certainly is very remarkable that from this very year 1163 the Danegeld ceases to appear as a distinct item of account in the Pipe Rolls; but it is surely impossible to identify the two taxes. The one was enrolled until this year, the other the King wanted then to enrol, and was prevented from so doing by the courageous opposition of St. Thomas. Of this tax paid to the sheriffs we know of nothing beyond the information we re-

<sup>4</sup> *Constitutional History*, vol. i. p. 463.

ceive from our Saint's biographers; but whatever it was, we may be sure that the collision on the subject would not help to close the growing breach between the Archbishop and the King.

The personal hostility which King Henry was now beginning to entertain against St. Thomas, soon found vent in an attack upon the liberties of the clergy. This was a part of the King's policy of self-aggrandisement, in which he had been restrained by the Saint whilst he exercised an influence over him.

The most important of the cases of ecclesiastical trials for crimes, of which Henry made use in his attack on that provision of the common law of Christendom that enacted the immunity of the clergy from secular jurisdiction, was the case of Philip of Brois, of which we have the accounts of five writers. He was a canon of Bedford, who had been accused of the murder of a soldier; and having been canonically tried in the diocesan court of Lincoln, had been acquitted. Simon Fitzpeter, one of the King's itinerant justices at Dunstable, attempted to bring him to account before his own court; on which Philip, losing his temper, insulted the justice. Simon forthwith went to London, and laid the case before Henry, who fell into one of his usual fits of rage, and swore his favourite oath, that he would hold every insult to his officer as offered to himself. The King ordered the trial to be held; but St. Thomas, who was present, resisting the summons of a cleric before a lay court, offered to try him at Canterbury; and



the King, most reluctantly consenting, deputed several bishops and barons as the Archbishop's assessors. Philip pleaded that he had already been tried and acquitted of the graver offence; but he acknowledged the insults to the justice. The court held the first plea good; and for the minor offence inflicted the very severe sentence of forfeiture of the revenues of his stall for two years to the treasury, and that he should make satisfaction in the ordinary humiliating manner to the insulted magistrate. The King complained of the sentence; and when the Bishops had declared that they had punished Philip above his deserts for the sake of peace and the King's honour, he exclaimed, with his usual temper, "By God's Eyes, *Par les Oilz Deu*," as his Norman oath ran, "you shall swear that you have not spared him because he was a cleric." They were ready to take the oath required; but the King proceeded further by summoning the Council of Westminster.

Unhappily this was not the only case in which the scandalous conduct of some members of the clergy gave the King a pretext for his attack upon the Church. Fitzstephen mentions two more. One was a cleric of Worcestershire, who was accused of having violated a young lady, and murdered her father. St. Thomas caused his Bishop to keep him in custody, lest he should fall into the hands of the King's justices. The sentence upon this prisoner is not recorded; we are not even told whether he was ultimately found guilty. The punishment inflicted upon the

other cleric is very terrible. He had stolen a silver chalice from one of the Archbishop's churches in London, St. Mary *in foro* (*i.e.* in Cheap; otherwise called St. Mary *in arcubus*, or Bow Church). The King wanted him to be tried by the secular power; but St. Thomas degraded him, and, to please the King, he was also branded.

This sad catalogue is concluded by one other case. A priest of the diocese of Salisbury was accused of murder; and on his trial before his diocesan, on the accusers failing to prove their case against him, he was put to the ordeal, and being unsuccessful, he was sentenced by the Bishop, on St. Thomas's recommendation, to be degraded, deprived of his benefices, and confined for life in a monastery of strict penance. Herbert, who tells this, also alludes to the sentence of banishment having followed degradation in the case of some other clerical delinquent.

Degradation involves the total loss of every ecclesiastical privilege and immunity, and the degraded cleric becomes as amenable to secular tribunals as any layman. This sentence seems to have been freely inflicted for grave offences, if we may judge by the cases before us. In examining them, to judge how far they justify the assertion frequently made of the corrupt state of the clergy of the time, it must in fairness be remarked, that they are taken from all parts of England, and that they are drawn from an exceedingly numerous body of men; for the clergy of England at that time was a far greater body than the secular and regular clergy of any country

in Europe now. In all we have five cases recorded. In the first we have a priest accused of murder, and insult to a judge; he is acquitted of the first charge, and severely punished for the second. In the second case we have an accusation of rape and murder; but the issue of the trial has not reached us. Sacrilegious theft, in the third case, was punished by degradation and branding. The accusation of murder in the fourth is unsustained by evidence; and the man, who in our time would be acquitted, was subjected to an ordeal, which resulted in a sentence of degradation, deprivation, and imprisonment for life. In the last case we hear only of a sentence of degradation and banishment.

We cannot accuse of laxity a body by some few members of which vice is committed, but only that in which it passes unpunished; and certainly if the cases we have given prove the existence of vice, they prove also the severity of the punishment that followed, even in an excessive degree of rigour. It was not, therefore, because ecclesiastical immunity had become a shelter for criminals that the King was induced to attempt its overthrow; his hatred of it arose because it placed a limit to his despotic power.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE COUNCIL OF WESTMINSTER.

1163.

Proceedings at Westminster—Archdeacons' exactions—punishment of criminal clerks—the royal customs—the clause *saving his order*—castleries resigned—the King leaves London—advice of the Bishop of Lisieux—three Bishops join the King—meeting near Northampton between the King and the Archbishop—the King's embassies to the Pope—expostulations with St. Thomas—he promises to yield—he writes to the Pope about Roger of York and also about the King—the Holy Father encourages him.

HENRY summoned the Bishops to a Council at Westminster, at which Herbert of Bosham says he was present. The King arrived in London<sup>1</sup> on the 1st of October, 1163, and the original object of the Council was to declare the right of the Archbishop of Canterbury to be Primate of all England, notwithstanding the opposition of Roger of York. This subject was, however, from the very beginning thrown into the background. The King was bent on something very different from the support of the Archbishop's honours or rights. The proceedings opened by the King's complaint of the exactions of the Archdeacons, who, he said, made money by people's

<sup>1</sup> "Summa Causæ inter Regem et Thomam" (*Materials*, iv. p. 201).

sins; and he demanded that no Archdeacon should try any one, however guilty, without the knowledge of his royal official. He then changed the subject. "My thoughts," said he, "are thoughts of peace, which is nevertheless much disturbed in my kingdom by the wickedness of the clerics, who commit many robberies and murders. Therefore, my Lord of Canterbury, I demand your consent and that of your brethren, that clerics who are taken in crimes be straight-way degraded, and given over to my officers to receive corporal punishment, without any defence from the Church. And I also demand that one of my officials be present at the degradation, to prevent the culprit's escape."

St. Thomas, who was unable to obtain the delay of a day for deliberation, took counsel with his brethren in the episcopacy; and it at once appeared that, in the great contest which was now beginning, none would have the courage to stand by him. They were "not columns but reeds," as the writer we are quoting remarks. They proposed to yield to the King; justifying the double punishment, first in the spiritual court, and then in the secular, on the ground of the higher dignity of the clergy. The Archbishop replied, that it was unjust to condemn a man twice for the same fault, and that the ecclesiastical sentence was in itself adequate. He added, that the liberty of the Church was in danger, for which a Bishop should be prepared to give his life. To this the Bishops answered, "Let the liberty of the Church perish,

lest we perish ourselves. Much must be yielded to the malice of the times." This was an allusion to the German Antipope. The reply aroused St. Thomas's zeal. "Who hath bewitched you, O foolish Bishops? Much must be yielded to the malice of the time, I grant; but are we to add sin to sin? It is when the Church is in trouble, and not merely in times of peace, that a Bishop must dare to do his duty. It was not more meritorious for Bishops of old to give their blood for the Church, than it is now to die in defence of her liberty. I declare, God be my witness, that it is not safe for us to leave that form which we have received from our holy fathers. Nor can we expose any one to death, for we are not allowed to take any part in a trial of life and death."

The King soon heard what had passed. Finding that, through St. Thomas's firmness, he could not gain his point, he suddenly advanced a new demand. He required a promise that they would in all things observe his royal customs. After consultation, St. Thomas answered that he and his brethren would do so, *saving their order*. The King, enraged at the condition, put the same question to the other Bishops; and received the same answer from all, except Hilary of Chichester, who, frightened at the King's anger, promised to observe them *in good faith*. This change, which was made on his own authority, gained him nothing; for the King insulted him, and, turning to the Archbishop and Bishops, he declared that they were in a conspiracy against him, and

renewed his demand for an absolute and unconditional promise. St. Thomas pleaded that in his oath of fealty he had sworn to give him "earthly honour, *saving his order*," and that in the term "earthly honour" the royal customs were included; that the condition "saving his order" was universal throughout Christendom, and that he would not depart from it. It was now late at night; and the King left the room without saluting the Bishops, who, after an anxious day, returned to their lodgings. On their departure, Hilary, the Bishop of Chichester, received a severe rebuke from St. Thomas, for having dared to change the phrase they had agreed upon without consulting him or the other Bishops.

Early in the morning the King sent to demand of St. Thomas the restoration of the castles and honours of which he had had charge from the time of his chancellorship, and the Saint at once resigned them. The King left London at a very early hour, without the knowledge of the Bishops, several of whom were thoroughly overpowered with fear of the consequences of his anger.

Arnulph, Bishop of Lisieux, a very clever but a time-serving prelate, had come over into England to obtain a reconciliation with the King, who had borne him some ill-will. Anxious to ingratiate himself and to show his zeal, he proffered his advice in this conjuncture how St. Thomas could best be overcome. His idea was that the Saint's firmness rested on the support of the other Bishops; and he recommended the King to

attempt to win them over first. This task was not very difficult, for some of the most frightened had followed Henry to Gloucester when he left London. The first to join the King's party were, Hilary of Chichester, Roger of York, and Gilbert of London. Hilary was doubtless moved by the pusillanimity of which he had already given proof; the Archbishop of York probably by the unfortunate rivalry which had long existed between the two metropolitan sees, fostered by the personal animosity Roger had ever borne against St. Thomas; but what moved Gilbert of London? Perhaps it was some feeling of disappointed ambition; perhaps it was a fear for his possessions and his power; but whatever caused it, Gilbert's first false step was taken, and henceforward the Bishop became the champion of the world against the Church.

Roger of Pontigny, who had admirable opportunities of hearing of all these occurrences from the mouth of St. Thomas and his companions not long after they happened, gives an account of a curious interview between the King and the Archbishop, which took place subsequent to the Council of Westminster. The King summoned the Saint to meet him at Northampton, intending to see whether he could not by his own influence induce him to give up the obnoxious condition. As the Archbishop was nearing Northampton, the King sent him out word (it was not known with what particular motive) that he was to wait for the King at the spot where he was; for, as both were attended by a numerous suite, Nor-



thampton could not hold them. The Archbishop turned aside into a field, and before long Henry joined him. The prelate took care to be the first to make his salutation. Their horses began to kick and neigh, which prevented their meeting till they had changed them; and then they withdrew apart. The King thus began: "Have not I raised you from a mean station to the height of honour? It seemed but little to me to make you the father of the kingdom, and even to prefer you to myself. How comes it that you have so suddenly forgotten all the proofs of my affection for you, that you are now not only ungrateful, but my opponent in everything?"

"Far be it from me, my lord," was the Saint's reply. "I am not ungrateful for the favours which I received, not from yourself alone, but from God through you; wherefore far be it from me to be ungrateful enough to resist your will, as long as it agrees with the will of God. Your worthiness knows how faithful I have been to you, from whom I look but for an earthly reward; how much more, then, must I do faithful service to Almighty God, from whom I have received what is temporal, and hope for what is eternal! You are my lord, but He is your Lord and mine; and it would be good for neither of us that I should leave His will for yours; for in the awful judgment we shall both be judged as the servants of one Lord, and one will not be able to answer for the other. We must obey our temporal lords, but not against God; for St. Peter says, we must obey God rather than man."

Then said the King: "I do not want you to preach me a sermon just at present. Are you not the son of one of my serfs?" St. Thomas answered, "In truth I am not sprung of royal race; no more was blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, on whom the Lord deigned to confer the keys of Heaven, and the headship of the Universal Church." "It is true," said the King, "but he died for his Lord." The Saint replied, "I too will die for my Lord, when the time comes." Henry retorted, "You trust too much to the ladder you have mounted by." "I trust," he answered, "in the Lord; for cursed is he that putteth his trust in man. I am ready for your honour and good pleasure, saving my order; as of old, so also now. But on the matters relating to your honour and the good of your soul you should have consulted me, whom you have always found faithful and useful in your counsels, and not those who have raised this flame against me, though I have never injured them. You will not deny, I think, that I was faithful to you before I was in Sacred Orders; much more, then, ought you to expect to find me faithful when raised to the priesthood." The King continued to urge that the saving clause should be omitted; and the Saint refusing, they parted.

The active service of Arnulph of Lisieux was by no means confined to the shrewd advice which had already had such serious consequences in the isolation of St. Thomas. Diceto says<sup>2</sup> that, in

<sup>2</sup> Diceto, p. 536.

company with Richard of Ilchester, Archdeacon of Poitiers, he crossed the Channel six times in three months, in different embassies to the Holy See, all of which had for their object to put the demand regarding the royal customs in a favourable light before the Pope and Cardinals.

Meanwhile Hilary of Chichester, at the Archbishop's house at Teynham, and afterwards John Count of Vendôme and Robert de Melun, Bishop-elect of Hereford, at Harrow, had expostulated in vain with St. Thomas. Their advice had more weight when it was backed by the authority of letters, of which Philip, the Cistercian Abbot of l'Aumône,<sup>3</sup> was the bearer. He asserted that he came from Pope Alexander, bringing the recommendation that the Archbishop should yield for the sake of peace. Roger of Pontigny gives as the contents of the Apostolic letters, that they urged great moderation and submission to the King; that the Church was in trouble in the troubles of its head, and that prudence must avert a similar trouble from befalling England. Thus, the Abbot observed, the responsibility now rested with the

3 "Eleemosyna," or l'Aumosne, sometimes called, according to *Gallia Christiana*, "le petit Citeaux," was situated "in silva Leonia," now called le Forêt de Marché Noir, in the diocese of Blois. It was founded about 1121, by Theobald, Count of Champagne. The Abbey of l'Aumône was the mother of many abbeys, and amongst others, of Waverley and Tintern. Philip, when Bishop of Tarentum, had fallen into schism under the Antipope Anacletus; and on being therefore suspended, he became a religious of Clairvaux, in 1139. St. Bernard made him Prior of Clairvaux; and in 1156 he became Abbot of l'Aumône. In 1171 he is mentioned in a charter of Henry, Archbishop of Rheims, as having resigned his abbacy and returned to Clairvaux.

Pope. He also brought letters from the Cardinals, who said that the King had assured them that he sought for submission for the sake of his dignity in the eyes of the kingdom, and not with a view to draw any consequences from it to the detriment of the Church. The Saint, who was then at Harrow, was persuaded by these assurances; and going to Woodstock,<sup>4</sup> where the King was, he promised to omit the phrase that had given so much offence.

The King was somewhat satisfied by this absolute promise, and he behaved a little more graciously towards our Saint; but still not as he used to do. He said that he wished, as the opposition had been public, that the obligation to observe the customs in this form should be accepted in an equally public assembly before the Bishops and peers; and with this view, he summoned the Council of Clarendon, from which the customs or constitutions in dispute ultimately took their name.

During the time occupied by the affairs related in this chapter, that is to say during the closing months of 1163, St. Thomas had been in communication with the Pope on these matters of urgent importance and difficulty. We have first a letter<sup>5</sup> from him to the Holy Father relating to the encroachment of Roger of York, who had ventured to have his cross borne before him in the Province of Canterbury; thus, as St. Thomas says, "opposing cross to cross, signifying that

<sup>4</sup> So Roger of Pontigny; Herbert says Oxford.

<sup>5</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 44.

Christ is divided." He says that he had admonished Roger fraternally, and had shown him the Pope's prohibition, in vain; and the Archbishop of York had appealed to the Pope, naming St. Luke's day, October 18, for the hearing of the appeal. St. Thomas sent Odo, the Subprior of Christ Church, Canterbury, to represent him in this matter. Gilbert Foliot, as has been already said, wrote a warm letter<sup>6</sup> to the Pope in behalf of his Metropolitan, saying that "all antiquity attested that to Canterbury alone had it been granted to bear the cross," and praying that the Pope would provide by his Apostolic authority that "he of York might not bear it any longer in another's province." By the exclusive privilege of Canterbury, Gilbert must mean that its Archbishop could bear his cross in the Northern Province, and this would doubtless go with a primacy of jurisdiction, such as we have already seen<sup>7</sup> claimed by Canterbury over York. But the Pope had granted to Roger, in the preceding year, 1162, by letters<sup>8</sup> dated from Montpellier, July 13, the right of having the cross borne before him "as former Popes had granted to his predecessors, and as they had enjoyed it by ancient custom," as well as the further privilege of crowning Kings, granted on a similar representation of past usage and concessions. The prohibition St. Thomas speaks of, if it be that which has come down to us,<sup>9</sup> was not a final decision on

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 46.    <sup>7</sup> *Supra*, p. 20.    <sup>8</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 68. It bears an impossible date in the Cottonian MS. "Lateran, December 29." From Sens in October would seem more probable.

the matter, but Roger was not to bear his cross in the Province of Canterbury, under plea of appeal or any other pretext; for "if he did not refrain for a time, he and his successors would have to refrain from so doing for ever."

Even before the Council of Westminster, St. Thomas wrote to the Pope,<sup>10</sup> not mentioning the King by name, but saying that the injuries inflicted on the Church succeeded one another like wave on wave. "That is stolen from Jesus Christ which He bought with His blood; the secular power has put forth its hand upon the portion of our Lord; so that neither the teaching of the Father's, nor the enactments of the canons, the very name of which is hated here, are any protection to the clergy, who by special privilege have been exempt from this jurisdiction hitherto." Master Henry, his envoy, will inform his Holiness more fully, and St. Thomas begs the Pope to keep the whole matter secret, as all that he says, or even whispers, in conclave, is carried to the King.

This letter the Pope answered from Sens, on the 26th of October,<sup>11</sup> saying that the full explanation of the Saint's troubles had moved him to the greatest sympathy "with his dearest brother" in his affliction. St. Thomas is to rejoice, as the Apostles did when they left the Council, and to keep his soul in patience, bearing his afflictions as penance for his past sins. The Pope bids him appeal to the Holy See without fear, and commands him to return to Canterbury and to move

<sup>10</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53.

about as little as possible ; and he warns him not to be induced by any fear or misfortune to resign his see. Pope Alexander evidently had the strongest dread of the harm that would befall the Church in England if St. Thomas were to be sent into exile by the King, and when Master Henry proposed that he should be summoned to maintain his cause in person, the Pope answered : " God forbid ; let us die sooner than see him so come forth and leave his Church desolate."<sup>12</sup> What the Pope so dreaded, was rapidly becoming a necessity, as we shall see if we accompany our Saint to Clarendon and Northampton.

<sup>12</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 61.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE COUNCIL OF CLARENDON.

1164.

St. Thomas regrets his promise to yield—expostulations of Bishops, Earls and Templars—the Saint yields and promises to observe the royal customs—the Bishops make the same promise—the Constitutions of Clarendon written—the Saint's objections to some of them—seals asked for and refused—the cross-bearer's reproach—the Saint's repentance—Herbert consoles him—the Saint abstains from Mass and asks absolution of the Pope.

ON the 29th of January,<sup>1</sup> 1164, the Council of Clarendon assembled. Meanwhile doubts had entered the mind of St. Thomas as to the trustworthiness of the assertions of the Abbot of l'Aumône, that the King would not use the promise against the Church if it were unconditionally made; and he determined not to renew it in public. For prudence sake he tried to keep this determination private; but it reached the King's ears, whose rage returned with redoubled violence. It now showed itself in demonstrations worse than verbal threats: armed men thronged the council-chamber, and fear filled every heart

<sup>1</sup> Gervase (p. 176) gives the date as St. Hilary, January 14th; Diceto (p. 536) says it was January 25th. The "recognitio" names the fourth day before the Purification. Wilkins, *Lcg. Angl. Sax.* p. 322; *Materials*, v. p. 79.



save his whom they were meant to intimidate. Amongst the Bishops were two who had particular reason to fear the King's anger, Jocelin of Salisbury and Roger of Worcester;<sup>2</sup> the latter, who was a young Bishop and a relative of the King's, is described as having incurred the royal displeasure by the freedom with which he had corrected Henry's excesses. These two prelates came to St. Thomas, and with tears in their eyes implored him to have mercy on them; for their lives depended on his reconciliation with the King. The Saint encouraged them as best he could, but refused to comply.

They were succeeded by two noblemen, Robert Earl of Leicester, and the King's uncle, Reginald Earl of Cornwall, who assured him that the King was prepared to proceed to extremities, and besought him to save their royal master and themselves from the disgrace of such a course. The Saint answered: "It would not be a new nor an unheard-of thing if we did die for the Church, since a countless host of Saints have so taught us by word and example: God's will be done." The threats of the nobles shared the fate of the entreaties of the Bishops.

He was next visited by two Knights of the Temple of great reputation and influence: Richard of Hastings, the Provincial Master of the English Templars, and Hostes of Boulogne. They repre-

<sup>2</sup> Roger of Pontigny (p. 34) has erroneously written "Norwich." William Turbo was Bishop of Norwich from 1151 to 1176. Roger de Melhent, Bishop of Worcester, was grandson to King Henry I., and therefore first cousin to Henry II.

sented to him once more that which had had such weight with him in the mouth of the Abbot of l'Aumône. They assured him that what Henry felt was the disgrace of being worsted in the contest; and they solemnly pledged themselves that the King would not attempt to injure the Church, and that nothing more should be heard of the constitutions.

Moved by their earnest solicitations and protestations, after consulting the other Bishops, and accompanied by them, he went to the King and said,<sup>3</sup> "My lord the King, if the controversy between us had been of my personal rights, then I never would have opposed your will; but your excellency must not be astonished if I am more scrupulous in the cause of God. With a lively hope in your prudence and moderation, I assent to what is required of me, and *in good faith* promise to observe the customs;" and he added the clause "*in the word of truth*," which was accounted equivalent to an oath.<sup>4</sup>

The words were scarcely out of St. Thomas's mouth when the King said with a loud voice: "You have all heard what the Archbishop has promised me on his own part; it now only remains that at his bidding the other Bishops should do the same." "I will," replied the Saint, "that they should satisfy your honour as I have

3 For the speech attributed to St. Thomas by Gilbert Foliot, see Note C.

4 Grim, p. 379; Rog. Pont. p. 35; Herb. p. 279. "On the word of a priest" (Alan, p. 323; Gerv. p. 178): Fitzstephen (p. 48) adds, but evidently inaccurately, "et sigillorum suorum impressione."

done." On this the other Bishops rose and gave their consent, save only (singularly enough, after the effort he had made to obtain the Saint's submission) Jocelin of Salisbury, who, when the Bishops had resumed their seats, asked the Archbishop whether he ought to promise as they had done, and on receiving the reply that he ought, he did so. The King shook his head at Jocelin and rebuked him, telling him that he was always in opposition to him. In spite of the assurance of the Templars, St. Thomas was in doubt how the matter would end; and the King's conduct showed that he had judged rightly.

Henry now said, "I suppose that every one has heard the promise that the Archbishop and Bishops have made, that the laws and customs of my kingdom may be better kept and observed. In order that for the future there may be no more contention on the subject, let my grandfather Henry's laws be committed to writing." Our Saint observed, that he was one of the youngest present, and could not be supposed to know what they were; besides that, as it was getting late, and the matter was of great importance, it would be better to adjourn until the following day. This was assented to.

On the next day, the constitutions were compiled by Richard de Luci and Jocelin de Bailleul,<sup>5</sup> which have given so sad a notoriety to the Council of Clarendon. They were read aloud; and St. Thomas, after consulting Herbert and his other divines, made the following objections

<sup>5</sup> See *Materials*, v. p. 388.

to them. The first provides that all causes of Church advowsons and presentations, whether between laymen or clerics, be tried in the King's Court. The Saint's objection to this was twofold: first, that by it clerics would be drawn before a civil tribunal; and secondly, that the subject matter was purely spiritual and ecclesiastical.

The third constitution declares, that clerics, when summoned by the King's justice, shall appear in his Court on any accusation; and when found guilty, that the Church should not protect them. St. Thomas's remark was: "By this' wicked canon, clerics are brought before a secular judgment-seat both in criminal and civil matters. Christ is judged anew before Pilate."

The next constitution was, that no Archbishop, Bishop, or other person, should leave the kingdom without the King's license. St. Thomas objected that this would put a stop to pilgrimages to the holy places, and render the kingdom but a spacious prison. Besides, supposing the Pope to summon a Council, and the King of England to be in opposition to him, and to forbid prelates attending, as they must obey God rather than men, must they not obey Christ's Vicar in spite of the prohibition? "It was but proper, he added, "to apply for the King's licence before their departure; but to bind yourself by an oath not to leave the country without licence was irreligious and wrong."

The seventh constitution says, that no one who holds in chief of the crown, nor any of the

royal household, can be excommunicated, nor their lands placed under an interdict, without the King's leave. By this decree the Saint declared that the Church was simply degraded, and the power was taken from her, which she received from God, of binding and loosing even Kings themselves.

The eighth constitution ran thus: Appeals, if any arise, are to be taken from the Archdeacon to the Bishop, and thence to the Archbishop. And if the Archbishop do not show justice, in the last instance they are to be brought to the King, by whose order the suit is to be ended in the Archbishop's Court, and the cause can proceed no further without the King's leave. The Saint replied, without hesitation, that an Archbishop who should consent to this would be guilty of perjury, for when he received the pallium he took an express oath not to hinder appeals to the Pope; adding that it would be a sad day when the refuge of the oppressed was taken from them, and they were not able to have free recourse to the Mother of all Churches, the Church of Rome.

The twelfth constitution began as follows: When archbishoprics, bishoprics, abbeys, or priories, in the King's dominions fall vacant, they must be left in his hands, that he may receive all their revenues. The Saint made answer, that the treasury was not the place for the property of the poor; and that although this practice had certainly sometimes prevailed, yet that the Church must always expostulate and resist as

far as lay in her power, but never give her consent.

The same constitution continued: When the time is come to consult for an appointment to a church, the King shall summon the principal persons of that church, and in the chapel-royal the election shall be held. The Saint was far too attached to liberty not to expostulate against a form of election so novel and so uncanonical, saying, that to sanction such a diversity from the rest of Christendom in his island church would be to start a schism, as well as to overpower by the weight of the King's authority all liberty of election.

The King then demanded that the Archbishop and Bishops should affix their seals to the constitutions; which was not only to exact the promise to observe the royal customs, which they had already given, but it was requiring them to acknowledge *this interpretation* of what those customs truly were. The Archbishop's answer<sup>6</sup> was prompt: "By the Lord Almighty, during my lifetime seal of mine shall never touch them." On this the King's officials prepared three copies on the same sheet; and tearing it in the usual way, they gave one copy to St. Thomas, one to the Archbishop of York, and the third they kept for the royal archives. St. Thomas took his copy: from it these extracts were taken; and it

<sup>6</sup> Rog. Pont. p. 37; Grim, p. 383; Garnier, fol. \*21, l. 9. Herb. (p. 288) says, that when his seal was demanded, the Archbishop, though much moved and distressed, yet dissembled, fearing to vex the King. He therefore did not positively refuse but begged for delay.

was subsequently placed, as we shall see, in the hands of the Pope.<sup>7</sup>

The Bishop of Poitiers, very shortly after these events, wrote to St. Thomas in terms that show that the conclusion to which we have arrived was that also of his contemporaries, that our Saint, though he had unhappily promised to keep the royal customs, neither signed nor sealed the constitutions of Clarendon. "I give God endless thanks," he writes,<sup>8</sup> "that, as I know for certain from the excellent testimony of others, and now from your own, you never did absolutely promise to observe, as their author boasts, nor did you sign as others did, those detestable and profane customs which have made their appearance in our days."

He turned his back upon the Court at the close of another eventful day, and went in the direction of Winchester. Contrary to his usual habit, he rode alone, apart from his suite, in deep meditation. As they rode on, his attendants began to talk in a low voice amongst themselves on the events of the day. Some said that what the Saint had done was necessary on account of the grave character of the time; others were indignant that the liberties of the Church should be at one man's beck. That promise to keep the royal customs seemed to carry all possible evil consequences with it, and the refusal to seal the

7 Amongst the names of those present at the Council are Richier de l'Egle, the Saint's friend in his boyhood, and Hugh de Moreville, one of his murderers.

<sup>8</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 112.

constitutions of Clarendon was forgotten in regret for the harm done by the promise.<sup>9</sup> The gravity of the fault of having made this promise was always admitted and asserted by St. Thomas and his friends. So John of Salisbury wrote in 1167, "The promise made at Clarendon, to which he was urged by the Bishops, I cannot justify, for it ought not to have been made, but confession atoned for the offence.

Alexander Llewellen,<sup>10</sup> who carried the archiepiscopal cross, spoke up louder, to the alarm of the rest. "Public power disturbs everything. Iniquity rages against Christ. No one is safe who loves the truth. In the world's judgment they only are wise and venerated who blindly follow the King. This tempest has overthrown the columns of the Church; and during the shepherd's folly, the sheep are scattered before the wolf. Now that the chief has fallen, where will innocence be? who will stand? who will triumph in the battle?" And then, after a pause, "What virtue has he retained, who has betrayed his conscience and his fame?"

"To whom does this apply, my son?" said the Archbishop.

<sup>9</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 235, cf. p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert's character of Alexander Llewellen is very quaint: "Alexander, called in his own language Cuelin, by surname and nation, 'the Welshman.' A well-educated man, pleasant in talking, and in pleasant speech profuse. Yet all his merit lay not in his mouth, for his hand was as ready as his tongue. With our father and for our father, bidden and unbidden, absent and present, frequently in great perils, he laboured with caution, resolution, and constancy; and, what is very valuable in his nation, his fidelity was equal to his work."



“It applies to you, who have to-day betrayed your conscience and your fame; and in an example left to posterity, which is hateful to God and contrary to justice, you have stretched out your consecrated hands to observe impious customs, and you have joined with wicked ministers of Satan to the overthrow of the liberty of the Church.”

The Saint groaned, and, acknowledging his sin, expressed his horror of it, and declared himself unfit for the altar. “By my sins I have brought the Church of England into slavery, which my predecessors ruled with such prudence in dangers as great as these: and this has rightly come in my time, who was not taken, as they were, from the Church, but from the Court; not from the cloister, nor from any place of religion, nor from the school of the Saviour, but from Cæsar’s service: a proud vain man, a feeder of birds, I have been made the shepherd of the sheep: of old the favourer of actors and the follower of hounds, now the pastor of so many souls. Truly my past life was far from advancing the safety of the Church; and now these are my works. I plainly see that I am deserted of God, and fit only to be cast out of the holy see which I fill.” And here he began to weep and sob, so as to be unable to speak.

Herbert consoled him as best he could, by showing how God often makes even falls conducive to sanctity. He reminded him of St. Peter, who rose by falling. “One thing only remains: if, as you say, you have fallen basely, rise the

more bravely; be cautious, strong, and valiant. And know for a certainty that the Lord will be with you, as he was with David, the King and Prophet, who had been an adulterer and a betrayer; as He was with the Prince of the Apostles, who had apostatized; as He was with the holy and apostolic woman, who had been a sinner; and lastly, as He was with the great Doctor of the Gentiles, who was first above all men a persecutor of the Church. You, too, were a Saul: now, if you desire to be a Paul, the scales have fallen from your eyes, and your Jesus will Himself show you what great things you must bear for His Name."

The Saint was thus somewhat consoled, looking more, as Herbert modestly says, to the love and fidelity of the speaker than to the value of the words. Herbert, looking back, saw Hilary Bishop of Chichester following them. St. Thomas, remembering that he had been the first to give up the clause "saving his order," said to Herbert, "Let him follow, and so let Satan get behind us."

The holy prelate took the earliest opportunity of sending to the Pope at Sens for absolution for his fault. Meanwhile, for about forty days, he abstained from offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar. It may have been even longer, for the Pope's letter<sup>11</sup> is dated April 1, 1164. The Holy Father reminded him of the difference between sins of deliberation and malice and those of ignorance or frailty. "If, then, you have com-

<sup>11</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 88.

mitted anything of which you have now remorse of conscience, we counsel you to confess it, whatever it be, in penance to a discreet and prudent priest: and after this, the merciful Lord, Who looks more to the heart than to the actions, will, with His usual pity, forgive you. And we, trusting in the merits of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, absolve you from that which you have committed, counselling and bidding you that on this account you no more abstain from Mass."

If St. Thomas's own tender conscience had not judged him so hardly, we should certainly have formed a gentler judgment of his fall. For the Constitutions of Clarendon he was in no way responsible, though he evidently accounted himself so when the promise which he had made to observe the customs came to bear this interpretation. Still he had hitherto had nothing to lead him to anticipate so violent an exposition of the royal customs as the sixteen constitutions presented. The King's demands had been comparatively moderate. St. Thomas had resisted the infliction of a civil sentence upon an offending cleric in addition to ecclesiastical degradation, and this he might fairly expect to be included under the royal customs; but what could lead him to anticipate the iniquities of Clarendon? Of assent to them, at least, he is perfectly guiltless.

But he doubtless committed an act of grave imprudence, endangering he knew not how far the liberty of the Church; and for this he did noble expiation. Twice he was persuaded, against

his own better judgment, that the King wanted nothing but a submission in public to leave the victory with him, and that he had no ulterior designs upon the Church. St. Thomas knew King Henry better; and here the imprudence lay. The King had never assured him so: it had been but asserted for him by others who had a point to gain. Nor could St. Thomas throw the blame of his concession on the Holy See. If we may judge by the letters which have come down to us, Pope Alexander, while ever urging on St. Thomas extreme moderation and submission to the King, invariably qualifies it with the important condition, "saving the honour of the ecclesiastical order." It is not probable that the letters of which the Abbot of l'Aumône was the bearer, which were written when the danger was less striking, would be of a different tenour.

A Circular letter from the Pope<sup>12</sup> to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans, written about this time, gives them the clearest directions for their conduct. "You know that you have received the episcopal charge for this purpose, that you may govern the Churches committed to you for the honour of God and the profit and salvation of your subjects, provided that the liberty of those churches be in no ways diminished but be preserved by your zeal and pains. Hence by these apostolic letters we command your fraternity and enjoin in virtue of holy obedience that if the illustrious King of the English exact from you at any time that which shall be

<sup>12</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 84.

against ecclesiastical liberty, you in no way attempt so to do, nor bind yourselves to him in anything, especially against the Roman Church, nor presume to bring in any new form of promise or oath, other than that which bishops have been accustomed to make to their kings. And if you should have already bound yourselves to the King in anything of the kind, know that you must by no means observe what you have promised, but must recall it, and strive to reconcile yourselves to God and the Church for so sinful a promise." It has been supposed that this letter reached the English Bishops before the Council of Clarendon. But in any case the letter shows us that the Abbot of l'Aumône could not possibly have shown to St. Thomas letters from the Pope justifying any concession to the injury of the Church and the Holy See. A general promise to observe the royal customs must necessarily have meant *some* compromise of those ecclesiastical rights, of which the Archbishop was the official guardian, and that compromise was unlawful.

Such would be the judgment of a Catholic on the fall of St. Thomas. The spirit which has generally moved modern historians would, if it were consistent, find still less to blame. Some writers find fault with the Saint for yielding when he did, others for not yielding sooner. On their own principles they are equally inconsistent. The first, in order to place the conduct of the Saint in a really blameworthy light, are obliged to rely upon singularly insufficient evidence, or to distort the facts of history. Thus some, trusting to the

mendacious pamphlet afterwards written by Gilbert Foliot, accuse him of a wilful and deliberate perjury; while others assert that he signed, though he afterwards refused to seal, the Constitutions of Clarendon.

A Protestant is more consistent, who blames St. Thomas for refusing his immediate and absolute consent. In his eyes, to make an exception in favour of his order is to falter in his allegiance; and he fondly persuades himself that the Constitutions of Clarendon, identical in spirit, and almost in the letter with the modern statute-law of England, were in reality the ancient customs<sup>13</sup> of the realm: as if it were possible in those days for anything to be the unwritten common law of the land which was contrary to the coronation oath of the Sovereign, or to become law in spite of the protests of the Church, who was herself a component part of the constitution of the country. The King had no claim to exact more than the oath of fealty gave him. Now, besides the assertion of St. Thomas, which we have given above, we have a singular proof from the Constitutions of Clarendon themselves what the terms of the oath were; that is, what the profession of obedience and submission was which the King had a right to exact from a prelate according to the law of the land. The twelfth constitution, after speaking of vacant sees and of elections in the manner we have already quoted, says: "And

<sup>13</sup> "These customs had never been written before, nor had they even existed in the realm of England" (Fitzstephen, p. 47). This is beyond dispute with respect to some of them.

there the elect, before he is consecrated, shall do homage and fealty to our Lord the King, as to his liege lord, of life and limb, and his earthly honour, *saving his order.*" Even by those who do not see as Catholics see, St. Thomas should be regarded as the opponent of a tyrannical effort of one estate to triumph over another, and under a specious pretence really to introduce a change in the constitution of the country.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### NEGOTIATIONS.

1164.

The King asks that the Archbishop of York may be legate—the Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's—Gilbert Foliot's profession—King Louis of France—St. Thomas asks the Pope to confirm the Constitutions of Clarendon.

✓ THE first effort of the King to crush our Saint, after the Council of Clarendon, was to send the Bishop of Lisieux and the Archdeacon of Poitiers to the Pope, to try to gain from him that the Archbishop of York might be legate in England instead of St. Thomas. The Pope replied, that York had ever been subject to Canterbury; “and shall be,” he added, “as long as I live.” The King hardly listened to their answer,<sup>1</sup> but immediately despatched Geoffrey Ridel, Archdeacon of Canterbury, and John of Oxford to the Pope, to renew the same request. On the refusal of his Holiness, they represented to him, on their knees, the precariousness of the life of St. Thomas, if the King were to be irritated by another repulse; and to save the life of the Saint, which he believed to be in danger, the Pope gave them the letters, dated Sens, Febru-

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 85.



ary 27, 1164, transferring the office of legate<sup>2</sup> to the Archbishop of York; but the messengers were hampered by a promise which they made in the King's name, and which they offered to confirm by an oath, that they would not deliver them without the knowledge and permission of the Pope, or, as another version of the Pope's letter<sup>3</sup> has it, without the consent of St. Thomas. Even with these terms, which rendered the concession absolutely nugatory, the messengers would fain return rather than empty-handed. After showing the letters about for a short time, as if to lead people to believe that he had received power over the Saint, the King, who had never made much of them, returned them to the Pope. The Holy Father, who had much regretted that he had granted the letters at all, received them with such satisfaction as to cause no little astonishment. They reached him on the same day with the news of the death of Octavian, the Antipope,<sup>4</sup> which event gave some hope of peace to the Church. The letters and messages which the King's ambassadors brought were, according to the account of apparently two different witnesses,<sup>5</sup> who were residing at the Court, of the humblest tenour; though the report

<sup>2</sup> Roger of Pontigny (p. 38), Hoveden (Ann. p. 282 b), and apparently some of the other writers, express themselves as if the King himself had been made legate. The letters are, however, very clear.

<sup>3</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Octavian died at Lucca on the Wednesday after Low Sunday, April 20, 1164.

<sup>5</sup> *Materials*, v. pp. 89, 94.

reached the Bishop of Poitiers that they were indignant and abusive. These messengers pretending that it was necessary for them to return immediately, the Cardinals of Naples, Porto, and Pavia, who took a part adverse to St. Thomas, petitioned the Pope with much energy, though quite unsuccessfully, for ampler and more absolute letters, conferring the office of legate upon the Archbishop of York.

In the matter of the cross of the Archbishop of York, a very curious thing happened. The Pope's letters from Montpellier, had conferred on him the privilege, "as his predecessors had enjoyed it;" but in some later copy, or other letters obtained from the Pope by Roger, the words *per totam Angliam*<sup>6</sup> were by an oversight inserted. These were recalled by letters from Sens, dated January 21st.

On another point the decision of the Holy See was more adverse to St. Thomas. We have seen that Clarembald, the Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's, had refused to receive the blessing of the Saint, unless it were in his own church, and without any profession of obedience. To gain this and some other points, which we have yet to mention, St. Thomas sent to the Pope at different times several of his most faithful followers, who afterwards bore exile and hardships with him, as the Bishop of Poitiers, Master Henry, Gunter of Winton, whom Herbert calls

<sup>6</sup> "Ex oblivione potius quam ex industria contigit . . . non enim tenorem priorum literarum memoriter tenebamus" (*Materials*, v. p. 69).

“a simple, faithful little man,” Hervey of London, who died on such an embassy, and several others. Many of the Saint’s letters to his friends, and their accounts in return to him, are extant, and from one of them we learn how anxious he was upon this and some other points. If the chronological arrangement of these letters were not so open to doubt, it would be far easier to write the history of these events. As it is, it would seem as if the letter of the Pope to Clarembald, dated Montpellier, July 10th, must have been the first answer, and that an entirely favourable one, to the Saint’s petition; but that afterwards the Abbot-elect had shown to the Pope the privileges granted by the Holy See to the Abbey of St. Augustine, and that in consequence of them an imperative order was issued to St. Thomas to perform the benediction, with the addition, that if he delayed, the Pope would send for Clarembald, and perform it with his own hands. The moderation of the King’s messengers, mentioned above, probably promoted this measure. Eventually Clarembald was deprived by Alexander III.<sup>7</sup> He never received his abbatial benediction, and was ejected by Archbishop Richard, St. Thomas’s successor.<sup>8</sup>

There was yet another question which St. Thomas carried for solution to the Pope. It

<sup>7</sup> The Bishops of Exeter and Worcester, and the Abbot of Faversham, who were sent as a commission from the Holy See to examine into the truth of charges of a personal character made against him, report him to have been a fearfully wicked man (Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 268).

Gerv. p. 77.

had been raised at the Council of Tours; but now that he felt that Gilbert Foliot was taking an undutiful part against him, he much wished to exact from him a fresh profession of canonical obedience, which in those days was a matter of considerable moment, being a personal obligation similar in its nature to feudal homage amongst laymen. Gilbert, on his consecration to Hereford, had made his profession to Theobald as his Archbishop; and St. Thomas wished him now to repeat it to him, the plea being his translation to London. The argument which the Bishop of Poitiers used to the Pope was, that if the translation had been to another province, it would absolve from the former profession, and render a second necessary. This was, however, overruled as bad canon law, by which the first profession held until the person making it became subject to another jurisdiction; and consequently a second profession could not be required from Gilbert, unless it were the local custom of that Church to make a personal profession to the Archbishop himself, and not to him and to his successors in his office.<sup>9</sup>

John of Salisbury, who had been banished<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzstephen (p. 46) says, that the King sent not only John of Salisbury, but also John the Treasurer of York, into exile, that St. Thomas might not have their help against him. The latter is as incorrect as his statement that the Bishops sealed the Constitutions of Clarendon; for John the Treasurer of York, who figures so well in his story of the Burgess of Scarborough (p. 44), was made Bishop of Poitiers while the King was friendly with St. Thomas, and he was consecrated by the Pope himself in the Council of Tours (*Diceto, Imag.* p. 536). This good prelate was a friend worthy of St. Thomas.

or the sake of St. Thomas by the King, probably soon after the Council of Clarendon,<sup>11</sup> wrote to the Saint as soon as he reached Paris, telling him that, to his astonishment, he found the affairs of the two councils, which had been then held, widely known, and much exaggerated. On these reports reaching his ears, Louis, the King of France, offered St. Thomas a safe refuge in his country. The Saint answered,<sup>12</sup> that while there was no one on the face of the earth, save the King of England, in whom he had greater trust, or towards whom he entertained more well-merited gratitude, than the King of France, he was bound to refuse the gracious offer; for there was some hope of peace being restored between himself and his Sovereign. "And do you, if it please you," the letter concluded, "if you should happen to speak with him, blame him for ever thinking evil of a man who has served him so much and so faithfully, who has ever loved him with a true love, and upon whom he has conferred so many honours." The efforts to promote peace here spoken of seem to have had a partial or temporary success, for in a subsequent letter<sup>13</sup> to the King of France, St. Thomas tells Louis that there is but one thing

<sup>11</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 95. This letter Mr. Froude dates from Paris, October, 1163, that is, immediately after the Council of Westminster; but the other council mentioned in the letter, which John of Salisbury calls "of Winchester," is evidently Clarendon; and therefore the letter cannot bear date earlier than the beginning of 1164.

<sup>12</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 80.

to disturb the newly restored and perfect peace between himself and the King, and that was a report which annoyed the King, that the Archbishop had denounced him to the Pope and to the King of France as a persecutor and oppressor of the Church; and St. Thomas begs Louis to bear witness that the report was untrue. The fact was, that the King's actions had been abundantly sufficient to give birth to such a report, and St. Thomas had done nothing more than state his case. About this time the Saint wrote to King Henry himself, in a tone quite calculated to attain his end, urging upon him that God would never leave the state of the Church in England unavenged, and promising him every blessing in God's name if he would remedy its evils.

St. Thomas has never received the credit he deserves for the efforts which he made at this time for the restoration of peace. The account just given of his correspondence with King Louis is a proof of his exertions. Another is afforded by the way in which he met the mediation of Rotrou de Beaumont, the Bishop of Evreux. This prelate, who was the son of the Earl of Warwick, and was afterwards raised to the archbishopric of Rouen, had gone to the King at Porchester, who had told him that in one way only could peace be restored, and that was by the Archbishop's gaining from the Pope a confirmation of the customs. St. Thomas, fearing to give the King a fair cause for complaint, actually sent such a request to the

Pope, considering, doubtless, that the liberty of the Church was at least as safe in the Pope's hands as in his own. This may have been the moment of the pacification of which St. Thomas speaks to King Louis. As the Saint had anticipated, the Pope absolutely refused<sup>14</sup> any such confirmation, though the constitutions were represented to him as those to which St. Thomas and other bishops had promised their assent. The letter of the Pope, it must be said, makes no mention of any application from St. Thomas for the approbation of the constitutions, but Edward Grim and William of Canterbury say it explicitly, and the former adds that the Pope's refusal was attributed by the King to the Saint.

Thus was St. Thomas prudently warding off, as far as was in his power, the coming trouble; but in spite of all his efforts it advanced apace upon him. Meanwhile, by the Pope's order, prayer was offered up to God for him in holy Houses, where the odour of St. Bernard's sanctity was yet fresh, Citeaux, Clairvaux, and Pontigny.

<sup>14</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 86. Dated Sens, February 27, 1164.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE COUNCIL OF NORTHAMPTON.

1164.

St. Thomas tries to see the King—his unsuccessful attempt to cross the Channel—he returns to Canterbury—interview with the King—Council summoned at Northampton—John the Marshal and his appeal—St. Thomas reaches Northampton—interview with the King before the Council met—proceedings of the first day—fine for contempt—John the Marshal—accounts of Chancellorship—second day's proceedings—further money demands—the Saint deserted by his retainers—third day spent in consultations.

ON the ultimate failure of negotiations, St. Thomas attempted to obtain a personal interview with the King, and with this intention he went to Woodstock. He was not admitted into the royal presence, and retired towards Canterbury. He then went to Romney,<sup>1</sup> intending to try to cross the sea and visit the Pope, in spite of the illegal, though royal, prohibition of Clarendon. Accompanied by two or three of his personal attendants, he made two attempts in the night to cross the Channel; but without success, either on account of the unfavourable wind, or through the fear of the sailors, who represented it as unfavourable and that a return was necessary, lest they should be punished by the King

<sup>1</sup> So Fitzstephen (p. 49), and Roger (p. 40). "His manor called Aldington" (Alan, p. 325).



for having assisted the Archbishop. The time was not yet come in God's purposes for the shepherd to be separated from his flock. St. Thomas was greatly fatigued by this useless tossing on the sea, and landed much exhausted.

To this time we must probably refer a little story,<sup>2</sup> which is characteristic of the times in the attention it mentions as given to *sortes*, or passages taken from books by hazard. When St. Thomas was seeking safety by flight, early one morning, as he was walking along and meditating on the sadness of his condition, he was met by a certain clerk. "Whither away?" he inquired. "I am going," quoth the scholar, "to school at Canterbury. For I have heard," he continued, "that it pleases our noble Archbishop to maintain poor scholars. I have hopes therefore of finding support under the wings of his fatherly affection and goodness; for I am but a poor orphan, and have no means of supporting myself." "And what book are you reading, my son," asked the Archbishop kindly, "and where is your lesson?" "Cato," answered the scholar, "and here is my lesson—

Esto animo fortis, cum sis damnatus inique.

The Saint took the verse for an omen, as a message of comfort from Almighty God; and telling the clerk that, when he next saw the Archbishop, he should approach him with confidence, and, asking his charity, show the verse for a

<sup>2</sup> It is told by Fordun in his *Scotichronicon*, and quoted by Mr. Brewer in his edition of Giraldus, *De Instructione Principum*, Anglia Christiana Society, 1846.

token, he gave him some money, and they separated with mutual comfort.

On a report of the flight of St. Thomas, a panic seized his followers, who accordingly separated. One of them, bolder than the rest, went to the Archbishop's own room at Canterbury, and there sat after dusk on the following evening pondering in sadness on his master's fortunes. When it was very late, he said to a boy who was with him, "Go and shut the outer door of the hall, that we may sleep more safely." The boy went out with a light, and saw the Archbishop sitting in a corner and alone; on which he ran away in a fright, thinking he had seen a ghost. The clerk would not believe him till he came himself, when he found St. Thomas, who, after some refreshment, summoned a few of the monks of Canterbury, and told them the whole state of the case.

The next morning some of the King's officers arrived to confiscate his property; but when they found that he himself was there, they retired in confusion. The King was greatly relieved when he heard that the attempt to cross the Channel had not succeeded; for he had every reason to fear that the result of a personal interview between St. Thomas and the Pope would be that the country would be placed under an interdict.

The Archbishop once more went to Woodstock, where he was admitted to see the King, who concealed in a great measure his hostility to the Saint, though to St. Thomas's practised eye it

was sufficiently evident. Of the recent attempt to leave England he merely said, as if in joke, that he need not have tried to go, as if the country were not large enough to hold them both. The interview was but short; but the impression was left clearly enough on St. Thomas's mind, and expressed by him to his intimate friends, that the time was now arrived when he must either give way disgracefully, or fight the battle bravely. His resolution had long been taken.

The King summoned a full Council to assemble at Northampton. It would appear that the Archbishop was not summoned in the usual way, as his dignity deserved, but as a culprit, to answer before the King, and even that not personally, for the King would not write to him, but through the Sheriff of Kent. The pretext for this indignity was, that he had not appeared personally before the King when cited to show why he had not done justice in his own Court to John the Marshal. This man had laid a claim before the Archbishop to Mundeham, a portion of the archiepiscopal manor of Pagham.<sup>3</sup> The King had previously made a law, that if in the process of a cause either party felt themselves aggrieved, they could stay all proceedings, and

<sup>3</sup> The result of this appeal to the King was that he alienated Mundeham from the Church, and thus, in 1169, we have in the list of persons excommunicated: "The man, other than the King, who holds the land of Mundeham, of the manor of Pagham, which the King took from the Church of Canterbury on account of John the Marshal" (*Materials*, vi. p. 602).

carry the cause by appeal to a higher court, if the party thus appealing could take oath that justice was not done. Of this power the Marshal availed himself; but in spite of the remonstrances of the judges of the Archbishop's Court, he produced from under his cloak a book of versicles called a tropary,<sup>4</sup> and on that he made his oath. He complained to the King that justice had been refused him on account of his fidelity, and obtained a summons against the Archbishop to appear in the King's Court on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. On the day named the Archbishop did not appear; but he sent four of his knights, bearing his own and the Sheriff's attestations to the invalidity of the appeal. The King was very angry with the Archbishop for not appearing in person, and he would hardly let his knights go free, even on bail. At the instance of the Marshal the Archbishop was peremptorily summoned to Northampton, to answer, as well for the original cause, as for the contempt.

On Tuesday, the 6th of October, 1164, St. Thomas arrived at Northampton. He was met on the way by some of his domestics, who told him that the King had permitted his lodgings to be occupied; on which he despatched word that he would come no further, if this were not rectified. Henry accordingly gave the requisite order. St. Thomas availed himself of the hos-

<sup>4</sup> Tropes were versicles that were sung before the *Introit* (*Ducange*). Canon Robertson was the first to point out the ordinary mistake of calling this "a book of songs."

pitality of the monks of St. Andrew's; which monastery was then in all the glory of its restoration by Simon de St. Liz, the Earl of Northampton and Huntingdon. On the day when he entered, the King was out hawking, so that they did not meet.

On the following morning, the Saint, after his Mass and Hours, went to the castle, where he waited in the antechamber while the King heard Mass. On his entrance St. Thomas rose to meet him, and showed himself ready to receive the customary salutation of a kiss, if the King should offer it; but he did not do so. The Archbishop's first request was for leave to visit the Pope, which was absolutely refused. He then requested that William de Curci might be removed from one of his lodgings; to this the King assented. He then said that he had come to obey the summons in the case of John the Marshal. Henry replied that he was in London in his service in the Exchequer, but that he would soon appear. Nothing further was transacted on that day; but the King bade St. Thomas return to his lodgings, warning him that on the following day the cause would be tried.

On the second day, that is, the Thursday, the Council assembled. All the Bishops of England were there, except Rochester and another who had not yet arrived. There were likewise several bishops of the King's dominions in Normandy, besides the earls and barons. The Archbishop was accused of the contempt of his non-appearance to the King's summons in the

case of the Marshal. The Saint's reply was, that his absence had been caused by illness, and that he had sent his knights to represent him; but it was not listened to, and Henry pressed for judgment. The Council decided that the homage and observance of earthly honour, to which the Archbishop was sworn, had laid upon him the obligation to attend at the royal summons; and for the contempt they sentenced him to the confiscation of all his moveable property to the King's mercy. This was apparently held equivalent to a fine of five hundred pounds of silver, for thus the penalty is stated by other writers. We are told that a difficulty arose in pronouncing judgment between the bishops and the barons, both parties acquiescing in the sentence through fear of the King, yet neither wishing to bear the odium of such a proceeding. The barons pleaded that the spiritual order ought to pronounce a sentence affecting one of themselves; the bishops, on the other hand, replied, that it was altogether a secular judgment; that they were not there as bishops to try their own superior, but that they sat as peers in the Council and the equals of the barons on the trial of a peer. The King began to be angry at such a question being mooted, and the Bishop of Winchester was obliged, though much against his will, to pronounce the sentence. St. Thomas at first thought of resisting it, as emanating from an incompetent tribunal; but he was persuaded not to allow a mere question of money to stand between himself and Henry. He therefore

offered bail for the sum, which was accepted, the Bishops standing his sureties, with the exception of Gilbert Foliot, whose refusal was remarked.

On the conclusion of the question of contempt, the case of John the Marshal was brought forward; but whether it was that the Archbishop's statement was too strong to be answered, or that the King was anxious to enter into the more vexatious questions which he had in store, it is plain that it was not proceeded with. We are told that the Marshal lost within the year his two sons, whom the portion of Church property he aimed at would have gone to enrich, and that he himself soon followed them to the grave, which St. Thomas attributed to the anger of God and St. Anselm.

Another cause was brought forward against the Saint on the same day. The King demanded the restoration of three hundred pounds, which the Archbishop had received from the Castelry of Eye and Berkhamstead. The Saint first pleaded that he had not been summoned to render any such account; but he did not refuse to reply that he had spent the money in question, and very much more, while he was Chancellor, in the repairs of the Tower of London and of the castles in question. The King declared that he had not authorized any such expenditure, and demanded judgment; on which St. Thomas, still determined that money matters should be no pretext against him, offered as bail for the sum the Earl of Gloucester, William of Eynes-

ford, and another of his feudal retainers. This closed the day's proceedings.

Friday began with a new demand on the part of the King. He claimed repayment of five hundred marks which had been lent to St. Thomas during the war at Toulouse, and for other five hundred for which he had stood surety for him in a loan from a Jew.<sup>5</sup> To this was added the astounding demand that he should immediately account for the incomes of all vacant bishoprics and abbacies, which had been paid into the Chancery while he was in office. St. Thomas expressed himself as totally unprepared for any such application, which had come upon him without warning, and he begged to be allowed to consult his suffragans and clerics. In this the King acquiesced. The irremediable character of the breach being now, however, apparent to all, his soldiers and military retainers, being anxious to retain the King's favour, deserted our Saint; on which he supplied their place by the poor and needy, and he triumphed much in the exchange.

Saturday was spent in consultation with the Bishops at one time, and Abbots at another. The character of the demand made upon St. Thomas may be estimated from the fact, that it was accounted equivalent to the enormous sum

<sup>5</sup> Herbert (p. 298) represents this day's proceedings as a demand for the repayment of five hundred silver pounds lent by Henry to St. Thomas when Chancellor. He says that, in spite of the danger of giving the King offence by such an act, five men were found willing to stand surety for the Saint, each for one hundred pounds.



of thirty thousand marks. Henry of Blois, the Bishop of Winchester, who had consecrated him, and who always took a lively interest in him, reminded him of the declaration of the Prince in the King's name at his election, that the Church was to receive him free from all secular obligations; and this the venerable Bishop could the better do, as he had himself at that time elicited the declaration. On the King's disallowing it, and declaring that he had been no party to any such liberation, and that he had never ratified it, and St. Thomas being reminded that all his moveable property had already been confiscated, the generous Bishop offered the King two thousand marks on his behalf; but they were refused. After this their consultations were much divided. Those who knew Henry's mind best, declared that he would never be satisfied until St. Thomas resigned the archbishopric. Hilary of Chichester, who was so inclined to favour the King, that St. Thomas, looking back upon these times from his exile, said that he had held amongst them the place of Judas the traitor, is reported to have said, "Oh, that you were only Thomas, and not Archbishop!" Henry, he declared, had said that the kingdom should not contain him as king and Thomas as archbishop, and by a resignation only of his see could peace be restored. Others, however, expressed their hopes that the Church would suffer no such disgrace at his hands; and they were the advisers who knew St. Thomas best.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE FIGHT.

1164.

Sickness of St. Thomas—Tuesday the 13th of October—rumours of violence—appeals to the Holy See—Mass of St. Stephen—the Archbishop's Cross—threats—the Bishops avoid taking part in a sentence—the Barons' message from the King—the Saint's reply—the Bishops' conduct—the Earl of Leicester's speech—St. Thomas's answer—insults—the Saint returns to the Monastery.

SUNDAY was comparatively a day of rest. St. Thomas remained within doors, taking diligent counsel with such as were best able to advise him, and scarcely giving himself time for refreshment. The next day was looked forward to by all as that on which the issue of these exciting proceedings would be seen. But in the middle of the night St. Thomas was taken ill with a violent pain in the side, so that to give him any relief they were obliged to place heated pillows where the pain was. This was a sickness to which the Saint was subject, particularly in times of unusual anxiety; and it was from the natural chilliness of his constitution, and his liability to this *mal de flanc*, that he was accustomed always to wear such a very unusual quantity of clothing. The pain lasted through the greater part of Monday, and prevented him from attending the Council;

and the King, believing the illness to be feigned, sent several nobles to see whether it were true. The Archbishop promised them, that if he were not better the next day, he would be carried to the Court in a litter rather than stay away. However, towards night he recovered.

The following day, Tuesday, the 13th of October, was one of great moment in the life of St. Thomas, in the history of the Church in England, and, it might be added, of the town in which these great events happened; for it is owing to the heroism of St. Thomas on that day shown at Northampton, that the diocese of which that old town is now the see has been placed under his patronage. The town yet bears traces of its ancient devotion to St. Thomas in its hospital and its well, which bear his name; and the very castle in its ruins is revered by a Catholic, not for its olden glories and royal pageantry, but because it was hallowed by the trial of St. Thomas. The blessed Saint cannot but look down with favour on the scene of the struggle, which he called, after St. Paul and the early martyrs, "fighting with beasts;" especially since it has been placed under his protection by the Rome that he loved, by the Holy Apostolic See whose champion he there was.

It was the anniversary of the solemn day<sup>1</sup> when all England had assembled in Westminster Abbey, and St. Thomas had translated the relics of St. Edward the Confessor. The festival of

<sup>1</sup> Alan (p. 330) says that it was the very day on which in previous century, the Normans had entered England.

the 13th of October is the dearer to us from the association of St. Thomas with the great Saint we then venerate, whether we think of him at Westminster doing honour to St. Edward, or at Northampton bearing his witness for the Church and for Christ.

A rumour had been current that in the course of that day violent measures would be taken against his person. Some of the courtiers, who had an affection for him, had warned him of it; and the Bishops, calling upon him very early in the morning, attempted to make use of this fear to induce the Saint to resign. They pointed out the certainty of his condemnation for high treason, on account of his rejection of the royal customs; and they asked what use there was in his archbishopric when he had incurred the hatred of the King. His answer was characteristic: "Brethren, you see how the world opposes me; but I mourn still more that the children of my Mother should fight against me. For even if I were to hold my peace, after ages would tell how you have left me alone in the contest, and how twice in these two days you have judged me, who, sinner though I be, am your Archbishop and Father. And now I gather from what you say, that you are ready to assist in passing, not a civil sentence merely, but also a criminal one, against me; but I command you all, in virtue of your obedience and under peril of your order, not to be present in any judgment against my person. And lest you should do so, I appeal to our Mother the Church of Rome, the

refuge of all the oppressed. If, as the rumour runs, secular hands are laid upon me, I order you, in virtue of obedience, to use ecclesiastical censure in behalf of your Father and Archbishop. Be sure of this, that though the world should roar, the enemy rise up, or the body tremble (for the flesh is weak), yet, by God's help, I will not be base enough to give way, nor to desert the flock intrusted to me."

On this Gilbert Foliot immediately appealed to the Holy See against his precept, that they should use censures in case of violence being shown to him; and the Bishops left, excepting Henry of Winchester and Jocelin of Salisbury, whose sympathies were altogether with the Saint, though they were afraid to show it. When he was left alone, he prepared himself for the contest like a true bishop.

He entered<sup>2</sup> the church, and said the Mass of St. Stephen at the altar of the Protomartyr with very great solemnity and devotion. His tears so blinded him, that more than once he was obliged to break off the prayers unfinished. Two things were particularly noted in this Mass by the King's party: that he had chosen one, the Introit of which began with the words, "For the princes sat and spake against me;" and that he cele-

<sup>2</sup> This was in consequence of the advice a religious, whom he had consulted, had given him (Rog. Pont. p. 45). Herbert (p. 304) suggests that perhaps the reason of his use of the pallium was, that it was the feast of St. Callistus, Pope and Martyr. This is, however, a mistake, for St. Callistus' was the following day, Wednesday the 14th.

brated, though it was not a festival, with his pallium, which was unusual.

The Saint would have gone to the Court vested as he was, and bare-footed, if some of the Templars with whom he was intimate had not persuaded him not to do so. His wish was, he said, to let the Court see who he was, whom it had twice judged. At their urgent entreaty, he laid aside his mitre and pallium; he threw his black cappa as a canon-regular over the sacred vestments, and, looking to the trial before him, he carried concealed about his person the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. On the way to the castle he said to his cross-bearer, Alexander Llewellyn, that he regretted that he had not come as he at first proposed. When he dismounted from his horse, he took his cross into his own hand, and so entered the castle. Gilbert, the Bishop of London, was standing in the gateway at that moment; and Hugh de Nunant, Archdeacon of Lisieux, who was in the Archbishop's train, said to him, "My lord of London, why do you suffer him to carry his cross?" The Bishop answered, "Good man, he always was a fool, and always will be." Robert de Melun, whom he had consecrated Bishop of Hereford, met him as he was entering, and begged to be allowed to act as his cross-bearer; but he would not permit it.

The King was in an inner room. The Archbishop advanced to the council-chamber and took his usual place, still holding his cross. The Bishops surrounded him; Gilbert Foliot being the nearest to him. The attention of all was

riveted upon him, when the Bishop of London said that he looked as if he were prepared to disturb the world. "You carry your cross," he said; "now, if the King were to draw his sword, what hope would there be of peace?" St. Thomas answered, "If it could be so, I should wish always to carry it in my own hands; but I know what I am now doing. I would preserve God's peace for myself and the Church in England. Say, if you like, that if you were here, you would think otherwise. If my Lord the King were now, as you say, to draw his sword, it would be but a bad token of peace." St. Thomas was probably thinking, Fitzstephen tells us, of the troubles of the Council of Clarendon.

The Bishops were summoned to the King, and remained in the inner room for a long time. The Archbishop of York arrived late purposely, that he might not be identified with the King's council, and he had his archiepiscopal cross carried before him; and this he did in virtue of a fresh appeal to the Pope against a prohibition which he had recently received from Rome. They were no sooner assembled than the King bitterly complained of the manner of St. Thomas's entry, saying, that so to bear his cross was to treat him as if he were not a Christian king. The courtiers then took up the accusation, declaring that he had always been vain and proud, and that his present act was an insult not to the King merely, but to the whole kingdom; and the cry that he was perjured and a traitor became so loud, that it impressed with a sense of

imminent danger those who remained in the council-chamber with our Saint: so much so, that on some persons leaving the room where the King was and entering the lower room, St. Thomas and those who were with him immediately made the sign of the Cross.

Herbert of Bosham sat at the Saint's feet, and Fitzstephen was not far from him. They each relate to us a few words that they interchanged with St. Thomas at that trying moment. The latter reports that Herbert bade him in a low voice have his sentence of excommunication ready, if any of them should dare to lay hands upon him. Fitzstephen overheard it, and observed in a little louder tone, "Far be it from him; not so did the Holy Apostles and Martyrs of the Lord, when they were taken; rather, if it should so happen, let him pray for them and forgive them, and possess his soul in patience. If he should suffer for justice sake and for the liberty of the Church, then, by God's grace, his soul would be at rest and his memory in benediction. But if he should pass sentence against them, all men will think that through anger and impatience he had done all he could to avenge himself." John Planeta, who was standing by, and Ralph de Diceto, then Archdeacon of London and afterwards Dean, the well-known historian, were both of them affected to tears.

Herbert's advice was such as we should have expected from his impetuous disposition, as we see it on several occasions when he appears on the scene before us, and in which he resembles



not a little the Saint his master. He tells us that some of the ushers with rods and wands passed into the room where they were, pointing with threatening gestures at the Archbishop and his companions; on which, while the others crossed themselves, St. Thomas stooped down and said to Herbert, who was sitting at his feet, "I am afraid for you; but do not be afraid for yourself, for you shall share my crown." Herbert answered, "We must neither of us fear; for you have raised a noble standard, by which not only the powers of earth but those of the air are overthrown. And," he added, "remember that once you were the standard-bearer of the King of the Angles, and were never overcome: it would indeed be a disgrace to be overcome now when you are the standard-bearer of the King of the Angels."

After a while Fitzstephen attempted to speak to the Saint again, but a king's marshal standing by prevented him; on which, by raising his eyes and moving his lips, he made signs for him to look up at the crucifix he was carrying, and to occupy himself in prayer. St. Thomas understood him; and several years afterwards, when he was an exile in France, he met Fitzstephen, then on his way to the Pope at St. Benedict's on the Loire (Fleury), and told him what a consolation his hint had been to him.

The Bishops were meanwhile, by the King's leave, taking counsel together; for they were not prepared to join with the nobles in passing sentence upon their Archbishop, and yet they did

not see how they could otherwise avoid the King's anger. They at length agreed to propose, if they were permitted to be absent from this judgment, to appeal to the Holy See against the Primate for perjury, and to pledge themselves not to rest until he was deposed. They told Henry how the Archbishop had appealed from their former sentences to Rome. On this the King sent several barons to inquire of the Saint whether he acknowledged this appeal; for he was his liege subject, and was bound by an especial oath at Clarendon to his constitutions, in which it was enacted that Bishops should assist at all judgments except those of blood. They were also to ask whether he would give bail that he would abide by the sentence of the Court regarding the accounts of his chancellorship.

St. Thomas answered thus: "I am bound, my lords, to the King my liege,<sup>3</sup> by homage, fealty, and by oath: but the oath of a priest is ever accompanied by justice and equity. In all devout and due subjection, I obey the King for God's sake in all things saving God's obedience, the Church's dignity, and the honour of a Bishop in my person. I am not bound to give any account of my chancellorship, for I was summoned only for the cause of John the Marshal. I remember and acknowledge that I have received many dignities and offices from the King, in all of which I have served him faithfully on both sides

3 "A *liege* lord was a lord of a free band, and his *lieges* were privileged free men, faithful to him but free from other service." Confused with the Latin *ligatus*, bound (Skeat).

of the Channel; and I rejoice to think that, after spending all my income in his service, I incurred debts for him also. When, by God's permission and the King's favour, I was chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, before my consecration I was delivered over by the King to the Church of Canterbury free from all secular claims; though now in his anger he denies it, yet you and most ecclesiastics in the kingdom know it well. I call upon you, then, to testify to this truth to the King; for it would not be safe, though it is according to law, for me to bring witnesses against him; neither need I do it, for I am not now pleading my cause. If since my consecration I have not made the progress I could have wished, I do not impute it to the King or to any one else, but solely to my own sins. Yet God can give grace to whom and when He wills.

“I can give no sureties for the accounts. All the Bishops and my friends have already been bound; nor ought I to be held to find bail in a cause which has not been judged against me. As to the prohibition I have placed upon the Bishops, I acknowledge that I told them that they had condemned me too severely for a single absence which was not contumacious; and therefore I appealed against them, forbidding them during this appeal to judge me for a secular cause committed before I was Archbishop: and I again appeal; and I place my person and the Church of Canterbury under the protection of God and of my Lord the Pope.”

At the close of this dignified address, the nobles

returned to Henry in silence. Others, however, of his partisans were not so respectful. Some said, talking to one another, but loud enough for St. Thomas to hear, "King William, who conquered England, knew how to tame his clerics. He put in prison his own brother Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux, who rebelled against him. He cast Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, into a black dungeon. And Geoffrey Count of Anjou, our King's father, caused Arnulf, Bishop-elect of Sééz, and many of his clerics to be mutilated, because he had counted himself as elected to Sééz without his consent."

When the King received St. Thomas's reply, he urged the Bishops by their fealty to him to take part in the sentence the barons were about to pronounce. They objected the Archbishop's prohibition, which Henry declared had no force against the express provisions of Clarendon. The Bishops urged that they would be placing themselves in the power of the Primate, and that it was therefore for the good of the King and the kingdom that he should acquiesce in their absence. At length he yielded; and they entered the room where the Archbishop was, and took their places near him. Robert of Lincoln was weeping, and some others could hardly restrain their tears.

Whilst the debate was continuing in the inner chamber, Roger Archbishop of York passed through, calling to two of his clerics who were in the council-chamber, Master Robert le Grand and Osbert de Arundel, "Let us go away; for we

ought not to see what will soon be done with my lord of Canterbury." "No," replied Master Robert, "I will not go till I see what God wills in his regard; for if he should strive unto blood for God and His justice, he could not have a finer or better end." The Archbishop of York went away, and Bartholomew Bishop of Exeter fell at St. Thomas's feet. "My father, have pity on yourself, have pity too on us; for the hatred against you is our destruction. The King has just issued a decree, that whoever should take your side should be accounted guilty of high treason." It was further reported, that Jocelin of Salisbury and William of Norwich were to be mutilated for resisting the King; and they also had pleaded with the Archbishop for their own safety. St. Thomas replied to Bartholomew: "Fly hence; for you savour not the things that be of God."

After the entrance of the Bishops, Hilary of Chichester thus addressed St. Thomas: "My Lord Archbishop; saving your grace, we have much to complain of you. You have placed us your Bishops between the hammer and the anvil by this your prohibition; of disobedience to you on the one hand, and of the King's anger on the other. Lately, when we were assembled at Clarendon, his highness urged upon us the observance of his royal dignities; and to prevent mistake, they were shown to us in writing. At length we gave them our assent; you in the first place, and afterwards we, your suffragans, at your command. When our Lord the King bade us swear to them,

and affix our seals, we replied that a priest's word was sufficient, and that we had pledged ourselves to observe his dignities in the word of truth, in good faith, without deceit, and lawfully. The King was therewith content. But now you force us to go against them by forbidding us to be present at a judgment when he requires it of us. From this oppression, and lest you should injure us further, we appeal to the Pope, and under a protest we obey your prohibition."

St. Thomas answered: "I hear what you say, and, by God's help, I will attend the appeal. At Clarendon nothing was granted by me, or by you through me, but saving the honour of the Church. For, as you yourselves say, we added these three clauses, *in good faith, without deceit, and lawfully*, by which the dignities which our churches have by Papal law were secured. Whatever is against the Church or the laws of God cannot be kept *in good faith, and lawfully*; nor has any Christian King a dignity which is the destruction of the Church's liberty, to which he has sworn. Besides, these very royal dignities our Lord the King sent in writing to the Pope for confirmation, by whom they were returned condemned. The Pope then taught us what to do; for we are ready with the Roman Church to receive what he receives, to reject what he rejects. Furthermore, if we fell at Clarendon, for the flesh is weak, we must take courage, and in the strength of the Holy Ghost contend against the ancient enemy, who is ever striving to make him fall who stands, and to prevent him from rising who has fallen. If, then,

*in the word of truth*, we swore to what was unjust, you know that an unlawful oath is not binding."

The Bishops, being exempted from joining in the judgment, sat apart. In a short time the barons appeared, leaving but a very few of their number with the King. St. Thomas was about to rise to them as they entered; but Herbert whispered to him, that to receive them sitting would impress them with a deeper sense of the truth that they were judging their father, and would become him better who was carrying his cross. The Archbishop remained quiet, and gave no sign of fear on their drawing near. The two earls, Robert of Leicester and Reginald of Cornwall, who had so often come to him from Henry, were the foremost.

The Earl of Leicester began: "The King commands you to render up your accounts, as you yesterday promised to do. Otherwise hear your judgment." "Judgment?" said the Archbishop. He then rose, and continued, "Son and earl, hear me first. You know, my son, how intimate I was with our Lord the King, and how faithfully I served him. It therefore pleased him that I should be advanced to be Archbishop of the Church of Canterbury. God knows, I willed it not, for I knew my own weakness: and rather for the love of him than of God I gave way, which to-day is clear enough, when God and the King have both deserted me. Still, in my promotion, when I was elected before Henry, the King's son and heir, who was appointed for that purpose, the

question was asked, How did they give me to the Church of Canterbury? And the answer was, Free from all worldly ties. I therefore am not bound, nor will I plead, respecting them." "This is different," said the earl, "from what the Bishop of London told the King. But how will you avoid his judgment? You are his subject, and have many castles and possessions in fief and barony." The Archbishop answered: "I have nothing in fief or barony; for whatever kings have given to the Church, they have given as a free alms; and the King himself in his privileges has declared and confirmed the same. Wherefore, by the authority and office which God's ordinance and the law of Christendom give me over you, I forbid your passing judgment upon me." The Earl of Leicester replied: "Far be it from me to transgress the command of such an authority to my soul's detriment; I now hold my peace, and as far as I am concerned, I leave you free." He then turned to the Earl of Cornwall, and said to him, "You hear that the Archbishop in God's name has imposed silence upon me; do you, therefore, what remains, and say what the King has ordered." He answered, "I will not venture upon what was not ordered me." The Earl of Leicester then said, "I beseech you, my lord, to wait until your answer is brought to you." "Am I, then, a prisoner?" St. Thomas asked. "No, by St. Lazarus, my lord," was the earl's answer, with his usual oath. The two noblemen were moving away, when St. Thomas added, "Son and earl, yet listen. By as much as the soul is



more worthy than the body, by so much are you bound to obey God and me rather than your earthly King. Neither law nor reason permits children to judge and condemn their father. Wherefore I decline the judgment of the King and yours, or that of any one else; for, under God, I will be judged by the Pope alone, to whom before you all I here appeal, placing the Church of Canterbury, my order, and my dignity, with all thereto belonging, under God's and his protection. And you, my brethren and fellow-Bishops, who have served man rather than God, I summon to the presence of the Pope; and so, guarded by the authority of the Catholic Church and of the Holy See, I go hence."

Some of those who stood by called him perjured and traitor; on which he turned upon them and said, that if it were lawful, and his priestly orders did not forbid it, he would defend himself against them by appeal to arms from such charges. He left the council-chamber, still bearing his cross; and as he passed through the hall, a multitude of people of all sorts collected there insulted him. In the middle of the hall was a quantity of firewood; and he stumbled over a bundle of faggots. Randolph de Broc called out against him, "The traitor is going away;" and he, with several others, threw straws and other trifles after him, raising a clamour as if the four quarters of the city were on fire or invaded by an enemy. The Earl Hamelin, the King's illegitimate brother, called the same things after

him, to which he answered, "If I were a soldier,<sup>3</sup> my own hands should prove you false."

When in the court, he mounted his horse and proceeded to the castle-gate, which they found locked.<sup>4</sup> But one of his servants, by name Peter de Mortorio, saw a bunch of keys hanging up; and the first that was tried proved to be the right one. Outside the gate, when it was opened, they found a great multitude of people; some suffering from the king's evil, who were waiting for the

3 According to William of Canterbury (p. 39), Randolph received for answer, "Your cousin was hanged for his crimes, which has not happened to any of my relations;" and Hamelin was saluted by the titles, "varlet and bastard:" but Garnier (fol. 13, 10) says, "li sainz huem ne dist mot, mais avant s'en ala;" and Grim (p. 399), in like manner, has, "nemini quicquam respondens;" Fitzstephen, who was there, mentions (p. 68) the insults, but no such rejoinder; and Herbert (p. 310) says, "he turned a stern countenance upon those who were reproaching him, and answered, that if his priesthood did not prevent him, and it were allowed, he would defend himself against them in arms from their charges of perjury and treason. And so we departed from the council: the disciple who bears witness of these things saw them, and now writes this. He at that moment was the only follower the Archbishop had, as he bore his cross from the inner room till we reached the hall." We have followed Roger of Pontigny (p. 52), who perfectly agrees with Herbert. This Hamelin Plantagenet Count of Warrenne, after the Saint's martyrdom, had recourse to him *quem vocaverat in vita proditorem*, and was cured of blindness of one eye (Will. Cant. *Mirac.* p. 452). Isabel, the sole daughter of William de Warrenne carried the earldoms of Warrenne in Normandy and of Surrey in England successively to her two husbands, William of Blois, son of King Stephen, and to this Hamelin, son of Geoffrey Count of Anjou, father of King Henry II.

4 Garnier (fol. 13 b, 7) says, the servant's name was Trunchez, and both he and William of Canterbury (p. 40) inform us that the porter was chastising a boy. The absence of the porter they looked upon as providentially saving St. Thomas from imprisonment.

exercise of that healing power which St. Edward the Confessor had bequeathed to his descendants, and others in fear and anxiety lest he should have been killed. They raised a loud cry on seeing him: "Blessed be God, Who has saved His servant from the face of his enemies." Herbert could not find his horse in the crowd, so the Archbishop took him up behind him to the Monastery of St. Andrew. They were accompanied by the poor; and the Saint had some trouble to guide his horse, hold his cross, and give his blessing to the crowds who fell upon their knees as he passed. He called it, as it truly was, a glorious procession; and that evening the poor were admitted in great numbers to dine with him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE FLIGHT.

1164.

Return to St. Andrew's—dinner with the poor—visit of two Bishops—three others sent to the King—preparation for a night in the church—Herbert's private orders—St. Thomas leaves Northampton—rides to Lincoln—by boat to the Hermitage—the Saint's flight made known—the King's letter to King Louis of France—St. Gilbert of Sempringham.

THE cross that had been borne so prominently that day found its resting-place by the altar of our Blessed Lady. The Saint there prayed for some time; and then rising up, he asked whether it were yet time for None. Learning that the hour was past, he sang None and Vespers, and then went to dinner. At the meal it was seen how few of his followers remained. Of a retinue of about forty who had come with him scarcely six were left; but their place was filled by the poor, who had accompanied him rejoicing from the Castle. "What a glorious procession," he said, "has brought us from the face of the troubler. Let the poor of Christ come in and dine with us." Thus not only the refectory but the courts of the monastery were filled. He sat a long time at table, and was very cheerful. William Fitzstephen said, "This has been indeed a sad day." "The last," St. Thomas replied, "will be

sadder." And then, after a while, he added the following saintly exhortation to his followers: "Dwell in silence and in peace. Let no sharp word proceed from your mouth. If any one speak against you, do not answer him; but suffer him to speak evil of you. The superior part is to suffer, the inferior so to act. We are masters of our own ears, as they are of their tongues. The evil is not spoken against me; but against him who, when evil is spoken, recognizes it in himself."

When the King was informed, it was believed by the Bishop of Hereford, as St. Thomas was leaving the castle, that the courtiers were saying and doing things insulting to him, he ordered proclamation to be made through the streets, that no insult should be offered to him, nor any of his followers be in any way interfered with. It does not seem unnatural to suppose that the King was anxious that these insults, though doubtless pleasing to him, as his own conduct towards the Saint sufficiently shows, should not be attributed to himself; for this he knew would be a strong presumptive argument against him in the eyes of the Pope and of all Christendom.

While the Saint was still at table, the leaders amongst the Bishops of the opposition to him and of subserviency to the King, Gilbert of London and Hilary of Chichester, came to him to say that they had found out a conciliatory course. They urged that it was but a money question between him and the King. If, then,

he would leave for a time two of his manors, Otford and Mundeham, in the King's hands as a pledge or surety, they thought that he would not retain them, nor urge his claim for the money, and would restore the Archbishop to favour.

\ The Saint answered, "Heccham, I am told, was once a manor of the Church of Canterbury; and the King now retains possession of it. I have, then, a claim to its restitution; though under these circumstances it is more than I can hope for. Nevertheless, sooner than resign the ancient rights of the Church of Canterbury over even that manor to the King, to put an end to my troubles or to recover his favour, I would undergo any danger, or even death." And so saying, he laid his hand upon his head. Did he already know where his death-wound would be inflicted? The two Bishops went to Henry, and reported to him what the Archbishop had said, and thus increased his anger against the Saint. These false brethren must have known what St. Thomas would answer; and their use of what he had replied proves that their wish for reconciliation was feigned, and that they really strove to urge matters to extremities.

During their meal the book that was read aloud was the Tripartite History on the persecution of Liberius; and when the text happened to be quoted, "When they persecute you in one city, fly to another," St. Thomas raised his eyes, and meeting those of Herbert, his flight was understood between them, though no word was uttered by either. Before he left the table, he

ordered his bed to be carried into the church, and placed behind the high altar; which was done before them all. They sat until nightfall, when, after grace, St. Thomas sent the three Bishops, Roger of Worcester and Robert of Hereford, whom he had consecrated, together with Walter of Rochester, his chaplain, to the King, to request leave to depart on the morrow, and a safe-conduct to enable him to visit the Pope. They found Henry in high spirits, but he refused to give any answer until the following day. This reply was considered to be ominous of danger; and the impression was confirmed by secret messages from some of the King's privy-councillors.

We are told that the Saint had spent one of the former nights in the church in vigil and prayer with his clerics, taking the discipline<sup>1</sup> and genuflecting at the name of each Saint in the Litany. Some of them, thinking that he was about to repeat this pious exercise, asked leave to watch with him. He said: "No, I would not have you troubled." His chamberlain, by name Osbern, was placed to prevent any one coming to that part of the church, his instructions being to say that the Archbishop was fatigued with his day's work and was not to be disturbed; and when the monks came to sing Compline, they did so in a low voice, believing him to be asleep behind the high altar. The Saint took into his confidence two lay-brothers who were in his train, named Robert de Cave and Scailman, and

<sup>1</sup> Facta afflictione: Fitzstephen, p. 69.

a faithful domestic of his own called Roger de Brai,<sup>2</sup> and bade them prepare what was necessary for his departure. Lest suspicion should be excited, he directed them not to take any of his own horses, but to procure others for their use. These men performed their part well; and four good horses were kept in waiting outside the monastery-gate, as if they belonged to strangers who were visiting within.

The Litanies were said, and a genuflection made at each saint's name; and then St. Thomas gave his parting instructions to his faithful Herbert. He was to go to Canterbury; and after collecting what he could of the Archbishop's income, to make the best of his way to St. Omer in Flanders, and await the Saint's arrival at the famous Monastery of St. Bertin; for thither he proposed to go, if capture or death did not prevent him. Herbert mentions with emotion that the Saint gave into his particular charge a book for which he had an affection, for fear lest, when his property was rifled, as he might expect after his departure, it might be lost: showing what he valued most of all the precious and magnificent things by which he was surrounded when in state. Poor Herbert was thus, to his distress, left behind, and separated from his beloved master.

The night was dark and rain was heavily fall-

<sup>2</sup> Garnier (fol. 14 b, 10) calls Roger de Brai "un brun, un prode bachelor." Perhaps he is the same person as "Brun son vaslet" (fol. 46 b, l. 13), who used to wash his hair-shirts for him. Brother Scailman was subsequently imprisoned, but made his escape (*Materials*, vi. p. 77).



ing, so that every one was within doors, and objects could with difficulty be distinguished. Guards had been set, as they had previously ascertained, at all the gates of the town except the north gate, which, as it happened, was the nearest to St. Andrew's; and, availing themselves of the oversight, St. Thomas, with his three companions, quietly passed through the streets of Northampton. His last preparation had been to take off his stole, which he had constantly worn since his consecration; and he took nothing with him except his pallium and his archiepiscopal seal. He wore his usual black cappa, and his hair-shirt next to his skin was his armour. In the course of that night's ride, the cappa became so heavy with the wet, that twice he had a piece cut off to make it lighter. By morning he reached a village on the Lincoln road called Graham (perhaps Grantham), about five-and-twenty miles from Northampton and half way to Lincoln. He here was able to sleep a little; and after this rest he pushed on the remaining distance to Lincoln. He lodged with a fuller of the name of Jacob; and here he changed his dress for that of a lay-brother, and determined to pass by the name of Brother Christian.<sup>2</sup> Two of his companions were Brothers of the Order of the Canons Regular of St. Gilbert of Sempringham, commonly called Gilbertines, which accounts for his taking refuge almost exclusively in their monasteries. Taking boat on the river which passes

<sup>2</sup> So Roger of Pontigny. Grim says that he was called Brother Dermann,

through Lincoln, he reached a solitary place in the midst of the waters called the Hermitage, belonging to the nuns of the Order of Sempringham. This was a distance of some forty miles by water. As the place was one where he was very safe from pursuit, he remained there for three days. The faithful lay-brother was once so overcome by seeing the Archbishop sitting at his solitary meal of a few herbs, that he was obliged to leave him for a while, lest his tears should distress the Saint. Robert de Cave alone had accompanied him, Scailman and Roger having been sent by land from Lincoln to Sempringham; but they rejoined him later.

It is now time that we should return for a few minutes to Northampton, before we follow St. Thomas on his further wanderings. One of his companions, whom he had left behind, and who knew nothing of his intended flight, afterwards told Herbert and others that he had that night a dream in which he heard a voice sing those verses of the Psalm, "Our soul has escaped like a sparrow from the snare of the fowlers; our snare is broken, and we are delivered." The story is worth repeating from the pleasure it affords us to introduce the words of that text.

In the morning, the Bishop of Winchester, unconscious of what had taken place, came to speak with the Saint. On his inquiring of Osbern, the Chamberlain, how the Archbishop was, he received for answer: "He is well; for last night he left us, and is gone we know not where." With a deep sigh, and tears in his

eyes, the venerable Bishop said, "And God's blessing go with him!" When the flight first came to the King's ears, he was silent through anger; and at length he said, "We have not yet done with him:" and he then gave special directions that all the ports should be carefully guarded, to prevent his leaving the kingdom. A council was then held; and it was determined that, in order that his flight might seem to have been unnecessary, and only done to irritate the King, all the Archbishop's possessions should be secured unmolested, and none of his officials be removed during the appeal. The Bishops, who had already pledged themselves to Henry to carry on the appeal before the Pope, were ordered to get ready; and the following were selected for the journey: Roger the Archbishop of York, Gilbert Bishop of London, Roger of Worcester, Hilary of Chichester, and Bartholomew of Exeter. To their party were added Richard of Ilchester, John of Oxford, and Guy Rufus, all ecclesiastics; and amongst the laymen, William Earl of Arundel, Hugh of Gondreville, Reginald of St. Valery, and Henry Fitzgerald, a royal favourite. Henry gave them letters to Louis King of France, and to Philip Count of Flanders, begging them not to receive into their kingdoms a traitor, who had fled from his country, Thomas, *the late* Archbishop of Canterbury.

Henry had yet to learn that it did not come within his royal prerogatives to unmake an Archbishop of Canterbury at will. Nothing could be more instructive, or throw more light on the

cause for which St. Thomas died, than this explicit statement that he was a traitor and that he had been tried and found guilty of treason. As far as we are acquainted with the proceedings of the Council of Northampton, no accusation was brought against St. Thomas that could be construed as treasonable in the slightest degree. The only accusation, that did not resolve itself into a mere money claim, was contempt by non-appearance at a royal summons, when John the Marshal appealed from the Archbishop to the King. The treason, and the only treason, in the case was the refusal of St. Thomas to acquiesce in the Constitutions of Clarendon. This was the cause of the anger of the King, who could not bear that any one should stand between him and any claim he might choose to make. St. Thomas was the official guardian of the King's coronation oath; and his sole treason, the punishment of which fell upon him seven years later, was the courage with which he withstood a tyrannical usurpation, and appealed to the Holy See in defence of the rights of the Church.

Our acquaintance with Henry's letter to Louis is due to a French source,<sup>3</sup> for it has not been preserved in any English collection of letters. It will be well to give it in full, as its terms are a perfect justification of the flight of St. Thomas. "To his lord and friend Louis, the illustrious King of France, Henry, King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou,

<sup>3</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 134, taken from *Gallicarum Rerum Scriptores*, Ed. Brial, vol. xvi. 107,

greeting and affection. Know that Thomas, who was Archbishop of Canterbury, has been publicly judged in my Court in a full Council of the barons of my kingdom to be a wicked and perjured traitor against me, and under the manifest name of a traitor has wrongfully departed, as my messengers will more fully tell you. Wherefore I pray you that you do not permit a man infamous for such great crimes and treasons, nor his men, to be in your kingdom. Let not this great enemy of mine, if you please, receive from you or yours any help or counsel; for to your enemies in my kingdom neither I nor my land would give any. Rather, if you please, efficaciously help me to avenge my dishonour on my great enemy, and aid me to seek my honour, as you would wish me, if needs were, to do to you. Witness, Robert Earl of Leicester at Northampton." We may now turn from these angry words to pleasanter thoughts.

It is ever delightful to be able to connect the memories of Saints together; and the following account of St. Gilbert of Sempringham deserves its place in the history of St. Thomas. After the flight of the Archbishop, it soon became bruited abroad that houses of the Gilbertine Order had given him refuge; for it was, as he himself tells St. Gilbert,<sup>4</sup> the religious order that he preferred above all others. St. Gilbert, then in his seventy-third year, was cited before the King's justiciars, and accused of having sent a sum of money to the assistance of St. Thomas in his need. Fear-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 261

ful punishments had been decreed against all who had dared to *abet the traitor*; and St. Gilbert had but a sorry prospect if he were found guilty. The judges, probably moved by the universal respect in which the aged founder of the Order of Sempringham was held, and by the fame of his sanctity, offered him an immediate release from all proceedings, if he would but swear that the accusation was untrue. This he absolutely refused to do; but when he was ultimately released, he voluntarily declared that truly the case was so, but that to have taken the oath required of him, would have been to have created an impression that he thought it wrong to act in the way that had been laid to his charge. This great Saint lived to hear of the martyrdom and canonization of the Archbishop, in whose holy cause he so sympathized; and he went to join him in Heaven, after he had spent a century of holy years on earth.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### EXILE.

1164.

From the Hermitage, by Boston, Haverholme and Chicksand to Eastry—the Saint hears Mass in concealment—embarks at Sandwich and lands near Gravelines—adventures—is recognized—goes to Clairmarais—Herbert arrives from Canterbury—the King's party pass—St. Thomas goes to Eldemenstre and to St. Bertin's—interview with Richard de Luci—the Saint escapes from the Count of Flanders by the help of the Bishop of Thérouanne—he reaches Soissons—Louis receives Henry's letter and St. Thomas's envoys.

WHEN St. Thomas left the Hermitage, he went to St. Botolf's (Boston), which was ten miles off; and thence by water to Haverolot (Haverholme), a place also belonging to the Canonesses of St. Gilbert. He now directed his course towards Kent; and as he would henceforward be passing amongst people who were likely to be acquainted with his personal appearance, he only travelled by night. He stopped at Chicksand, in Bedfordshire, on his way southwards. This was another house of Gilbertine Canons; and one of them, of the name of Gilbert, he added to his party. This resting-place of our Saint had a celebrity in after times, and the miracles there wrought were a testimony of Whose cause it was for which St. Thomas was a wanderer. At length he

reached a village belonging to his see, named Eastry, close to Sandwich, and about eight miles from Canterbury. Here he was lodged in the priest's house, from which a little window opened into the church; and here he assisted at Mass without the knowledge of the people or even of the priest who celebrated. A cleric, who had been trusted with the secret, brought the Pax, or kiss of peace, to him from the altar. It would have been affecting to see the devotion with which, from his place of concealment, the Saint gave his episcopal benediction at the end of Mass to the faithful, who were unconscious of his presence.

On All Souls' Day, Monday, the 2nd of November,<sup>1</sup> nearly three weeks after the memorable Tuesday at Northampton, a little before day-break, St. Thomas embarked at Sandwich, on board a small boat which had been prepared for him by the priest who had given him shelter; and two priests undertook the labour of rowing him across the Channel, with a few others who, John of Salisbury says, did more harm than good. The very same day the Bishops and other messengers from the King also embarked. The weather was very stormy, and our Saint must have been in great peril in his open boat; for the ship that carried the Bishops was in such danger

<sup>1</sup> Herbert (p. 326) has here made another mistake in the dates. He says, that St. Thomas crossed on Tuesday, November 2nd, being the fifteenth day from his departure from Northampton. Fitzstephen (p. 70) corroborates Herbert in saying that it was All Souls' Day. This withdraws one from the list of the critical Tuesdays of our Saint's life.



that the Bishop of London had taken off his cappa and cowl through fear of shipwreck. St. Thomas landed towards evening, on the sand at low water, at a part of the coast called Oye<sup>2</sup> in Boulogne, about a league distant from Gravelines, which seaport town they now made for, as best they could. They went on foot; until at length the Saint, who was unaccustomed to the heavy dress and shoes of a lay-brother which he wore, and who was wearied out by the roughness<sup>3</sup> of the passage, lay down on the ground, and declared that he could go no farther unless they carried him or found him something to ride upon. After some seeking, they at length found a boy, whom they begged to go and hire a beast. He went to the nearest village; but remained away so long, that they were much frightened lest he should have given some notice which should betray them. The Saint had, however, fallen several times, and his hands were bleeding, so that they were obliged to await the result. At length the boy returned, leading by a straw halter an ass without a saddle, which they were glad to hire for a piece of silver. They threw a cloak over the animal, and thus St. Thomas rode for about two miles: he then found it easier to walk. In passing through a village, a woman who saw him was much struck

<sup>2</sup> See Note F.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert (p. 325) is not consistent with himself, when, a little later on (p. 330), he says that though the King's envoys in their ship had a rough and dangerous passage, those who crossed with St. Thomas told him that they in their boat had had a calm sea. They must have meant that it was a wonder that in such weather they could have crossed in an open boat at all.

with something unusually noble in the expression of his face; and seeing his fatigue, she ran into her house to find a stick to offer him. Finding nothing at the moment but one which had been used as a spit and on which fish had been hung, and the state of which betrayed the uses to which it had been put, she ran out and offered it to him: and he thanked her for it earnestly with all gratitude. A little further on, a knot of young men were standing together, one of whom had a hawk on his hand. St. Thomas forgot for a moment where he was; and looking at the bird with his old manner, drew forth the exclamation from one of them, "If I am not mistaken, that is the Archbishop of Canterbury!" Brother Scailman promptly answered him, "Did you ever see the Archbishop of Canterbury travelling in that fashion?" The fright, one of his biographers observes, was probably satisfaction enough for the momentary vanity.

At the house where he slept on the Monday night in Gravelines, he sat at the meal with the three Gilbertine brothers in the lowest place, and was called by his companions Brother Christian. The host, however, noticed a practice which we have already recorded of him as Archbishop, that of sending to others portions of what was set before him. From his platter, he gave some food to the children and to the people of the house; which caused the host to look at him narrowly. He could not help noticing his great height, his broad and calm forehead, and particularly his long and beautiful hands. It had already been

rumoured thereabouts that the Archbishop of Canterbury had fled from Northampton; he therefore called his wife, and told her his suspicions. She no sooner had heard it than she ran in; and after looking at him for a while, she went to her husband, smiling and saying, "Certainly, good man, it is he." The good hostess then became very zealous, bringing her nuts and apples and cheese, and placing them before Brother Christian. Poor Brother Christian would gladly have dispensed with these kind attentions; but she was indefatigable.

After supper the host drew near, all smiles. Brother Christian asked him to sit down by him on the bench; but he refused, and sat on the floor at his feet. After a little, he said, "My lord, I give God thanks that you have come under my roof." Brother Christian replied, "Why, who am I? Am I not a poor Brother, and am I not called Christian?" "I know," replied the host, "that, whatever you are called, you are a great man, the Archbishop of Canterbury." St. Thomas no longer concealed himself; but starting early the next day, to keep his host from talking about him and so betraying him, he took him part of the way with them to Clairmarais, a Cistercian monastery near St. Omer. This journey was made on foot, and the roads in winter time were very muddy and slippery. He arrived at Clairmarais about nightfall, and by the computation of the people of the place, he had walked that day about twelve leagues.

The cause of all these precautions was the hostility of the Count of Flanders. The King of England had been a party some years before to a sacrilegious marriage between Matthew Count of Boulogne, the brother of this Philip Count of Flanders, and Mary of Blois, daughter of the late King Stephen, who was Abbess of Romsey. St. Thomas, when he was Chancellor, had opposed this marriage; and the dislike for him which the Count had then conceived was quite reason sufficient to render it necessary for him to remain concealed. And besides, King Henry had sent Count Philip, his kinsman, a letter against St. Thomas couched in the terms that he used in writing to the King of France.

Herbert of Bosham, with some others of the Saint's followers, had obeyed the directions he had given before leaving Northampton; and had now been awaiting him for four or five days at the neighbouring monastery of St. Bertin in the outskirts of the town of St. Omer. The very night of his arrival, Herbert came to Clairmarais to see his master; and his delight at meeting him was tempered by his compassion for the toils and perils he had undergone. St. Thomas recounted to him how he had travelled by night and on foot; how he had put on the habit of a lay-brother, in which he saw him; and all that had befallen him under the name of Brother Christian. On Herbert's showing himself much moved by the change of his master's circumstances, St. Thomas answered: "If we have received good from the hand of the Lord, why

should we not receive evil?" This brought to Herbert's mind the text, "The just man will never be sorrowful, let what may happen to him." Their conversation must have been not without its share of amusement when St. Thomas recounted to his faithful friend his adventure the night before with his host and hostess. Herbert's account of the way in which he had been able to fulfil the commission intrusted to him was very brief. The King's order, issued with an intent to injure the Saint, had been productive of good; for if the proclamation had not been made that his goods and followers were not to be molested, Herbert would not have been able to leave the country or to bring anything with him. As it was, he had succeeded in bringing a few silver vessels and a hundred marks in money; a sufficiently scanty supply for an exile of indefinite duration. St. Thomas was, however, very thankful for this assistance, and hopeful for the future.

The King's party arrived at St. Omer on the same day with the Saint; and as it was publicly known that St. Thomas was expected at the Monastery of Clairmarais, it was thought better that he should not remain there, lest, if his enemies came, they might find in his fallen state matter for exultation. Accordingly, after Matins that very night, he took boat, and was conveyed to a solitary place surrounded by marshland called Eldemenstre,<sup>+</sup> which was venerated as having once been a hermitage of St. Bertin.

+ See Note F.

Towards morning, as they were going, one of his party said to him, "My lord, you are weary with travelling, and we are coming to most hospitable people, who will rejoice over your escape; do them the favour, on your arrival, of allowing them to break the abstinence." "No," said the Archbishop, "to-day is Wednesday and we must abstain." "But, my lord," the other still urged, "we must not put them to trouble, and perhaps they have no supply of fish." "That is for God to provide," said St. Thomas; and as he said the words, a great fish—it was a bream—leapt into the Saint's lap; which incident made them very merry till they reached their destination.<sup>5</sup> He remained at the hermitage for three days; and on the fourth, at the pressing invitation of Godeschall, the Abbot of St. Bertin's, he took up his abode in that monastery.

Meanwhile apparently Richard de Luci had been separated from the rest of the royal party, and had been sent with the King's letter to the Count of Flanders. On his return he visited the Archbishop, and tried every argument to induce him to return with him to England. Finding his persuasions without effect, he tried threats. St. Thomas stopped him, saying, "You are my man, and ought not to speak to me so." Richard retorted, "I give you back my homage:" to which the Saint said, "You never borrowed it from me."

<sup>5</sup> Alan (p. 336) who tells this story, assigns it to the journey from the hermitage to St. Bertin's, but that could not have been on the Wednesday.

After this St. Thomas sent two abbots to the Count of Flanders, to request a safe-conduct and free passage through his territory. The Count sent word that he would take counsel upon the matter, and added that he had power enough to keep an archbishop within his dominions.<sup>6</sup> Milo, the Bishop of Théroutane, an Englishman by birth, coming on a visit to St. Thomas, the Saint consulted with him what had better be done on this ominous answer. They purposely protracted their interview until night; and when it was dark the Bishop rose as if to leave, the Archbishop accompanying him to the door with torches. St. Thomas then ordered the lights to be taken away, as if he had a few more words to say in secret to the Bishop; and as soon as the attendants were gone, he mounted a white horse which the Bishop had had prepared, and they rode away together to the Bishop's cathedral city, where they arrived that night. The next day, accompanied by the Bishop of Théroutane and the Abbot of St. Bertin's, he safely reached Soissons, where he had previously bidden his followers rejoin him. He was thus safe from the Count of Flanders, and within the territory of the King of France.

The remainder of the King's party, on the day after their arrival at St. Omer, carried Henry's

<sup>6</sup> It is strange that Fitzstephen (p. 71) should say that the Count promised him all he desired, and liberally provided him with horses, clothes, and other requisites. The Count of Flanders had certainly received John of Salisbury with promises of help some months before this (*Materials*, v. p. 96).

letter to Louis, whom, after three or four days' travel, they found at the royal castle of Compiègne. On reading the phrase, *Thomas the late Archbishop of Canterbury*, King Louis demanded of them again and again who had deposed him. At length he said, "Truly I am as much a king as the King of England; yet I could not depose the very least of the clerics of my kingdom." St. Thomas had despatched Herbert and another trustworthy person of his suite to follow the King's messengers diligently, travelling always at the distance of a day's journey from them, so that accurate information might be had of all their proceedings. Consequently, on the day after the departure of the King's Bishops, Herbert and his companion reached Compiègne. They were admitted to an immediate audience; and when Louis learnt that they formed part of the Archbishop's household, he kissed them and received them very graciously and kindly. The relation of all that St. Thomas had undergone moved him very much, the more that he had formed a friendship for him when he was Chancellor. Louis then told them the purport of the King of England's letter, and what answer he had given to it. He added, "Before King Henry had so hardly treated so great a friend of his and a person of such station as the Archbishop, he should have remembered the verse, 'Be ye angry and sin not.'" Herbert's companion amused the King by answering, "My lord, perhaps he would have remembered it if he had heard it as often as we do in the canonical



hours." The next morning, before their departure, the King had taken counsel with those about him, and promised the Archbishop security and protection in his kingdom, declaring that it was an ancient glory of the Crown of France to protect and defend exiles, and especially churchmen, from all persecution. Herbert and his companion, much delighted with their perfect success, did not pause to send the Archbishop word of the refuge that was open to him; but, according to their instructions, hastened on after King Henry's messengers; and they reached Sens, where Pope Alexander III. was staying, on the day after their opponents.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE POPE.

1164.

King Louis sympathizes with St. Thomas—the envoys on both sides see the Pope—the public audience of King Henry's ambassadors—they leave Sens, and St. Thomas arrives—he is received by the Pope, and after three weeks spent at Sens, he retires to Pontigny.

THE messengers of the King of England had urged Louis to write to the Holy Father in their favour, trying to persuade him to take part against the Archbishop by some very unworthy motives, as, that he now had in his power the man who in the war of Toulouse had acted with such vigour and effect against him. So far from acquiescing in their request, he called Brother Franco, the Pope's Chamberlain, who was staying with him at Compiègne, and charged him with a message to the Holy Father in favour of St. Thomas. In fact, the sympathy for the cause of the exiled Primate was there so widespread, where King Henry had no power to repress and counteract it, that the English Bishops and other nobles who were on their way to the Pope considered it unsafe to proceed openly; so they put William de Albini, the Earl of Arundel, into the chief place, and all the others rode as if they were

members of his household and train. On the day after their arrival at Sens, Herbert and his companion reached it also; and on that very evening they had an audience of Pope Alexander. They related to the Holy Father, with all devotion and humility, in the Archbishop's name all that he had undergone during and since the Council of Northampton; and the Pope's fatherly and compassionate heart was so moved, that he said with tears, "Your lord is yet alive, you tell me; he can, then, while still in the flesh, claim the privilege of martyrdom." As they were very weary, the Pope soon dismissed them with his apostolic benediction much consoled.

On the following day the Holy Father held a Consistory of Cardinals, to give public audience to the Ambassadors of the King of England. Herbert and his companion were also present. Gilbert Foliot, the Bishop of London, was the first to speak. "Father," he said, "the care of the whole Catholic Church is yours: those who are wise, your prudence directs and strengthens; those who are unwise, your apostolic authority corrects. Your wisdom will never account him to be wise who trusts to his own wisdom, while he overthrows the concord of his brethren, the peace of a kingdom, and the devotion of a king. Not long since a difference arose between the State and the priesthood; the occasion was unimportant, and a little moderation would have checked it all. But my lord of Canterbury, trusting to his own private opinion and neglecting our counsel, has urged matters unnecessarily

far, without considering the malice of the times or the harm that might come of it; and thus he has entangled himself and his brethren. And if we had given our assent, matters would have become worse. But when we withheld it, as we were bound to do, for him to persist was to cast a reproach upon the King, upon ourselves, and, I might say, upon the whole kingdom. And, as if to heap infamy upon us, without any violence having been shown to him or a threat used against him, he fled; even as it is written, 'The wicked man flieth when no man pursueth.'" The Pope interrupted the speaker: "Spare, brother." "Shall I spare him, my lord?" said the Bishop. The Holy Father continued: "Brother, I did not say spare him, but spare thyself." At this rebuke Gilbert was so discomfited as to be unable to proceed.

Hilary of Chichester, who was renowned as a good speaker, then began: "My Lord and Father, your blessedness is ever careful to restore to a state of peace and concord whatever has been wrongfully done to the harm of many, lest one man's immoderate presumption should destroy many, and create a schism in the Catholic Church. To this point his lordship of Canterbury has been inattentive, when he left the mature counsels of others to bring trouble and anxiety upon himself and his followers, the King and his kingdom, the clergy and people. Such a course a man of such authority *ought* never to have followed." In this last sentence Hilary used the word *oportuebat*, and he repeated it in the

next ; adding to his error by treating it as a personal verb. “ Neither *ought* his followers to have joined with him, if they had been wise.” This repetition of his mistake caused a general laugh ; and one of the bystanders saying, in allusion to the sound of the word he had used, “ You have come to a bad *port*,” he suddenly broke off his speech.

The Archbishop of York was more careful. “ Father, no one can be better acquainted with my Lord of Canterbury than myself. From the beginning I have known that it was his nature never to leave an opinion which he had once formed. It is therefore easy to believe that his present obstinacy rests on insufficient grounds. The only remedy for this that I can think of is, that your discretion should lay a heavy hand upon him. I will detain your Holiness no longer.”

The Bishop of Exeter followed. “ Father, it is not necessary for me to say much. This is a cause which can never be terminated in the absence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. We therefore beg that you will send legates to England to hear and adjudge this cause between the Archbishop and the King.” After this the Bishops sat in silence.

The Earl of Arundel was standing amongst the soldiers ; and when he found that no one else was willing to speak, he asked a hearing. He thus began in his Norman-French : “ My lord, we unlearned people know nothing of what the Bishops have said. We must therefore say, as well as we can, why we have been sent. It is not

that we should contend with nor insult any one, especially in the presence of so great a man, to whose authority all the world rightfully bows; but that in your presence, and in that of the whole Roman Church, we might present to you the devotion and love which our Lord the King ever has borne and still bears towards you. By whom, I ask, does he represent it? By the greatest and noblest of his dominions; by archbishops and bishops, by earls and barons: and if he had any greater and nobler than they, he would have sent them to testify his reverence for you and the Holy Roman Church. To this we may add, that when your Holiness was but newly promoted, you experienced his fidelity and devotion in the way in which he placed himself and all he had at your service; and we firmly believe, that in the unity of the Catholic Church over which you rule, one more faithful than he could not be found, nor one more anxious to preserve peace. Nevertheless my Lord the Archbishop of Canterbury is equally perfect in his own degree and order, prudent and discreet in the matters which concern him, but, some people think, too sharp. Now unless there were this dissension between the King and the Archbishop, the State and the priesthood would both rejoice in a good King and an excellent Prelate. This is what we petition, that your Holiness would do all that can be done to remove this dissension, and to restore peace and tranquillity." The earl's moderate speech was very well received, and produced a favourable impression.

The royal ambassadors urged their King's request that St. Thomas might be sent back into England, and that one or two Cardinals might be deputed with full legatine powers to adjudge the whole matter on the spot. Henry felt, and truly, that while the Archbishop was out of his dominions his cause had nothing but its own merits to trust to. His wish to have St. Thomas once more in his power, and the hope that the choice of the Cardinal to fill the office of Legate might fall on some member of the Sacred College who was favourable to himself; or if this were not the case, that bribery and the other thousand arts in which a Court is practised might help forward the result,<sup>1</sup> were motives sufficient to induce him to urge this measure. The Pope represented that the Archbishop himself was not now far off; and that if the King's representatives would but wait for his coming, the cause could be tried by himself in person. The Bishops replied that their instructions were imperative, and that they were bound to depart with their answer in three days' time, without waiting for the Archbishop. The Pope was very unwilling to delegate judges in the matter from whom no appeal should lie to himself; "this," he said, "is my glory, which I

<sup>1</sup> It is said, that an offer was made to the Pope, if he would depose St. Thomas, not only that Peter-pence, which were now diverted into the Treasury, should be paid, but that they should for the future be exacted, and confirmed by the King for ever, from every inhabitant of the country—"from every house from which smoke ascends, in cities, towns, boroughs, and villages"—which would bring in an additional income to the Holy See of a thousand pounds of silver (Fitzstephen, p. 74).

will not give to another." But his position was one of extreme difficulty and delicacy in refusing the King's request. From the time of his own accession to the Chair of St. Peter, an Antipope, upheld by the power of the Emperor, had led many of the children of the Church from their allegiance to himself. Recent events in England showed that the power of King Henry was sufficient to plunge all his extensive dominions into schism, if he should become personally alienated from the Pope; and the Holy See has ever borne with everything that was not in itself sin to avert sin. Some of the ambassadors secretly showed the great danger of such a schism; and some of the Cardinals, amongst whom William of Pavia was prominent, recommended a course conciliatory to the King of England. But these motives and this advice were not sufficiently powerful to induce the Pope to send St. Thomas into the power of his enemies, from whom he had with such difficulty escaped in order that he might lay the Church's cause before the Church's Head; and consequently, when their three days were expired, the King's ambassadors returned without success. Their departure was accelerated by a fear lest the strong feeling against them in the kingdom of France might place themselves or their property in danger.

We left St. Thomas at Soissons, unconscious of the success of Herbert of Bosham's interview with King Louis. The day after, the King himself happened to come to the same place: and learning that St. Thomas was there, he went to



visit him, and showed the most lively compassion and interest in his circumstances. Before Louis left him, he made an offer to supply him with all that he could need ; but the Archbishop said that he was provided for the present, though the time might come when such help would be necessary for him. Learning that he was on his way to the Pope at Sens, he ordered his officials to afford him every assistance.

During the stay of St. Thomas at Soissons many personages of great importance in France, principally ecclesiastics, amongst whom was Henry the Archbishop of Rheims, the brother of King Louis, came to visit him to show their sympathy ; and some of them accompanied him to Sens, so that he travelled through France with a party of more than three hundred horsemen. The Archbishop's numerous suite, travelling on one bank of a river towards Sens, were seen by the King's messengers from the other bank on their return ; and the latter thought it better to send back one of their number, Guy Rufus Dean of Waltham, to return to Sens, and report how St. Thomas was received by the Pope and Cardinals.

The sympathy with the Saint's sufferings which the Holy Father had shown to Herbert, led him to receive St. Thomas with great affection. After spending several days at Sens, the Saint thought it was time for him to explain to the Holy Father how the steps which he had taken had become necessary ; and for this he could choose his own opportunity, for the Pope had left the opening of the subject to his own dis-

cretion. The Pope's salutation to him was, "The Church has two sons, firm columns on which she rests, Thomas of Canterbury and Luke of Gran." It was not in the public Consistory, but in the Pope's own room, on an occasion when the Cardinals were present, that St. Thomas related the whole history of the Constitutions of Clarendon, acknowledging openly his own fall; and he concluded by producing the very copy which he had then received from the King's officials. As the Pope had never seen them before, we must suppose that the purport only of some of them had been sent to him for confirmation at an early period of the dispute. They were now read aloud; and the Pope's sentence upon them was, that while there were some among them that the Church might tolerate, there were others that were of such a character that nothing could save them from condemnation. The Holy Father then spoke with some severity of the Saint's former consent to them; but he praised his wish to bring them in person to the Holy See, of his sincere devotion towards which his recent sufferings were a sufficient pledge.

St. Thomas seems, ever since he spoke at Northampton of the share that the King had had in his election, to have had in view the step which he now took. He took his ring from his finger, and resigned the Archbishopric of Canterbury into the hands of the Pope, expressing his sense of the manner in which the King's declaration of his wishes might have influenced the election; adding, that to have resigned before, when the Bishops urged him to such a course to

gratify the King, would have been an abandonment of the Church's cause. Some of the Cardinals were very anxious that the most should be made of this opportunity of restoring peace to England, and they therefore advised that the resignation of St. Thomas should be accepted; that another, who would please the King better, should succeed him; and that he should be appointed to some other dignified see. But others of the Sacred College felt how truly the cause of the Church was bound up with our Saint, and that if the royal power were permitted to make this inroad upon the Church's liberties, it would be impossible to prevent further aggression. The Holy Father therefore restored his archbishopric to St. Thomas, declaring that his conduct had shown him to be the fittest for the office. Having been now three weeks<sup>2</sup> in the Court of the Pope, it was time for them to choose a refuge; and the holy Cistercian Order furnishing the separation from the world and the constant service of God he required, the Abbey of Pontigny in Burgundy was chosen; and, having been first recommended to the abbot and brethren by the Pope, to their great joy and consolation, he entered the monastery, in which he was to spend the first two years of his exile.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert, p. 357. Grim (p. 404) says a month. The Pope annulled and revoked the sentence passed by the Bishops and barons in the first day at Northampton, of forfeiture of all the Saint's movable goods to the King, as being "both contrary to the form of law, and against ecclesiastical custom, especially as he had no movable goods but those of his Church" (*Materials*, v. p. 178). This document is conjecturally assigned by Jaffé to June of the following year.

## CHAPTER XX.

### PONTIGNY.

1164—1166.

Life of St. Thomas at Pontigny—Abbot Guichard and his hospitality—Roger of Pontigny—sacred studies—the King confiscates the Saint's possessions, and banishes four hundred of his relatives and friends—public prayers for him forbidden—the exiles come to Pontigny—they are provided for by the charity of Christendom—the Saint's austerities—he takes the Cistercian habit—he is made Legate—Abbot Urban sent to King Henry—three letters to the King—Henry's sharp answer, and the Saint's anxiety.

ST. THOMAS began his new life as an exile on the Feast of St. Andrew, 1164. He had chosen the Monastery of Pontigny because its resources were such, that his stay there with his followers would be no burden, and because it had a great reputation for hospitality, a character which those good Cistercians well deserved. Its Abbot Guichard had in the previous month of June been specially recommended to him by his friend the Bishop of Poitiers<sup>1</sup> as “a venerable man of incomparable sanctity,” who had undertaken to communicate secretly with the Pope on St. Thomas's affairs. The good Bishop, who had been the Saint's companion of old in Archbishop Theobald's

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 113.

household, did him the good service now, together with Isaac, Abbot of l'Etoile, of recommending him to the prayers of the holy community of Pontigny; and at the same time told him that he might be sure of temporal help from the monastery, which, thanks to the Abbot's good management, could best of all Cistercian houses afford him succour. The promise of his friend was fulfilled in the amplest manner. The good religious were kindness itself to the poor exiles, providing, as one who experienced their hospitality records, meat and other things for their guests, which their own rigid rule prevented them from sharing in themselves. When St. Thomas had spent three or four days there, he entered the chapter-house; and after recounting to them the cause of his Church, he commended it and himself to their prayers. He and his followers lived in a series of monastic cells, near together; and he was waited upon by a monk named Roger, whom he ordained priest, and who afterwards was in all probability the writer of a very interesting biography of the Saint.

The time was now come that St. Thomas had longed for all his life. He often said, that when he was Lord High Chancellor of England he had desired a quiet and retired life, that he might devote himself to sacred studies; and when he became Archbishop of Canterbury, he felt still more the need of that learning, which, except in leisure that he could not then command, he could never acquire. He now studied canon law, under Lombard of Piacenza, that he might the more

successfully prosecute the cause of the Church ; but it was not long before he found from his own experience, what his good friend, John of Salisbury, afterwards wrote to him, that such studies in one of his position had a tendency to check spirituality ; and he therefore studied far more assiduously the great science of dogmatic theology. His readings in the Holy Scripture with Herbert of Bosham were resumed ; and this study acquired such charms for him, that soon, after the Office in choir, he always had some book of Scripture in his hands, the Psalter and the volume of Epistles being his favourites. Though this manner of life was consolatory after the trying scenes he had lately passed through, yet at Pontigny the Saint had to bear crosses of great severity, in addition to the thought of the sad state of his spouse the Church of Canterbury during this his separation from her.

The Pope had sent a messenger to King Henry to accompany the Bishops and others on their return ; and they found him on Christmas Eve at Marlborough. He was so angry that the Holy Father had not consented to his request, that St. Thomas should be sent back into England, to be there tried by legates delegated by the Pope with plenary powers, that by a public decree he confiscated all the possessions of the Archbishop and Church of Canterbury ; and he passed a sentence of banishment against all the relations of St. Thomas, against all his household, and even against all the relatives, “the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, nephews and

nieces," of his followers.<sup>2</sup> Our Lord permitted this decree to be issued on Christmas Day, the anniversary of His own entrance upon His homeless exile ; as if to console all who were suffering such hardships for His sake. The decree further enjoined, that an oath should be exacted from every person thus exiled, that they would go personally to St. Thomas at Pontigny ; for the King well knew how his tender heart would be wounded at the sight of such suffering inflicted on all who were dear to him, for no motive but their connection with him. The decree was cruel ; but it was rendered still more cruel by Randulf de Broc, the old enemy of St. Thomas, to whom its execution was intrusted. The very next morning, with the King's apparitors and officials, he appeared at Lambeth, where the oath was exacted from every one who had any connection with the Saint, that they would leave England with the first fair wind, and that they would not tarry by the way until they had shown themselves in their misery to St. Thomas. Those who had given him a night's shelter during his wanderings, and even the relations of his clerics, were treated

<sup>2</sup> The King's first instructions to the sheriffs through England were worded thus: "I command you that if any cleric or layman in your bailiwick shall appeal to the Roman Court, you shall take him and keep him safely till you know my will ; and all the income and possessions of the clerks of the Archbishop you shall seize into my hand, as Randulf de Broc and my other ministers shall tell you. And you shall take by sureties the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces of all the clerks who are with the Archbishop, and their chattels, until you know my will thereon ; and you shall bring this brief with you when summoned" (*Materials*, v. p. 152).

in the same manner; delicate females and children, and even infants in arms, not being excepted; so that the whole number amounted to not less than four hundred. A few escaped actual banishment; but their condition in England was as hard to bear. They wandered about in dread of arrest; their friends feared to see them, for it was dangerous to speak with them; and there was a penalty against those who harboured or helped them. A priest, named William of Salisbury, was imprisoned in Corfe Castle for six months. Three others, who were more wealthy, bought off the persecution against them: Stephen of Everton and Alfred of Wathemestede, each for one hundred pounds; Thurstan of Croydon<sup>3</sup> paid one hundred marks, after he had been confined for an entire day in a filthy gaol in London amongst thieves. Few, if any, escaped as easily as William Fitzstephen, the biographer, who wrote a rhyming prayer, supposed to be addressed to Almighty God by the King; and presenting it to his majesty in the chapel at Bruhull, it took the King's fancy, and he was not afterwards molested. The Bishop of London might, if he had been so inclined, have relieved the destitution of such at least of the Archbishop's clerics as were deprived of their ecclesiastical revenues; for Henry placed them in his hands, and his official, Robert Uscarl, was very diligent in making the most of the benefices, though not for the

<sup>3</sup> Thurstan the cleric in whose house in Kent St. Thomas was ill before he was raised to worldly honours, as Jordan of Plumsted has told us (*Supra*, p. 14).



advantage of the rightful owners. It was not until he had been frequently reproached by the Pope with this connivance with the King's injustice, that the Bishop of London ceased to hold these benefices. Towards the close of the year he transferred them to the royal treasury.

St. Thomas also felt very much a decree by which the King forbade his name to be publicly mentioned in the prayers of the Church. It was remarked of Gilbert Foliot, as a specimen of his policy, that while St. Thomas was in disgrace, he omitted his name from the prayer, but when there was some expectation of a reconciliation, he reinserted it. So, again, some time afterwards, when the King and his son, or, as he was called, the young King, were in accordance, he used to pray "for our Kings;" but when they quarrelled, he resumed the old form, "for our King."

Many of those who were thus cruelly exiled, especially those whose age or sex rendered the journey very difficult, were absolved by the Pope from the oath which had been extorted from them, of at once seeking St. Thomas. These, therefore, stayed in Flanders. But as the number of exiles was very great, the Saint's noble heart was wrung by the frequent arrivals at the Abbey of Pontigny of these sufferers who had offended neither God nor man. The news of such a measure of persecution struck all Europe with astonishment. It was not long before powerful and wealthy people, even those who were personal strangers to the Saint, offered their assist-

ance; and in this work of charity, as might be expected of them, the great nation of France was prominent. Some were sent by the Archbishop to a considerable distance with letters commending them to the protection of lay persons and ecclesiastics; and before very long the poor exiles found that Christendom would not let them suffer anything in addition to the violent breach of every tie that bound them to their country and their home.

“If any one is a defender of the law,” St. Thomas wrote<sup>4</sup> to Stephen the Chancellor of the King of Sicily, “he is held to be an enemy of the King. We are scattered, we are proscribed. Our crime is the assertion of ecclesiastical liberty; for to profess it is under our persecutor to be guilty of high treason. He alone is believed to be a faithful subject, to whom contempt of religion is pleasing, who persecutes the law of God, who despises priests, who venerates as something sacred the cruelties of former tyrants. Because we have dared to speak for the house of the Lord, we are in exile with all our relations and friends, one of whom is Gilbert, my sister’s son, who I affectionately ask may be relieved, when need be, by the liberality of your highness.”

The effect produced upon St. Thomas himself was very great. We have already mentioned that he habitually wore a hair-shirt, and that he was in the habit of very frequently receiving the discipline in secret. In addition to these rigours, with which he prepared his soul for the crosses

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 247.

God destined for him, he now attempted an austerity in his diet, to which he had been unaccustomed all his life. The sluggishness of his circulation, which rendered so much clothing requisite, made it imperative on him to take nourishing food; and for the same reason, he found the use of hot spices, like cloves and ginger, absolutely necessary, even in considerable quantities. In like manner, the wine that was provided for him was always of good quality; though he used it with the greatest moderation. He had ever been sparing, though his food had been delicate; but now he bade the lay-brother who served him bring him the simple conventual fare amongst the dishes which they prepared for him. That it might not be observed that he ate nothing but herbs, he dined apart from his followers. After a few days of this unaccustomed austerity, he fell ill. On one occasion, when Herbert went to him for his usual study of Scripture, finding that he was seriously unwell, he urged him very much to say what was the cause of the illness. St. Thomas attempted to change the subject; but at length, in answer to his friend's importunity, he said that he was not certain, but that he imagined that his illness was owing to this change in his manner of living. He was induced to lay this aside and resume his former diet, when his health was soon restored. The Saint was not, however, content with the mortification of his assiduous study and the simplicity of his new convent home; but the very coldness of the stream that flowed past the

monastery was made by him an instrument of penance, to subdue his flesh and to bring himself into subjection.

While St. Thomas was at Pontigny, he requested the Holy Father, who was still at Sens, to send him the habit of a monk. The Pope blessed one of thick rough cloth, and forwarded it to the Archbishop, with a message to the effect that he had sent him such a one as he had, and not such as he could have wished. He was invested with the habit privately by the Abbot of Pontigny. Alexander Llewellyn was standing by; and when he saw that the capuce or hood was disproportionately small, he said in his dry way, "It is serious enough, but whether it is regular or not I am sure I do not know. It is plain that my lord the Pope has not fitted over well the hood to the cowl." St. Thomas said with a laugh, "It was done on purpose, lest you should mock me again, as you did the other day." "How and when was that, my lord?" said he. "The day before yesterday, when I was vesting for Mass and had put the girdle on, you asked what stuck out so behind. Now you would call me hump-backed, I suppose, if my hood were over-large. So, you see, I am only protected against your gibes." The fact was, that the hair-shirt which the Saint wore from his neck to his knees was very thick and stiff, and gave him an appearance of greater size than he really had; for though his face was full, he was really very thin.

Giraldus<sup>5</sup> says that St. Thomas had the custom,

<sup>5</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis, *De Instructione Principum*, Anglia Christiana Society, Ed. Brewer, 1846, p. 186.

when he was wearied by study, of visiting his clerics in turn, and asking them what they had discovered of interest in the course of their reading. On one occasion coming thus to Alexander the Welshman, he asked him what book he had in hand, and was told, "All Martial's works." "A very proper book for you," rejoined the Saint, for Alexander was a facetious man, as Giraldus and Herbert of Bosham have both recorded of him. "The book is worth transcribing," he said, "if it were only for the two lines I was reading just as you came up; they so exactly fit our case.

Di mihi dent, et tu, quæ tu Trojane mereris,  
Di mihi dent, et tu, quæ volo si merui."

Gods and thou grant me, Trojan, what thy merits claim!  
Gods and thou grant my wish, if I deserve the same!

The Martial was transcribed accordingly, and the copy probably found its way in due time to Canterbury. And indeed we are told in general that the Saint made use of his stay in this religious house to get copies made for the Church of Canterbury of all the best books in the French libraries. He also was at some pains to ascertain what privileges different great churches had obtained from the Holy See, in order that he might gain as many of them as possible for his own.

Meanwhile time was rolling on, and messengers were constantly passing between the parties who were engaged in this struggle. Apparently at first both the Pope and St. Thomas seemed to consider it very advisable that some little time might pass by, in order that the King's anger

might cool down. After a while, the Pope, seeing no improvement, gave great weight to St. Thomas's cause by making him his Legate over England. In the course of his second year at Pontigny, he felt that the time was come for him to exercise the power committed to him. He chose a Cistercian Abbot of one of the dependencies of Pontigny, of the name of Urban, a person described as admirably fitted, from his gentle and winning manners, for the office; and by him he sent letters to the King. The Pope had forbidden St. Thomas to use his powers until the Easter (April 24th) of 1166 should be past; and in the interval he had written to urge Gilbert Foliot to use all his influence with the King to induce him to repent. The application had been quite fruitless; but Gilbert had used all his sophistry to put Henry's conduct in a favourable light before the Pope. The letter<sup>6</sup> which St. Thomas sent by Urban soon after Easter was of the gentlest and most conciliatory tenour. "My lord, the daughter of Sion is held captive in your kingdom. The Spouse of the great King is oppressed by her enemies, afflicted by those who ought most to honour her, and especially by you. Oh, remember what great things God has done for you; release her, reinstate her, and take away the reproach from your generation." This short extract will show the style of the letter, the bearer of which speedily returned, without having been able in the least to move or soften the King.

Another extract will show the yet gentle though

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 266.

stronger tone in which the Saint wrote his second letter<sup>7</sup> to Henry. "Now I am straitened above measure; for a spiritual power has been assigned to me by the same God under whom you hold temporal dominion; and my office constrains me to address your Majesty in a manner which as yet my exile has prevented. It is my duty to exhort you, nay, to warn and rebuke you, lest, if any thing you have done amiss, which, indeed, you have, my silence may endanger my own soul." This letter being as fruitless as that which preceded it, one of a still more solemn character was sent, and by a messenger whose appearance and reputation would add to its weight. A monk of the name of Gerard had won for himself, by his austerities, the surname of The Discalced. He was a man whose peculiar gift it was to reconcile those who were at variance, and he was further remarkable for a very apostolical liberty of speech. Gerard, with another religious, took charge of the Archbishop's letter, of which the following is an extract: "You are my liege lord, and as such I owe you my counsels; you are my son in the Spirit, and I am bound to chasten and correct you. . . . Let my lord, therefore, if it please him, listen to the counsels of his subject, to the warnings of his Bishop, and to the chastisements of his father. And first, let him for the future abstain from all communion with schismatics. It is known almost to the whole world with what devotion your Majesty formerly received our lord the Pope, and what attachment

<sup>7</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 269.

you manifested to the See of Rome; and also what respect and deference were shown you in return. Forbear then, my lord, as you value your soul, to withdraw from that see its just rights. Remember, moreover, the profession you made to my predecessor at your coronation, and which you deposited in writing upon the altar at Westminster, respecting the rights and liberties of the Church in England. Be pleased also to restore to the see of Canterbury, from which you received your consecration, the rank which it held in the time of your predecessors and mine; together with all its possessions, its villages, castles, and farms, and whatever else has been taken by violence, either from myself or my dependents, lay as well as clerical. And further, allow us to return in peace and quietness to the free discharge of our duties.

“Should your Majesty be pleased to act in this manner, you will find me prepared to serve you as a beloved lord and King, faithfully and devotedly, with all my might, in whatsoever I am able,—saving the honour of God and of the Roman Church, and saving my order. *But otherwise, know for certain that you will feel the vengeance of God.*”

This letter was delivered to the King in May, 1166, at Chinon,<sup>8</sup> where he was holding a meeting<sup>9</sup> of his nobles to take counsel against St. Thomas. The answer that it drew was a bitter complaint<sup>10</sup> from Henry addressed to the Abbot of Citeaux, that “your Abbot of Cercamp brought

<sup>8</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 266.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 381.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 365.



a writing from Thomas, who was once our Chancellor, and read it with his own lips, in which we were charged with breach of faith and as it seems with schism, with other words of anger and pride which are derogatory to our honour and person."

This sharp answer to his letter proved to the Archbishop that the King's heart was not by any such measures to be softened towards him. These three extracts of letters have been given, not only on account of their importance as the hearty efforts of the Saint for reconciliation before he proceeded to stronger measures, but also that they may leave upon the reader's mind the impression which the perusal of the whole correspondence would produce, that the Archbishop never resorted to vigorous remedies before every effort to render them unnecessary had been made without effect. St. Thomas was now very anxious; for he felt that the time had arrived when he could be no longer silent regarding the wrongs of his see before the Church and Christendom. The power of the keys was in his hands, as Archbishop and Legate; and he dared not leave it inactive. How these thoughts must have moved him, as he prayed and fasted and did penance for the conversion of the King! how his heart must have burned within him, as he worked with the simple Cistercian brethren in the hay-field and the harvesting, and in all their out-door labours!—for he must have felt what a responsibility lay upon him of using rightly the great powers intrusted to him. What wonder that his heart should have failed him, and in his humility that

he should have thought, as we are told he did think, of resigning his archbishopric into other hands? The dismay at such a proposal of those who, as well as himself, were suffering for the Church, and their lively sense that it would be a desertion of the cause of God, persuaded him that it was a suggestion of the tempter, and that this was a time when personal feelings could not be allowed to interfere with deeds to be done in God and for God.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### VEZELAY.

1166.

King Henry dallies with schism—his angry words against St. Thomas—he appeals to the Holy See against the Saint, who absents himself from Pontigny when the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Lisieux bring notice of the appeal—St. Thomas is confirmed in the primacy and made Legate—his letters to England—he goes to Soissons, and thence to Vezelay, where he publishes various censures—the Bishops appeal—the Pope confirms the censures—the King threatens the Cistercian Order—St. Thomas leaves Pontigny—he foretells his martyrdom to two successive Abbots—he promises the monks a reward—St. Edmund's relics rest in the abbey church—an altar erected there to St. Thomas after his martyrdom—miracles.

KING HENRY had been urged by his hostility to St. Thomas very far towards flagrant schism. That the remark that the Saint made in the letter last quoted was very gentle, when compared to the lengths which the King had gone, is sufficiently plain when we read the opening sentence of Henry's letter to Reginald, Archbishop of Cologne, who was the greatest amongst the followers of the Emperor and the Antipope. "I have long wished for an opportunity to recede from Pope Alexander and his perfidious Cardinals, who dare to uphold against me the traitor Thomas, once Archbishop of Canterbury." Though

he never actually carried into full effect the wicked intentions here expressed, yet it was confidently asserted that he had sent John of Oxford and Richard of Ilchester as his ambassadors to the Emperor, at the Diet of Würzburg, at Whitsuntide, 1165, to pledge his word that he would bring "fifty Bishops" to obey the Antipope;<sup>1</sup> and he knew full well to what spiritual censures such rebellious and schismatical proceedings subjected him. This consciousness, therefore, together with the many causes of complaint which the Church previously had against him, led him, with much reason, to fear that some sentence would be passed against himself, and perhaps against the whole country. He held consequently several councils on the Continent; one more especially at Chinon, as we have already said, where, after complaining bitterly of the letters which St. Thomas had written to him, and of similar letters to the Empress Matilda his mother, he used with tears words which have a terrible prominence on the page of history; for they are, by a singular coincidence, the very same as those which, four years later, led to the martyrdom of St. Thomas. He declared that the Archbishop would take away his body and soul; and he called the knights

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 185. The Emperor Frederic Barbarossa in his diploma respecting the canonization of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle, says that it was done "at the earnest petition of our dearest friend Henry King of England, and by the assent and authority of the Lord Paschal," the Antipope. The effect of this canonization, in itself of course null, has been by the tacit consent of subsequent Popes and the lapse of time, equivalent to beatification (Benedict XIV. *De Canon. SS.* lib. 1, c. ix. n. 4).

around him traitors, for they had not zeal enough to relieve him from the molestations of one man.<sup>2</sup> On this the Archbishop of Rouen rebuked the King with some warmth; yet, from the very gentleness of his disposition, with less severity than God's cause demanded.

The Bishop of Lisieux, who was ever temporizing, recommended an immediate appeal, as the only means of preventing the Archbishop from passing sentence; and Henry consenting, the singular spectacle was shown to the world, of the King who was at war with the Holy See, and who had made laws to prevent appeals, himself appealing to that authority. To the Bishop of Lisieux was added another courtier, the Bishop of Sééz; and they hoped, by hastening to the Archbishop, and giving notice of the appeal, to be able to delay matters until Low-week in the following year. The Archbishop of Rouen accompanied them; professing, however, that he did so in order that he might seize every opportunity to promote peace, and not as taking any part in the appeal. The Saint had timely notice of their coming from one of his friends who was at King Henry's Court; and not wishing to see them, he left Pontigny.

It has been already said that, prior to writing the three letters to the King in the last chapter, St. Thomas had been made Apostolic Legate. A

<sup>2</sup> " Tandem dixit quod omnes proditores erant, qui eum adhibita opera et diligentia ab unius hominis infestatione nolebant expedire " (*Materials*, v. p. 381).

bull<sup>3</sup> had been issued, probably on the 8th of April, 1166 (the date it bears is questioned), granting to St. Thomas and his successors in the see of Canterbury, the primacy of England, as fully as it had been held by Lanfranc and Anselm and his other predecessors. Very shortly after this, that is on Easter Day, the 24th of April in this year, 1166, by letters dated from the Lateran,<sup>4</sup> the Pope made St. Thomas his Legate over all England, save only the diocese of York. Of these letters the Saint sent two copies to England; one to the Bishops of Hereford and Worcester, who on the whole had shown themselves the most sensible of their duty to the Archbishop, and on whom he had an especial claim as their consecrator, and the other to the Bishop of London, especially commanding them to communicate them to their fellow-suffragans and to the Bishop of Durham. The letter was placed in the hands of the Bishop of London at the altar at St. Paul's on the festival day, June 30, 1166. Its authority produced a great impression upon him, and he wrote to the King<sup>5</sup> in this strain: "The high authority by which we are now opposed and overwhelmed, compels us to have recourse to your Majesty for counsel and support. No appeal can suspend

3 *Materials*, v. p. 324. *Vide supra*, p. 21.

4 The date given is Anagni, Oct. 9, but as this is impossible, and as the Pope's letter to the Bishops announcing the Archbishop's legation is dated April 24, from the Lateran, the same date is reasonably assigned to the concession itself (*Materials*, v. p. 329). Herbert (p. 397) expressly says that St. Thomas was Legate at Vezelay, that is in June.

5 *Materials*, v. p. 417.

an apostolical mandate, which admits of no alternative but to obey or be guilty of disobedience. . . . Your Highness will provide against the disgrace, nay the extinction, which threatens us, if you grant us your royal permission to obey the apostolical mandate and pay the amount of Peter's pence, and of your royal clemency make restitution to the clerics; and if you give the Bishops a command that, in case the Archbishop's letters contain any matter contrary to the customs of the country, they may appeal at once to the Pope or to the Legates who are expected." Poor Gilbert must have bitterly experienced by this time how hard it is to serve two masters as different as God and mammon. Well might he write to the Pope, "To tell the truth in a few words, while matters are in this state between my lord the King and his lordship of Canterbury, it is impossible for me or any other Bishop in this kingdom to obey the commands of the one and avoid the insupportable anger of the other."

There is an interesting letter<sup>6</sup> extant, from the Pope to the Suffragan Bishops of the Province of Canterbury, written a little later than this, explaining the difference between the powers of a Metropolitan and of a Legate. Some of the Bishops had asserted that St. Thomas could interfere with no cases coming from their dioceses, unless they were brought before him by appeal. This the Pope says is true when an Archbishop is acting as Metropolitan, but if he

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 297.

be Legate of the Holy See, he can and ought to hear all causes that come before him from all the dioceses of the Province, whether they come by way of appeal or by complaint of the parties.

St. Thomas left Pontigny soon after he received these Legatine powers, and he went to Vezelay, prepared to use them. This intention however he kept to himself, not communicating it even to the intimate friends of his household. He spent three days at Soissons, keeping vigil by night at three celebrated sanctuaries there. The first was a shrine of our Blessed Lady; the second of St. Drausin, the patron of champions, and much frequented by knights about to engage in judicial combats from all France and Italy;<sup>7</sup> and the third that of St. Gregory the Great, some of whose relics were there venerated. On the 3rd of June, 1166, the day after the Ascension, he went to Vezelay. On the same day he received a message from King Louis, testifying to an illness of the King of England, which had prevented him from attending a conference between them, for which Henry had been very anxious. The Saint consequently postponed his intention of passing censure upon the King. At the petition of the Abbot and the community, St. Thomas celebrated the High Mass on the festival<sup>8</sup> of Pentecost; and after the Gospel, he

<sup>7</sup> John of Salisbury says, "Here Robert of Montfort kept his vigil before his combat with Henry of Essex" (*Materials*, v. p. 382). St. Drausin (Drausius) was the 22nd Bishop of Soissons, the founder of the famous abbey of Notre Dame.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert (p. 391), writing several years afterwards, says that it was the feast of St. Mary Magdalen (July 22nd), to whom the Church was dedicated, and whose relics were there



mounted the pulpit and preached an energetic sermon. After it, he publicly explained what were the real causes at issue between himself and the King, and his own fruitless efforts for a reconciliation; to the astonishment of all, but more especially of his own followers, whom he had not informed of what he was about to do. With every mark of the deepest emotion, he warned King Henry by name of the sentence hanging over him. This he afterwards told Herbert he was obliged by his conscience to do.

But if the King escaped the censure he deserved, several lesser offenders were punished. John of Oxford was excommunicated by St. Thomas as Papal Legate for two offences: for schism, in communicating with the Emperor and with Reginald Archbishop of Cologne; and for usurping the deanery of Salisbury, against the Pope's command. Equally publicly, before the large concourse of people assembled from all nations, St. Thomas excommunicated Richard of Ilchester,<sup>9</sup> then Archdeacon of Poitiers, for com-

honoured; but John of Salisbury, in a letter written at the time (*Materials*, v. p. 383), says that it was Pentecost (June 12th). Gervase (p. 200) follows Herbert; but Nicholas of Mount Rouen mentions the proceedings at Vezelay in a letter which says, that it was expected that on St. Mary Magdalen's day sentence would be passed on the King (*Materials*, v. p. 421), and in the same letter a meeting of the Bishops, subsequent to these proceedings, is said to have been held about the feast of St. John (June 24th).

<sup>9</sup> This Richard of Ivelchester, or Ilchester, who, according to Godwin (*De Præsul. Angl.* p. 216), had also the surnames of Topclif and More, succeeded Henry of Blois as Bishop of Winchester. At the time of his election, he professed himself very devout to St. Thomas. John of Salisbury wrote in 1173 to

municating with the Archbishop of Cologne, Richard de Luci, Jocelin de Bailleul, as the authors of the Constitutions of Clarendon, and Randulf de Broc, Hugh of St. Clair, and Thomas FitzBernard, for usurping the possessions of his Church; and he also published a decree excommunicating *ipso facto* all who should injure the Church of Canterbury. Finally, he suspended Jocelin the Bishop of Salisbury, for manifest disobedience, because he had conferred the deanery of his church on John of Oxford; though he had been duly warned that he was not to give it to any one whom the King might name, but to wait until the Canons of Salisbury, who were in exile with St. Thomas, could unite with the rest of the chapter to exercise the right which belonged to them of electing their Dean.

In addition to these sentences, he published anew the Pope's condemnation of the following Constitutions of Clarendon, excommunicating any one who should act on their authority:

1. That a Bishop may not excommunicate any tenant of the King without the King's license.
2. That a Bishop may not punish any person of his diocese for perjury or breach of faith.
3. That clerics be subjected to lay tribunals.
4. That questions of churches or tithes be tried by laymen.

recommend him to Humbald the Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, saying, "He loves your friend the glorious Martyr of Christ with such affection, that he has made himself his servant; so that he consoles his followers, many of whom flock to him in their necessities, and he tries with all his might to imitate him" (Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 277).

5. That no appeals be made for any cause whatever to the Apostolic See, except with the permission of the King and his officials.

6. That no Archbishop, Bishop, or other dignitary, may attend a summons from the Pope without the King's leave.

These, he said, were not the only enactments of Clarendon which are against the Divine law and the constitutions of the holy Fathers. The Archbishop absolved all the Bishops from the unlawful promise which they had made of observing these constitutions; and wrote to them all to that effect, as the Holy See had given him instructions.

The Bishops of Lisieux and Séez, with the Archbishop of Rouen, as has been already intimated, did not find St. Thomas at Pontigny when they came with notice of the King's appeal. When he returned, he found the formalities of the notice awaiting him; and though many of his followers advised him to disregard the appeal as being invalid, yet he determined to do nothing whatever without the Pope.

All the parties concerned appealed to the Pope from St. Thomas's sentence. Gilbert Foliot interceded with the King that the Bishop of Salisbury might have leave to do so; and the words in which he makes the request shows how sadly he was changed from the fervent religious of Clugny and Gloucester, or the zealous Bishop of Hereford. Two clerics consequently arrived at Pontigny; one on the part of the Bishop of Salisbury, and the other on that of John of Oxford. The

latter denied that his master had had any schismatical intercourse with the Emperor or with Reginald of Cologne; and said that, as a member of the household of one of the clerics of the chapel-royal, he was charged to inform the Archbishop that the King himself instituted an appeal, for the term of which he named the second Sunday after Easter of the following year. St. Thomas replied, that he came without any proof that he was sent by the King; and still further, that as he confessed to having communicated with John of Oxford, an excommunicated person, he was himself excommunicate; and therefore that his appeal was invalid.

The Bishops met on the 24th of June; and they also appealed, naming next Ascension Day as the term. They wrote two long letters;<sup>10</sup> one to St. Thomas and the other to the Pope. St. Thomas and his followers read in these letters the

<sup>10</sup> *Materials*, v. pp. 403, 408. Though written in the name of all the Bishops, these bore the seals but of three—London, Winton, and Hereford (*Materials*, vi. p. 65). The last two names it is not a little surprising to find in such a position. Neither St. Thomas nor the Bishop of Winchester forgot the relationship then felt to be incurred by consecration (*Ibid.* p. 345). Henry of Winton was one of the first of the English Bishops who dared to act according to the laws of the Church and his conscience; and the affection St. Thomas bore him is beautifully shown in the conclusion of one of his letters to him (Ep. St. Tho. i. p. 338): "May your holiness fare well, father to be beloved, and remember to commend to God in your prayers *your creation*,—I speak of our littleness." To Robert of Hereford St. Thomas wrote, "*Doleo super te, frater, fili mi primogenite.*" For putting his seal to this letter the Bishop of Hereford received a very severe and cutting rebuke from Ernisius, the Abbot, and the Prior of St. Victor's at Paris, in the name of his former scholars (*Materials*, v. p. 456).

style and spirit of Gilbert Foliot; and in a very full answer<sup>11</sup> to them the Saint says so. This drew from Gilbert's pen a letter,<sup>12</sup> which was in all probability never sent; for it, and it alone, of all the letters on the subject, is not noticed either by St. Thomas or any of his correspondents; a letter which is so calumnious, that its very falsehood is regarded by one modern writer as a proof of its spuriousness; a letter which probably never was delivered on account of its very calumny, the exposure of which could not have been difficult; and which has provided modern opponents of St. Thomas, who consider its being unanswered as a proof of its unanswerableness, with matter for what they very truly call a view of the conduct of St. Thomas through the whole controversy, from the beginning to the end, very different from that to be found any where else.

These lesser appeals were all unsuccessful. When *Bonus Pastor* Sunday (the second after Easter) of 1167 came, Jocelin of Salisbury did not appear to prosecute his appeal; and the Pope confirmed the suspension, and all the other sentences passed at Vezelay. He also commanded the Archbishop to condemn all who had usurped Church property; and though he did not give any especial directions regarding the King, he expressly left the Saint's own ecclesiastical powers free; and he wrote to the Bishops, warning them that all such sentences he would uphold.

The stay of St. Thomas at Pontigny was now coming to an end, owing to the machinations of

<sup>11</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 490.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 521. See Note C.

the King of England. Although the appeals were pending, the King immediately sent over into England Walter de Lisle, who is described as a good man, and an unwilling bearer of such orders, with commands that all the ports should be very strictly watched, lest any sentence passed by the Archbishop should find admission. In another parliament at Clarendon, he exacted an oath from the Bishops and nobles, that they would not give the Archbishop any assistance, nor receive any letters from him; and he also included in the oath the receipt of any letters from the Pope, and appeals to any one save himself. In the September following, on Holy Cross Day (Sept. 14, 1166), the general chapter of the Cistercian Order was held as usual. The King sent them a letter to the effect that they were harbouring one of his enemies; and warned them that, as they valued their possessions in his dominions on either side of the Channel, they should cease to do so. After the three days of the chapter, Gilbert, Abbot of Citeaux, the Bishop of Pavia, who had once been a monk of the order, and several other Abbots, came to Pontigny. They showed the Saint the letter which they had received; and added, that they did not send him away from amongst them, but they left the matter to the dictates of his own prudence and affection for their order. The meaning of this message was sufficiently plain; and St. Thomas replied, that he would certainly go elsewhere; and that he trusted to the Lord, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, to provide

for him and his fellow-exiles. On the following day the Abbots departed, leaving Guarin de Galardim, the good Abbot of Pontigny, and his charitable community full of sorrow at their approaching loss, and of compassion for the homeless Prelate and his household. The true sympathy and warm active charity of this noble abbey more than compensates for the want of heroism shown by the chapter of Citeaux. Abbot Guichard, who had been summoned to Sens by the Pope, that he might introduce our Saint to him, and who had so gladly and hospitably received him, had been consecrated at Montpellier by the Pope himself to the Archbishopric of Lyons on the 8th of August of the previous year (1165);<sup>13</sup> but his successor had inherited his charity and his hospitable spirit as well as the abbatial mitre and staff.

While St. Thomas was at Pontigny, he received from God a foreknowledge of what was to happen to him. One day, after he had said Mass, while he was making his thanksgiving before the altar of St. Stephen with that fervour which distinguished all his devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, he heard a voice, which called, "Thomas! Thomas!" He answered, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And our Lord said to him, "I am Jesus Christ, thy Lord and thy Brother; My Church shall be glorified in thy blood, and thou shalt be glorified in Me." When the Saint was leaving the church, he found that he had not been alone,

<sup>13</sup> He did not obtain possession before St Martin's day, November 11, 1167 (*Materials*, vi. 279).

as he thought, but that the Abbot was waiting for him by one of the columns, and had heard all. The Saint bound him to silence on the subject until the promise should be accomplished.

The successor of this Abbot received a similar intimation; for on the day of his departure from Pontigny, the good Guarin accompanied the cavalcade on its way; and it was remarked that St. Thomas, who was usually very cheerful in travelling, was now very sorrowful, keeping apart from his companions and fellow-travellers. The Abbot urged him very much to tell him what was the matter, upbraiding him freely for the effeminacy of his attachment, as it seemed to him, to the home he was leaving. At length the Saint, under a promise of secrecy, told him that the cause of his sorrow was a revelation he had received, in a vision the night before, of the martyrdom by which this trouble was to end. "Yet," he said, "I am not so sorrowful for the revelation, for which I rather give the Most High all the thanks in my power; but I grieve for those who follow me, and have borne so much for me, for I know for a certainty that when I am struck down, the sheep will have no shepherd." The Abbot smiled, and said, "So, then, you are going to be martyred. What has a man who eats and drinks to do with martyrdom?" His answer was saintly in its humility: "I know that I am too fond of worldly pleasures; but the Lord is good, who justifies the wicked, and He has deigned to reveal this to me, who am all unworthy." He then recounted the vision, that in some church,



he knew not where, he was defending his cause before the Pope and Cardinals, the Pope being on his side, but the Cardinals against him, when four soldiers rushed in, and in that same church attacked him, and cut off that part of his head that was anointed at his consecration, now marked by his tonsure; and from this he gathered that it was God's will to make known to him that by a hard though precious death he would glorify Him. He told this vision afterwards to the Abbot of Val-luisant also, under similar conditions of secrecy; and after his martyrdom both these witnesses made it public. With what fervour St. Thomas must have spent the four years that were to intervene, with this sense of his coming martyrdom ever before his eyes, we may piously conceive.

On his departure, he made a promise<sup>14</sup> to the monks that a successor of his should recompense them for their goodness to him. When Cardinal Stephen Langton received shelter from them, while excluded from his see by King John, he made a grant to the abbey of fifty marks sterling from the revenues of the benefice of Romney. To this St. Edmund, under similar circumstances, added ten; and the blessed Archbishop Boniface of Savoy,<sup>15</sup> in 1264, out of gratitude to them for the refuge thus afforded to three Archbishops of

<sup>14</sup> Martene, *Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. p. 1873.

<sup>15</sup> At the prayer of King Charles Albert, Pope Gregory XVI., by a decree 7th September, 1838, approved of the immemorial honour this English Archbishop has received at Hautecombe in Savoy, where he is buried and venerated as a saint.

Canterbury,<sup>16</sup> gave them the whole of the tithes of the same rectory. But the fulfilment of St. Thomas's prophecy was a far nobler treasure; and he was afterwards understood by the monks of Pontigny to have referred to the holy relics of St. Edmund, of which their church was and still is the resting-place; and this is asserted in the bull of his canonisation by Pope Innocent IV.<sup>17</sup> The first cure performed at St. Edmund's tomb was that of a poor cripple, whom the monks called Thomas, out of gratitude to our Saint.

But long before there was an altar of St. Edmund in that grand old Abbey church of Pontigny, there was an altar of St. Thomas of Canterbury; and we have the account of a miracle wrought by St. Thomas's intercession in a letter<sup>18</sup> written by Peter Abbot of Pontigny to Benedict Prior of Canterbury in the year 1176 or 1177. One of the monks named Ponce had suffered for ten weeks from paralysis of the right side united with epilepsy. He obtained his Abbot's leave to vow a pilgrimage to St. Thomas, but instead of any improvement, he grew so much worse that in the middle of the night his attendants summoned the Abbot and a part of the community from Matins to give him Extreme Unction. The following day, which was Saturday before Palm Sunday, he seemed to be dying, and everything

<sup>16</sup> Martene, *Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. pp. 1247, 1254, 1255, 1824, 1853, 1904.

<sup>17</sup> Lyons, 11 Jan. 1247. *Bullar. Roman.* Alban Butler (Nov. 16) erroneously says Innocent V.

<sup>18</sup> Will. Cant. pp. 512, 532, 533.

was prepared for his funeral. But in the evening, waking up from the sleep of death, he rose and began to walk with the help of sticks. Soon he found that he was quite well, and with his attendants he hastened down to the church, where the Abbot was at that moment giving holy water to the monks after Compline. When the Abbot, who tells the story, had recovered from his stupefaction, he sprinkled him also with holy water, and Brother Ponce went to spend the night in thanksgiving at the altar of St. Thomas.

The Book of Miracles by William of Canterbury, in which this story is given, mentions two other persons belonging to Pontigny. One of them was Robert, who had been a servant of St. Thomas when he was Chancellor, and had become a lay-brother at Pontigny. He was suffering from a quinsy, which took away his power of speech, and for a week he had been without food. In the night he heard a voice saying, "Brother Robert, can you not speak?" The sick man paying no attention, the same thing was repeated, and the third time he heard, "Robert, speak to me, I am Thomas." Looking up, he saw his old master by the light of the lamp, and calling out in his eagerness, "Thomas, Thomas!" the quinsy broke and the good monk used his newly-recovered speech in prayer and praise.

The other story tells us that Guarin, Abbot of Pontigny, being elected Archbishop of Bourges, in 1174, the day of his consecration came, and only two Bishops appeared for the consecration.

As the morning wore on, and all were fretting at the delay, one of the Abbots present said that he had dreamt the night before that Alexander the Welshman, St. Thomas's cleric, had come to say that his master would be present as a fourth Bishop at the consecration on the following day. Dinner-time coming, the Archbishop-elect returned to his palace, giving up all hope of consecration for that day, when the Bishop of Cahors galloped into the town, he and his suite having been detained and nearly lost in a flood. The consecration was now able to proceed, and the third Bishop having come, the promised presence of the fourth was piously inferred.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### SENS.

1166.

The Saint leaves Pontigny—hospitality of King Louis, by whom he is maintained at Sens—the Pope's journeys—St. Thomas accompanies him to Bourges—subsequent miracle where he lived—"sweet France"—John of Oxford successful in his appeal—the Saint remonstrates against the appointment of Cardinal William of Pavia as Legate—Cardinals William and Otho appointed Legates, with full powers—John of Oxford lands in England—St. Thomas, John of Salisbury, and Lombard of Piacenza write to the Pope.

WHEN the exiles were left together, on the announcement having been made which led to the decision to leave Pontigny, the question was discussed whither they now should go. They seem to have been very cheerful in their difficulty, one of them saying, to the amusement of the others, that they must go where they could, as they could not go where they would. Herbert's mind reverted to the interview he had had with King Louis; and he reminded St. Thomas of the promises and offers which that King had made to him at Soissons two years before, which he had declined at the time. The Saint said, "It would seem, my brother, that you are looking out for the pleasures of a city and a King's Court, which hardly suit our bonds in the Gospel." He was,

however, persuaded that, as they had no choice left, it would be better to send Herbert on another visit to King Louis, as his first had been so successful. The King was travelling when Herbert found him; and on the motives that made St. Thomas wish to move being told him, he cried out to those around him, "O religion, O religion, where art thou? Those whom we believed to be dead to the world, fear its threats; and professing to despise the things that perish, for their sake turn back from the work of God which they had taken in hand, and drive God's exile from them." Then, turning to Herbert, he said, "Salute your lord the Archbishop, and promise him in my name, that though the world and those who are dead to the world desert him, I will not. Let him tell us what city or castle or other place of our dominions he would prefer, and he shall find it prepared for him." The city of Sens, while Pope Alexander had resided there, had been frequently visited by them, and seemed to them to combine all that they could wish; St. Thomas therefore chose the royal abbey of St. Columba, a small distance from Sens, famous as the resting-place of the holy virgin from whom it takes its name. Here he remained, living at the expense of the King of France,<sup>1</sup> from St. Martin's Day, No-

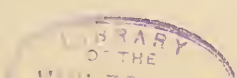
<sup>1</sup> Gerv. p. 201. The Pope had recommended King Louis, in a letter from Montpellier, Aug. 6, 1165, to assign to our Saint any French bishopric or abbey that might fall vacant (*Materials*, v. p. 198). The report was general at one time that he had been made Chancellor of France (*Ibid.* p. 421). The Pope blamed the Abbey of Pontigny and the Cistercian Order very severely for their timidity (*Ibid.* v. p. 426).

vember 11th, 1166, until his exile was exchanged for martyrdom.

After Easter in 1165, that is, when St. Thomas had been about six months at Pontigny, Pope Alexander departed from Sens on his way back to Rome, in answer to the request made to him by the Roman clergy and people. He left Montpellier after the Assumption, and entered Rome on the 23rd of November, amidst unusual festivities. He was not left there long in peace; for in the following year the schismatical Emperor Frederic Barbarossa besieged the city, in order that he might place the Antipope on the chair of St. Peter. The siege being successful, the Pope was obliged to leave Rome; and he went in the disguise of a pilgrim to Gaeta, and from thence to Benevento. It was not until 1171, when St. Thomas's labours were over, that he returned to Rome. Alan says, that on the Pope's departure, the Archbishop accompanied the Holy Father as far as Bourges; and the further assertion of the same biographer cannot be otherwise than true, that this was the last time that they met upon earth.

While at Bourges, St. Thomas received hospitality from the canons of St. Oustrille (Austregisilus), and they considered themselves abundantly repaid by a miracle that was wrought at his invocation years afterwards on a young man attached to their church. This we learn from a letter<sup>2</sup> of John of Salisbury to Prior Odo, written before 1175. The miracle was related at

<sup>2</sup> Will. Cant. p. 458.



Bourges in the presence of the King of France at an assembly of Bishops and nobles, "where all were praising the liberality of the martyr, his courtesy and magnificence towards men, his faith, his zeal for the law and the perseverance of the constancy which he had had in God from the beginning of his promotion."

From Bourges the Pope addressed a letter<sup>3</sup> on the 17th of May, 1165, thanking the community of Pontigny for all their kindness to the Archbishop, and begging that St. Thomas might find their charity ever more fervent, in spite of all threats and terrors. It was not with these hospitable monks only that the exiles met with kindness. William, the Archbishop of Sens, and the clergy and people, received them with much joy; and they were entertained in so kind a manner in their new home, that Herbert, who is the only one of St. Thomas's biographers who was with him at this time, writes with much feeling the praises of "sweet France." Who can yet tell what graces that country has received and still receives from the glorified martyr, with whom in his trouble the warm-hearted nation so nobly sympathised?

The King's appeal had for some time past been prosecuted. He had sent John of Oxford to the Pope, who managed to convince the Holy Father that he had been guiltless of schismatic intercourse with the Emperor and his adherents; and who justified himself for having accepted the deanery of Salisbury, in spite of the Pope's prohibition, by the extraordinary statement that he

<sup>3</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 172.



had been forced to accept it by the King. However, he resigned it into the Pope's hands; and the Holy Father absolved him from his excommunication, and himself conferred the deanery upon him, investing him with a gold ring by his own hand.<sup>4</sup> He afterwards boasted that he had received a personal exemption from the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury or any other Bishop.

Having been thus successful with his own affairs, he prosecuted with great apparent success those of his master. The King's request was, that Legates might be appointed to hear and adjudge the whole case, especially requesting that the Cardinal William of Pavia might be one of them.

St. Thomas had also his messengers and representatives with the Pope. He represented in several letters that the King of England had imprisoned a priest, who is called William the Chaplain,<sup>5</sup> whose brother was on one occasion the bearer of letters; and the Saint argued that the King was therefore *ipso facto* excommunicate. He also pleaded very warmly against any Legates being sent, and especially against William of Pavia. "May it please your Holiness not to expose our innocence to peril at the hands of my lord William of Pavia, through whom our perse-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 141, 170, 177.

<sup>5</sup> This is William of Salisbury, who as we have already seen, was kept in Corfe Castle for six months (*Supra*, p. 14). He was imprisoned in the diocese of Salisbury, which was therefore placed under interdict (*Materials*, vi. p. 32). The Pope wrote to the King requiring the release of the priest (*Ibid.* v. p. 169).

cutors boast that they will cause us to be deposed. Whether he is to come with such powers, we know not; but this we know, that unless compelled by your Holiness, we shall never trust ourself to any judge except your Holiness. Far be it from the Church of God that such things should be accomplished, as a priest, who is one of the clerics of our above-named friend and lord, but just now has promised to the King of England, that as Legate he will determine the cause at issue between us to the King's liking. The brother of the priest who is in prison will communicate the rest. May it please your Holiness to compassionate ourself and them, and the whole Church of God."<sup>6</sup> Similar letters were sent to the Cardinal Henry of Pisa, at whose persuasion, it will be remembered, St. Thomas accepted the archbishopric; and to the Cardinals Hyacinth and Boso, who had been his constant friends in the Sacred College.

St. Thomas had not been long at Sens when his messengers returned, who had been sent to oppose the appeal which John of Oxford was promoting in the King's name. They reported his absolution and restoration to the deanery of Salisbury, and that he had succeeded in obtaining from the Pope that Legates should be sent, and that the Cardinals, William of Pavia, priest of St. Peter's Chains, and Otho, deacon of St. Nicholas in the Tullian Prison, should be appointed. This was arranged towards the close of the year. The particular powers with which these

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 53.

Cardinals were to be intrusted it was not very easy for St. Thomas to ascertain. The letter<sup>7</sup> which the Holy Father wrote to him to announce the appointment spoke of the peace which he hoped they would be able to effect between himself and the King, bidding him give way in anything that would promote agreement, "saving your own and the Church's honour," as the letter twice qualifies it; and it advises him to trust William of Pavia, for he had solemnly promised the Pope to do his utmost to promote an understanding. The Pope's letter to the Bishops<sup>8</sup> dated from the Lateran, December 1, 1166, speaks more plainly of the powers of these Legates, as "persons *de latere nostro*, with fulness of power to hear this cause and such others as they shall judge expedient, and to terminate them canonically, as the Lord shall enable them." He added faculties by which any one whom St. Thomas had excommunicated might be absolved in danger of death, under the usual conditional oath of submitting themselves to the judgment of the Pope in case of recovery. In like manner, in his letter to the King,<sup>9</sup> the Pope says that he has sent them "in the fulness of his power," and that he had "committed to them the fulfilment of his own office in all things, with that fulness with which

<sup>7</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 88.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 125. A copy of this letter was sent to St. Thomas by a friend, under a strong injunction that he should show it to no one but Master Gunter, for so the transcriber had strictly promised Master Walter [perhaps de l'Isle] from whom he had it.

the Roman Church was accustomed to delegate." The tenour of these letters shows that John of Oxford was not without reason in boasting of his success. But he exaggerated it when he said that the King was exempted from the power of all bishops, so that the Pope alone could excommunicate him, and when he spoke of one Legate only, to be sent with full powers, Cardinal William of Pavia, the Saint's avowed enemy. The appointment of Cardinal Otho as co-Legate was held largely to mitigate the dangers arising from the hostility of the Cardinal of Pavia; or, as the Bishop of Poitiers puts it,<sup>10</sup> "The malice of one star, if not extinguished, is tempered and weakened by the conjuncture of another star, more propitious and favourable."

The following account of the arrival of John of Oxford in England is from St. Thomas's own pen.<sup>11</sup> The facts mentioned in it were related to him by the Bishop of Hereford's chaplain, a canon regular and a trustworthy person, whom the Bishop had sent over to make his excuses to the Archbishop for not appearing, in answer to three summonings which he had received from St. Thomas to appear in person before him by the Purification. "On his landing, he found our brother the Bishop of Hereford waiting for a wind to cross the water, and in concealment; for the King's officers would have prevented his crossing openly. On finding him, he forbade him to proceed, first in the name of the King, and then of his Holiness the Pope. The Bishop then

<sup>10</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 150.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 147.

inquired, as I am assured by his messenger, who came afterwards to excuse his lordship's non-appearance, 'whether he had any letters to that effect.' He asserted that he had, and that the Pope forbade him, and the other Bishops as well, either to attend our summons or obey us in anything till the arrival of the Pope's Legate *à latere*, who had been obtained by the King, and was coming with full powers to determine the matter on which they had appealed, and the principal cause and all its incidents. The Bishop insisted on seeing the letters; but he said that he had sent them on with his baggage to Winchester, about twelve miles from Southampton. On considering the matter, the Bishop sent back his cleric to Winchester, Master Edward, in whose veracity I confide; and he saw the letters in company with the Bishop of London, who was likewise waiting to cross the water. When the Bishop of London saw them, he said aloud, as if unable to restrain himself, 'Then Thomas shall be no more Archbishop of mine.'"

And here we must interrupt the perusal of St. Thomas's letter to say that Robert de Melun returned to his see at Hereford, and there died. His death was caused, according to Fitzstephen,<sup>12</sup> by mortification at not being allowed to obey the Archbishop's letter of summons. He died on the 28th of February, 1167.<sup>13</sup> The see was kept vacant

<sup>12</sup> Fitzstephen, p. 87.

<sup>13</sup> Godwin, p. 483. It is clear from the events above narrated, that to assign the death of the Bishop of Hereford to the year 1166 (*Materials*, iii. p. 87) must be an error, due probably to that

six years; and then Robert Foliot, cousin to the Bishop of London, who was at this time Archdeacon of Oxford, succeeded him.

The narrative in the Saint's letter continues thus: "John of Oxford added, that his own person was privileged, so that we had no power to excommunicate him, or even rebuke him, except in the Pope's presence; and that he might present the deanery of Salisbury to any one he pleased; and that our authority was in all points curtailed till the Legates' arrival."

This news produced the greatest consternation amongst all St. Thomas's friends. The Saint's own warm disposition led him to feel it deeply, and to express himself on the subject strongly. The letter from which the above extract is taken was written to one of his retinue, named John, who was representing him at Rome, and it contains the following reflections, which place before us in a strong light his disappointment and anxiety:

"If this is true, then without doubt his lordship the Pope has suffocated and strangled, not only our own person, but himself and every ecclesiastic of both kingdoms, yea, both churches together, the French and the English. For what will not the Kings of the earth dare against the clergy under cover of this most wretched precedent? And on what can the Church of Rome rely, when it thus deserts and leaves destitute the

fertile source of misdatings, the ancient commencement of the new year on Lady day. On the 8th of January Robert Bishop of Lincoln also died (Hoved. fol. 293 b).

persons who are making a stand in its cause, and contending for it even unto death? And what if anything should befall his Holiness the Pope, while the King and others are in possession of these privileges and exemptions? They will be transmitted to posterity, from whose hands none will be able to wrest them. Nay more, let the Church say yea or nay, other princes will extort like privileges and exemptions for themselves, till in the end the liberty of the Church perishes, and with it the power and jurisdiction of the Bishops. For none will be at hand to coerce the wickedness of tyrants, whose whole efforts are at this day concentrated against God's Church and ministers. Nor will they desist till these are reduced to like servitude with the rest.

“ However, the result is as yet unseen; what we do see is, that whether the above assertions are true or false, we, at any rate, are troubled above measure. No obedience or respect is now shown us in anything, either by the Bishops or Abbots, or any of the clergy; as if our deposition was now a settled thing. Of one thing, however, let his lordship the Pope assure himself; no consideration shall induce us to enter the King's territories as a litigant, nor to accept our enemies as our judges, especially my lord of Pavia, who thirsts for our blood, that he may fill our see, which, as we understand, is promised him in case he rids the King of us. There is another thing that grieves us. The great men of France—nobles, bishops, and other dignitaries—as if despairing of our cause, have sent back our un-

happy co-exiles, whom their charity has sustained; and these must perish of cold and hunger, as some, indeed, have perished already. Be careful to impress all this upon his lordship the Pope, that if, as we even yet hope, some zeal of God remains with him, he may take steps to relieve us."

John of Salisbury wrote the Holy Father a strong letter on the subject, and so did Lombard of Piacenza, the future Cardinal Archbishop of Benevento, who now styles himself "subdeacon of the Roman Church."<sup>14</sup> The latter urged upon the Pope first the anger of the King of France, who declared that "his Holiness could not have given him greater molestation if the cause for which he was sending Legates had been to take away his own crown." After saying that the result was, that "the sweet savour of his Holiness's name was in part impaired," he adds, "and what makes matters still worse, it seems the general belief that the day of victory for his lordship of Canterbury and your Holiness was at hand. For the King was so terrified when the day of appeal had lapsed, that he asserted that the Bishops had not engaged in it by his commands or advice, and that he would take no part with them in the matter. The Bishops, too, were in such a strait, and in such dread of an interdict, that some were sending messengers to his lordship of Canterbury, and others were on their way to attend his summons, when John of Oxford, as if with legatine authority, forbade them to obey in your Holiness's

<sup>14</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 176, 170; cf. *ibid.* p. 497.



name. On this occasion the Bishop of Hereford was recalled, when he was actually at the sea-side waiting to cross." Finally, he says that he "has often heard it asserted, and in many quarters, that the King's whole hope rests in your Holiness's misfortunes, and in what I pray God of His infinite mercy long to avert—your death; for he asserts that he will never recognize your successor till all the dignities and customs of his realm have been acknowledged by him. And now it is believed that these Legates have been demanded by him only in subtlety, that for the time he may evade excommunication and his realm an interdict; and that thus he hopes, during your Holiness's life, to render void the Archbishop's authority, till he can make terms with your successor."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE CARDINAL LEGATES.

1167.

Double dealings of John of Oxford—limitation of the powers of the Cardinal Legates—their long journey—letter of William of Pavia and two draughts of an answer—the Cardinals visit St. Thomas at Sens and King Henry at Caen—meeting at Les Planches between the Cardinal Legates and the Saint—the Cardinals return to the King who shows them discourtesy—councils and conferences—fresh appeals—the Cardinals' departure.

MATTERS were not, however, really as bad as they seemed. John of Oxford was well known to St. Thomas to be so reckless and unscrupulous a person, that he currently went amongst the Archbishop's friends by the nickname of "the Swearer." Two of the King's envoys, John Cumin and Ralph of Tamworth, who left Rome on the 1st of January, and reached Poitiers by the Purification, told the Bishop of that place, who was one of St. Thomas's greatest friends, that John of Oxford ingratiated himself with the Pope, by suggesting that peace might be restored between the Archbishop and the King, if any one could be found to negotiate it faithfully; having the effrontery to say, that he would undertake to do this himself. For this reason the other royal envoys loudly called him a traitor to the King;

because for his own ends he promised to do what the King regarded as impossible. But after a while what was rumoured and suspected from the beginning became certain, that John of Oxford had gone much further, and in the King's name had sworn to all the Archbishop could have wished, before the Pope granted the legation, with a view to pacification. Thus writes John of Salisbury to Milo Bishop of Théroutane:<sup>1</sup> "We hope in our Father, Who is Lord of all, that before long he will turn this storm into a gentle breeze; although the Church's enemies boast that a worse shipwreck awaits us. It is not true to say that the Church of Rome has turned against us, and that our lord the Pope has assented to all the petitions of the King of England. Perhaps people were misled by finding that those who had been excommunicated were absolved at the return of John of Oxford; and that he himself, as if he had done right in communicating with the schismatical emperor, had had the deanery of Salisbury restored to him from the Pope's own hand. But any one who paid attention to what was done at Rome would see, that though the Pope was deceived, he always faithfully upheld our cause and the Church's. Before John was absolved, he publicly swore (and I hope he did not perjure himself) that he had done nothing among the schismatics against the faith of the Church, or the honour and service of the Pope. He then produced commendatory

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 198. "Miloni Episcopo Morinorum." Théroutane was destroyed by Charles V. in 1553, as the old and very neat chronogram records: *DeLetI MorInI*.

letters and petitions from the King, which said that he was to be believed with the credit that was due to the King himself. Acting on this authority, he committed to the judgment of the Pope the cause at issue between the King and the Archbishop, respecting the wicked customs, that at his pleasure they should have all force or none, and that peace should be concluded with the Archbishop on the terms the Pope might dictate. When he had confirmed this with an oath, he obtained from his Holiness a promise that the legates should be sent. It is reported that they have been stopped on their way, in consequence of the discovery of the Swearer's treachery." How far King Henry was responsible for obtaining favours from the Pope on conditions which he never meant to fulfil, it is hard to say; most probably, John of Oxford, finding his powers ample, preferred an apparent success, gained through an unscrupulous oath, which he must have known his master would not ratify, to returning unsuccessful. Besides, the moment was critical. The legatine powers conferred upon St. Thomas were bringing the Bishops to a sense of their duty; and the King, who found the battle difficult with the Archbishop alone, would have been unable to contend with the clergy of the kingdom, if united. It was therefore essential to gain some concession from the Pope, which should hamper St. Thomas, at least for a time; and it was gained, though with a terrible violation of the sanctity of an oath.

When these things reached the Pope's ears,

notwithstanding the letters of remonstrance which have been already given, he was very unwilling to give up all hope of a reconciliation. John of Oxford had written to him to say that the King of England had liberated such ecclesiastics as he had imprisoned; and that he was willing to confirm to the Church all that liberty which she had had in his realm in the time of King Henry his grandfather. This phrase, which makes its appearance now for the first time, though it is afterwards repeated, is but a quibble; for the King professed to claim the Constitutions of Clarendon on the very ground that they were customs. Still it seemed to the Pope that peace might be concluded, and he therefore wrote<sup>2</sup> from Rome, on May 7, 1167, to the Cardinals, William of Pavia and Otho, that their first duty was to console the Archbishop, and that their only task was to arrange this reconciliation to the satisfaction of both parties; commanding them not to set foot in King Henry's dominions until the reconciliation had taken place. Similar instructions were sent to them from Benevento, on the 22nd of August. This was practically to take away the powers of the Legates, and to restore his liberty to St. Thomas; and Humbert, the Archdeacon of Bourges, afterwards Archbishop of Milan, and ultimately Pope Urban III., who went to meet them at Chateauroux, wrote to the Archbishop,<sup>3</sup> that, as far as he could learn from them in person, such was the case.

The year 1167 was far advanced before the ]

<sup>2</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 200, 232.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 202.

Cardinals arrived who had been named legates in the previous December, but whose powers since May had been restricted to a mere mediation. Cardinal Otho wrote from Montpellier, where he was waiting for his co-legate William of Pavia, that his journey had been long because it had been necessary to go to Venice in disguise, owing to the state of Italy, where the Emperor was with his troops; and that he had stayed some time at Brescia, his native place. This Cardinal St. Thomas did not dread as a mediator, as he did his colleague William of Pavia, who also wrote, but in a style that made the Saint seriously uneasy. Considering that they had no powers whatever, but were simply peacemakers, the following sentence left the impression that its writer intended to assume an authority that did not belong to him, which, as he was notoriously a partisan, might have serious consequences: "Our venerable brother Otho, Cardinal Deacon, and ourself are on our way to his (the King's) territory, with a commission to determine the questions at issue between your lordship and himself, as shall seem to us best for the interests of the Church of God; and we would seriously press your lordship, as far as in you lies, to avoid all steps that may tend to widen the breach, but zealously to co-operate in whatever may facilitate an arrangement." To this letter St. Thomas prepared two several answers, but they were never sent; for John of Salisbury, whom the Saint consulted respecting them, freely condemned them, as far too severe and not respectful

enough to be sent to a cardinal-legate ; and he himself suggested a substitute. There is scarcely anything so beautiful in the life of St. Thomas as the spirit in which he received and encouraged John of Salisbury's constant and free criticisms on himself and his proceedings.

As the Cardinals had to pass by Sens, they naturally visited St. Thomas first. They had to thank the intercession of the Saint with King Louis for their liberty of passing through France, which that King was strongly inclined to refuse. They then went on to visit King Henry, who was at Caen ; with whom they spent a long time without sending the Archbishop any account of their proceedings. This was quite in accordance with the idea which the friends of St. Thomas entertained, that the King's sole object was to protract all negotiations, and that he was insincere in treating about terms of reconciliation at all. However, St. Thomas was summoned by them to a conference, to be held on the confines of France and Normandy, at a spot between the towns of Trie and Gisors.

On the night before the conference the Archbishop dreamed, as he told his companions on the way, that poison was offered him in a golden cup. In the course of the day, they thought they saw it verified in the person of the Cardinal William of Pavia, whose proposals were plausible and elegantly put, though they were destructive of the liberty of the Church. The King of France was himself present at the interview, and he had provided for the Archbishop's accommodation.

In a letter, in which St. Thomas himself describes this interview to the Pope, he says that his enemies tried to wear him out with journeys and expenses; and that, as he and his fellow-exiles had but three horses at their disposal, he was obliged to ask for another week, besides the ten days' warning which the Legates gave him. At this slight delay, King Henry, it would be hard to say why, took offence. When King Louis learned the straits to which the Archbishop was reduced, he amply provided him with means to travel with his fellow-exiles to the appointed place of conference. "God in the richness of His mercy reward him," wrote St. Thomas to the Pope.

At the interview, which was held at Les Planches on the 18th of November, 1167, the Legates were attended only by the Archbishop of Rouen, the King of England having kept about him such of the English Bishops as he had summoned, who were all St. Thomas's greatest enemies,—the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of London, Chichester, and Salisbury, with, for appearance' sake, the Bishop of Worcester. Many, however, of lower rank represented the King's interest at the conference.

St. Thomas was accompanied by John of Salisbury, Herbert of Bosham, Lombard of Piacenza, Alexander the Welshman, Geoffrey prior and Guarin canon of Pentney, Robert and Gilbert canons, the two last named being the Archbishop's chaplains, John the Cantor, Alan, Richard, Henry and many others.



We have the fullest accounts of all that passed, as both parties sent their reports to the Pope, and John of Salisbury has recorded the transactions in two documents.<sup>4</sup> The Legates opened conference by dwelling at some length on the charity of the Pope and their own anxiety for peace and for the safety of the Archbishop of Canterbury and his companions. They then spoke of the difficulties of their journey, which had been very long. They had left Rome in the middle of March,<sup>5</sup> and it was November when they reached Normandy. They then approached the matter before them by enlarging on the greatness of the King of England, his inflexibility, the badness of the times, the necessities of the Church, which, in every part of the world but France, was beset with enemies. They spoke, too, of the many favours the King in times past had delighted to heap upon the Saint; and they recounted the wrongs of which Henry now complained. Amongst the latter he reckoned the war which had broken out between himself and both the King of France and the Earl of Flanders, which he attributed to St. Thomas. They ended by asking his advice how they might themselves hope to recover the favour of the King, whose displeasure they had incurred when he found that their powers were not as extensive as John of Oxford had led him to expect. "With-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 281, 245, 256, 261.

<sup>5</sup> The Bishop of Poitiers had been told by John Cumin and Ralph of Tamworth that they left Rome on the 1st of January, 1167 (*Materials*, vi. pp. 123, 147).

out much humility and moderation," they said, with the view, it was thought, either of frightening or provoking the Archbishop, "and without showing so great a prince very much honour, they would not be able to appease his indignation or find a remedy for so many dangers."

St. Thomas rose, and with great calmness, yet with his eyes sparkling and the colour in his face, addressed the Legates in Latin with fluency and elegance. He opened his reply by thanking themselves and the Pope for the interest they took in him and his fellow-exiles. He answered their address point by point, showing the groundlessness of the King's complaints and exposing the wrongs of the Church. With regard to the war, in order to deprive such reports of any colour of probability, for a long time past he had purposely abstained from all personal intercourse with the King of France, the only recent instance being the interview in which he had obtained a safe-conduct for the Legates at their request. This matter was further confirmed the next day by the appearance of King Louis in person before the Legates; and he there asserted on oath that the Archbishop of Canterbury had always counselled peace, on such terms as should secure the honour of the two Kings and the tranquillity of their people.

St. Thomas expressed himself as ready to show to the King all such humility and loyal obedience as was consistent with the honour of God and the Apostolic See, the liberty of the Church, the dignity of his office, and the preservation of

Church property; and, if this seemed too much or too little, he promised to be guided by the advice of the Legates, as far as his circumstances and profession permitted. The Legates replied that they had not come to give him counsel, but to take counsel with him and to promote a reconciliation.

William of Pavia then asked whether, "inasmuch as we are not better than our fathers," the Saint would not in their presence promise to observe to King Henry whatever customs his predecessors had observed to former kings. All questions would then be at an end, and he might return to his see in peace. The Archbishop's answer was that none of his predecessors had ever been forced to make such a promise to any king; and as for himself, by God's help he would never promise to observe customs that were clearly contrary to the laws of God, that overthrew the rights of the Holy See, and destroyed the liberty of the Church. In the presence of the Cardinals themselves and of many others the Pope at Sens had condemned these customs, and had absolved the Archbishop from his promise, and the Saint added that the Pope had then used an expression worthy of his apostolic office, which please God he would never forget, that he should have bent his neck to the executioner sooner than have given consent to such wickedness and for temporal advantages or for the love of life have abandoned his priestly duty. The Constitutions of Clarendon that had been condemned were then read, and

St. Thomas asked the Legates whether a priest could observe them without perilling his order and his salvation. The Cardinal of Pavia recommended the Saint to resign his see; which, St. Thomas answered, would be to abandon the cause of the Church. He also refused to return to Canterbury without anything being said on either side of the subjects in dispute, quoting the English proverb, "Silence gives consent."

They then proceeded to ask, whether the Saint would submit to their judgment as to the points in dispute between himself and the King. The question placed him in the dilemma of submitting to an arbitrator like the Cardinal William of Pavia, whom he knew to be a partisan of the King's, or of refusing an arbitration in what might seem a factious manner. His answer was, that before any such arbitration should take place, restitution must first be made of all the Church property which had been unjustly taken away; and that then he would be prepared to submit to the judgment of any one whom his Holiness might appoint.

The Legates finally asked the Archbishop if, in case of another appeal being made by the Bishops, he would consent to their hearing evidence upon it, and adjudging it. The Saint had already heard a rumour of the nature of this appeal, which it was proposed to make in the name of the Bishops of England. As he was aware, but a very few were assembled at Rouen, and most of the other Bishops knew nothing of it; while of those who did know of it, many dis-

approved it, as being rather an evasion than an appeal. For these reasons he answered, that he had received no instructions from the Pope upon the subject; but that on receiving them, he would return such an answer as he might judge reasonable. In conclusion, the poverty of himself and his friends disabled them from undertaking law-suits and expensive journeys; nor would he consent to encroach on the bounty of the King of France by asking him to maintain them in other men's houses. The Archbishop parted from the Legates with mutual expressions of good-will.

The Cardinals<sup>6</sup> now returned to the King. On the Thursday after the interview, they arrived at the monastery of Bec; the day after, at Lisieux; the third day, at St. Pierre-sur-Dives; the fourth day, that is, the Sunday before Advent, they passed through Argentan. The King came out two leagues to meet them; and welcoming them cordially, attended each to his lodgings.

The day following, that is, Monday, the 27th of November, early in the morning, after Mass, they were invited to attend the King, and entered the council-chamber with the Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots who had admission. On their reappearance, after a space of about two hours, the King came out as far as the outer door of the chapel, and there said publicly in the hearing of the Legates, "I trust my eyes may never light upon another Cardinal." In such haste was he to get quit of them, that, though

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 269.

their house was at no great distance, he would not await the arrival of their horses, but mounted them upon the first that could be found near the chapel. Thus the Cardinals took their departure, with four attendants at the most.

The Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots stayed with the King, and re-entered the council-chamber, where they remained till evening. After this, they visited the Cardinals, all in evident confusion; then, after remaining some time, they returned to their houses. The day following they were closeted with the King till twelve o'clock; then visited the Cardinals; then returned to the King, and again to the Cardinals, carrying secret messages backwards and forwards. The day after, that is, the vigil of St. Andrew, the King rose at daybreak, and went out to hunt and hawk, so that it was surmised that he absented himself on purpose. Very early the Bishops met at the chapel-royal, and adjourned to the council-chamber; here they deliberated in the King's absence, and then withdrew to the church, near which the Cardinals lodged.

When the Cardinals had taken their seats to hear what was proposed, and the others were arranged on each side, the Archbishops of Rouen and York, the Bishops of Worcester, Salisbury, Bayeux, London, Chichester, and Angoulême, with very many Abbots, and a great multitude both of clergy and laity, at length the Bishop of London rose, his pointless and inelegant oration sufficiently evincing the troubled state of his mind. He opened it as follows:

“Your lordships have heard that letters were brought to us from his Holiness the Pope, which we have now in our hands, in which his Holiness signified to us, that on receiving your summons we should come to meet you, for that your lordships were intrusted with full powers to decide the cause now pending between his lordship the King and my lord of Canterbury, and also that between the Bishops of England and the same Archbishop.

“In consequence, as soon as we heard of your arrival in these parts, we hastened to meet you, ready to abide by your decision, and to take our parts as well in accusation as defence. In like manner, my lord the King is prepared to ratify any sentence which you may pronounce respecting himself and his lordship of Canterbury. Since, then, no impediment is raised on the part either of the King or of your lordships or of ourselves, to thwart his Holiness’s instructions, let the blame rest where it is due.

“But because, with his accustomed precipitation, the Archbishop strikes before he threatens, suspends and excommunicates before he admonishes, for this reason we anticipate his headlong sentence by an appeal. We have appealed already before this, and we renew our appeal now; and in this appeal all England includes itself.”

He then spoke of the claim raised by the King for the sum of forty-four thousand marks on account of revenues which passed into St. Thomas’s hands as Chancellor; and he was witty at the Saint’s expense, saying, that he apparently believed

that promotion remitted debts, as baptism does sins. He proceeded to the danger of a schism, in case of severe measures against the King; and he complained that the Archbishop defamed the King respecting the statutes of Clarendon, protesting publicly that the King would relax the statute which forbade appeals; that it was only for the sake of the poorer clergy that he had enacted it, and now that they were ungrateful for it, he would annul it; and that if the cause was civil, they should contend before a civil judge; if ecclesiastical, they might choose their own court, and contend as they would.

Lastly, he said that St. Thomas imposed unfair burdens upon him, commanding him to disperse his briefs through England, and that forty couriers were not enough for this; and, as a further grievance, that he had withdrawn from his jurisdiction nearly sixty churches, on the ground that they had formerly paid rents to Holy Trinity or St. Augustine's; and that he had his Dean<sup>7</sup> in the City of London to judge the causes of these exempt churches, and thus undermined the authority of the Bishop, who was in this manner more aggrieved than any other Bishop.

The Legates stated that they had no powers to act as judges over the Archbishop, but only as mediators: on which, the Bishops named St. Martin's in the following year as the term of their appeal, that is, November 11th, 1168. The Bishop of Salisbury joined in the appeal,

<sup>7</sup> This official of the Archbishop is the well known Dean of the Arches.



in his own name and that of the Bishop of Winchester. A cleric of Geoffrey Ridel, Archdeacon of Canterbury, appealed in the name of his master; so, probably to ingratiate himself with the King, did one of the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, who had been sent to the court to implore Henry's protection against the exactions of the infamous Randulf de Broc. This monk had at the same time another commission. Prior Wibert had died September 27, 1167, and the Convent of Christ Church now sent to the King about the appointment of a new prior. John of Salisbury wrote<sup>8</sup> to reproach the monks for their disloyalty to their Archbishop, and said that those who heard their representative join in the appeal of the Bishops, scoffed at him, saying that it was almost hereditary for the monks of Canterbury to hate their Archbishop. "They had been no comfort to Anselm when twice exiled for justice sake. They had despised Ralph, hated William, set snares for Theobald, and now for no reason they persecuted Thomas."

When the conference was over, the Cardinals sent two messengers to St. Thomas, who, on the day after the feast of St. Lucy, December 14th, delivered to him letters<sup>9</sup> prohibiting him, in the Pope's name and their own, from issuing any excommunication or interdict until the Pope had been consulted.

The Bishops also sent two messengers, Walter, precentor of Salisbury, and Master Jocelin, chancellor of Chichester, to announce the appeal, and

<sup>8</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 301.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 284, 277.

renew it in the Archbishop's presence; but he would not give them a hearing; first, because one of the Bishops was London, whom he regarded as excommunicate, and had denounced as such to the Cardinals; secondly, because they had held communion with excommunicates whose absolution had been fraudulent.

The Archbishop wrote back to the Cardinals, that he well knew, and that they could not be ignorant, how far their commands were binding on him; and that by God's grace he should act as he thought most for the interest of the Church. He sent them also a verbal message by their messengers and his own, finding fault with their conduct for manifold and obvious causes. Likewise he called on them to fulfil the Pope's instructions about the excommunicates, either urging them to satisfaction, or replacing them under sentence.

The Cardinals left the King on the same Tuesday after Vespers. On their departure, the King entreated them most humbly that they would intercede with the Pope to rid him of St. Thomas altogether. In asking this, he shed tears in the presence of the Cardinals and others. William of Pavia seemed to weep too; but Cardinal Otho could scarcely conceal his amusement.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

“MEANWHILE.”

1168.

Absolutions of excommunicated persons—proposed translation of St. Thomas—messengers to the Pope from both sides—conferences between the two Kings at Nantes—John of Salisbury, Herbert of Bosham and Philip of Calne have interviews with King Henry—the Pope suspends the Saint's powers—St. Thomas expostulates with the Pope.

THE departure of the Cardinals left matters balanced much as they were before their arrival, although eventually their commission resulted in the most serious reverse St. Thomas experienced. He had now cause of complaint to the Pope, that the Legates had, as far as their power went, suspended him from all authority. On the other hand, the King was apparently not unwilling to give up the two most obnoxious articles of Clarendon: that which prevented appeals to the Pope, and that which required the clergy to plead in the secular courts, even in ecclesiastical causes. The Cardinals, however, still continuing in the neighbourhood, application was made to them for absolution by persons, who, after being excommunicated by St. Thomas, had been absolved in England. This absolution had been principally obtained from the Bishop of Llandaff, on John of

Oxford's return from Rome, in virtue of a fraudulent interpretation of the powers sent by the Pope in favour of those who were in peril of death, and who should make oath to obey the orders of the Holy See on their recovery. All parties now regarding these absolutions as invalid, the Cardinals William and Otho issued<sup>1</sup> orders to the Bishops of Norwich and Chichester to repeat them after a similar oath. The Pope,<sup>2</sup> who had been informed by St. Thomas of what had taken place, ordered them to replace the censure, unless the parties should at once make restitution of the Church property they had usurped. This letter was sent<sup>3</sup> to the Legates by St. Thomas, first, copies by a canon regular of St. John's, and then the originals by Osbert, a subdeacon of the Holy See; but the Cardinals said that the Church revenues had been received by the King's mandate and authority, and therefore that, as long as they were in his territory, it was impossible to do justice on the usurpers. Cardinal Otho was now plainly either over-persuaded by his colleague, or over-awed by the King, for the present proceedings are inexcusable.

With regard to the proposal of William of Pavia, that the Saint should be translated to another see, which had been taken up in some quarters rather warmly, and amongst others, to St. Thomas's great mortification, by the Bishop of Worcester, he wrote in these striking terms: "We wish our lord the Pope and our other

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 311.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 315.

friends to know, and do you take care to impress it upon them, that sooner than suffer ourself to be torn from our Mother the Church of Canterbury, which has nourished and raised us to our present station, God the inspector of hearts knoweth we would consent to be slaughtered. Let them waste no labour on such a prospect, for there is no calamity which we would not prefer to that. You may inform them also, that if every other grievance were removed, yet so long as that man retains the possession of our own or any other church in his dominions, we would rather die any death than basely live and suffer him to enjoy them with impunity.” In a letter<sup>4</sup> written not very long before, the Saint had represented to the Pope that the King held in his own hands no less than seven vacant bishoprics in the two provinces of Canterbury and Rouen.

Meanwhile messengers on both sides were constantly going to and from Benevento, where the Pope was. To use Herbert's graphic words, “The threshold of the Apostles was worn by our messengers and by our adversaries: both parties run to and fro, hurry and bustle. Some of both die on the way, but others succeed them, and on both sides the number increases. And to speak of our own people only, the multitude of our fellow-exiles afforded us such a supply of messengers, that it seemed as if God had permitted so many to be banished for our advantage. Here was a poor Archbishop and his ragged and wretched fellow-exiles showing a brave resistance

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 253.

to citizens and kings, to cardinals and persons of wealth; and I then at least learned that gold and silver cannot be brought into comparison with a man of learning and energy, let him be as poor as he may."

John of Salisbury, in May 1168, wrote the following account<sup>5</sup> of the proceedings at Benevento to the Bishop of Exeter, with whom he kept up an active and friendly correspondence: "Both parties were courteously received; but the King's envoys, as their cause was worse, so their pomp and ostentation was greater; and when they found that they could not move his lordship the Pope by flattery or promises, they had recourse to threats; intimating that the King would follow the errors of Nouredin, and enter into communion with a profane religion, sooner than allow Thomas to act any longer as Bishop in the Church of Canterbury. But the man of God could not be shaken by terror any more than seduced by flattery. He set before them the alternative of life and death, and said that, though he could not prevent their choosing the way of those that perish, despising the grace and patience of God, yet by the grace of God, for his part, he would not recede from the right way. Their spirit then quickly subsided; and, as they perceived that they could not make any progress this way against justice, they sent envoys to the King of Sicily, with the King's letters which they had brought as their credentials, in the hope that the King and Queen of Sicily might

<sup>5</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 406.

aid them in obtaining something from his lordship the Pope to the prejudice of the Church. But his most Christian Majesty the King of the French, presaging this wicked policy, had written to the Archbishop elect of Palermo, identifying himself with the cause of the Church and of the Archbishop of Canterbury. What has been the success of either party is as yet unknown. In the mean time messengers arrived from the Legates whom the King of England had procured from the Pope, but did not at all agree in their accounts; for whatever one said in the Pope's Court, the other unsaid. But there is nothing certain known about these either, as to the answers they will bring back to their respective masters. Supplication was made to the Pope, on the part of the King and the Legates, backed with other interest, in behalf of the Bishop of Salisbury; and at length it was conceded that the Pontiff would pardon him his offence, and write to his lordship of Canterbury, requesting and counselling him to take off the sentence of suspension, and to receive him back into his favour and affection, on condition that he gives security in his own person, and sends two of the principal clerics of his church, the Dean being excepted, to make oath that the Bishop has ordered them, and not afterwards revoked the order, to swear in his name and stead that he will make satisfaction to the Archbishop for his contumacy and misconduct. From this it may be surmised that the Pope was either ignorant of the sentence of the legates, by which they absolved the aforesaid

Bishop, or that he did not think fit to ratify it. The same Bishop had before obtained letters nearly to the same effect, which, however, did not impose upon him the oath; but these he did not think fit to use, either because they were displeasing to the King, or else that they were not considered sufficient. What award each party would bring back was unknown, when the bearer of the aforesaid letters returned; but his lordship the Pope has written to his most Christian Majesty that he will not fail the Church of God nor his friend of Canterbury, whenever he can uphold him with justice."

Various conferences were now held between the principal nobles of both kingdoms, and finally between the two Kings of England and France, at Mantes, on the 12th of May, the Sunday after the Ascension, with a view to promote peace. Probably about this time, though it may very possibly have happened in one of the previous years,<sup>6</sup> an effort was made by the intercession of King Louis to reconcile some of the Archbishop's followers to King Henry, that so the revenues of their benefices, of which they stood in great need, might be restored to them. Henry gave them a safe-conduct for going and coming to and from Angers, where he had spent Easter. On Low Sunday the King gave them audience. The

<sup>6</sup> Canon Robertson assigns it to 1166, in which case the date of Low Sunday would be May 1. Fitzstephen places it after the events of 1169, but he has placed the excommunications of 1169 before the conference at Les Planches in 1167, so that his order of events cannot be relied on (*Materials*, iii. p. 98).



first who was introduced was John of Salisbury, who, after saluting the King, begged for a peaceable restitution of his benefices, as he had never wilfully offended him, but was ever ready to be faithful and loyal to him, as his earthly lord, saving his order. On the King's part it was answered him, that he was born in the King's dominions, that his relations there had their subsistence, and that there he himself had risen to riches and station: therefore, as a subject of the King, he ought to have been faithful to him against the Archbishop and every one else. An oath was then proposed to him, that he would be faithful to the King in life and limb, and in preserving his earthly honour against all men; and expressly that he would lawfully keep his written customs and royal dignities, let the Pope, or the Archbishop, or his own Bishop, do what they might. He replied, that he had been brought up from his youth by the Church of Canterbury, that he was sworn to the obedience of the Pope and of his Archbishop, and that he could not desert them, nor could he promise to observe the customs; but he was willing to pledge himself to receive whatever the Pope and the Archbishop received, and to reject what they rejected. This did not satisfy the King, so he received orders to leave. This unsuccessful visit, John of Salisbury afterwards complained, cost him thirteen pounds and two horses, which he could ill afford. He had previously consented to leave the Court of the Archbishop, but he had constantly refused the terms that were now offered to him.

Master Herbert of Bosham was called for, and entered. The King said to those near him, "Now we shall see a specimen of pride." Tall and striking in person, he had on a dress peculiarly calculated to set it off; a tunic, and above it a mantle of the green cloth of Auxerre hanging over his shoulders, and reaching, after the German fashion, to his ankles. After the usual salutation, he took his seat; was interrogated in the same manner with John, and made for the most part the same answers. On mention of loyalty and the Archbishop, he said that the Archbishop above all men was most especially loyal, for that he had not suffered his majesty to go astray unwarned. Of the customs he said as John had, and added that he wondered the King had put them in writing. "For in other kingdoms likewise there are evil customs against the Church; but they are not written, and for this reason there is hope, by God's grace, that they may become disused."

The King, wishing to take him in his words, asked, "And what are the evil customs in the kingdom of our lord the King of France?"

*Herbert.* "The exaction of toll and passage from the clergy and pilgrims. Again, when a Bishop dies, all his movable goods, even the doors and windows of his house, become the King's. So, in the realm of the King of the Germans, though these and similar evil customs exist, they are not written."

*The King.* "Why do you not call him by his proper title, the Emperor of Germany?"

*Herbert.* "His title is King of Germany; and when he styles himself Emperor, it is 'Emperor of the Romans, the ever-august.'"

*The King.* "This is abominable. Is this son of a priest to disturb my kingdom and disquiet my peace?"

*Herbert.* "It is not I that do it; nor, again, am I the son of a priest, as I was born before my father entered orders; nor is he a King's son, whose father was no King when he begat him."

Here Jordan Tarsun, one of the barons sitting by, said, "Whosoever son he is, I would give half my barony he were mine." This speech made the King angry, but he said nothing. After a little he dismissed Herbert, who withdrew.

Philip of Calne, entered next. He was by birth a Londoner, and for two years before the Archbishop's exile he had studied in the Holy Scriptures at Tours,<sup>7</sup> at which place he had also taught law. He was a man of great reading and very eloquent, but in poor health, and on this account he had not accompanied the Archbishop, nor had he been sent to Rome, nor mixed up in proceedings against the King. All this was explained to Henry, and he had influential advocates, who reported to his majesty that he had said, when he heard that his property in England had been confiscated on the Arch-

<sup>7</sup> Tours is probably a mistake of Fitzstephen's for Rheims. Philip was recommended by St. Thomas to Fulk Dean of Rheims, whom the Saint afterwards thanks for his kindness to him. John of Salisbury speaks of Philip as living at Rheims (*Materials*, v. pp. 166, 258, 422).

bishop's account, "Good God, what does our good King look for from me?" The King was anxious not to seem to have granted nothing graciously, so he remitted the oath which had been proposed to the others, and restored Philip to his favour and to his possessions. He then rose, and turned to other business.

If it was in this year, 1168, that this attempt was made to restore the Archbishop's followers to Henry's favour, its resumption was rendered impossible by the news which reached the King from the Pope in the middle of the summer. His envoys—Clarembald, the Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's, whom, it will be remembered, St. Thomas had refused to bless as abbot several years before; Reginald, Archdeacon of Salisbury; Simon de la Chartre, and Henry of Northampton—had unexpectedly returned with letters from the Pope, not only confirming the prohibition placed upon St. Thomas by the Legates, which was a virtual suspension, but actually suspending the Archbishop by his Apostolic authority. It was conveyed to the King in these words:<sup>8</sup> "We, however, are unable to forget our fatherly affection for your person, but wish in all things, as far as duty will permit, to honour and attend to you as a Catholic Prince and most Christian King; and in the sure hope and belief that your discreet prudence will perceive how in the things of God and those which pertain to the Church, it is more glorious to be conquered than to conquer; and confiding that He, in whose hands

<sup>8</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 377.

are the hearts of kings, will deign to mitigate your indignation, we have laid our commands on the Archbishop, and altogether inhibited him from attempting, on any account, to put forth either against yourself, or your land, or the nobles of your realm, any sentence of interdict or excommunication, until you take him back into your favour, and he is reconciled to you, or from presuming in any matter to aggrieve you.

“And since it is certain that those letters, which we last addressed to your magnificence by your envoys, a year ago, are for the future without force; if, in the meantime, the aforesaid Archbishop shall in any matter presume to aggrieve yourself or the nobles of your realm, you are at liberty to show these present letters in attestation of our pleasure, and to demonstrate that you and yours are beyond the reach of his attacks.”

If the Holy Father thought that an appeal to the King's generosity or honour was likely to be successful, when he pointed out to him that “it was more glorious to be conquered than to conquer,” he must have been sadly disappointed. He published the letter as widely as he could, sending it to all the churches and dignitaries of both kingdoms; although the Pope only gave him liberty to do so, “*if* the Archbishop should aggrieve him;” and although his envoys had sworn that it should be kept secret, and the Pope had commanded them so to keep it, in virtue of their obedience and under peril of an

anathema; so that Master Geoffrey, one of the clerics of the Cardinal, William of Pavia, openly protested "that they had perjured themselves and incurred an anathema."

The Pope had never been suspected for a moment of being moved by any inferior motive; but the King was so elated with this his triumph, that he could not refrain from naming those of the Cardinals who had accepted his gold, and those personages who were his agents in dispensing bribes. John of Salisbury wrote to Master Lombard, who was with the Pope, "Would that my lords the Cardinals were within hearing of the French; among whom it has become a proverb, that the princes of the Church are faithless and companions of thieves—*Ecclesiæ principes infideles, socii furum*,<sup>9</sup> for they authorize the plunder of Christ's patrimony, to share in it themselves." The same writer also says to the Bishop of Poitiers, "The King himself told the Bishop of Worcester, that he and the other Bishops were exempted from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop; and bade them fear no threats, for that he had his lordship the Pope and all the Cardinals in his purse. So elated is he, that he boasts openly of having at last obtained the prerogatives of his grandfather, who was, in his own realms, at once apostolic legate, patriarch, and emperor, and whatever else he chose."

The letter<sup>10</sup> of the Holy Father to St. Thomas

9 "Thy princes are faithless, companions of thieves: they all love bribes, and run after rewards" (Isaias i. 23).

<sup>10</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 421.

announcing the step he had taken, is dated Benevento, the 19th of May, 1168. It differs in a material point from that sent to the King. In the latter the suspension ran, “until you take him back into your favour, and he is reconciled to you;” in that to the Archbishop it was, that his powers were suspended, until he should receive other apostolic letters to empower him to act, which were promised, if peace had not been arranged before the beginning of next Lent. The Pope had always confided much in the reality of the promises of reconciliation so freely made by the King of England’s envoys; and he probably thought that the step he was now taking would have the desired result, and at once end the suspension of the Archbishop.

The following<sup>11</sup> was St. Thomas’s expostulation with the Pope on what was by far the hardest trial he had yet had to bear:

“O my father, my soul is in bitterness; the letters by which your Holiness was pleased to suspend me have made myself and my unhappy fellow-exiles a very scorn of men and outcast of the people, and, what grieves me worse, have delivered up God’s Church to the will of its enemies.

“Our persecutor had held out sure hopes to the Count of Flanders, and others of the French nobility, that he meant to make peace with us; but his messengers arrived with new powers from your Holiness, and all was at an end. What could our friends do for us when thus repulsed by

<sup>11</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 51; Froude’s *Remains*, p. 348.

your Holiness's act, and smitten down as with the club of Hercules?

“Would that your Holiness's ear could hear what is said of this matter by the Bishops, nobles, and commons of both realms, and that your eye could see the scandal with which it has filled the French Court. What is there that this man may not now look for, when, through agents famous only for their crimes, he has circumvented those who have the key of knowledge, overthrown the ministers of justice, and seared the majesty of the Apostolic See? This King, whose sole hope rests on the chance of your Holiness's death or mine, has obtained the very thing he wishes,—a fresh delay, in which one or other of those events might happen. God avert them!

“But your Holiness counsels me to bear with patience the *meanwhile*. And do you not observe, O father, what this *meanwhile* may bring about, to the injury of the Church and of your Holiness's reputation? *Meanwhile*, he applies to his own purposes the revenues of the vacant abbeys and bishoprics, and will not suffer pastors to be ordained there; *meanwhile*, he riots in uncontrolled insolence against the parishes, churches, holy places, and the whole sacred order; *meanwhile*, he and the other persecutors of the Church make their will their law; *meanwhile*, who is to take charge of the sheep of Christ, and save them from the jaws of wolves, who no longer prowl around, but have entered the fold, and devour and tear and slay, with none to resist



them? For what pastor is there whose voice you have not silenced, and what Bishop have you not suspended in suspending me?

“This act of your Holiness is alike unexampled and unmerited, and will do the work of tyrants in other days as well as yours. Your Holiness has set an example ready to their hands; and doubtless this man and his posterity, unless your Holiness takes steps to order it otherwise, will draw it into a precedent. He and his nobles, whatever be their crime, will claim, among the privileges of the realm, exemption from any sentence of excommunication or interdict till authorized by the Apostolic See; then, in time, when the evil has taken root, neither will the Supreme Pontiff himself find any in the whole kingdom to take part with him against the King and his princes.”

There is yet another passage of this magnificent example of apostolic liberty which must be given, notwithstanding its length, as it is valuable for the instances which it recites of royal tyranny and usurpation.

“Some may say, perhaps, that it was out of hatred to myself personally, that the customs were introduced. But in truth, from the very day of the King’s accession to power, he took up the persecution of the Church, as if it were an heirloom. Was I Archbishop when his father prohibited the envoys of the blessed Eugenius from setting foot on his territory? Was I Archbishop when Gregory, Cardinal Deacon of St. Angelo, foreseeing this man’s tyranny, persuaded my lord

Eugenius to permit<sup>12</sup> the coronation of Eustace, King Stephen's son, saying that a ram was more easily held by the horns than a lion by the tail? Your Holiness will recollect this history, and likewise the letters which were then procured by him who is now at York, and joins the King in my persecution, yea, aims at overthrowing the Church's liberty. Was I Archbishop when, taking offence at an appeal, the King transferred the Church of Bosham to the Bishop of Lisieux, who by his rhetoric and his flatteries still holds it,<sup>13</sup> to the injury of the Church of Exeter? And what success had the Bishop of Chichester against the Abbot of Battle;<sup>14</sup> when, on his daring to speak before the Court of apostolic privileges, and to denounce the Abbot excommunicate, he was forthwith compelled to communicate with him in the face of all present, without even the form of absolution, and to receive him to the kiss of peace? For such was the King's pleasure and that of the Court, which dared not to oppose his will in anything. And this, most Holy Father, happened in the time of your Holiness's predecessor as well as of mine.

“And now, let those who attribute all this to

<sup>12</sup> “Ut Eustachium coronari *non* permetteret,” by an evident error in Dr. Giles' edition. This letter has not yet appeared in the Rolls Series.

<sup>13</sup> When Henry, after the martyrdom, left Normandy on his way to Ireland, to escape the Legates, Bartholomew Bishop of Exeter crossed the Severn, and finding him at Pembroke, asked and obtained the restoration of Bosham to the see of Exeter (Girald. Cambrensis, *Angl. Sacr.* p. 427).

<sup>14</sup> See Note D.

hatred of myself, name, if they can, any instance in this man's time, in which the authority of the See of Rome has availed any single person in his realm, so as to procure justice against himself or his favourites. Truly I can recollect none; though I could name many whom his hatred of the See of Rome has brought into jeopardy.

“Achard, Abbot of St. Victor's, was elected Bishop of Sééz. What prevented his consecration, except that his election had been confirmed by Pope Adrian? And why did the King consent afterwards to his being made Bishop of Avanches, except that no election had preceded his own choice? Froger too, in like manner, was not elected to the see of Sééz, but intruded into it: and all this before my promotion.

“And yet I doubt not that this struggle for the Church's liberty would long ago have been brought to a close, unless his wilfulness, not to use a harsher term, had found patrons in the Church of Rome. God requite them as is best for His Church and for themselves. The Almighty, All-just Lord God judge between them and me. Little should I have needed their patronage, if I had chosen to forsake the Church and yield to his wilfulness myself. I might have flourished in wealth and abundance of delicacies; I might have been feared, courted, honoured, and might have provided for my own in luxury and worldly glory, as I pleased. But because God called me to the government of His Church, an unworthy sinner as I was, and most wretched, though flourishing in the world's goods beyond

all my countrymen, through His grace preventing and assisting me, I chose rather to be an outcast from the palace, to be exiled, proscribed, and to finish my life in the last wretchedness, than to sell the Church's liberty, and to prefer the iniquitous traditions of men to the law of God.

“Such a course be for those who promise themselves many days, and in the consciousness of their deserts expect better times. For myself, I know that my own days are few; and that unless I declare to the wicked man his ways, his blood will shortly be required at my hands, by One from whom no patronage can protect me. There silver and gold will be profitless, and gifts that blind the eyes of wise ones.

“We shall soon stand all of us before the tribunal of Christ, and by His majesty and terrible judgment I conjure your Holiness, as my father and lord, and as the supreme judge on earth, to render justice to His Church and to myself, against those who seek my life to take it away.”

Surely these last two paragraphs were penned by the Saint when the revelation of his coming martyrdom was vividly before his mind, as was doubtless also the conclusion of a letter<sup>15</sup> to the Bishop of Hereford, written probably about the time he left Pontigny, in which he thus speaks: “Now to end all as it ought to be ended, since the Lord has shown us what and how great

<sup>15</sup> “Quoniam ostendit nobis Dominus quæ et quanta oporteat nos pati pro nomine suo et defensione Ecclesiæ” (*Materials*, v. p. 456).

things we have to suffer for His Name's sake and for the defence of His Church, we have need that you, and the Church committed to your care, should pray without ceasing for us; that where by our merits we fail, we may by your prayers and by those of the saints under your rule be able to endure, and thus deserve to obtain grace everlasting.”

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE KINGS.

1169.

The Cardinal Legates recalled—a new embassy from the Pope—meeting between the Kings of England and France near Montmirail—St. Thomas invited to the conference—he stands firm, while his own followers and King Louis turn against him—the people praise him—he refuses a second conference—the Kings meet again—the Pope restores St. Thomas's powers—King Louis again becomes his friend.

THE remonstrances which St. Thomas thought it right to address to the Pope were accompanied by letters<sup>1</sup> in a similar strain from the King and Queen of France and from other influential personages. The result was a renewal of the assurance on the Pope's part,<sup>2</sup> that, at the time named, St. Thomas should be left free to exercise his powers against the King.<sup>3</sup> The Cardinals were recalled; and they left, not without some sense that the cause of the Church had sadly suffered in their hands. In a final interview with King Henry, Cardinal Otho strongly pressed upon him the duty of restoring the Archbishop. His reply

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, p. 460, 462, 464, 468.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 484.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 480.

was, that as to the customs, he and his children would be content to claim only those which a hundred men from England, a hundred from Normandy, a hundred from Anjou, and so from his other dominions, would prove on oath to have been claimed by his predecessors. Or, if this condition displeased the Archbishop, he said he was willing to abide by the judgment of three Bishops from England, and three from his continental dominions, naming Rouen, Bayeux, and Le Mans. Or, if this were not enough, he would submit to the arbitration of his lordship the Pope, but only for himself and not for his heirs. He refused, however, to make any restitution whatever of the property of the Archbishop and his friends. The Cardinals were glad to leave King Henry's dominions; for the time was running rapidly on, and they were much afraid lest, if Lent came, and St. Thomas then passed some spiritual sentence upon the King, their own persons might not be safe.

The Holy Father had received such strong assurances from Henry that he was about to be reconciled to St. Thomas, both under his own hand and by his envoys, that he had regarded it as certain to take place shortly, and accordingly he had given it in the first instance as the period of the suspension of the Saint's powers. As the Lent was now approaching which he had defined as the term to St. Thomas, he thought it might be productive of good to send an embassy to the King. Accordingly, Simon prior of Montdieu, Engelbert prior of Val de St. Pierre, and Bernard

la Coudre a monk of Grammont, were sent<sup>4</sup> to be the bearers of commonitory letters warning him of the sentence which would now surely fall upon him if he did not at length do his duty by the Church, and fulfil his promise of being reconciled to the Archbishop. By their mediation, a conference was brought about between St. Thomas and King Henry.

Many efforts had been made and conferences held with a view to restoring peace between England and France. At length terms were finally arranged and peace was concluded at a meeting<sup>5</sup> between the two Kings in a plain near Montmirail in the Chartraine, on the Epiphany, January 6th, 1169. King Henry was now in earnest in his desire of peace, and, by the mediation of Theobald Count of Blois and Father Bernard of Grammont, the Kings joined hands and interchanged the kiss. About the same time, the King of England had received letters commonitory from the Pope in behalf of St. Thomas through the three religious messengers. Henry on his part had given hopes of peace, if the Archbishop would make a show of submission. For this reason, they counselled King Louis to invite St. Thomas to the colloquy.

Before the conference began, St. Thomas was surrounded by his friends, who, almost unanimously, tried to induce him to make his submis-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 437, 438. This letter or commission is dated Benevento, 25th May; but it contains the words, "ante initium proximæ Quadragesimæ, quæ jam quasi instare videtur."

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 488, 506.



sion to King Henry absolutely, adding no condition or clause, and leaving all the matter in dispute to the King's mercy and generosity. St. Thomas had proposed to substitute for the phrase, "saving his order," the similar but more solemn clause, "saving God's honour." At this time, one came in and told him that he had heard the King of England say, that he was only waiting to be reconciled to the Archbishop, to take the cross on his shoulder and go to Jerusalem; adding, what had deceived the Saint years ago, but was hardly likely to entrap him now, that he only wanted a verbal consent, before the King of France and the others who were by, for the sake of his own honour. As St. Thomas was entering into the conference, while it was unknown whether he was persuaded or not by the arguments and entreaties of all around him, Herbert of Bosham managed to thrust himself in amongst the crowd of great people to whisper a warning to the Saint that, if he omitted the clause "saving God's honour" now, he would be sure afterwards to repent it as bitterly as he had done his omission of the former clause in England. There was not time for him to answer by more than a look, when they were in the presence of the Kings.

When he saw his sovereign, he threw himself on his knees before him, and in this he was imitated by his firm friend William, the son of Count Theobald, now Archbishop of Sens; Hugh having died since the Saint went to live in that city. The King raised him up, when he said,

“Have mercy on me, O my lord; for I throw myself on God and your majesty, for God’s honour and yours.” King Henry had only been anxious for a reconciliation with the Archbishop as long as he thought it would promote his treaty with the King of France, so he at once took offence at the phrase touching the honour of God, which had been introduced. He began to speak in a contumelious and insulting manner to the Saint, saying, amongst other things, that while he was Chancellor he had received oaths of homage and fealty from all sorts of persons on both sides of the Channel, that he might supplant his King and become lord of all. The Saint began to reply; but Henry interrupted him, and turning to Louis said, “My lord, see how foolishly and how proudly this man deserted his Church, for he ran away by night, though neither I nor any one else drove him out of the kingdom. And now he persuades you that his is the cause of the Church, and that he suffers for justice sake, and thus he has deceived many great people. Now, my lord the King, and holy men and princes who are present, I ask for nothing from the Archbishop, but that he should keep those customs which his five immediate predecessors (some of whom are Saints and are famed for miracles) all observed to mine, and to which he himself has assented: let him again, in your presence, as a priest and a bishop, pledge himself to these without any subterfuge. The sole cause of dissension between us is, that he infringes them, and that at Vezelay, that famous place, on

a high festival, he has condemned some of them, and excommunicated those who observe them."

This speech produced a great effect. Some people called out, "The King humbles himself enough." The Archbishop was silent for a while, when Louis said, in a way which delighted the friends of the King of England, "My lord Archbishop, do you wish to be more than a saint? Or better than Peter? Why do you doubt? Here is peace at hand." St. Thomas replied: "It is true that my predecessors were better and greater than I, each in their time, and although they did not uproot every thing that lifted itself against God, yet they did destroy some things. And if any of them exceeded or fell short in any thing, in such a matter they set us no example. We blame Peter for denying Christ, but we praise him for risking his life in opposing Nero. Our fathers have suffered because they would not withhold the Name of Christ; and shall I, to recover a man's favour, suppress Christ's honour?" "This phrase," King Henry said, "I will never receive, lest the Archbishop should seem to wish to save God's honour, and not I, who desire it still more." St. Thomas reminded the King that the oath of fealty contained the clause, "saving my order;" on which he rose in anger, and withdrew. The Pope's envoys followed him, being bound to serve upon him other letters of the Pope of a severer character, in case the reconciliation were not effected; but they postponed it when the King began to say to them that on their counsel he

would do what he had avoided in the conference, lest it should not seem a free act on his part. He promised that if they could induce the Archbishop to swear to the customs, he would correct anything that might seem harsh and intolerable in them, by the advice of religious men whom he would summon. He also boasted with an oath that there was no Church in the world which had such liberty and peace, and that there was no clergy in such honour as those in his dominions, though a more impure and wicked set did not exist; being for the most part sacrilegious, adulterous, highwaymen, thieves, men guilty of rape, arson, and homicide: and for every lie he found a witness amongst the clergy and laity about him.

On this they went to the Archbishop, whom they found surrounded by French, English, Normans, Bretons, and Poitevins, whom they joined in praying him to consent to omit the vital clause. "Why," they urged, "should we be better than our fathers?" The Saint replied, that the blessed Anselm was the only one of them who had been urged to profess the customs, and he had been driven into exile. At length they left St. Thomas, and told the Kings of his firmness, which was called obstinacy; after which, as night was coming on, the two Kings mounted and departed together, without saluting the Archbishop. King Henry boasted as he rode that that day he had been avenged of his traitor. Some of the courtiers let the Archbishop hear them say that he was always proud, wise in his

own eyes, a follower of his own will and opinion; that the worst thing that had happened to the Church was the choice of him for a ruler, and that through him she would soon be destroyed altogether, as she now was in part. The Saint made no reply whatever; which shows, if one may venture to say so, how much good his exile had done to his spiritual life, and how much more his naturally vehement temper was under control than it was when he was subjected to similar reproaches at Northampton. He answered, however, his old friend John, the Bishop of Poitiers, "Brother, take care that the Church of God be not destroyed by thee; for by me, by God's favour, it shall never be destroyed."

The majority even of his own followers were led away by the current feeling, and were jealous of losing the restoration to their homes, which had seemed just within their grasp. As they were riding away after the conference, the horse of one of them named Henry of Houghton,<sup>6</sup> who was riding just before the Archbishop, stumbled, on which the rider called out, loud enough for the Saint to hear, "Go on,—saving the honour of God, and of Holy Church, and of my order." Here again the Archbishop, much as he was pained, did not speak. When, however, they drew up to give their horses breath, the Saint said to his clerics: "Beloved companions, who have suffered every thing with me, why do you

<sup>6</sup> Fitzstephen, p. 96. This Henry of Houghton, or Hocton, relates a cure that he had obtained by the Saint's intercession (Benedict, p. 161).

so think and speak against me? Our return and restoration is but a little thing: the liberty of the Church, of which the King says nothing, is of far greater consequence. At length I will accept the best peace I can, but you never yet saw such short bargaining." Herbert, however, took a better tone, by reminding his master of the text, "Him will I honour who honoureth Me."

They arrived at Montmirail before the King of France. King Louis usually came to visit the Saint on his return, but to-day he did not do so. It was noticed that now, when, according to the threats of one of the earls after the conference, it was probable that France would no longer afford them shelter, the Saint was far more cheerful than usual. On the following day King Louis remained behind; but early in the morning the Archbishop left Montmirail for Chartres on his way back to Sens. As they went, people asked who it was that was going by; and when they heard that it was the Archbishop of Canterbury, they pointed him out one to another, saying, "That is the Archbishop who yesterday would not deny God or neglect His honour for the sake of the Kings." The fame of the conference had already spread far and wide. The Archbishop, who overheard what was said, was much touched, and looked at Herbert, who tells us that this frequently happened as they were travelling in France.

The Bishop of Poitiers was sent after the Saint to Étampes, to beg him once more, for the sake

of peace, to leave matters unreservedly to the King. The answer was as before, that he would do so, saving God's honour, and the order, honour, and liberty of the Church; but that he would promise nothing to the injury of the law of God. The Bishop returned to the King; and in order to pacify him, he modified the answer, saying, that the Archbishop would trust his cause to him above all mortals, but that he prayed him as a Christian prince to provide for the Church's honour and his own. Henry was overjoyed to accept such terms; and the Bishop wrote<sup>7</sup> to St. Thomas, telling him, that the King invited him to an audience at Tours on the feast of St. Peter's Chair, January 18th, about a fortnight after the conference of Montmirail. St. Thomas's answer,<sup>8</sup> which was a very affectionate one to the Bishop personally, refused absolutely any further conference, until, according to the Pope's command, he was freely restored to his Church and the royal favour. That this was not to be expected, was shown by the King's answer to the Pope's envoys, as by them described to the Pope, "That perhaps it might be the advice of his friends to restore him his Church, but that to take him back into favour he never would; for that then he should make void the privilege His Holiness had granted him, by which the Archbishop's power was suspended till he was taken back into favour."

When the King learned from Bernard de la Coudre that the purport of the Pope's second

<sup>7</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 491.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 493.

commonitory letter was the restoration of the Archbishop's powers over himself and the kingdom, he secretly sent other messengers to the Holy See. Another conference of the two Kings was held, at which the Pope's envoys delivered the second letter. It was with the greatest difficulty that Henry could be brought to accept it by the persuasion of his councillors; but though they induced him to abandon the word *customs*, yet he still declared that the only terms on which St. Thomas might return in peace, were a simple promise, "in the word of truth, that he would do what his predecessors had done." They told him that the Archbishop would still require the insertion of his saving clause, and that he *could* not observe such things as the Pope had condemned at Sens, when he had been absolved from his obligation or promise to observe the customs. Henry then said that he would summon the Bishops of England, and consult with them, as he had usually done; but he refused to write any answer to the Pope. He left the Pope's envoys with anger, excepting Bernard de la Coudre, whom he took aside, promising to visit Grammont very soon, and to follow the advice of the Prior.

St. Thomas's full powers were now restored; but the envoys begged him not to use them until it was seen what effect the conference of Grammont might have.

At length, most thoughtful people perceived that St. Thomas was only acting with common prudence, when he refused to omit the *salvo* of



God's honour. Bernard of Grammont said to Herbert: "I would rather have my foot cut off, than that your lord the Archbishop should have made peace at that conference, as I and all the others advised him."

A still more important point was the return of King Louis to his former friendliness. The Archbishop's party went back from Chartres to Sens, which was a two days' journey. Three days after their arrival, they were talking together, and asking one another where they should go. The Archbishop was as cheerful as if he had no misfortunes, and he returned the condolences of the party with quiet laughter and pleasantry. "I am the only one aimed at; when I am disposed of, they will not persecute you, so seriously at least. Be not so alarmed." They assured him that he was the only one they were concerned for. "Oh," he replied, "I commit myself to God's keeping, now that I am shut out of both kingdoms. I cannot betake myself again to those Roman robbers; they are always despoiling the miserable. Let me see,—I have heard that they are a more liberal people in Burgundy near the river Saône. I will go there on foot with one companion; perhaps when they see us, they will take compassion on our forlorn condition, and give us subsistence for a time, till God interposes for us. God can help His own in the lowest misery: and he is worse than an infidel who distrusts God's mercy." No sooner was this said, than the mercy of God appeared at the very door. A servant of the King of

France requested the presence of the Archbishop at Court. "In order to expel us from the kingdom," exclaimed one of the party. "You are no prophet," said the Archbishop, "nor the son of a prophet: do not forbode evil." They went accordingly.

When they arrived, Louis was sitting and looking downcast; nor did he rise up, as his custom was, to meet the Archbishop. This was an ominous beginning. After a silence of a considerable time, the King bent his head down, as if he was reluctantly meditating the Archbishop's expulsion, and every one was in painful suspense, expecting the announcement, when all at once he sprang forward, and with sighs and tears threw himself at the Saint's feet, to the astonishment of the whole party. The Archbishop raised him up; and when he had recovered himself, he said, "O my lord, you were the only clear-sighted one amongst us." He sighed and repeated, "O my father, you were the only clear-sighted one amongst us. We were all blind, and gave you advice repugnant to God's law, and surrendered God's honour to the pleasure of a man. I repent, my father, I deeply repent. Pardon me, and absolve me from this fault. I offer myself and my kingdom to God and to you, and I promise henceforward, as long as I live, not to fail you or yours." The Archbishop gave him absolution and his blessing, and returned with his suite to St. Columba's abbey in great joy. And the King was as good as his word.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### CLAIRVAUX.

1169.

At Clairvaux on Palm Sunday St. Thomas excommunicates the Bishop of London and others—these sentences generally disregarded at Court—publication of the Bishop's excommunication in St. Paul's on Ascension Day—the danger run by the Archbishop's messengers—the King's violence when angry—Gilbert Foliot's appeal in Lent—meeting of Bishops at Northampton on Trinity Sunday—King Henry's letter to Foliot—further excommunications on Ascension Day—courageous conduct of the Bishop of Worcester—the Pope requests St. Thomas to suspend the censures for a time.

ST. THOMAS was now in a better position than he had yet been. King Louis was more firmly his friend than ever, and his powers were now fully restored to him, both by the lapse of the term for which they had been suspended, and by the publication of the Pope's second letter to the King.

At last the blow, long merited and long delayed, fell on the head of Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London. The Bishop knew perfectly well that the sentence was pending, although the citations could not, in consequence of the severity of the watch that was kept, be legally and formally delivered. He wrote to Jocelin of Salisbury, to warn him that he was to be included in the coming

censure; and at the beginning of Lent they both appealed to the Pope, naming as the term of the appeal the 9th of February, 1170. This they certified to St. Thomas.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, the opinion of the canonists who advised the Saint that the appeal was invalid, as being captiously made in order to avoid justice: on Palm Sunday,<sup>2</sup> therefore, April 13, 1169, at Clairvaux, he excommunicated Gilbert Foliot; and in the document<sup>3</sup> which announced it to the Dean and clergy of London he threatened, unless satisfaction was made by them in the interval, on Ascension Day to excommunicate also Geoffrey Ridel, the Archdeacon of Canterbury, and Robert his vicar, Richard of Ilchester, Richard de Luci, William Giffard, Adam of Charing, and all who should have either usurped Church property or urged the King to injure the Church or banish the innocent, and all who should have injured the Pope's messengers or his own. The names were added of all who were excommunicated at the same time with the Bishop of London: they were, the Bishop of Salisbury; Hugh Earl of Norfolk; Randulf de Broc; Thomas Fitz-Bernard; Robert de Broc, a cleric; Hugh of St. Clair; Letard of Northfleet, a cleric; Nigel de Sackville; and Richard the brother of William of Hastings, a cleric, who had usurped the Church of Monkton. There are several names found here which are amongst the excommunicates of Vezelay, which is accounted for by the

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 534, 539, 540.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 451.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 558.

rumour which reached the Archbishop, that John of Oxford had obtained their absolution. He had, in truth, as we have seen, obtained but a very conditional one, which was very freely interpreted; for Alan de Neville had been absolved on the plea that he was going to Jerusalem, and several others at Holy Trinity in London, under pretext that they were in danger of death, as they were about to join the war against the Welsh.

The Archbishop's letters excommunicating the Bishop of London were carried by two messengers, whose names were Berengar and William Bonhart, the latter of whom has described to us their delivery.<sup>4</sup> On Ascension Day, May 29, 1169, they went together to St. Paul's Cathedral, at the high altar of which a priest named Vitalis was singing Mass. At the offertory, Berengar went up to the altar, and kneeling down placed the Archbishop's letters in the priest's hands, who turned to receive them, thinking them an offering. Berengar then held his hands firmly, until he had bidden him in the name of the Pope and the Archbishop, to give one copy to the Bishop, and the other to the Dean; and he commanded him not to proceed with the Mass, nor William of Nordhall<sup>5</sup> the deacon, nor W. Hog the subdeacon, whom he called as witnesses, to continue to assist at it, until the letters were read aloud. Berengar then turned to the people, and said in a loud voice, "Take notice, that Gilbert the Bishop of

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 603.

<sup>5</sup> William was Bishop of Worcester from 1186 to 1192.

London has been excommunicated by Thomas the Archbishop of Canterbury and Legate of the Apostolic See." When the people heard this, some tried to stop Berengar, others insulted him; but William Bonhart covered him with his cloak, and, mingling with the crowd<sup>6</sup> who poured out of the church, they got safe to their lodgings. Some of the people nearest the altar asked the priest whether the city was placed under an interdict; and on learning that it was not, they asked no more questions. Vitalis did not wish to continue the Mass until the letters were read; but the deacon went to Nicholas the Archdeacon, who said, "Would the priest stop his dinner if a messenger were to bid him cease to eat, in the Archbishop's name?" They continued the Mass, the letters being only read privately. The King's officials instituted a strict search for Berengar both in the city and the country, but without success. He afterwards went to York, bearing letters from the Pope; and he managed to escape arrest.

The danger which Berengar ran was very serious. He was a layman, and not literate; but he is described as a young man who would expose himself to peril, and who was not afraid even to die for God's sake. A very strict watch

<sup>6</sup> Fitzstephen (p. 90) says, that people who had heard Mass in their parish church in the morning were in the habit of leaving the cathedral after the Gospel, probably having attended the sermon. Bonhart thought this escape so wonderful that in writing to St. Thomas he says that he has, as witnesses of the fact, Berengar himself, Richard the nephew of William de Capes, and the son of William Wannoc.

was kept up along the coast, so that the chance of escaping detection was but small; and when taken, the Archbishop's messenger had to expect not only the severe penalties of high treason, but also whatever else Henry's irascible temper might choose to order on the spur of the moment. An extract from a letter,<sup>7</sup> showing what the great Henry Plantagenet could become in a paroxysm of rage, will not be out of place here. "Richard de Humet ventured to say something that seemed like favouring the Scotch; and the King broke out into open abuse, calling him a traitor outright. In his fit of passion he flung down his cap, undid his belt, threw from him his cloak and robes, tore the silk covering off his couch, and, sitting down as if on a dunghill, began to chew stalks of straw." The same writer says, "It was at Toucques that his lordship the Pope's messenger was taken; he is still imprisoned and in chains. Here, too, the Lord saved Master Herbert out of the hand of his pursuers. Surely he should not have exposed himself so on a matter of such little consequence." Another specimen of the King's temper is given us in the fate of a bearer of a letter to the King. "You know, I conclude," writes Nicholas,<sup>8</sup> Prior of the Hospital of Mont-St. Jacques, near Rouen, "in what a strait the messenger was who delivered the letter to the King. His fingers were

<sup>7</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 71. This Richard de Humet was Justiciary of Normandy; so that Henry could not restrain his violence, even against a great nobleman and high officer of State.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 76.

thrust into his eyes, as if to tear them out, till the blood flowed; and hot water was forced down his throat, till he confessed that the letter came from Master Herbert. He is not yet released from prison; though the King has received an order to that effect from his mother."

The fear of being subjected to violent usage was, under such circumstances, quite enough to deter people from carrying the Archbishop's letters; and the wonder is, rather how so many reached their destination in safety, than how in some cases no one could be found to take them. This would also account for the three warnings which the canon law requires not being served on the Bishop of London previous to his excommunication, and for the formal notice of it being after such an interval. He had, however, known of it long before the Archbishop's letter was published in London. Early in Lent (March 18, 1169) Gilbert Foliot had appealed at St. Paul's in the presence of many abbots, priors, archdeacons, and clerics;<sup>9</sup> and, about the same time, he had assembled<sup>10</sup> at Westminster the Bishops of Exeter and Salisbury, Richard of Ilchester, Laurence the Abbot of Westminster, Guy Rufus the Dean of Waltham, and the Barons of the Exchequer. The Bishop of Exeter sent him a preliminary message that he must not offer him the usual salutation of a kiss; but on their meeting, and Gilbert offering it, Bartholomew did not refuse it. The object of the Bishop of London was to try and induce his

<sup>9</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 614, 619.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 606.



brother of Exeter to join him in an appeal; but he did not succeed. Jocelin of Salisbury, in the course of the proceedings, made use of the insulting phrase, in reference to the sentence passed upon him, "If Buinard the Archbishop, or any fool of an archbishop of mine, were to order me to do anything that I ought not to do, do you think I should do it?"

The Bishop of London was in the country, at a place called Stubbehuthe (Stepney), when he learnt what had happened in his cathedral.<sup>11</sup> On the Saturday following (May 31, 1169) he met the Chapter, which had been summoned for that day; and after much conference, Vitalis was ordered to produce the letters, which he did, giving the Bishop and the Dean those respectively intended for them. The Bishop read his aloud, knitting his eyebrows, and pronouncing the words with difficulty through vexation. When he had finished the letter, he began to argue against it under the following heads:

"The first head is from the Old Testament. Adam sinned in Paradise. God did not sentence him at once, but suffered him to depart; then cited him, saying, 'Adam!' then rebuked him, saying, 'Where art thou?'

"The second head from the New Testament. It is said to Peter in the Gospel, 'If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him in private;' afterwards, 'before two or three;' thirdly, 'tell it to the Church;' then, lastly, reckon him incorrigible, 'let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.'

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 604.

“It will not do for the Archbishop to say, ‘I could not cite the Bishop of London.’ It appears he could: if he could do the greater, that is, excommunicate, he could do the less, that is, cite.

“Not to be appealed from is the privilege only of the Pope. I am safe, therefore, by my appeal; and in the sacred name of the Most Holy Trinity, I dash this deed of his to pieces against the rock on which the Church is founded.

“In all criminal cases, four persons are necessary,—the accuser, the accused, the witnesses, the judge; these he confounds in his eagerness against me, accusing, witnessing, judging all himself. Hence it is clear that, if he could, he would be executioner too.

“He puts his sickle into another man’s harvest; for he has no power over my person or my church: over my person, because I never made profession of obedience to him, nor yet obeyed him, nor yet made profession to the Church of Canterbury in the name of this Church of London; over my Church, because the Church of London reasserts the right which was only taken from it by a Pagan invasion,—that is, of being the archiepiscopal see. This I am prepared to prove, and on this ground I renew my appeal.

“If it is true, as he says, that he holds his power from the Pope as legate, neither will that assist him; for he is not yet within the limits for which his commission is granted.”

The Dean, Archdeacon, and all the canons

and priests of St. Paul's joined the appeal;<sup>12</sup> but the canons of St. Bartholomew's, St. Martin's, and Holy Trinity refused. Finally, the Dean caused the letter sent to him to be read.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever validity there may be in canon law in the other points of the Bishop's appeal, one of those above mentioned was particularly disgraceful. When he was translated from Hereford to London, he refused to make a fresh profession of obedience, on the express plea that it was not requisite, since that made by him on his promotion to Hereford was still in force. St. Thomas carried the question with him to Pope Alexander when they both went to the Council of Tours; and, with the express provision that it should be no prejudice to the Archbishop or his Church, Alexander decided the cause in Gilbert's favour. It was, therefore, literally true that he had not personally made any profession to St. Thomas, for when made Bishop of Hereford, his profession was made to Theobald; nor had he in the name of the Church of London professed obedience to Canterbury; but he had been exempted from both on the express condition that he should not claim the exemption which he now pretended.

The Bishops on Trinity Sunday held a meeting at Northampton.<sup>14</sup> The object was to induce them to renew the appeal which the

<sup>12</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 606, 618. The Abbots of Westminster, Ramsey, Chertsey, Reading, and Stratford, the Archbishop of Rouen, and the Bishop of Lisieux, all wrote to the Pope on behalf of the Bishop of London (*Ibid.* pp. 621—639).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 558.

<sup>14</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 268; Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 328.

Bishops of London and Salisbury had made at the beginning of Lent. When the Bishop of Durham, who sat first, was asked, he answered that he had not been present when the appeal was made, nor had he received any citation; that he would, however, consult his metropolitan, the Archbishop of York; and after due deliberation, he would do whatever he might, saving God's honour and his own. The evasion was highly approved by the other Bishops, who were unwilling to take a bolder part than they were forced into against St. Thomas. They were also probably deterred by the pretensions to independence of Canterbury, which Gilbert had mixed up with his appeal, and which, especially on the Continent, excited the liveliest indignation. The Archbishop of Sens, and the Bishops of Auxerre, Thérouanne, Noyon, Paris, and Troyes all wrote<sup>15</sup> on the subject.

The Bishop of Exeter was next asked what he thought; and he replied, that his brother Bishops had made the appeal without his knowledge; that if they appealed, they would be uniting themselves with excommunicated persons; and that if the Pope should confirm the sentence, there was great danger, which nothing should induce him to encounter. If, however, it were for the good of the Church, and if by the King's favour he might leave the kingdom, he would appeal against any fresh injury which might be feared, but not against any already

<sup>15</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 154; Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. pp. 205, 224, 228, 235, 267.

inflicted. For his part, if any sentence of his superior directed against himself were to come to his knowledge, he would bear it obediently. This answer strongly excited the ridicule of Gilbert Foliot.

The Bishop of Winchester was requested to send an answer to Northampton to these same points that were proposed to his brethren. His reply was this: "The Divine law binds a man who is summoned to a higher judge not to appeal to an inferior; and he who appeals, is in duty bound to carry on his cause. Now I, who am worn out by sickness and old age, am summoned by the Lord, and am therefore unfit for appeals to an earthly tribunal. I pray you to excuse my joining in appeals which may bring me under an anathema." Roger of Worcester, who was himself on St. Thomas's side, records these proceedings; and adds, that these two Bishops, Bartholomew of Exeter and Henry of Winchester, incurred by their answers the suspicions of the King's party, and were for the future excluded from their cabals. Going further still than this in the direction of obedience, four bishops published<sup>16</sup> the letters proclaiming Gilbert's excommunication, the Bishop of Norwich in his first synod, and the Bishops of Lichfield, Winchester, and Chichester, on the day after they received them.

Though Gilbert was unsuccessful with his fellow-Bishops, he had recourse to the King, who wrote<sup>17</sup> him a letter from St. Macaire on the

<sup>16</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 328.

<sup>17</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 598, 599.

Garonne, in Gascony, giving him leave to appeal. "I have heard of the grievance which that Thomas my traitor and enemy has inflicted upon you and other persons of my kingdom; and I bear it with not less vexation in your case, than I should if he had vomited forth his venom against my own proper person." Henry also wrote the Pope in his behalf, of which letter the following is an extract: "I cannot adequately marvel that your wisdom should hand me over to what I consider most injurious molestation, who am a devoted son of the Church of Rome, ever ready to submit to justice. Now he who desists not to afflict the innocent, has added a fresh injury to the multitudes that preceded it. Supported, as he says, by your Holiness's authority, he has just now excommunicated the Bishops of London and Salisbury, unconvicted, uncited, unadmonished, and while an appeal was pending; and to several of my friends he holds out a threat of the same treatment, without any reasonable provocation. At all this I am not less indignant than if I had been the object of his sentence myself. It seems to me that your fatherly goodness has, as it were, cast me off; that you have ceased to regard the sufferings of your son, and will permit my wicked adversary to proceed against me as he pleases."

The further excommunications, threatened at Clairvaux on Palm Sunday, were carried into effect on Ascension Day. The persons censured were Geoffrey Ridel, Archdeacon of Canterbury, Robert his vicar, Richard of Ilchester, Richard

de Luci, William Giffard, and Adam of Charing. It is to be feared that much attention was not paid to these sentences; so that the contagion spread in such a way that we are told, that in the King's chapel hardly any one was to be found to give him the *pax*, except persons under either the major or minor excommunication,—the first incurred by sentences passed upon them by name, and the second by communicating with those who were excommunicated. Fitzstephen notes that Robert and Nigel de Sackville, the King's sealbearers, who had been excommunicated at Vezelay, died young; and that Robert the vice-archdeacon of Canterbury and the priest of Thierlewde (Throwley) died of such grievous ulcers, that they seemed stricken by the hand of God.

The sentence on Geoffrey Ridel gave one of the bishops whom St. Thomas had consecrated an opportunity of showing his sense of duty. Roger, the son of the Earl of Gloucester, a near relation of the King, was Bishop of Worcester; and to him has been attributed the glory of being the only Bishop who was willing to be banished for St. Thomas's sake. Geoffrey Ridel retained his place in the chapel-royal, notwithstanding his excommunication. The Bishop of Worcester happened to go to Court, where he was well received by the King; who was content to listen to his remonstrances, though he would not be guided by them. One day they entered the chapel, where the King was about to hear Mass. The Bishop was in his place, when he saw the

Archdeacon of Canterbury come in; on which he immediately left the chapel. Henry was astonished and angry; yet, though he knew the motive well enough, he sent a messenger to him, to bid him come back and explain why he had gone away. Roger sent him the cause for answer; when he received another message from the King, to bid him leave the kingdom with all speed. The Bishop sent for his retinue, and ordered them to follow him, which they did as soon as they could get their baggage together; and he then sent word to the King that he already had his foot in his stirrup,<sup>18</sup> and that he would leave the country directly. After a while, the King broke out into insults and threats; on which one of those about him mustered courage enough to expostulate: "My lord, what have you done? You have banished a Bishop who is closely united to you in faith and blood. If I might say so, you have not done well. Besides, you have given the Archbishop what will please him best; and the Pope, who has had no reason for blaming you yet, will now have a cause to do so, placed in his way by yourself. You grieve your friends, and rejoice your enemies, by banishing an innocent man, not to say a bishop." The King was moved, and sent a horseman after the Bishop; who, however, refused to return. He then sent others, and finally, a party mounted on fleet horses, with an earl at their head, with

<sup>18</sup> "In *strepā* vel orbe tenente pedem seu quo alio dignatur nomine" (Fitzstephen, p. 86). "*Stirrup* put for *sty-rope*, a rope to mount by, from A. S. *stigen*, pp. of *stigan*, to mount" (Skeat).



orders to bring the Bishop back, whether he would or no. Roger returned, and spoke in plain terms to the King; and ever after, while the Bishop was there, the Archdeacon never entered the chapel nor the King's presence.

The Pope sent the following letter<sup>19</sup> to St. Thomas on the subject of the excommunications, dated from Benevento the 19th of June: "We marvel greatly that, at the time when your envoys and others from our well-beloved son in Christ, Henry the illustrious King of England, were still present at our Court and waiting our determination, you should have thought fit, ourself not consulted, to utter any sentence against the dignitaries of the realm. Moreover, although we doubt not your general prudence and circumspection, yet it often happens that persons see less clearly in their own cause than in the cause of others; and for this reason, as we are unwilling that your sentence should be revoked but by your own deed, we advise, counsel, and exhort you, as a beloved brother, that in order to mitigate the King's displeasure, you of your own will suspend it, till such time as you learn from our envoys whether the said King is willing to be reconciled, and to realize the promise of your recall.

"It becomes ourself and you to wait with patience, and to tolerate him with all gentleness of spirit, for the space of two or three months, that we may leave him without excuse. If you do not think fit to accede to this our request, and things

<sup>19</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 22; Froude, p. 429.

turn out not according to your wish and expectation, but, which God avert, to the contrary, you must attribute the result to yourself, and not to us. But if, according to our wish and suggestion, you suspend the sentence till the arrival of our envoys, and the King still persists in his obstinacy, in that case, before the departure of the envoys, you shall be at liberty unhesitatingly to revive the sentence without incurring the risk of our displeasure. Yea, rather you may look to us for every support and assistance."

This letter seems to take for granted the validity of the censures in spite of the want of the three canonical citations or monitions, probably from the notoriety of the offences and the impossibility of serving the warnings.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE POPE'S ENVOYS.

1169—1170.

King Henry tries bribery on a large scale—has recourse to the King of Sicily—Gratian and Vivian appointed Envoys by the Pope—their interviews with Henry—Gratian returns to the Pope with the Archbishop of Sens—St. Thomas threatens an interdict, if the King does not repent—the King imposes a new oath on his subjects, and obtains a conference with King Louis by a pilgrimage to St. Denys—at Vivian's request St. Thomas comes to Montmartre and terms are agreed on by Henry, who however refuses to ratify them by a kiss, and retires to Mantes—St. Thomas lodged in the Temple—the English Bishops resist the King—Henry returns to England.

It was mentioned that King Henry sent other messengers to the Pope, when Bernard de la Coudre told him the contents of the second commonitory letter. It was their business<sup>1</sup> to see what money could effect in his favour. The Emperor Frederic Barbarossa had been so unsuccessful in his invasion of Italy, that the threat to join the Antipope was now less likely to be carried out than it had been. Henry's present object was to see what advocacy his money could buy. He offered the Milanese three thousand marks and a thorough repair of their fortifications, if they would join the other states, which

<sup>1</sup> Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 208; Froude, p. 435.

he was attempting to corrupt, in prevailing on the Holy See to depose or translate the Archbishop of Canterbury. On the same conditions he promised the citizens of Cremona two thousand, and those of Parma and Bologna one thousand each. To the Pope he offered a release from all the demands the Romans made on him, and ten thousand marks besides; and to allow him to appoint what pastors he would, as well in the Church of Canterbury, as in all other sees now vacant in England. A letter<sup>2</sup> of the Saint's of this date shows what dioceses were in this condition. "He has now for five years," he writes, "held the revenues of our see and all our goods, besides the bishoprics of Lincoln, Bath, Hereford, and Ely. The possessions of Llandaff he has squandered on his knights; the Bishop of Bangor he will not suffer to be consecrated, and that see has been ten years without a Bishop."

On all his offers proving ineffectual, he tried next what the power of the King of Sicily could do for him; but neither the Bishop of Syracuse with all his efforts, nor yet the labours of Robert Count of Basseville, and the other host of intercessors, nor the great power, weight, and influence which that King possessed with the Pope, in consequence of the generous way in which he had helped the Holy Father in his late troubles at Rome, could effect his wishes. His envoys were at last dismissed in disappointment, having obtained nothing but a promise that the Pope

<sup>2</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 121.

would send fresh envoys to mediate a peace. The persons selected were very acceptable to St. Thomas, being Gratian, a subdeacon and notary of the Holy See, a nephew of Pope Eugenius III., and Vivian Archdeacon of Orvieto,<sup>3</sup> and advocate in the Roman courts. They were bound by an oath to abide by prescribed terms of peace, which they were on no account to exceed. It was also in their instructions that their expenses should not be defrayed by the King, unless peace were granted; nor were they to remain a day beyond the time appointed them. These precautions against bribery were, at least in the case of Gratian, perfectly successful; for, when his mission was over, he returned with the highest reputation for integrity.<sup>4</sup>

On the feast of the Assumption, August 15th, 1169, the letters of the new envoys reached the King at Argentan. He was much troubled on reading them; and on the following day he sent John of Oxford and Reginald, the one the Dean, the other the Archdeacon, of Salisbury, to meet the envoys, who on the 23rd of August reached Domfront. On hearing of their arrival, two excommunicates of the King's party, Geoffrey Ridel and Nigel de Sackville, left the town in haste, doubtless fearing lest they should be treated as such by Gratian and Vivian. That very day, late in the evening, King Henry returned from the forest, and visited the envoys

3 "Urbis veteris," which Mr. Froude has translated, "of the ancient city."

4 Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 277; Froude, p. 437.

before he went to his own house. He behaved towards them with all honour, reverence, and humility. While they were exchanging their first compliments, Prince Henry, who had been hunting with his father, arrived with his youthful train blowing their hunting-horns, and bringing the stag they had killed as a present to the envoys.

The next morning, at about six, the King again waited on them, and they attended him to the apartments of the Bishops of Séez and Rennes. After some delay, John Dean of Salisbury and Reginald the Archdeacon were admitted, and soon after the Archdeacon of Llandaff. These remained in conversation together till three in the afternoon: they were standing, and spoke sometimes gently, sometimes loudly and angrily. The King's object was to obtain the absolution of the excommunicate clerics, without their taking the oath. Just before sunset the King came out, very wroth, complaining bitterly that the Pope had never listened to his requests in anything, and said with defiance, "By God's eyes, I will do something else." Gratian answered mildly, "Threaten not, my lord; we fear no threats, for we come from a Court which is accustomed to dictate to emperors and kings." Then a convocation was held of all the barons and white monks that were in attendance, and nearly all the chapel-royal; and the King called on them to witness the greatness of the offers he had made, namely, the restitution of the archbishopric, and the restoration of peace. At last he left them

somewhat pacified, and he appointed that day week for giving a definite answer.

On the day named, August 31, the Archbishops of Rouen, Bourdeaux, and all the Bishops of Normandy, met by appointment at Bayeux, and the Bishop of Le Mans accidentally joined them. The Bishop of Worcester arrived on the following day; the Bishop of Poitiers excused himself, as he was holding a synod, but promised to come when it was over. The envoys presented the Pope's letters praying for the Archbishop's return and reconciliation. After a tirade against the Saint, which was the King's only reply, he concluded by saying, "If I grant any of his lordship the Pope's requests for that person, I shall deserve many thanks for it."

The day following, the Bishops met the envoys at the King's palace, called Bur, near Bayeux. Immediately on their arrival, they all entered the park together. The King began by a demand, in private, for the absolution of his clerics, without their taking the oath. This the envoys positively refused; on which Henry immediately mounted his horse, and swore in the hearing of all, that never again would he listen to the Pope or any one else in behalf of the Archbishop. The prelates who were present entreated the envoys, for the love of God, to concede this point; which they accordingly did, though most reluctantly. The King then again dismounted. Soon after, when all in the park were collected, Henry remarked, that he wished them all to know that it had not been through him that the Archbishop

had left England, and that he had often recalled him, that he might explain his conduct, but he had always refused; in the present instance, however, in compliance with the Pope's prayers and commands, he would restore his archbishopric to him in peace, and allow all to return that had been banished on his account. This concession he made about three o'clock in the afternoon, and afterwards was very cheerful and went through much other business.

Later on he returned to the envoys, requesting that they would go to England to absolve the excommunicates who were in that country. Their refusal made him angry, but he urged one of them at least to go, or to commission one of their clerics, and he would pay their expenses himself. This too Gratian refused, and the King shouted angrily, "Do what you will, I care not for you or your excommunication one egg." He then mounted his horse and rode off; but on the Archbishops and Bishops following him and remonstrating, he once more returned. The sum of their deliberations was, that the Bishops should write to the Pope, testifying that in their presence the King had offered the Archbishop peace, and that he was ready to comply with every command of his Holiness, but that the difficulty was raised on the part of the envoys. Much time was wasted in the composition of the letter, and at last the King determined to leave them, quite out of patience. The Bishops then informed him that the envoys had previously shown them a mandate from the Pope, commanding every one to obey



whatever they might decree. The King answered, "I know, I know, they will interdict my kingdom; but shall not I, who can take a strong castle a day, be able to take one cleric, if he publishes the sentence?" However, on one or two points being conceded, the storm blew over, and Henry said, "Unless you make peace this night, you will never get to this point again;" and then calling all together, "It behoves me to do much at the request of my lord the Pope, who is my lord and father, and therefore I restore his see to the Archbishop, as well as my favour to him, and to all who are banished on his account." The envoys and all the others returned thanks, and the King added, "If I have been deficient in anything to-day, I will make it up to-morrow."

The next day, September 1, they met at the same place at noon, and after a long discussion about the absolution of the excommunicates, whether they should or should not take the oath, it was at last agreed that Geoffrey Ridel, Nigel de Sackville, and Thomas Fitz-Bernard should place their hands on the Gospels, and declare in the word of truth that they would obey the instructions of the envoys. A request was then made that all the Church property which the King had alienated might remain with its new holders. This was, however, refused. Then it was proposed that the Bishops should draw up in writing the terms of peace to which the King had consented. The King had insisted on the expression being allowed, "that the Archbishop should hold his Church to the honour of the King

and his posterity;" and this the envoys had thought unobjectionable. But on the conference breaking up, about nine o'clock at night, the King insisted that there should be inserted in the terms, "saving the dignity of his kingdom;" but Gratian refused to consent to this on any condition whatsoever. It was, in fact, the introduction of the Constitutions of Clarendon into the negotiation, which we should have said had been as yet unmentioned, were it not that, by suggesting the change, the King showed what meaning he had attached to the apparently simple and innocent phrase which the envoys had allowed.

On the 8th of September, the envoys retired to Caen, whence they sent to the King to say that they would permit the clause he had requested, if "saving the dignity of the Church" were also introduced. This was refused; and Henry charged them with inconsistency for rejecting a qualification which, he maintained, they had in the first instance admitted. They then gave the King a month for consideration, warning him that at the expiration of that time, the sentence of the Archbishop would be again put in force with respect to the persons whom they had absolved. The month passed, and affairs being thus restored to their former state, Gratian returned, leaving Vivian behind. The Archbishop of Sens accompanied him to the Pope, which frightened King Henry much, as he regarded these two dignitaries as his most powerful opponents. He accordingly despatched other messengers in his own behalf to the Holy Father.

The Archbishop of Rouen wrote to complain of the envoys, and so also did some of the Bishops of Normandy, who seem to have become more strongly partisans of the King, as those of England returned to some sense of their duty.

For the greater part of a year all restriction had been taken off from the exercise of the highest ecclesiastical power which St. Thomas could use ; he was, moreover, Legate of the Holy See ; but he had been very patient, and had waited until all hope of the King's repentance was gone. He felt that the time was now come ; so he issued letters<sup>5</sup> to the principal religious houses in England, and to the Bishops or other officials of the different dioceses, ordering them by his own authority and that of the Apostolic See, if the King should not repent and make amends to the Church by the feast of Our Lady's Purification, February 2nd, 1170, to publish the interdict he laid upon them. By this sentence all sacraments and rites of religion of every kind were prohibited, save only baptism for infants, and penance and the Holy Viaticum for the dying ; Low Mass would be permitted for the consecration of the Blessed Sacrament for the sick, but the doors were to be closed, the laity excluded, and no bells rung. The religious would also be at liberty to recite the Divine Office in a low voice, under similar restrictions. The same letters, besides denouncing those who were actually excommunicated, pronounced a similar sentence, to date from Christmas, unless before that

5 Ep. S. Tho. i. pp. 199, 200, 207, 267, 335, 346.

time they had given satisfaction, against John of Oxford Dean of Salisbury, Guy Dean of Waltham, John Cumin, Ralph Archdeacon of Llandaff, and Wimar, a priest attached to the person of Earl Hugh. Other letters<sup>6</sup> of a somewhat similar tenour, but declaring the interdict to begin fifteen days after their publication, were intrusted to some of the French Bishops, but they never were actually published.

The King did his utmost to prevent their admission into England, threatening those who introduced them with the severest punishments. He decreed<sup>7</sup> that if the bearer were a regular, his feet should be cut off; if a cleric, he should be blinded and mutilated; if a layman, he should be hanged; and if a leper, be burned. He caused an iniquitous oath to be administered throughout the country, that the letters of the Pope and the Archbishop should not be received, nor their commands obeyed. Maud, Countess of Devonshire,<sup>8</sup> the daughter of Baldwin de Redvers, is recorded as having refused to take any such oath, or to permit any of her vassals to do so. The Archbishop of York also resisted it; but the other Bishops were weak enough to permit it to be administered in their dioceses. St. Thomas sent secretly to absolve from the obligation of observing it all who had been forced into taking it.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. pp. 201, 209, 229, 297, 344, 347.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 252.

<sup>8</sup> Fitzstephen, p. 102. Thomas of Froimont gives a curious account of how his father avoided taking the oath by stooping and mingling with the crowd of those who had taken it (*Anecd. Bed.* p. 256).

The presence of Gratian, and of William Archbishop of Sens, at Rome at the same time, and the conduct of St. Thomas, frightened the King. The course adopted by the Saint probably had not the same effect as the issuing of actual letters of interdict, as, at the very least, when the term named had expired, a declaratory sentence would be necessary to prove that the King had remained contumacious; but it was certainly a warmer earnest of what would surely follow than anything that had as yet happened. If Henry asked for another interview with the King of France, he could hardly hope it would be granted; he therefore determined on a measure which would bring about a conference, even unsolicited. He entered the territories of King Louis in the guise of a pilgrim to the shrine of the glorious martyr St. Denys, which he declared would be an opportunity of seeing, for the first time, the young prince, Philip; as it was not right that he should be a stranger to the son of his feudal lord, the King of France. His scheme completely succeeded; for Louis hastened at once to Paris to entertain him; Henry having also pretended that, if he had an opportunity, he would intrust Prince Richard to his guardianship. Henry at the same time consented to terms which satisfied Vivian,<sup>9</sup> and led him to urge St. Thomas very warmly to join the conference of the Kings to be held at St. Denys, on Sunday, November 16th, assuring him that he would be met with the hymn, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to my

<sup>9</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 253; Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 299.

lord of Canterbury.”<sup>10</sup> King Louis preferring a similar request, St. Thomas consented, and promised to meet Vivian at Corbeil on the Friday.

When the King of England had visited the shrine of St. Denys, on the 18th of November, where he made an offering of a magnificent cope, and four-and-twenty gold pieces, Vivian, in a preliminary interview, tried to obtain from him a ratification of the promise which he had just made of the terms on which he would now consent to a reconciliation.<sup>11</sup> The King, however, behaved in so unsatisfactory a manner, that Vivian complained openly both before his face and to St. Thomas of his evasive conduct, declaring that he had never met with such a liar; or, as he expressed it in writing to the Pope,<sup>12</sup> “He is sophistical and captious in every word he says about the Church.” As Vivian had shown himself the most favourable to the King of the last two envoys, this strong declaration of his was counted of some importance.

At the foot of the hill of Montmartre, between Paris and St. Denys, was a chapel called the Holy Martyrdom, marking the spot where St. Denys was put to death. Here St. Thomas was praying, as King Henry returned from St. Denys. A messenger came to hurry him, saying that the two Kings and Prince Philip were waiting in the plain near the chapel. His reply was, that it was becoming in a priest to proceed with gravity.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* ii. p. 216; i. p. 357.

<sup>11</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 254; Froude, p. 455.

<sup>12</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 221.

St. Thomas<sup>13</sup> advanced his petition through the Archbishop of Rouen, the Bishop of Séez, and Vivian, that the King would restore his royal favour to him and his, together with their possessions and goods which had been seized; offering in turn to show him every kind of deference which is due from an Archbishop to a King. The prelates who were mediating required that the Saint should expressly name all such possessions of the see of Canterbury as he required to be restored. Length of absence, and the great difficulty of intercourse with England, rendered it impossible for him to say what the King and his officials had alienated; the Saint therefore demanded the restoration of every thing which Theobald had held, and all which he had himself possessed at the time he attended the Council of Tours. Three things, however, in particular he named: first, those lands which Henry of Essex had held under the Archbishop, on the plea that the King, as his feudal lord, having resumed the lands which that nobleman had held under the crown on the occasion of his attainder, the same proceeding ought to be extended to the archbishopric. The fief of William de Ros the King had usurped, contrary to his royal oaths; and of this St. Thomas demanded restitution, as well as of the Church property bestowed upon John the Marshal, whose name appeared so prominently at the beginning of the Council of Northampton. The mediators expressed their confidence of being able to obtain this from the King, without

<sup>13</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 219.

which St. Thomas declared his determination to remain in exile, disdaining, as he said, to purchase peace for himself with the goods of the Church. Of obtaining restitution of the revenue and movable property of which the King had possessed himself they were less sanguine, amounting, as it was calculated to do, to thirty thousand marks; though some of them thought that perhaps a thousand marks might be paid, to enable the Archbishop and his companions to meet the expenses of their return. Urged especially by the King of France not to permit a money question of a personal character to hinder a reconciliation between himself and his King, the Saint said that he would be contented with a part only of what was due to him.

King Henry, on his part, declared that he readily forgave all the offences of which he had complained, and that in the matters now proposed he was willing to abide by the decision of the King of France, or of the clergy of France, or the University of Paris. On hearing this, the Saint professed himself satisfied; but he stated at the same time, that he would rather settle the affair amicably than by litigation, and he therefore made his petition in writing, to prevent future misunderstanding and evasion, framing it in such moderate terms, "that it was obvious to all that he would refuse no conditions of peace which were not absolutely intolerable for the Church."<sup>14</sup>

Some time before, the Saint, foreseeing the

<sup>14</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 382; ii. p. 220.



probability of negotiations being ultimately successful, and of the King finally consenting to such terms as he could accept, had consulted the Holy Father what pledge or guarantee he ought in such a case to require. The Pope had advised him to ask the King for the kiss of peace, thinking it unbecoming for a priest to require an oath from his own sovereign. St. Thomas, therefore, now sent to ask Henry to ratify his good intentions towards him by the kiss. The King's message in reply was brought without remark by the mediators to St. Thomas, who was still in the chapel, that he would have done so with pleasure, if he had not one day in a rage publicly sworn never to admit the Archbishop to the kiss again, even if he should be reconciled to him; and that this oath was now his sole reason for refusing, not that he retained any ill-will whatever. His reply to the written petition was, that the Archbishop should enjoy in peace all that *his predecessors* had enjoyed, as well as all *his own* possessions; by which phrase he seemed, to those who were not familiar with the circumstances, to concede everything, while in fact, it was intended not to include the Church property which St. Thomas had himself recovered, soon after his consecration, as well as the benefices which had fallen vacant during his exile. King Louis said, before Vivian and many others, that unless the kiss were granted, he would not advise our Saint to put foot in England, though Henry should give him a sum of gold equal to a King's ransom; and Count Theobald added, that to do so would

be mere folly. King Henry did not wait for any reply, but set off abruptly for Mantes, about twelve leagues from Paris, during the whole of which ride that evening he uttered frequent reproaches against the Archbishop. Prince Philip met him on the road, but their interview was far from cordial; and King Louis, who accompanied him to Mantes, was offended that he had not received charge of Prince Richard, afterwards our Cœur de Lion, which had been the pretext of their meeting. Henry was not, however, content to break off the negotiations; so, as a bribe to induce him still to try to bring about some arrangement, he sent Vivian twenty marks, which were scornfully rejected. Gilo Archdeacon of Rouen, John of Oxford, and John of Sééz, went to the Pope to endeavour to prevent the measure so much dreaded by Henry, of legatine power over his Continental dominions being conferred upon the Archbishop of Sens.

St. Thomas again lodged in the Temple, the very place where he had lived when he visited Paris in all his magnificence as Chancellor. In the evening of the Conference, as he was leaving the chapel where it had been held, one of his party came up to him and said, "To-day we have treated of the peace of the Church in the Martyrdom, and I believe that by your martyrdom only will the Church attain peace." The Saint briefly answered, "Would that even by my blood she might be freed!"

After Matins that night in the Templars' Choir, the companions of the Saint came to expostulate

with him on the present state of his affairs. While any thing vital had been at stake, they said, they had been proud to bear their share of his confessorship; but now the King had withdrawn his demand for any oath, without the usual *salvo* of God's honour and the Church's dignity; he had now consented to make restitution of all Church property; and there was nothing to be exiled for, since his refusal to give the kiss of peace might fairly be accounted a personal matter, like the repayment of the stolen revenue, which the Archbishop had consented to forego.

While these matters were going on, which at length rendered a reconciliation probable, news came from England that the Bishops were beginning to act a more manly part.<sup>15</sup> Geoffrey Ridel the Archdeacon of Canterbury, together with Richard Archdeacon of Poitiers, and other officials, summoned all the Bishops and abbots to London in the King's name, to give security that they would observe the new edict, and receive no messenger from the Pope or the Archbishop without the royal permission; nor obey any interdict, if such should be promulgated, nor pronounce an anathema against any of the King's subjects. However, none of the Bishops, nor any abbot, except Clarembald, the intruded Abbot of St. Augustine's, chose to obey the summons. The Bishop of Winchester publicly protested, and declared that while he lived he would, at all costs, obey the Apostolic decrees, and those of

<sup>15</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 219; Froude, p. 458.

the Church of Canterbury, to which he had professed his fealty and obedience; and the noble old man charged all his clergy to do likewise. The Bishop of Exeter followed his example, prepared to obey in all things; and he took refuge in a religious house till the storm should pass over. The Bishop of Norwich, though expressly forbidden in the King's name, excommunicated Earl Hugh and some others, according to the instructions he had received, even in the presence of the royal officials. On descending from the pulpit, he placed his pastoral staff upon the altar, saying that he would see who dared to extend a hand against the Church and its possessions. He also entered a religious house, to live with the community. The Bishop of Lichfield declared his readiness to execute all the orders of his ecclesiastical superiors; and, to secure himself from the officers, he took refuge in the Welsh part of his diocese.

Fresh messengers were now sent by King Henry to the Pope,<sup>16</sup> to retract all that had been before demanded, and instructed to leave the arrangement of the terms of reconciliation entirely to the judgment of the Holy Father. The Bishop of Auxerre, and other Norman Bishops, took the opportunity of trying to bring about another interview between the King and the Archbishop.<sup>17</sup> St. Thomas was accordingly on his way to the place of meeting, and had reached Pontisare with his companions, when they were

<sup>16</sup> Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 224.

<sup>17</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 259; Froude, p. 463.

informed that the King had abruptly broken his engagement, and would wait no longer at the place of conference. This sudden change was brought about by the return of some of the King's messengers from Rome, asserting, though untruly as it turned out, at least in the manner they reported, that the Holy Father had consented to the absolution of the Bishop of London, and the other excommunicates. The King was so elated, that he left, declaring that he was going to make arrangements for the coronation of his son. Accordingly, in March, 1170, he returned to England.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### OUTRAGE AND PEACE.

1170.

The Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers receive authority from the Pope—they absolve the persons excommunicated—St. Thomas's letter to Cardinal Albert—coronation of Prince Henry by the Archbishop of York—courage of the Bishop of Worcester—the Pope repeats the threat of an interdict—Henry's insincerity—conference in Traitors' Meadow—reconciliation.

THE report of the absolution of the excommunicates which King Henry's messengers had brought him, and which served so completely to unmask his insincerity in the late negotiations, was not altogether without foundation. The Pope, probably giving credence to Henry's last expressions of submission, and wishing to conciliate him still further, selected two of the Norman Bishops, who had shown themselves of late to be his friends, the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers; and to them he intrusted the care of concluding the negotiations, and of absolving the excommunicates. From this last power, however, the case of the Bishop of London was excepted; and in the other cases two conditions were required for its lawful exer-

cise, the *certain hope* of reconciliation, and the exaction of the usual oaths. These two Bishops were instructed by the Pope to urge upon the King the immediate fulfilment of the offers made by him at the late conference; and on his refusal, they were ordered, after a notice of forty days, to lay the kingdom under an interdict.

St. Thomas warned the Bishop of Nevers,<sup>1</sup> that Henry's first object would be to obtain the absolutions; and that when he had once gained his point thus far, they would be unable to make any further progress with him. The two Bishops, when urged by Henry, neglected the condition imposed upon them by the Pope, which made a certain hope or immediate prospect of reconciliation a necessary preliminary, and complied with the King's request. Meanwhile Gilbert Foliot had been pleading his own cause with the Pope in person; and he was so far successful, that the Holy Father removed the exception in his case, which had prevented him from benefiting by the powers conferred on the two Bishops. He hastened to the Archbishop of Rouen, by whom he was at once absolved, without the presence of the Bishop of Nevers, as the Pope's letter required, and that with all publicity, on Easter Day, 1170. Foliot regarded it as a great triumph; and by way of showing this openly, he even celebrated pontifically with all solemnity in St. Thomas's own Church of Canterbury.<sup>2</sup> These

<sup>1</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 302; Froude, p. 467.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* i. p. 250.

events drew the following letter<sup>3</sup> from St. Thomas, addressed to one of the Cardinals.

“I would, my beloved, that your ears were within hearing of my countrymen, and that you knew the contemptuous sayings against the Church of Rome which are being chanted in the street of Ascalon!

“I know not by what fortune it has come to pass, that the side of the Lord is always sacrificed at the Court of Rome: Barabbas escapes, and Christ is crucified. By the authority of the Court, our exile, and the sufferings of the Church, have been protracted to the end of the sixth year. Your lordships have condemned the wretched and homeless, and for no other reason, I speak it from my conscience, than because they are feeble and Christ's little ones, and will not recede from the justice of the Lord; on the other hand, you have absolved the sacrilegious, the murderer, the robber, persons who have not repented, and whose absolution, I say it freely, Christ being my authority, would not hold in the sight of God, though it were St. Peter that pronounced it. In St. Luke's Gospel our Lord commands, that ‘if thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him; and *if he is penitent*, forgive it him; and if seven times a day he sin against thee, and seven times a day he turn to thee, *saying, I repent*, forgive it him.’ Think you the words of Christ are idle where He says, ‘if he is peni-

<sup>3</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 95; Froude, p. 478. This was addressed to Cardinal Albert, who was one of the Legates sent after his death by the Pope to the King.



tent,' and 'if he turn to thee, saying, I repent?' Surely in the Day of Judgment He will not admit that His words were idle; nor will He pass over those uncondemned, who, against the form He prescribes, presume, by vain absolution, to justify the wicked, without confession or penance, and to save alive the souls that should not live.

"And now I have done. For the rest I commit to God His own cause, that God for Whom I am proscribed and exiled. Let Him act by me as He sees best. It is my intention to give the Court no further trouble in this matter. Let those seek its protection who are strong in their iniquity, and who, after trampling justice under foot and leading innocence captive, return glorying in the shame of the Church."

The words of this letter breathe in every line the same ardent soul that led him when a boy to leap into the brook after his hawk, or in later times taught him to put on the terrible hair-shirt, and to bear severe scourgings three or four times in the day. Ever in earnest, there is still the same impatience of obstacles that hinder the end he has in view, as when he buckled on his armour and laid lance in rest for his earthly master's cause. That cause ever became his own: his Master now is God, and God's cause is his cause; he looks singly to its attainment, and with apostolic liberty he speaks; for "where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty."

The King's threat that he would go to England and hasten the coronation of the Prince, was not an idle one. For some time past he had

entertained this wish, apparently with the view of hindering, in some degree, the effect of personal sentence of excommunication against himself. His difficulty in this project was, that the coronation of the Sovereign was one of the undoubted prerogatives of the see of Canterbury. Reginald of Salisbury advised him to request the Pope to empower some other Bishop to perform the ceremony;† and on his replying that he believed it to be impossible to obtain such a favour, Reginald answered, “Our lord the Pope will act like a dolt and a fool, if he does not grant your petition.” The request may have been made and have met with success; for two letters of Alexander’s are still extant,<sup>5</sup> empowering Roger, the Archbishop of York, to crown the young Prince. Their genuineness, however, is very questionable. The plea which Henry urged in his own excuse afterwards, and which doubtless was the pretext used at the time to justify the usurpation, St. Thomas<sup>6</sup> learned from the King’s own lips, and he related it to the Pope. It would seem, then, that after Theobald’s death, while Canterbury was vacant and St. Thomas still Chancellor, Henry had entertained the wish that his son might be crowned, though he was then a child but six or seven years old. Roger de Pont l’Eveque was in such disfavour that

† Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 226.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. pp. 43, 45. It was reported, so the Bishops of Noyon and Paris wrote to the Pope (Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 230), on the return of Richard Barre and Ralph Archdeacon of Llandaff, that such a power had been granted.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 70.

St. Thomas was able to remind Henry that he had said, that he would rather his son were beheaded, than that he should have Roger's "heretical hands" laid upon him. In order to prevent any claim on the part of the Archbishop of York to exercise this great function during the vacancy of the see of Canterbury, Henry applied to the Pope that his son might be crowned by any bishop whom he might choose. This faculty he now brought forward in favour of the very Prelate whom it had been obtained to exclude. St. Thomas, on the other hand, previous to the negotiations respecting the absolution of the Bishop of London, had received from the Holy Father letters,<sup>7</sup> dated February 26th, and still earlier from Anagni, in November, others again from the Lateran, April 5th, forbidding any one but the Archbishop of Canterbury to perform the ceremony. St. Thomas did his best to send these letters into England; but the watch that was kept up was so vigilant, that it would appear that no copy escaped until the very Saturday before the coronation. They were then delivered<sup>8</sup> to the Archbishop of York

<sup>7</sup> Rymer's *Fœdera*, i. p. 29. St. Thomas's own letters to the Bishops (Ep. S. Tho. i. pp. 190, 227).

<sup>8</sup> Fitzstephen (p. 103) says so expressly. St. Thomas asked the King why he had driven Roger and the other Bishops into disobedience; "for *they had received* the prohibition of our lord the Pope that they should not presume to do this in any way in our absence" (Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 70). Roger of York took oath after the martyrdom, that he had not received them (Diceto, p. 558). One set of letters was certainly destroyed (Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 288).

and the Bishop of London, only to be entirely disregarded.

After the return of St. Thomas to the Abbey of St. Columba, near Sens, he told Herbert one morning that he was convinced that Prince Henry would not live long; for as he lay sleepless, after Matins, thinking of the King, his greatness and wonderful prosperity, and while musing especially over what might be the future fate of Prince Henry, his former pupil, to whom he was much attached, and of one of his brothers, either Richard or Geoffrey,—as he was dropping off to sleep, he heard a voice which said,

*Mors tulit una duos, tulit altera sed male patrem.*

Herbert says that St. Thomas never wrote a line in his life, never having been taught to versify when young; and he adds, that he thought he had lived to see the fulfilment of the verse. The story is interesting, as showing the feelings of affection the Saint still entertained for the Prince, whom he calls “our Henry,” notwithstanding the ceremony which was then being performed at Westminster, of which that Prince was the central figure.

The King summoned the Bishops and barons to meet in London on Sunday, June 14th.<sup>9</sup> The Queen was not to leave Normandy, and for some unexplained reason the Princess Margaret was to remain with her; but Richard of Ilchester was sent to hasten the Prince's movements, as his father was waiting for him on the English

<sup>9</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. pp. 64, 287, 299.

coast: and he speedily crossed the Channel, attended by the Bishops of Bayeux and Séez. When the Sunday came, Prince Henry, who had been previously knighted by the King, was crowned by the Archbishop of York; and, as if to render the outrage more flagrant, not only was the usual coronation oath to maintain the liberty of the Church omitted, but another was substituted in its place, to observe the royal customs.<sup>10</sup>

Immediately afterwards, Henry returned to Normandy. Before he had left for England, he had ordered the Bishop of Worcester to be present at the coronation; the Bishop accordingly went to Dieppe. The King had crossed, when the Queen, who remained at Caen with Richard de Humet, the Justiciary of Normandy, fearing lest he should interfere with the coming invasion of the Archbishop's rights, sent him fresh directions not to cross the Channel; and she ordered the provost of Dieppe and the ship-owners not to permit his passage. When Henry, on his return, was approaching Falaise, the Bishop went out three miles to meet him. The King began at once to insult him: "Now you are plainly a traitor. I myself ordered you to be present at my son's coronation; and, though I named the day, you have chosen to be absent: you have shown plainly enough that you have no love for me, nor for my son's promotion. Now I see that you favour my enemy, and hate me and mine: but you shall no longer

<sup>10</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. pp. 33, 50, 84.

have the revenues of your bishopric; I will take them away from you, for you have shown yourself unworthy of bishopric or benefice. Truly you never were the son of the good Earl Roger, my uncle, who brought you and me up together in that castle, and had us there taught our letters and our manners." The Bishop, in reply, mentioned the simple fact of the prohibition which he had received when in the port; but the King would not believe him, and said, still in a violent passion, "The Queen is in the castle at Falaise, and Richard de Humet is not far off; do you quote them as your authorities?" "Certainly not the Queen," said the Bishop; "for if, through fear of you, she should suppress the truth, you would be in a greater rage with me; and if she were to confess it, you would be shamefully mad with that noble lady. I am not of sufficient consequence that for my sake she should hear one rough word from you. It is well I was not present at that coronation, which was offensive to God, not on the Prince's account, but on the prelate's; and if I had been there, I would not have suffered it to be performed. You say that I am not the son of Earl Roger. Whether I am or not, I cannot tell; but you do not show by your gratitude that that same Earl Roger, my father, was your uncle, who brought you up as became your birth, and after fighting your battles, offensive and defensive, with King Stephen for sixteen years, was at last taken prisoner on your account. If you had thought of these things, you never would have reduced

my brothers as you have. You have reduced the tenure and honour of a thousand men, which your grandfather the great King Henry gave to my father, to a fief of two hundred and forty, and thus injured my brother the earl. Then my younger brother, who has the reputation of a brave soldier, you have suffered to fall into such poverty, that on that account he has left secular life and service, and has taken the perpetual vow, with the ensign and habit of the Hospital of Jerusalem. These are the advantages you confer on your relations and friends: thus you requite those who deserve well of you. As for your threat of taking away the revenues of my bishopric,—take them, if you are not satisfied with those of the archbishopric and six vacant sees, and many abbeys, which you receive to the peril of your soul, and turn to secular uses, the alms of your fathers, the good kings, and the patrimony of Jesus Christ.” These words, and more of the same sort, were said in the hearing of all who were riding with the King. A knight of Aquitaine, who did not know the Bishop, asked who was speaking; and on being told who it was, he said, “It is lucky for him that he is a churchman; if he were a soldier, the King would not leave him two acres.” Another, thinking to please Henry, reproached the Bishop bitterly; but the King, turning to him in indignation, loaded him with the foulest abuse, saying, among other things, “You vile fellow, do you think that because I say what I like to my cousin the Bishop, you or any other person

may insult or threaten him? I can scarcely keep my hands off your eyes; it is too bad for you and the others to abuse a Bishop." They arrived at their resting-place; and after dinner the King and the Bishop talked apart amicably on the subject of a reconciliation with St. Thomas. To the honour of the Bishop of Worcester be it recorded, that he took every opportunity of sending assistance to our Saint; and while the justiciaries made this a frequent pretext for persecuting abbots and other ecclesiastics, they never dared to molest the Bishop on that account.

All this time, the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers were doing nothing to bring Henry to terms, in conformity with the Pope's instructions. They had been ordered to follow a monition of an interdict by the sentence itself within forty days, if the King did not ratify his former proposals; and the very power of absolving the excommunicates, which they had used, was only conferred to be employed in case of the certain hope of reconciliation. The Archbishop of Sens wrote to the Pope to complain of their dilatoriness; and in consequence, fresh letters came from the Holy Father, ordering them to bring the King to a conference within twenty days, and then, within forty more, to lay the kingdom under interdict. These letters were sent, in the first instance, to St. Thomas, who, for reasons which have not come down to us, delayed to forward them. The two Bishops made a faint and ineffectual attempt to cross the Channel while the King was in England;



but on his return, they had the conference with him which the Pope required. It seems singular that the coronation of the Prince is nowhere spoken of as an offence committed *by the King* against the Archbishop's rights; but, as will be subsequently seen, the prelates who performed it were alone punished as guilty. Henry consented at once to all the terms which had been proposed at Montmartre, repeating, however, his refusal to take or give the kiss of peace. The Pope had suggested that in this case the Archbishop might receive the kiss from Prince Henry, or, as he is henceforward called, the young King; but St. Thomas did not ultimately press for that sign of amity in the subsequent negotiations.

From this moment the question arises, which is of such vital consequence to the character of King Henry II., and on which his personal responsibility for the martyrdom of St. Thomas really depends, whether, that is, he was sincere in his desire for a reconciliation, and in the arrangements which he now concluded. It must be acknowledged, that his refusal to give the kiss is not the only suspicious circumstance which leads us to doubt how the oath, which he took before his absolution, after the martyrdom, could have been sincere. Fitzstephen tells us that "some one wrote to the King to ask, 'Why is the Archbishop kept out of the kingdom? He had far better be kept in than kept out.' The hint was given to one who understood it. The King forthwith arranged a conference to treat of a peace, and there conceded everything which

before he had refused." Then, beyond doubt, the *apparent* object of the coronation of his son is precisely that which is suggested by the same writer: "But first he caused his son to be crowned with all despatch, on account of a certain result which might possibly take place; so that, if a crime were committed, the kingdom could not be punished on his account, seeing that he would be no longer the King of it."<sup>11</sup>

On the 16th of July, the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers went to inform St. Thomas, who was still at Sens, of Henry's readiness to comply with the terms which were required of him. The Kings of England and France held a conference on the 20th and 21st, in a plain between the two castles of Viefui and Freitval, on their borders; which plain the poor exiles afterwards learnt was called by the inhabitants Traitors' Meadow. The Archbishop of Sens had pressed St. Thomas to attend this conference, in company with himself and the two Bishops, adding, that a peace could never be effected between them while they kept aloof from one another. The Saint was, in the first instance, very unwilling to attend unbidden; but at last he acquiesced. The Kings settled their affairs without making any mention of the Archbishop of Canterbury; so that, after their second day's conference, his clerics returned to him, bringing news that the business was over, and the Kings on the point of retiring; and it was greatly feared that they, who had attended un-

<sup>11</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 301; Froude, p. 498.

invited, would retire disgraced. In the interval, however, the Bishops, who had accompanied the Saint, had been interceding with the King, who consented to an interview on the following day, which was the feast of St. Mary Magdalen. He promised to abide by the Pope's commands in every point, excepting the matter of the kiss, adding, on his oath, that if he refused, it was not from any design against St. Thomas: and, calling God to witness this, he prevailed on the Archbishop of Sens to pledge himself for its truth. He even said, that he would yield in this point, however reluctantly, rather than part finally at variance. The Archbishop of Sens returned to the Saint, and told him how gracious the King had seemed both in his manner and words; and intreated him not to mar the prospect of returning kindness by insisting on the kiss; adding that Henry had promised publicly, that, on returning to his own dominions, he would receive him with the kiss, and every demonstration of gratitude. The Saint "was prepared even to lay down his life for his sheep,"—a phrase used in a letter describing these circumstances, which shows how little credit St. Thomas's friends attached to the King's protestations; and he therefore yielded to the advice of the Archbishop of Sens, and late in the evening his answer was laid before Henry.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> St. Thomas was entertained at the time of his reconciliation to the King, by Emmeline, a lady of Chaumont, who years after pointed out the place where his bed was laid to Ralph, a priest of Angers, by whose advice, as she was old and ill and could not undertake a pilgrimage to Canterbury, she slept on the same spot and was cured (Will. Cant. p. 450).

That night the King of England was the guest of the King of France. The following allusion to the coming day was heard to pass between them: "To-morrow," said King Henry, "that thief of yours shall have peace, and a good one too." "What thief, pray," replied Louis, "by the saints of France?" "That Archbishop of Canterbury of ours," was the answer. King Louis rejoined, "I wish he were ours as well as yours; you will please God and man if you make a good peace with him, and I shall be ever grateful to you."<sup>13</sup>

On the morning of the feast, July 22, at dawn of day, the King, with a vast multitude in his train, set out for the spot which had been agreed on by himself and the King of France for the interview. King Louis was not himself present. St. Thomas arrived rather later, attended by the Archbishop of Sens and Count Theobald. The other French also, who had attended the conference between the Kings, crowded to the spectacle in great numbers. At the first sight that Henry caught of the Saint's approach, he darted forward from the midst of his party, and made straight up to him with his head uncovered, in order to be the first to give the salutation. They exchanged greetings, offered right hands, and embraced; so that some thought the King had broken the oath which they had heard him swear, that he would not admit the Archbishop to the kiss. Henry then retired with the two Archbishops; and St. Thomas addressed him respect-

<sup>13</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 65; Froude, p. 503.

ing the injuries done to himself and the Church, in a discourse which the Archbishop of Sens declared was most moving and pertinent. After this, the King and the Saint conversed together for the greater part of the day, so long, indeed, as to weary out all who were in attendance. The anxiety and attention with which they were watched by the bystanders may be gathered from the fact, that it was remarked that St. Thomas shifted frequently from side to side in the saddle, which they afterwards knew to have been caused by the irritation occasioned by the hair-drawers that he wore. At length, however, a sight was seen which struck all with amazement. St. Thomas, on a sudden, dismounted, and knelt at the King's feet; the King sprung from his horse in haste, and taking hold of the stirrup, obliged the Saint to remount, saying with emotion, "My Lord Archbishop, what more? Let us renew our old intimacy; let us henceforth be friends, and forget our past enmity. Only, I beg of you, give me honour in the sight of those who are standing by."

He then passed over to his party, and said, "Now that the Archbishop has shown such good intentions, if I, in my turn, did not show as good, I should indeed be the worst of men, and should verify all the evil that has been said of me. I believe I can do nothing wiser or better than try to surpass the Archbishop in kindness, charity, and good offices." It is only just to Henry's impulsive character to believe him to have been in earnest for the moment.

The King then withdrew, and St. Thomas was able to explain to his friends what had caused so striking a termination of the conference. After the other subjects had been spoken of, St. Thomas said, that it was necessary for the King's own welfare and that of his children, as well as for the preservation of the power which God had given him, that he should make formal reparation to his mother, the Church of Canterbury, for his late most grievous injustice to her, in having, by an enormous violation of her most ancient privilege, and contrary to the Pope's letter, caused his son to be crowned by the hands of the Archbishop of York; a prelate, blind, headstrong, and presumptuous enough to perform that rite in another Archbishop's province. For some time the King showed a reluctance to admit this charge, and said, though not, he protested, in any spirit of contention, that an Archbishop of York had crowned William the Conqueror, and a Bishop of Hereford had done the same for King Henry his grandfather, so that he might conclude that it was open to a king to choose the prelate who should crown him. The Saint showed in reply, that, in the first instance, Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had never received the pallium, so that the see was, to all intents and purposes, vacant; and that, in the second case, Archbishop St. Anselm being in exile, the Bishop of Hereford was his deputy, and the Archbishop of York had made no claim. And further, that on the return of St. Anselm, his royal grandfather had acknow-

ledged the rights of Canterbury by requesting to be crowned anew by him. Henry rejoined, that he had had leave from the Pope to choose any Bishop for the ceremony; but St. Thomas reminded him that when that leave was granted, there was no Archbishop of Canterbury, that its object had been to exclude this very Roger, and that, at any rate, the later prohibitions of the Pope revoked the former concessions. He did not say these things from any wish to lower or disgrace the Prince, whose success and glory, on the contrary, he desired, and would endeavour to promote by every means in the Lord, as in Stephen's time he had laboured hard to maintain the King's own right to the crown.

Henry, with a look of good humour, and in a cheerful tone, replied, "You have a double right to love my son; for I made you his father, as you may remember, and gave him into your hands. And his love for you is such, that he cannot endure the sight of any of your enemies. He would have used coercion to them before now, only his reverence and dread of me prevented him. But as soon as he has the opportunity, I know he will take vengeance, and a severer one even than he ought. I doubt not that the Church of Canterbury is the noblest of all the Churches of the west; she consecrated me; and so far from wishing to deprive her of her rights, I will in this instance, as you advise, take measures for her relief, and restoration to her ancient dignity. But as for those who up to this time have betrayed the interests of both

of us, I will, with God's help, answer them as traitors deserve." He added, that St. Thomas should crown Margaret, his son's wife, and as an acknowledgment of the rights of his Church, he should repeat the coronation of the young King. This it was which made the Saint leap from his horse; there was apparently no longer anything to separate him from his flock.

Those who were present were called together, and before them Henry declared that he restored to the Archbishop his royal favour, together with his Church, and all its possessions entire. It was arranged that one of the Saint's clerics should go to the King before long for a letter to his son, which should empower and command a full restitution; and Herbert was the one to whom this matter was confided. As many of the co-exiles of the Saint as were there then came forward, and did obeisance at the King's feet; and he promised to reinstate them all.

After consulting with the Archbishop of Sens and his other friends, St. Thomas drew up a memorial recounting the points to which the King had consented, amongst which the case of the coronation was particularly specified. This was presented through the Archbishop of Sens, and was ratified by the King. That Henry expressly and publicly consented to the punishment of the Bishops, who had merely executed his will, is perfectly certain; but as it is a point of the very greatest consequence, since the anger that led to the martyrdom was excited by the course here agreed to by the King himself, and as, just



before his death, St. Thomas solemnly reminded Fitz-Urse of this very consent, it will be well to insert the words of another witness.<sup>14</sup> "I was present," writes Theobald Count of Blois to the Pope, "I was present when the King of England received the Archbishop of Canterbury with every sign of peace and good-will. In my presence his lordship of Canterbury complained to the King of the coronation of his son; and as he was conscious that he had inflicted an injury, he promised satisfaction. Complaint was then made of the Bishops who had dared to place the new King on the throne, against the right and honour of the Church of Canterbury; and the King gave him free and lawful power over them, that, at your Holiness's pleasure or at his, sentence might be pronounced against them. These things I saw and heard, and I am ready to attest and confirm them by an oath, or in whatever other mode you may prefer."

St. Thomas and the King, when these concessions had been publicly made, conversed together alone till evening, as familiarly as in the days of their friendship; and it was agreed on parting, that the Saint should return to pay a visit of thanks to the King of France and his other benefactors, and to arrange his affairs; and then go and stay with Henry, previous to embarking for England, to show how perfectly their intimacy was restored. St. Thomas, however, subsequently determined to wait in France till he heard from the envoys he was about to send that restitution

<sup>14</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 211.

was actually made; for as long as the King retained a foot of Church land, he could not trust his sincerity.

As he was leaving, the Bishop of Lisieux openly said that, as the King had taken his followers into favour again, the Saint ought to adopt a similar course towards all who had opposed him. He answered that the cases could not be classed together, but that, as far it was possible, he wished to be in peace and charity with all; and, having first consulted with the King, he would endeavour that every thing should be so arranged with reference to the honour of God and the Church, that if any failed in obtaining absolution (which God forbid), the blame would be chargeable upon themselves only. Geoffrey Ridel Archdeacon of Canterbury stepped in, and began some swelling reply, when the King, to prevent any revival of old animosities, drew the Saint out of the crowd, begging him not to mind what such persons said. He then asked the Archbishop's blessing, which concluded the conference.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### DISAPPOINTMENT.

1170.

King Henry does not keep his engagements—St. Thomas has various interviews with the King—the Pope's action—the Saint prepares to return to England—the King's leave to excommunicate the Bishops concerned in the coronation—indications of coming danger—last words with the King—John of Salisbury precedes the Saint, who leaves Sens, and passes through Flanders—from Wissant he sends the Pope's letters of censure to three Bishops in England—further indications of danger—St. Thomas crosses from Wissant to Sandwich—his reception and entrance into Canterbury.

ST. THOMAS<sup>1</sup> wrote at once to inform the Pope and Cardinals of the reconciliation which had taken place. It is a striking proof how well King Henry was understood by them, that their joy was mingled with mistrust. As Cardinal Albert expressed it,<sup>2</sup> “the Ethiopian does not easily change his skin, nor the leopard his spots.” Events soon showed that Henry was determined to be consistent with himself, and violate his engagements, however recent and however solemn.

Messengers were sent over into England by St. Thomas, carrying letters from the King to his

<sup>1</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 65; Froude, p. 503.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 119; Froude, p. 519.

justices, ordering restitution to be made of the Church property. Such benefices as had fallen vacant during the exile of the Saint had been given away. In the first instance, Henry's nominees were ejected, and the clerics appointed by St. Thomas obtained possession; but they were soon dispossessed again, and the intruders reinstated. It was also remarked by thoughtful observers, as an important sign of the King's intentions, that the Archbishop's Michaelmas rents were received by the royal officers as before. The messengers of the Saint<sup>3</sup> wrote to him from England, to the effect that all his friends whom they had met despaired so completely, that even when they showed them the King's letters, with his great seal hanging to them, and declared that they had themselves been present at the reconciliation, and even stated this on oath, they could hardly obtain credence. The only person whom they could get to co-operate with them was Robert, the Sacristan of Canterbury. They had had interviews with the young King, but without any satisfactory result. The date of this letter is in the first week of October.<sup>4</sup> It was forwarded by St. Thomas to the Pope, with the complaint that nothing had yet been gained from Henry but bare words. John of Salisbury and Herbert of Bosham had previously been sent to the King himself. They had found him in Normandy; but as he was suffering from a tertian fever, it was long before they could see him on the sub-

<sup>3</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 306; Froude, p. 512.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 77; Froude, p. 516.

ject. At their last interview, Henry said to John of Salisbury, "O, John, I will never give you the castle, unless I see you behave to me differently than you have yet behaved." This was an application either for Rochester Castle, or for Saltwood, the fief of Henry of Essex, which Randolph de Broc occupied.<sup>5</sup>

When St. Thomas heard that the King was about to give an interview to one of his firm friends, Theobald Count of Blois, he determined to be present. It took place at Tours, on the 12th of November. The evening before, the Archbishop arrived; but it was noticed that though the King came out to meet him, he did not look kindly upon him or his companions. Nigel de Sackville, whose name had figured in some of the lists of the excommunicated, was the King's seal-bearer and one of his clerics, and had received from his master the Church of Harrow, which was one of the vacant benefices. Fearful of being obliged to restore it, he was not over-anxious for peace. The King thought that he should have some difficulty the next morning in refusing the kiss of peace to the Archbishop, if they should hear the same Mass; but Nigel de Sackville relieved him of his difficulty, by recommending him to have a black Mass celebrated, in which the *Pax* is not given. After Mass, as usual, the *Salve Sancta Parens* was said in honour of our ever-blessed Lady; after which the priest kissed the text of the Gospel, and carried it to the Archbishop, and then to the King, for them to kiss.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. pp. 185, 262.

St. Thomas then said, "My lord, I have come to you in your own dominions, now give me the kiss according to your promise." The King said, "Another time you shall have enough."

On another occasion, the Saint met the King at a castle near Blois, in order that he might carry out the advice of the envoys, and see as much of him as possible, in order to confirm the reconciliation. In the course of familiar and cheerful conversation, Henry said to him, "Oh, why do you not do my will? I certainly would put every thing into your hands." When St. Thomas repeated this to Herbert, he told him that it reminded him of the saying in the Gospel, "All this will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Even before St. Thomas's last letter reached the Pope, his Holiness was determined to enforce the terms of the reconciliation which had been concluded. On the 9th of October, he issued from Anagni<sup>6</sup> letters to the Archbishops of Rouen and Sens, and the Bishop of Nevers, enjoining them to threaten the King with an immediate interdict; and all occupiers of Church lands were ordered to make restitution forthwith, under pain of excommunication. Full powers, dated Segni, October 13,<sup>7</sup> excepting only the persons of the King, the Queen, and the Princes, were lodged in the Saint's hands, as Apostolic Legate. Sentence of suspension had been pronounced by the Pope at Veroli, on the 10th of September,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. pp. 63, 72.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* ii. p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* ii. pp. 32, 48, 82.

against the Archbishop of York and the other Bishops who were present at the coronation; while the Bishops of London and Salisbury, by letters dated Ferentino, September 16, were replaced under the excommunication from which they had been absolved. In these letters the substitution by the Bishops, on that occasion, of the Constitutions of Clarendon for the Coronation Oath was naturally dwelt on by the Pope as an additional cause for the punishment which was inflicted; for several of those Constitutions had been condemned by him. St. Thomas, in his letter of complaint against the King,<sup>9</sup> requested the Pope to withdraw the mention of the Constitutions, as being particularly calculated to irritate him; while the part taken by the Bishops in the young King's coronation was abundantly sufficient cause for their censure, and one in which Henry had acquiesced. He also begged that the sentences of all the Bishops, but that of the Archbishop of York, might be intrusted to his discretion. The Pope consented,<sup>10</sup> writing from Frascati on the 24th of November, and as he urged St. Thomas to return to England, in spite of the King's non-fulfilment of his engagements, the Saint now prepared for his departure.

The French nobles provided him and his companions with everything that was necessary, with such liberality, that when he actually started there were more than a hundred horses in his

<sup>9</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 77; Froude, p. 524.

<sup>10</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 85.

train. His farewell visit to King Louis was very affectionate and moving. He must indeed have found it difficult to express his gratitude for the truly royal treatment he had received from him. In their conversation, the Archbishop showed his sense of the danger to which he was now exposing himself. "We are going to England," he said, "to play for heads." "So it seems to me," said Louis. "My Lord Archbishop, if you followed my advice, you would not trust yourself to your King, as long as he refuses the kiss of peace. Remain; and as long as King Louis lives, the wine, the food, and the wealth of France shall never fail you." The Saint answered, "God's will be done;" and they parted with tears, to meet again, we may hope, in that land where even a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple does not lose its reward.

The parting words of St. Thomas to the Bishop of Paris were: "I am going to England to die." And, indeed, stories were afterwards told which showed that some people believed that such a fate was deliberately prepared for him. A priest, named Richard de Halliwell, was told by one of the sergeants of the King's Court, that he had with his own hands sealed the letters which were sent to England to command the death of the Archbishop, and that Nigel de Sackville had written them; and he added, that he had confessed this before to an English Bishop and asked for a penance, but the Bishop had said, "What for? you did your lord's command;" and, as if he had done no harm, enjoined him



nothing. Another anecdote is also very significant. Reginald de Warrenne one day entered the chapter of the Canons of Southwark, with whom he was very intimate, and said to them, "Pray heartily to God for me, for I have great need of it. Soon, perhaps, you will hear that something has been done in England, such as never before has been heard of: as far as I am concerned, it is quite against my will, but I am not my own master."

The Saint wrote to Henry in the following terms,<sup>11</sup> expressive of the same tone of mind as that which pervaded his farewell to King Louis. After showing what procrastination there had been in making restitution, he said, "Meantime, Randulf violently outrages the property of the Church, collects our stores into the castle at Saltwood, and, as we have been informed by those who can prove it, has, in the hearing of many, boasted that we shall not long enjoy our peace; 'for that, before we have eaten a loaf of bread in England, he will take away our life.' Your highness knows that voluntarily to overlook a wrong is to participate in the guilt. Yet this Randulf is plainly relying on your countenance and authority; for how else could he venture so far? What was the answer he returned to your son's letters? We leave this for your discretion to reflect upon, when you are informed of it.

"Forasmuch, however, as there are plain indications that, through hatred of our person, the mother of the British Churches is in danger of

<sup>11</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 380; Froude, p. 526.

perishing, we, in order to save her from this fate, are prepared, God willing, to surrender our life into the hands of Randulf and his accomplices in persecution; yea, and to die a thousand deaths for Christ's sake, if His grace enables us. I had intended, my lord, ere now to have returned to you, but the necessities of the afflicted Church draw me to her side. With your favour and permission, I purpose returning to her; perhaps, unless your timely pity ordain it otherwise, to die for her. Yours, whether we live or die, now and ever in the Lord."

When the part that was actually taken by Randulf de Broc in the martyrdom is remembered, this letter cannot but be regarded as very remarkable. His parting with King Henry is thus told. "Go in peace," said the King; "I will see you at Rouen or in England as soon as I can." St. Thomas said, "My lord, my heart tells me that you will never see me again alive." "Do you think I am a traitor?" "No, my lord," was the simple answer. The Saint then went to Rouen at the King's request.

John of Salisbury went before him into England, where he landed on the 12th of November.<sup>12</sup> Three days before, a mark had been set on all the Archbishop's effects, and his officials had been excluded from all share in the administration of the property. Also, an edict had been published in all the ports, forbidding any of the Archbishop's friends to leave England, under penalty of exile and proscription. John of Salis-

<sup>12</sup> Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 240; Froude, p. 256.

bury was received by both clergy and people of Canterbury with great honour, and presided, in the Archbishop's name, over a synod which was held there on the 18th of November, a few days after his arrival. He had a gracious audience of the young King; but he saw too many signs of the insincerity of the reconciliation which had been made, not to believe the general report that the rancour against them, which had been nominally softened, was in reality more vigorous than ever. The Christmas rents followed those of Michaelmas into the King's coffers.<sup>13</sup>

The pretext which Henry alleged for not meeting St. Thomas at Rouen was, that the men of Auvergne had sent to request succour to repel an attack which they expected from the King of France. He sent in his stead the notorious John of Oxford. When St. Thomas saw him, he said that times were indeed changed when the Archbishop of Canterbury was to receive protection from him. The Archbishop of Rouen said that he had received no instructions from the King to accompany him, and that as all was safe enough, it was not necessary. He also gave him three hundred pounds as a gift. The King urged his immediate departure by letter. "Inasmuch as many things are told me respecting your lordship's delay, which perhaps are not true, I think it expedient for you to take your departure for England with all speed." He had also received letters from the Pope, exhorting him to return fearlessly to his church, and fulfil his ministry.

<sup>13</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 300.

They left Sens on the feast of All Saints, with which day the seventh year of their exile began.<sup>14</sup>

St. Thomas and his fellow-travellers were escorted through Flanders by Philip Count of Flanders, and at his request the Saint consecrated for him a chapel at Male, a country-seat belonging to the Count.<sup>15</sup> Our Saint once more received hospitality at the great Abbey of St. Bertin at St. Omer, and was conducted thence to the fort of the Count of Guisnes by Peter Abbot of Ardres. As they passed the Abbey of Ardres on the west and there was not time enough to spare for a visit to it, at the Abbot's request St. Thomas raised his right hand and blessed it; and that blessing the chronicler<sup>16</sup> of the abbey says, rested upon it "with blessings of sweetness." Baldwin, Count of Guisnes, who had been knighted by him when he was Chancellor, received him with every mark of honour. The next morning the Saint had recourse to the ministry of Gusfrid, the Count's chaplain, and made his confession to him in his chapel before making his way to the sea.

They chose the port of Witsand or Wissant, in the territory of Boulogne, for their embarkation. From this place he forwarded the Pope's letters<sup>17</sup> of censure to the Bishops by a person named Osbern, but that for the Archbishop of York was intrusted to a nun named Idonea, doubtless as

<sup>14</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 239.

<sup>15</sup> Martene, *Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. 657; *Materials*, iv. p. 262.

<sup>16</sup> D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, ii. p. 812; *Materials*, iv. p. 263.

<sup>17</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. pp. 48, 82.

a messenger less likely to be suspected. The letter<sup>18</sup> which St. Thomas wrote to her on the subject is well worthy of insertion.

“God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. The pride of Holofernes, which exalted itself against God, when the warriors and priests failed, was extinguished by the valour of a woman: when Apostles fled and denied their Lord, women attended Him in His sufferings, followed Him after His death, and received the first-fruits of the Resurrection. You, my daughter, are animated with their zeal; God grant that you may pass into their society. The spirit of love hath cast out fear from your heart, and will bring it to pass that the things which the necessity of the Church demands of you, arduous though they be, shall appear not only possible but easy.

“Having this hope, therefore, of your zeal in the Lord, I command you, and for the remission of your sins enjoin on you, that you deliver the letters which I send you from his Holiness the Pope to our venerable brother Roger Archbishop of York, in the presence, if possible, of our brethren and fellow Bishops; and if not, in the face of all who happen to be present. Moreover, lest by any collusion the original instrument should be suppressed, deliver a transcript of it to be read by the by-standers; and open to them its intention, as the messenger will instruct you.

“My daughter, a great prize is offered for your

<sup>18</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 399; Froude, p. 53.

toil ; remission of sins, a fruit that perisheth not, —the crown of glory, which, in spite of all the sins of their past lives, the blessed sinners of Magdala and Egypt have received from Christ their Lord. The Lady of Mercies will attend on you, and will entreat her Son, Whom she bore for the sins of the world, God and Man, to be the guide, guard, and companion of your steps. He, Who burst the bonds of death, and curbed the violence of devils, is not unable to restrain the impious hand that will be raised against you. Farewell, bride of Christ, and ever think on His presence with you.”

The Bishops were found by the messengers at Canterbury, preparing to cross the sea ; and they submitted to the sentences which were thus pronounced against them, the Archbishop of York of suspension, and the Bishops of London and Salisbury of excommunication. To his very great satisfaction, the news of their having received the letters was brought to St. Thomas while he was waiting at Wissant for a fair wind.

One day they walked down to the beach to see the ships in which they were to cross, when a vessel arrived from England. They asked the sailors what was there said about the Archbishop's return ? They were told, that every one was much pleased. But Herbert was taken aside by one of them, whom he thought was the captain, who said : “ Wretched people, what are you doing ? Where are you going ? Certainly to your death ; so say all who know any thing about it, and everybody expects it : and, besides, there

are soldiers in the very port where you are going to land, waiting to take the Archbishop, and those who are with him." Herbert told St. Thomas what he had heard; and the Saint took counsel of his companions. Gunter of Winton, a good and simple soul, who had been very faithful to the Archbishop, recommended that they should wait until the storm caused by the suspensions passed over, saying, "If the country is moved by it now, what will it be when the King has heard of it?" Herbert's opinion was, that it was impossible to go back again into Flanders; and he said, that a death in such a cause would be a glorious martyrdom. St. Thomas briefly answered him, "Your speech seems faithful; but it is hard, and who shall fulfil it?" He then said, "Truly, Gunter, I see the land; and, by God's help I will enter the land, though I know for certain that my death awaits me." To a similar warning, given him by Milo Dean of Boulogne, in the name of his lord the Count of Boulogne, he replied, "Did you tell me I were to be torn limb from limb, I would not regard it; for I am resolved that nothing shall hinder my return. Seven years are long enough for a pastor to have been absent from the Lord's sorrowing flock. I will only ask my friends (and a *last request should* be attended to), that if I cannot return to my church alive, they will carry me into it dead." He added that he hoped that the library which he had thought of leaving on the Continent, but which the uncertainty of public affairs had made him resolve to take with him, would make his

monks willing to give him a burial-place in exchange.

On another occasion, when one of his clerics asked him what they were waiting for, and why they did not embark, he said, "Forty days will not pass after your entrance into the country, that you will not wish you were any where in the world rather than in England."

Robert, the keeper of the treasures of the Cathedral of Canterbury, was sent over by St. Thomas the day before he sailed, that he might make some preparation for the reception of the exiles. On his landing at Dover he was seized and made to take oath that he would return as soon as the wind permitted. Nothing was alleged against him except that he had no passport from the King.

On Tuesday the 1st of December, very early in the morning, the Saint embarked. Knowing that Dover was beset with soldiers, he ordered the vessel to be steered for Sandwich, a fief of his own, and the very port from which he had sailed on All Souls' Day, 1164. His ship could be distinguished from the others by the archiepiscopal cross, which was erected as he approached the shore. The poor people<sup>19</sup> caught sight of it,

<sup>19</sup> Among them was a youth called George, who afterwards in a storm invoked the martyr thus: "Save thy servants, O martyr Thomas, who of old were subjects of yours and were ready to defend you when you came back and made us happy. The officers were preparing their arms, but your devoted people were on the watch for you. We did what we could and what we were bound to do, and we make no boast of it, but now that we have fallen into trouble for our sins, help us" (Will. Cant. p. 325).



and collected in great numbers: some ran into the water to receive him; others knelt for his blessing; many wept; and some cried out, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the father of the orphans, and the judge of the widows."

The retainers of the three Bishops, under the command of Randulf de Broc, Reginald de Warrenne, and Gervase of Cornhill, the sheriff of Kent, who had been awaiting his arrival at Dover, soon heard of his landing; and hastening to Sandwich, with scarce a salutation to the Archbishop, began to demand why, on his very first entrance, he had begun by suspending and excommunicating the King's Bishops. The Saint answered quietly, that the King would not be offended by it; for he had received his permission to punish the injury to his Church, which those Bishops had committed. On hearing that the King had known of what he had done, they became a little more moderate; but they demanded the absolution of the Bishops. St. Thomas postponed the matter till he reached Canterbury; and John of Oxford protesting in the King's name against all violence, the soldiers, who had their armour on under their capes and tunics, retired. However, before they left, Reginald demanded that, if there were any foreigner among them, he should take the oath of allegiance to the King, which was exacted in the case of those who were suspected to be spies. It happened that Simon, the Archdeacon of Sens, was in the Archbishop's company; but as the oath

made no mention of the Pope, and was not usually imposed upon the clergy, the Saint would not suffer it; and the sensation caused by his arrival prevented them from enforcing it.

The six miles which he had to go from Sandwich to Canterbury were passed over in a sort of triumphal procession, owing to the vast crowds, especially of the poor, who thronged the roads to welcome him. Some threw their garments in the way, crying, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord." The parish priests led out their parishioners in procession to meet him, with the Cross preceding them; and they knelt for his blessing, while the air resounded with the same joyful cry. Though the distance was short, the concourse was so great, that they were late in reaching Canterbury.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE RETURN.

1170.

Joy in Canterbury at the Saint's return—the three Bishops demand absolution in vain, and then cross the sea—Prior Richard sent to the young King at Winchester—St. Thomas goes to Rochester and Southwark—a servant sent to the Earl of Cornwall, who returns with a warning—St. Thomas meets the Abbot of St. Alban's at Harrow—outrages of Randulf de Broc—return to Canterbury—William the poor priest of Chidingstone—Confirmations by the way—the Saint enters Canterbury—holds an ordination—Prior Odo—interview between the three Bishops and the King—his anger—four knights leave Normandy for Saltwood Castle—St. Thomas at Canterbury on Christmas Day—his last letter to the Pope—the knights come to Canterbury.

THE Saint entered into his cathedral city amidst every sign of rejoicing. The bells were ringing merry peals; the cathedral was decked out; the inhabitants, from the highest to the lowest, dressed themselves in their silks and gayest clothing; a public entertainment was prepared for great numbers; a numerous procession, with his own conventual chapter, attended him into the town; the churches resounded with the sound of the organs, chants, and hymns, and the halls with trumpets; and the whole place was overflowing with joy. He entered the city by the gate that led to the cemetery belonging to the

Cathedral, passing barefoot through the streets straightway into the church; and people remarked that his face shone as he did so with an outward splendour, as his heart was on fire with a holy gladness. He went to his episcopal throne, and there received the religious to the kiss of peace. This he was able to do, though there were many among the monks of Christchurch who during his absence had incurred censure by communicating with Gilbert Foliot and other excommunicated persons, for he had sent about a month before his return faculties by John of Salisbury to Brother Thomas of Maidstone to absolve and reconcile them all. The past was therefore forgotten in this happy moment. Men were crying with joy all around; and Herbert went up to him, and said, "My lord, we do not now mind when you may have to leave the world; for this day the Church, the spouse of Christ, has conquered in you." He made no answer, but simply looked at Herbert. In the chapter-house, he preached a beautiful sermon on the text, "We have here no abiding city, but seek one to come;" he then entered his palace, after a day of great solemnity.

The next morning, the King's officials came, accompanied by the chaplains of the three Bishops, to ask for absolution from the censures. "He had not come," they said, "in peace, but with fire and sword; treading his fellow-Bishops under foot, and treating them as his footstool, uncited, unheard, unjudged." They said too, "that his suffragans had gone to the sea, that

they might receive him in the procession with the Church of Canterbury; but that they had unexpectedly and undeservedly found themselves dressed in certain black garments, of which, if his lordship pleased, they must be ridded before they could present themselves." He answered that "the peace of sinners was no peace; for there was no true peace except to men of goodwill. Jerusalem, abounding in luxury and self-indulgence, said to herself, 'It is peace;' but the Lord in His pity wept over it, because the vengeance of God hung over it and was hidden from its eyes." With regard to their objections against the sentence, they must remember that it was passed by the Pope, and that it was not for them to call the acts of his Holiness in question. "I understand the meaning of this application: if I have not the power of absolving them, they will consider me a Legate with curtailed powers; if I have the power, they will try by secular violence to extort absolution from me. I am setting no snares for them." As, however, they were very urgent for the absolution, the Saint finally promised that, after ascertaining the King's wishes, and consulting the Bishop of Winton and others of his brethren, he would consent for the sake of peace to accept their oath to obey the judgment of the Pope, and would take on himself the responsibility of doing what he could, subject, of course, to his Holiness's approbation; and that he would receive them as brothers, with Christian love.

The Bishops objected to this proposal, as un-

constitutional, and derogating from the dignity of the crown; but on its being represented to them that the Pope himself had required a similar oath from them on their former absolution, the Bishops of London and Salisbury were prepared to give way; but the Archbishop of York persuaded them to throw themselves on the King's patronage, and excite the jealousy of the young King, as though it were the Saint's object to effect his deposition. The Archdeacons of Canterbury and Poitiers were on the point of crossing; but the former was now left behind to repair to the new King, and, as far as possible, poison his mind against his former guardian. The Bishops crossed the Channel; and, at their suggestion, six of the dignified clergy from each vacant see in the province were summoned to attend the King on the Continent, and go through the forms of an election before him, which it is unnecessary to say, would be invalid and uncanonical. This scheme, of which St. Thomas had been informed by his messengers in England while he was yet abroad, was frustrated by his martyrdom.

When the Archbishop had been eight days at Canterbury, he sent Richard, the Prior of St. Martin's at Dover, who was his immediate successor in the archbishopric, to the young King at Winchester, to say that he was about to come to pay his homage to him as his new Sovereign. He was thus prompt because he was anxious immediately after this visit to begin his visitation of the diocese, from which he had been so long separated. He took with him three magnificent

high-stepping chargers, richly caparisoned, as a present for his young lord.

Prior Richard was met on his arrival at Winchester by the young King's guardians, William St. John, William Fitz-Adeline, Hugh de Gondreville and Randulf Fitzstephen, who made difficulties about admitting him into the young King's presence. When assured that the message that he bore was one of peace, they allowed him access to the young King. The message of which he was the bearer from the Archbishop was, that through the merits of the saints of Canterbury and the prayers of the faithful, God in His mercy had reconciled him to the King; that he had therefore returned to England, which reconciliation and return he wished the young King to learn from himself; that he knew that enemies of his were misrepresenting him to the young King, and that he called God to witness that he held him to be his lord and king; but that as it had not been by his, the Archbishop's, hand that the coronation had been performed, he begged for a conference with him on this subject. The young King's answer was discourteous to St. Thomas, though civil in form to Prior Richard, saying to him that he owed him no favour for his present errand but that his thanks were due to the Prior for hospitality shown by him of old to his mother Queen Eleanor and for marrying his sister the Princess Matilda to Duke Henry of Saxony. Prior Richard was told to leave, for the young King would answer the Archbishop by his own messengers.

St. Thomas began his visitation by going to London, hoping there to receive an invitation to meet the young King. On the way the Bishop of Rochester, his old friend Walter, Archbishop Theobald's brother, met him in procession with his chapter and clergy. As he entered London, he was conducted by another procession to St. Mary's, Southwark, a church of canons regular. The multitude of people of every class who came out to meet him was incalculable. The poor scholars and clerics of the city went out for about three miles; and when he came in sight, their *Te Deum* rent the air. The Saint, who scattered his alms freely on the way, was lodged in the palace of the Bishop of Winchester by the riverside in Southwark. The canons received him at the door of St. Mary's; and intoning the *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*, the vast multitude took up the chant and continued the canticle. A crazy woman named Matilda, amidst the general joy, called out repeatedly, "Archbishop, beware of the knife."

The next day, the young King's promised messengers came, Jocelin of Louvain, younger brother of Adeliza, the Queen of Henry I., with a knight called Thomas of Turnebuhe, but they were the bearers of an order to him to return at once to Canterbury. The Archbishop asked if it was the King's intention to exclude him from his presence and confidence. "His commands were what I told you," Jocelin replied, and left him haughtily. As he was passing out, he met a rich citizen of London whom he knew,



to whom he said, "And are you come to the King's enemy? I advise you to go home quickly." He made answer, "We do not know whether you reckon him the King's enemy; but we have heard and seen the letters of the King, who is over the water, respecting the reconciliation;<sup>1</sup> if there is anything more behind, we know nothing about it."

Reginald of Dunstanville, Earl of Cornwall, whose conduct to St. Thomas at Northampton had not been unfriendly, now advised the young King to give him the audience he asked for. This may have come to the Saint's knowledge, or else he trusted to the Earl's comparative friendliness, and he resolved to send a confidential servant to stay with the Earl, in the hope that thus he might have speedy information of what was said or done in the young King's Court. The Earl was at Breamore, near Fordingbridge, suffering from a fistula, and nothing could more strongly show the hostility of the Court than the fact that St. Thomas's messenger could get access to the Earl or hope to remain in his household only by pretending to be a physician come to cure him. However he was soon recognized. The very next day the young King came to see his uncle,<sup>2</sup> bringing him some game. The King's servant who brought the game, standing watching the serving and the guests, said, "Is not that William

<sup>1</sup> That to the Bishop of Exeter is given in Ep. Jo. Sar. ii p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Reginald was a natural son of Henry I., created Earl of Cornwall 1140, ob. 1175.

I see there, from the household of Archbishop Thomas?" On this the Earl said to his physician, "Return in all haste to the Archbishop, and tell him from me that he must look to himself. Nothing is safe. And let John of Salisbury know, and John of Canterbury, and Gunter, and Alexander the Welshman, that wherever they are, they will be killed by the sword." The messenger started that night, and making all haste, delivered the Earl's warning to his master at Canterbury, in the presence of John of Salisbury only, in all probability on Sunday, the feast of St. John. The Archbishop then made use of a gesture and a phrase that he repeated later, "Here, here," said he, striking himself a light blow on the neck, "the varlets (*garçiones*) will find me."

About the feast<sup>3</sup> of St. Lucy, December 13, the Saint was at Harrow, his own manor, which Nigel de Sackville had usurped. He sent from thence to his friend Simon the Abbot of Alban's, closing his letter with the words, "that he never had needed consolation so much as then." The Abbot came to him, and was most affectionately received. After they had talked over all that the Saint had undergone abroad, the Abbot said, "By God's grace, it is all now happily ended." St. Thomas sighed; and taking the Abbot's hand under his cappa, and pressing it, he said, "My friend, my friend, I will tell you my case as to another self: things are very different with me

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Paris (a monk of St. Alban's) *inter vitas* xxiii. S. Albani Abbatum, de Abbate Simone, ed. Wats, p. 60.

to what men think. New persecutions are beginning. The King and his son (who is my only hope) are devising fresh injuries." The Abbot said, "How can this be, holy Father?" With a deep sigh, and looking up, the Saint answered, "Well enough, well enough I know to what matters are tending." When they parted, St. Thomas bade the Abbot pray for him to his holy martyr-patron, and promised to remember him in his prayers. "I will go," he added, "and celebrate such a feast in my church as the Lord shall provide me."

A messenger came from Canterbury, to say that Randulf de Broc had laid hands on a ship of his, laden with wine, and had cut the cables, carried off the anchors, killed some of the sailors, and imprisoned the others in Pevensey Castle. The Saint immediately sent the Abbot of St. Alban's and the Prior of Dover to complain of this outrage to the young King; and, at his command, the ship was ordered to be restored.

The Archbishop was accompanied by five mounted soldiers as an escort, on account of the unsafe state of the roads. It was reported to King Henry, that he was marching about England with a great army, besieging the towns, and intending to drive the young King out of the country.

At Wrotham, on the first evening of his return towards Canterbury, a poor priest named William, who said Mass at Chidingstone, came to him, and in a private audience, which he had requested,

said, "My lord, I bring you some relics of St. Laurence, St. Vincent, and St. Cecilia, as St. Laurence told me to do in a vision."

*St. Thomas.* "Brother, how do you know that they are the relics of those saints?"

*William.* "My lord, in my vision I asked St. Laurence for some sign, for I said that otherwise you would not believe me; and St. Laurence told me that you lately put your hand to your breast, and found the hair-shirt torn which you wear next your skin; and while you were deliberating whether you should have that one repaired or a new one made, you soon put your hand in again, and found it whole."

*St. Thomas.* "In virtue of obedience, I command you to tell nobody, as long as I live."

*William.* "So be it;" and he added, "I am a poor man, and I serve in another man's church; think of me."

*St. Thomas.* "Come to me four days after Christmas, and I will provide for you." He then went away.

Randulf de Broc and Gervase of Cornhill, who had privately had the names reported to them of some of those who had gone in procession to meet the Archbishop, summoned the priors and more distinguished citizens. They pretended that the King commanded that they should give bail to appear when called upon, to answer for having gone out to meet a traitor. The priors and ecclesiastics would not attend; but many citizens did. They replied, that they had not seen any letters from the King, nor

even from the justices; and that they were the King's liege men, and responsible to him alone, and not to them.

The De Broc family, in order to provoke him, hunted<sup>4</sup> in a chase of his without permission, and killed a stag; they also carried off several of his dogs and kept them. One day before Christmas, Robert de Broc, who had been a cleric, and then a white monk, and had apostatized and returned to the world, waylaid a train of the Archbishop's pack-horses, and set a nephew of his, John de Broc, to cut off the tail of one of them, on the King's highway. The poor mutilated beast was brought for the Archbishop to see.

All along the road which he had travelled, miracles were wrought after his martyrdom, more particularly in the places where he had stopped to give Confirmation to children, to mark which spots crosses were erected. The most famous was at Newington, a manor belonging to Richard de Luci, and Benedict<sup>5</sup> remarks that for the Saint to work wonders on his property, was to heap coals of fire on the head of an ancient adversary.

As soon as he arrived at Canterbury he dismissed his five soldiers. His last journey was over and he was once more in his Church on his birthday, the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle,

<sup>4</sup> This was forbidden by King Henry in an instrument which St. Thomas witnessed when Chancellor (Rymer's *Fœdera*, i. p. 40).

<sup>5</sup> Benedict, p. 164.

when he began his fifty-third year. The feast of his patron saint fell on a Monday. He had reached Canterbury in time to hold an ordination in his Cathedral on the previous Saturday in Ember week, December 19. Many were ordained from other monasteries and churches of the province, but of Christ Church monks he only ordained five, one subdeacon, one deacon, and three priests. The deacon was William of Canterbury, who records the fact. The ordination of some other monks of Christ Church the Saint postponed, as they had been irregularly received in his absence, and he caused them to be excluded from the Chapter, but just before Christmas he allowed them to renew their petition for admission, and he granted it, sobbing as he uttered an admonition to them to remember the indulgence that he had shown them.

Amongst those intruded during his absence was Odo,<sup>6</sup> the prior of the monastery. St. Thomas therefore regarded the office of prior as vacant, and he had summoned the Abbot of Boxley and the Prior of Dover to advise him in the choice

<sup>6</sup> Prior Wibert died September 27, 1167, and John of Salisbury wrote a strong remonstrance to the Convent for applying to the King on the occurrence of the vacancy (*Materials*, vi. p. 301). The Pope in a letter dated May 16, 1168, ordered the Convent to receive a Prior of the Archbishop's appointing only (*Ibid.* p. 418). St. Thomas did not recognize the intruder, but when he wrote in the following year, he addressed his letter "Wilhelmo Suppriori et Odoni et cæteris fratribus" (*Ibid.* p. 589). We learn from William of Canterbury (p. 542) that some of the monks were troubled at Odo's continuing in office. On the other hand, others wanted him to be St. Thomas's successor as Archbishop (*Materials*, iv. p. 177).

of one of his monks to fill the post, but the appointment was prevented by his death, and Odo continued to hold the place of prior, till in 1175 he was made Abbot of Battle.

The three Bishops who had crossed the sea found the King at his palace, called Bur, near Bayeux. When counsel was asked of them, Roger of York said, "Ask your barons and soldiers; it is not for us to say what ought to be done." At last some one said, "My lord, as long as Thomas lives, you will not have good days, nor peaceful kingdom, nor quiet times." The Bishops complaining that it was a shame to the King and his realm, that they should be so suspended from their offices that they were hardly allowed to bless their food, and declaring that if the King did not put a stop to the Archbishop's presumption, it would grow much worse, Henry fell into one of his terrible fits of rage, so that he was scarcely conscious of what he said. He repeated again and again, "What slothful wretches I have brought up in my kingdom, who have no more loyalty to their King than to suffer him to be so disgracefully mocked by this low-born cleric!" So saying he left the council-chamber.

Four knights immediately departed together. Their names were, Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Moreville, and Richard Brito, or Le Breton. After swearing to carry out the end of their conspiracy, they separated in the night of Christmas eve; and it was remarked, that though they left different ports of France,

and entered England at different places, they arrived at the same hour at Saltwood Castle. The King, after their departure, summoned the barons into his chamber, to complain that the Archbishop had entered his country like an invader; that he had suspended the Archbishop of York and the Bishops, and excommunicated others, for their services to himself; that he had disturbed the whole kingdom, and intended to deprive him and his son of their crowns; and that he had obtained from the Pope a privilege giving him and the Bishops the disposal of benefices, without regarding the advowsons of the earls or barons, or even of the King. The Earl of Leicester was the first to speak: "My lord, the Archbishop and the Earl, my father, were intimate friends; but be assured that, from the time he took himself out of your kingdom and favour, he has not seen a messenger from me, nor I from him." Engelger de Bohun, the uncle of the Bishop of Salisbury, and himself excommunicate, said, "I do not know what you can do with such a man, except you bind him with a wicker rope, and hang him on a cross." William Malvoisin, nephew of Eudes Count of Brittany, was the third speaker: "Some time ago," he said, "I was at Rome, on my return from Jerusalem. On questioning my host concerning the Popes, I learnt that a Pope had once been killed for his intolerable haughtiness and insolence."

As soon as this debate was ended, the King sent William de Mandeville Earl of Essex, Seyer



de Quincy, and Richard de Humet, in search of the four who had left. The report was, that they were to seize the Archbishop. Earl William and Seyer went as far as the coast, but did not cross. Richard went to another port and crossed. The young King was at Winton. Richard sent to Hugh de Gondreville and William St. John, his guardians, to come without his knowledge to Canterbury, with the troops of the royal household. He himself lay in wait on the coast, that the Archbishop might be taken, if he attempted to fly; and the Earl of Essex and Seyer did the same on the other side of the Channel.

The four knights reached Saltwood on Monday the 28th. We must therefore now return to St. Thomas, whom we have accompanied to Canterbury. On Christmas night he sang the Gospel of the Nativity after Matins, according to the rite still in use in the Benedictine Order; and he celebrated the midnight Mass himself. He also sang the High Mass on the festival, and before it he preached a beautiful sermon on the text which so much occupied his thoughts: "On earth peace to men of good will." When he came to speak of the holy Fathers of the Church of Canterbury, the confessors who were there, he said that they had one Archbishop who was a martyr, St. Elphege; and that "it was possible that they might soon have another." The tears burst from his eyes, and his sobs interrupted his words. All in the church were deeply moved; sobs and groans of sorrow were heard, and amongst them a low murmur, "Father, why do

you desert us so soon? To whom do you leave us desolate?" Checking his tears, the Saint in a loud clear voice excommunicated Robert de Broc, whom he had summoned by a messenger to do penance; but the contumacious sinner had sent for answer, by a soldier named David of Runnel [Romney], that if he were excommunicate, he would act as such. He involved in the same sentence the usurpers of his two churches, Harrow and Thierlewde or Throwley.

Christmas Day in that year fell upon Friday; and St. Thomas, proceeding from the church to the refectory, thought it more religious to eat meat than to abstain, in honour of the joy of Christmas, for which alone the Church suspends the precept of abstinence. On both the following feasts of St. Stephen and St. John the Saint sang Mass. On the former day he sent off three of his attendants, Herbert of Bosham, Alexander "the Welshman," as they called him, his cross-bearer, and Gilbert de Glanville, who had not been very long in his service. Herbert was sent to the King of France, the Archbishop of Sens, and others of the Saint's friends. He left at night through fear of treachery, with many tears; his own conviction being confirmed by the Saint's words, that he, who had borne so much with his master, would never see that master's face again upon earth. The others were the bearers of a letter<sup>7</sup> to the Pope, the last its writer ever sent to the Holy See, of which he had been the unflinching champion. In it he told the Pope of

<sup>7</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 81; Froude, p. 539.

all that had lately taken place; and he added, that a plan was in progress, of which he had had some notice from his messengers before he returned to England; that six dignitaries of each vacant Church had been summoned before the King to go through the form of election of their Bishops, whom he would be obliged to refuse to consecrate; and thus a pretext would evidently be furnished for rekindling animosities. The concluding words of the letter were, "May your Holiness fare well for ever, dearest Father!" Two other messengers also left him, Richard his chaplain, and John Planeta, who had been with him at Northampton, with instructions to the Bishop of Norwich to absolve the priests on the domains of Earl Hugh Bigod,<sup>8</sup> who had incurred the lesser excommunication by their intercourse with excommunicated persons. They were to take oath to send, within a year, two of their number to the Pope, in their name, to accept their penance from his Holiness.

The Saint did not forget the poor priest William, who had come to him at Wrotham. He sent William Beivin, who knew him, in search of him, to see whether he had arrived at Canterbury. As he was not found, the Saint gave to William Beivin, to be given to the priest, a deed, conferring upon him the chapel of Penshurst, to which he had added an excommunication against any one who should dare to hinder its fulfilment. In virtue of this deed, the priest received the

<sup>8</sup> Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, was excommunicated by the Pope himself for usurping the property of the Canons of Pentney. See Note G.

benefice after the martyrdom; the young King saying, when he heard of the miracle, that he would not incur the Saint's excommunication.

On this Sunday, St. John's day, St. Thomas received a letter from a friend of his among the courtiers, bidding him beware of his coming fate. This was probably the outspoken warning of Reginald Earl of Cornwall, already mentioned. He hid the letter within his hair-shirt, where it was found after his death.

On the Monday a monk of Westminster, who was at Canterbury on business, asked St. Thomas whether he remembered a message St. Godric,<sup>9</sup> the hermit of Finchale, had sent him years before. "Right well do I remember it," he said, "but he has passed from this world to our Lord, and it is some time since we sung our funeral Mass for him. I know that he did not need our help, for he is happily reigning with Christ in Heaven. The message that he sent me by you, came to pass as he said, for I went into exile only Archbishop of Canterbury, and now I have returned Legate of all England."

Another message from St. Godric foretold his martyrdom to St. Thomas. "Tell him not to be troubled," said St. Godric while St. Thomas was still in exile, "if for a little while he will have much to suffer; but the longer the trial is, the fuller will be the crown, and the light burden of this tribulation will bring forth an increase of everlasting beatitude. For within six months peace by word of mouth will be made between

<sup>9</sup> See Note H.

him and the King, but Godric will not then be living here: and within nine months his honours and possessions will be restored to him, and he will return to his see in Kent, where not long after, an end shall come to him altogether and of all things—an end that shall be for his saving good, his joy and perfection; and to many men a remedy of salvation, a help and consolation.”<sup>10</sup>

The soldiers of the castles round Canterbury, Dover, Rochester, Saltwood, and Bletchingley, were on the alert, and the castles put into a state of defence; perhaps to prevent any vengeance being taken by the people for what was now about to happen. It was on the 28th of December that the four conspirators reached Saltwood, where they would learn from their host that Robert de Broc, the apostate monk, had been solemnly excommunicated on Christmas Day. They spent the long winter night in concerting their scheme; and early in the morning of the next most memorable day, which after ages were to know as the Feast of the Holy Martyr St. Thomas, they set out with the De Brocs for Canterbury. They went to St. Augustine's Abbey, outside the walls, the intruded abbot of which, Clarembald,<sup>11</sup> who had been a

<sup>10</sup> *Libellus de vita et miraculis S. Godrici*, auctore Reginaldo monacho Dunelmensi. Surtees Society, 1845, pp. 236, 297.

<sup>11</sup> The Papal commission of inquiry into the character of the abbot-elect of St. Augustine's informed the Pope that they had absolved some of Clarembald's attendants, who, through the fear of the Abbot and the King, had communicated with the murderers of St. Thomas on their return from their crime (Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 272).

constant enemy of the Saint's ever since his refusal to bless him in his abbacy, received them. They remained there all the morning. They had sent, at an early hour, to collect as many soldiers as they could from the castles and the neighbourhood. With about a dozen men-at-arms, they rode from St. Augustine's to the Archbishop's palace; others being dispersed about the town, with orders, in the name of the King, to summon all the soldiers they might find, and to command all other persons not to stir from their houses nor to move, happen what might. Their place of rendezvous was the house of one Gilbert, not far from the gate of the palace, where they ultimately assembled.

A soldier, who was sworn to the conspiracy, told Richard, one of the cellarers or bursars of the monastery, that the Saint would not see Tuesday night. Richard repeated what he had heard to St. Thomas, who smiled and said, "They are threats." Reginald, a citizen of Canterbury, also told him that the murderers had landed and were making their preparations. The Saint shed tears, and said, "They will find me ready to die; let them do what they like. I know, my son, and am certain that I shall die a violent death; but they will not kill me outside my church."

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when the four conspirators, with their small troop of soldiers, reached the palace. Before another hour and a half had elapsed, the soul of St. Thomas of Canterbury was safe in Heaven.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE BIRTHDAY.

1170.

The last morning—Matins—the thought of flight—Mass—spiritual conference and confession—dinner—the coming of the four knights—the interview—the knights call to arms—John of Salisbury's remonstrance—the panic of the monks—the Saint enters the church—the knights follow through the cloister—the Saint's last words—the martyrdom.

THE Saint had spent his last morning well. His Matins<sup>1</sup> he had recited at midnight in his room, with several of his clerics and of the monks; and when the Divine Office was over, he opened a window, and stood for a long time silently looking out into the night. At length he suddenly turned to his companions, and asked what o'clock it was, and whether it would be possible to reach Sandwich before daybreak. They replied, that it was yet very early, and that there was time to go a great deal further than that, which was but seven miles. On this they heard him say to himself, "God's will be done in me: Thomas will wait for whatever God has in store for him, in the church over which he presides."

He had assisted at Mass in the Cathedral; he visited all the altars, which was a customary devotion of his, and the shrines of the saints;

<sup>1</sup> Girald. Cambr. *Angl. Sacr.* Lond. 1691, ii. pp. 423, 424.

and he remained several hours in the chapter-house, in close spiritual conference with two of the monks, who were remarkable for their piety. He went to confession to one of the religious whom he was accustomed to call "a man after his own heart," Dom Thomas of Maidstone,<sup>2</sup> and his great contrition, and his obedience in the fulfilment of his penance, were deemed worthy of record. Three times on that day he received the discipline: his foreknowledge of his martyrdom probably leading him to anticipate the amount of mortification of this severe kind which he was accustomed to inflict upon himself every day. He dined at three o'clock in the afternoon; and doubtless there was that day a double tenderness in his large clear eye as it roamed over the hall to see what was needed, whether by his clerics on one side of him, or his monks on the other. Amongst these were John of Salisbury, and William Fitzstephen; and probably with them the visitor Edward Grim, a cleric of Cambridge. With the monks were Benedict, afterwards Abbot of Peterborough, and Gervase the historian. Doubtless his former confessor and early instructor, Robert, the Prior of Merton, had an honourable place. His dinner consisted of a pheasant: and one of the monks said to him, "Thank God, I see you dine more heartily and cheerfully to-day than usual." His answer was, "A man must be cheerful who is going to his Master."

When dinner was over, and the grace chanted,

<sup>2</sup> Will. Cant. pp. 102, 509, 510.



the Saint retired to his private room to hold his usual conference with his friends; for evidently he had resumed all the routine of his life, as he used to practise it at Canterbury, before his exile. He sat upon the bed, and his clerics and some of the monks were on either side of him. The crowd of persons, principally the poor, who had as usual dined with him, were still waiting about in the courtyard. Those who had served at the Archbishop's dinner were themselves dining, when the four knights, followed by one attendant, Randolph, an archer, entered by the open and hospitable doors. William Fitznigel, the Archbishop's seneschal, who was about to leave his service, and in the end acted a very unfaithful part, met and recognized them, and showed them the way to the room in which the Archbishop was. As they passed through the hall, the servers invited them to dine; but they declined. Fitznigel, entering the Archbishop's room, told him that four of the King's household knights were without, wishing to speak with him. "Let them come in," was the answer of the Saint, who continued his conversation with the monk he was talking to, without looking towards them. As they entered, those who were nearest to the door saluted them as usual; and they returned the salutation in a low tone of voice. They went close up to the Archbishop, and seated themselves on the floor at his feet, without offering him any salutation, either in their own or the King's name. Randolph, the archer, sat on the floor behind them.

After a pause, which drew the attention of all,

the Saint quietly saluted them, calling William de Tracy alone by his name. They took no notice of the salutation, but looked at one another in silence; until at length Fitzurse contemptuously said, "God help you." The colour rose in the Saint's face; and Fitzurse continued, while his companions still held silence, the play of their countenances showing what was passing in their minds, "We are come to you with the commands of the King over the water; say whether you will receive them in private, or in the hearing of all?" "As you wish," said the Archbishop. "No; as you wish," rejoined Fitzurse. The Saint ordered all to leave the room, at Fitzurse's ultimate request. The door-keeper ran up, and opened the door, so that those who were in the next room could see both the Archbishop and the knights. As soon as Fitzurse had begun to speak of the absolution of the Bishops, the Saint said, "These are not things to be kept secret;" and, not wishing to place himself in their power, called the door-keeper, and ordered him to send in the clerics and monks, but not to admit any lay persons. The knights afterwards confessed, that while they were in the room with him alone, they had thought of killing him with his archiepiscopal cross, which stood by, as there was no other weapon at hand. When his friends re-entered the room, the Saint said to the knights, "Now you may tell your lord's will, in their presence." Reginald Fitzurse answered, "As you have chosen to make these things public, instead of private, we can satisfy you, and tell these people. My

lord the King says, that he made peace with you in all cordiality; but that you have not kept it. He has heard that you have gone through his cities with bands of armed men; and you have excommunicated the Archbishop of York and the other Bishops, for crowning the young King. You must go to Winton, and do your duty to your lord and King." "And what am I to do?" said the Saint. "You ought to know better than we," was the answer. "If I knew, I would not say I did not know; but I believe that I have done my duty towards him." "By no means," retorted Reginald; "there is much to do, much to mend. The King's commands are, that you go to the young King, and take the oath of fealty, and swear to make amends for your treason." The Saint said, "What am I to swear fealty for? And what is my treason?" Neglecting the latter question, Fitzurse answered the former. "The oath of fealty is for the barony which you hold of the King; and all your foreign priests, too, must take the same oath of allegiance." St. Thomas answered, "For my barony I will do my duty; but know that neither I nor my clerics will swear any more oaths. There are enough perjured and censured already. But, thank God, I have already absolved many, and I hope, by God's help, to free the rest." Reginald replied, "We see that you will not do anything we propose. The King further orders you to absolve the Bishops." "I did not suspend nor excommunicate them," said the Saint; "but it was done by the Pope. You must go to him." "But,"

said Reginald, "whether you did it or no, it was done through you." St. Thomas answered, "I confess I was not sorry that the Pope punished the offence against my Church. As to my suffragans of London and Salisbury, I have already sent them word that I would absolve them, on their oath to observe the judgment of the Church; but they have refused. The same I am now ready to do. All that was done, was under the King's permission, which he gave me on the day of our reconciliation. I was on my way to the young King when I received his orders to return, for which I was sorry. So far from wishing to uncrown him, I would gladly give him three crowns, and broad realms."

Fitzurse became still more insulting. "What is that you say? It is an unexampled and unheard-of treachery, if the King has given any leave to suspend the Bishops, who were only present at the coronation at his own command. It never came into his mind. Yours is an awful crime, in feigning such treachery of our lord the King." "Reginald, Reginald," said the Archbishop, "I do not accuse the King of treachery. Our reconciliation was not so secretly done; for Archbishops and Bishops, many men of rank, and many religious, and more than five hundred knights were there, and heard it; and you yourself, Sir Reginald, were there." "I was not there;" he said; "I neither saw nor heard it." The Saint answered in a quiet tone of voice, "God knows it; for I am certain that I saw you there." He swore he was not there; and re-

peated that it was indeed a strange and unheard-of thing for him to accuse the King of treachery. "This cannot be borne any longer; and we, the King's liegemen, will not bear it any more." The other knights then broke silence for the first time, swearing again and again, by God's wounds, that they had borne with him far too long already.

John of Salisbury said, "My lord, speak in private about this." "There is no use," said the Archbishop: "they propose and demand things that I neither can nor ought to do."

*Fitzurse.* "From whom do you hold your archbishopric?"

*St. Thomas.* "Its spiritualities from God and my lord the Pope, its temporalities and possessions from the King."

*Fitzurse.* "Do you not acknowledge that you have it all from the King?"

*St. Thomas.* "By no means; but we must give what is the King's to the King, and what is God's to God." This made them the more angry. St. Thomas continued: "Since I have landed under the King's safe-conduct, I have suffered many threats, insults, and losses. For instance, my men have been made prisoners, and their property taken from them: Robert de Broc has mutilated one of my horses, and Randulf de Broc has violently detained my wine, which the King himself sent to England through his continental dominions. And now you come to threaten me. I must say I think it very hard." Hugh de Moreville said, "If the King's men have

injured you or yours, why did you not tell the King, and not excommunicate them on your own authority?"

*St. Thomas.* "Hugh, how you hold up your head! If any one injures the rights of the Church and refuses to make satisfaction, I shall wait for no one's leave to do justice."

*Fitzurse.* "These threats are too much." Another shouted, "Threats, threats; will he put the whole land under an interdict, and excommunicate us all?" And another followed: "God be propitious to me, he shall not do it; he has excommunicated too many already." They leapt up, twisted their gloves, flung their arms about in a state of the wildest excitement, and altogether behaved like madmen. One rushed up to him and said, "We warn you, that you have spoken to the peril of your life." Reginald said, "Thomas, in the King's name, I defy you." The Saint answered, "I know that you have come to kill me; but I make God my shield. You threaten me in vain. If all the swords in England were pointed against my head, your terrors could not move me from the observance of God's justice, and the obedience of our lord the Pope. Foot to foot you will find me in the battle of the Lord. Once I went away like a timid priest: I have come back by the advice and command of the Pope; I will never leave again. If I may fulfil my priestly office in peace, it is well for me: if I may not, God's will be done. Besides this, you know what there is between me and you; so I am the more aston-

ished that you should threaten the Archbishop in his own house." He said this to remind Reginald Fitzurse, William de Tracy, and Hugh de Moreville, that they had sworn fealty to him on their knees when he was Chancellor. They shouted out, "There is nothing between us against the King." Reginald Fitzurse added, "We can well threaten the Archbishop, we can do more: let us go."

A great number of persons had now collected besides the ecclesiastics, especially some of the soldiers of the Archbishop's household, attracted by the loudness of the voices. Reginald turned to them and said, "We enjoin you in the King's name, whose liegemen and subjects you are, to leave this man." Finding that they did not move, he said, "We command you to keep him in safe custody, and produce him again when the King shall please." "I am easy to keep," said the Saint; "I shall not go away. I will not fly for the King, nor for any living man." He followed them to the door, saying, as he placed his hand upon his head, the very place where he afterwards received his death-wound, "Here, here, you will find me." He called to Hugh de Moreville, who was the gentlest of the party, to come back, that he wanted to speak to him; but he would not listen. As they went out, they seized on the seneschal, William Fitznigel, saying, "Come with us." Fitznigel called out to the Archbishop, "Do you see, my lord, what they are doing to me?" He answered, "I see: this is their strength, and the power of darkness." The

Saint then followed them a few steps from the room, asking them quietly to let Fitznigel go, but without effect. They also, as they went, seized on another soldier of the Archbishop's, called Ralph Morin. They passed through the hall and the court to the house of Gilbert, where their followers were, calling out loudly, with violent and threatening gesticulations, "Arms, men, arms!" Some of their soldiers had removed the Archbishop's porter from the great door, and placed one of their own men there, so that when they came pouring out, shouting, "The King's soldiers, the King's, the King's!" the great door was opened for them, and immediately afterwards it was shut. The wicket was left open, and William Fitznigel, and Simon de Crioil, a soldier of Clarembald, the Abbot of St. Augustine's, kept guard on horseback in the court.

The Saint, on failing in his attempt to recall Hugh de Moreville, returned to his room, and sat down again on the bed. John of Salisbury said to him, "My lord, it is a wonderful thing that you will take no one's counsel. What need was there for a man of your station to make them more angry by rising and following them to the door?"

*St. Thomas.* "What would you have me do, Dom John?"

*John of Salisbury.* "You ought to have called your council, and given them a milder answer. They only try to make you angry, to take you in your speech; for they seek nothing but your death."



*St. Thomas.* "Counsel is already taken. I know well enough what I ought to do."

*John of Salisbury.* "By God's blessing, I hope it is a good counsel."

*St. Thomas.* "We must all die, and the fear of death must not turn us from justice; I am more ready to die for God and justice, and the liberty of God's Church, than they are to inflict it on me."

*John of Salisbury.* "We are sinners, and not ready for death; and I see no one who purposely wishes to die but you."

*St. Thomas.* "God's will be done."

Some said, that there was nothing to fear, that it was Christmas and they were drunk, and would have behaved differently if they had not dined: "besides, the King has made his peace with us." Others, however, thought that they would surely fulfil their threat. Some people rushed in, saying, "My lord, my lord, they are arming." He answered, "What matter? Let them arm." They could also hear the sound of wailing in the church, from a number of persons who had heard the proclamation to the soldiers to arm and hasten to the palace. The domestics ran down the stairs and across the hall towards the church, to get out of the way of the soldiers. The panic of most of them was complete, when they heard the noise of the crashing of a door and window in a passage which led from the orchard to one of the outer rooms. "My lord, go into the church," said the monks. "No," he replied, "do not fear; monks are too timid and

cowardly." Some tried to drag him there. Others said that Vespers were being sung in the choir, and he should go and assist at them. When he had moved a few steps, he stopped, because he saw that his cross was not borne before him as usual: and Henry of Auxerre then supplied the place of his absent cross-bearer. He made them all precede him; and once he looked round to the right, either to see whether the soldiers were following, or whether any one had been left behind. They could not go the usual way to the church, so they turned down a passage which had long been closed. One of the monks ran on before to try and force the door open, of which they had not got the key, when the two cellarers or bursars of the monastery, Richard and William, came up through the monks' cloister, into which the passage led, and tore off the bolt, and so opened the door. So unexpected an interference seemed quite like a miracle. The door was shut behind them, which the Saint did not much like. Twice he paused in the cloister, and once in the chapter-house, trying to compose his companions and overcome their panic.

When the monks in the choir heard the armed men, and saw two terrified boys who rushed in among them, they were thrown into confusion. Some continued the Office, while others fled to the door by which the Archbishop was entering. Not knowing what might have happened, they were overjoyed to see him; and said, "Come in, father, come in, that we may suffer together and be glorified together. Console us by your

presence." He answered, "Go on with the Divine Office." As they still remained about the door, he said, "As long as you keep in the entrance, I will not enter." They gave way, and the people who were crowding forward being pushed back, he said on the threshold, "What are these people afraid of?" They answered, "Armed men in the cloister." He replied, "I will go out to them." As he looked round, they begged him to go into the church and up to the sanctuary, that he might be defended by the sanctity of the place. This he refused to do. Some of the monks brought an iron bar to fasten the door. He said, "Go away, cowards; let the blind wretches rage: I order you, in virtue of obedience, not to shut the door: a church ought not to be fortified like a castle." The monks, however, drew him in, and tried to fasten it. He immediately went to the door, saying, "Let my own people in;" and moving away those who were close to it, he opened it, and drawing in with his own hands those who were outside, he said, "Come in, come in quickly." He was now urged away by those around him; the door was, however, left open, opposing no barrier to the entrance of the soldiers, who were close at hand.

When the knights had first entered the Archbishop's room, they had on their capes and tunics over their coats-of-mail. These they took off under a large mulberry-tree in the garden, and put on their swords. Fitzurse armed himself in the porch before the hall, making Robert Tibia, the Archbishop's shield-bearer, help him. Osbert

and Algar, and others of the Archbishop's servants, seeing the soldiers making these preparations, shut the hall-doors, and fastened them securely. The knights were not able to force them open; but Robert de Broc, the cleric, who had become familiar with the place during its usurpation by Randulf, called out, "Follow me; I will take you in another way." He led them through the orchard, and tried to go straight by that entrance to the Archbishop's room. Not succeeding in this, he led them through the ambulatory, the wooden steps of which were under repair, that he might open the hall-door. The carpenters' tools were lying about, and Fitzurse seized an axe and the others hatchets. Breaking a door and a window, they got into the hall, and after severely wounding the servants who had closed the doors, they re-opened them. They then rushed over the palace, and not finding the Archbishop in his room, they followed him rapidly through the cloister to the church. Fitzurse entered on the right hand, the other three on the left; they all had their swords drawn, while in their left hands they held the carpenters' tools they had picked up. They were so covered with their armour, their vizors being down, that nothing was visible of their persons but their eyes. Fitzurse shouted, "This way to me, king's men!" They were followed by a number of their soldiers with weapons, though not in armour, and some of the townsmen of Canterbury, whom they had forced to join them.

It was about five o'clock on an evening in mid-

winter, and almost dark. If the Saint had chosen, he could have easily concealed himself, and so have escaped his death. But he had already said that the time for flight was past; so that he did not avail himself of the neighbouring crypt, nor of the hiding-places in the very accessible roof. John of Salisbury and the other clerics fled away, and hid themselves behind the altars, and wherever they could find refuge, leaving him with only three, Robert the Prior of Merton, William Fitzstephen, and Edward Grim. A little later the first two followed the others, leaving Grim alone with him. Whether this faithful cleric carried his cross at this time is not recorded, but the tradition, especially in pictures of the event, is so uniform, that it is not improbable that he took it from Henry of Auxerre, when the panic seized him.

The three who remained with him urged him up the steps which led from the transept towards the choir. The Saint said to them, "Leave hold of me, and go away; there is nothing for you to do here; let God dispose of me according to His will." On the entrance of the soldiers into the church, one of them called to the monks who were with him, "Do not move." Another cried out, "Where is Thomas Becket, the traitor to the King?" To this no answer was returned. Fitzurse, who was on the right hand of the knights, said to one against whom he had run, "Where is the Archbishop?" The Saint instantly answered, having first made a slight motion of his head to the monks, "Here I am; no traitor,

but the Archbishop." He came down the steps which he had ascended, and turned to the right, under the column by which he had been hidden from the knights on their first entrance. He now had a statue of our Blessed Lady before him,<sup>3</sup> with her altar in the nave beyond it; on his right was the altar of St. Benedict, and on his left his cross. His back was to the wall. Some one struck him on the shoulders with the flat of his sword, saying, "Fly, or you are a dead man." He answered, "I will not fly." The four knights now came up, with Hugh of Horsea, a sub-deacon, named Mauclerc, calling out, "Absolve the Bishops immediately, whom you have excommunicated." He said, "I will do nothing more than I have already said and done."

The Saint then turned to Fitzurse, "Reginald, Reginald, I have done you many favours; do you come against me in arms?" "You shall know it," he said; and added, "Are you not a traitor?" The Saint replied, "I do not fear your threats, for I am prepared to die for God; but let my people go, and do not touch them." Fitzurse laid hold of his robe, knocking off his cap with his sword, saying, "Come, you are my prisoner." The Saint answered, "Do with me *here* what you will;" and he pulled the border of his cappa from his hand. They then tried to put him on William de Tracy's shoulders, and carry him out of the church; but he stood firmly in his place, keeping fast hold of the column in the middle of the transept, and Edward Grim assisted him. One

3 See Note I.

of his assailants, probably Fitzurse, he laid hold of by his coat-of-mail, and nearly threw him down on the pavement, calling him by a name<sup>4</sup> which reproached him for the immorality of his life, and adding, "You shall not touch me, Reginald; you are my man, and owe me fealty and submission." Fitzurse answered, "I owe you neither fealty nor homage, contrary to my fealty to the King."

Fitzurse, seeing that they could not drag him away, and beginning to be afraid of the interference of the people, who were assembled in the church for Vespers, flung down the two-edged axe which he had brought to force the door, and which was found there after the martyrdom, and waved his sword, crying out, "Strike, strike." When the Saint saw that the blow was coming, he joined his hands, and covered his eyes with them, and bowing his head, said, "I commend myself to God, to holy Mary, to blessed Denys, and St. Elphege." The first severe blow was a slanting one. Grim attempted to ward it off, and received so grievous a wound that his arm was nearly severed. The blow nevertheless fell upon the Saint, and wounded that part of his head where the sacred unction had been poured at his consecration, which was marked by his tonsure. It then glanced upon the left shoulder, and cut through the vestments to the flesh. We know that this stroke was inflicted by William de Tracy, for he afterwards boasted at Saltwood that he had cut off John of Salisbury's arm; either the dim light or the excitement of the

<sup>4</sup> Grim, p. 436; Will. Cant. p. 133.

moment having caused him to mistake the person whom he had wounded. Grim fled to the nearest altar, our Lady's or St. Benedict's, where several of the monks had also taken refuge. One of the monks received a blow on the head from the flat of a sword. William of Canterbury, fearing a general slaughter when he heard the words "Strike, strike," ran up the steps, clapping his hands, and at the sound those monks who had remained in choir, at Vespers, dispersed.

The Saint wiped the blood that was flowing from his head with his arm; and when he saw it, he gave thanks to God, saying, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." Bowing he awaited the second blow, which struck him again upon the head, but he did not move. When struck a third time, probably by Fitzurse, the blow made him fall<sup>5</sup> first on his knees, and then on his face. His hands were still joined, and his cappa covering him down to his feet, he looked as if he were prostrate in prayer. He was lying towards the north,<sup>6</sup> having fallen to the right hand, before the altar of St. Benedict. He breathed his last words in a low voice, but so as to be overheard by the wounded Grim, who alone records them. They were, "For the Name of JESUS, and the defence of the Church, I am ready to die." The fourth blow was dealt by Richard Le Breton, who, on

<sup>5</sup> Grim (p. 437) says that the fall was caused by the third blow; Benedict (p. 13) and Fitzstephen (p. 141) by the second, but the latter, though stating that the Saint received four blows on the head, describes only three.

<sup>6</sup> Garnier, 74 b, 11.



being reproached for his backwardness, struck with such force that the sword was shivered on the pavement, saying, "Take that for the love of my lord William, the King's brother." This was an allusion to an unlawful marriage between William Plantagenet and the Countess of Warrenne, which St. Thomas had prevented.<sup>7</sup> Hugh of Horsea, the subdeacon, placed his foot on the Martyr's neck, and with the point of his sword drew the brains from the wound and scattered them on the pavement;<sup>8</sup> for Le Breton's blow had so separated the crown of the head from the skull, that it was attached only by the skin of the forehead. Hugh de Moreville contented himself with keeping back the people, and was the only one of the four who did not strike the Martyr. Hugh Mauclerc shouted out, "Let us go; the traitor is dead; he will rise no more." They all rushed from the church by the way by which they had entered, shouting the fatal watch-word to which the deed had been perpetrated, "The King's men, the King's men!"

<sup>7</sup> See Note J.

<sup>8</sup> Benedict (p. 13) attributes this to Le Breton, Herbert (p. 506) to Robert de Broc.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### ABSOLUTION.

1170—1172.

The palace sacked—the Saint's body—devotion of the people—threats of Randulf de Broc—the Saint's vestments—he is buried in the crypt—the body removed for a short time—miracles—the Cathedral reconciled—grief of the young King—conduct of King Henry—his messengers to the Pope—sentence of his Holiness—absolution of the Bishops—the King goes to Ireland—his absolution at Avranches.

WILLIAM DE TRACY afterwards confessed to Bartholomew, Bishop of Exeter,<sup>1</sup> that his heart failed him when all was over, and he dreaded lest the earth should open and swallow him up. They allowed themselves no time for reflection

<sup>1</sup> So it is given in the MS. lessons for the Church of Exeter, compiled by Bishop Grandisson, and kindly copied for me by the Rev. Dr. Oliver from Grandisson's autograph copy in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Exon. Giraldus Cambrensis (*Angl. Sacr.* p. 426) affirms deliberately that William de Tracy confessed to Bartholomew that the four knights had been bound *by the King* by oath to put the Primate to death; and he says that their reproach against Hugh de Moreville for not having taking a more active part bears out this statement. He adds, that this induced the Bishop of Exeter to change his opinion respecting the King's complicity. It is singular that Herbert should say (ii. p. 301), that when Tracy went to the Pope, he gave an account of the whole matter that exculpated the King as much as possible. That many of the guilty parties came to Bartholomew for absolution is plain from instructions the Pope sent him (Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 80), in answer to his inquiries how he should distinguish between the degrees of participation in the guilt.

or remorse. Robert de Broc had not come into the church, but with some others had gone to the Archbishop's room to guard his goods. As the knights rushed away, they inflicted a severe wound on a French servant of the Archdeacon of Sens, for lamenting the Martyr. They then joined Robert de Broc, and broke open the Saint's chests and desks; the gold and silver as well as the books which they found, they took away. There was the gold chalice<sup>2</sup> with which the Saint said Mass, and Garnier records, a knife that was "worth a city," and his ring with a sapphire in it of singular beauty. All the documents, Bulls of Popes, charters and privileges, and other papers, Randulf de Broc took possession of, to send to the King in Normandy. The soldiers roamed all over the palace, taking every thing of value, even precious stuffs which were intended for vestments for the church. They did not spare the rooms of the clerics, and they took from the stables the Archbishop's horses. All this spoil, which Fitzstephens estimated at two thousand marks, they divided amongst themselves. They found, to their astonishment, amongst the Saint's things, two hair-shirts, which they threw away.

As soon as the report of what had happened got abroad, people flocked in. Their grief and horror at the double sacrilege were general,—we should have said universal, if Grim had not heard one, an ecclesiastic like himself, say that he was not a martyr, for he had died through

<sup>2</sup> Garnier, 74 b, 21.

his obstinacy. When the multitude of people had left the Cathedral, the monks locked the doors. The holy body lay for some time deserted, when Osbert,<sup>3</sup> his Chamberlain, came, and cutting off a portion of his surplice, placed it over the head. When it was known that the murderers were gone, the clerics and monks, with the servants and a number of the townspeople, surrounded the relics. The silence was broken, and the sobs and lamentations were the louder for the restraint that fear had hitherto placed upon them. They called him "St. Thomas;" and there was not one among them who was not marked with his blood, for they dipped their fingers in it, and under his invocation signed with it their foreheads and their eyes. They raised the body and laid it on a bier, to carry to the high altar. Beneath it they placed a vessel to receive the blood, which was still running from the wound. All were struck with the beauty of the face;<sup>4</sup> the eyes and mouth were closed, the colour was fresh, and it appeared as if he were asleep. The blood had formed a sort of crown round his head, but the face was clear, save only a light graceful line which passed from the right temple across the nose to the left cheek. They covered the wound with a white linen cloth, and the cap was fastened on. Beneath the body,

3 This Osbert (named also *Supra*, p. 413) is probably the same person as Osbern, who was with the Saint at Northampton (*Supra*, p. 185).

4 Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 304. This is a letter to the Pope from some one who arrived at Canterbury on the day of the murder and saw the Saint's dead body.

an iron hammer and the axe were found. The people, in the confusion, made the best use of their liberty by filling little vessels with the blood, and tearing off pieces of their clothing and dipping them in it. No one was content who had not secured a portion of it. After a short time, one of the monks who was a goldsmith, named Ernold, went to the spot of the martyrdom with some others, and collected into a vessel all the brain and blood which were on the pavement; and to prevent any one from treading on the place, they brought some movable benches and put them all round. Vigil was kept all night, the monks saying in silence the commendation of the soul. Robert, the Prior of Merton, who, as his confessor, knew his austerities, showed the monks, who had no suspicion of anything of the kind, how he was vested. He put his hand into the Martyr's bosom, and pointed out that his cappa, as a canon regular,<sup>5</sup> covered his cowl as a monk, and that under this was his hair-shirt. The sight turned their sorrow into spiritual joy; they knelt down, kissed his hands and feet, and called him, "St. Thomas, God's holy and glorious Martyr." Thus the morning found them, watching around the precious relics before the high altar. The night had set in dark and stormy, but later on a red light filled the sky.

The next morning, Robert de Broc was sent by Randulf with a message to the monks: "He

5 "Sub habitu canonici regularis, eum in habitu et ordine monachorum tam secreto diu reperiunt exstitisse, ut etiam hoc suos lateret familiares" (Grim, p. 442).

died the death of a traitor, and the earth is rid of him ; but he deserves no better treatment dead than alive. Put his body somewhere where it may not be known, or I will come and drag him out by the feet, and fling him piecemeal to the swine and dogs." The monks hurriedly closed the doors, and carried the precious treasure into the crypt ; and both on account of the haste which was necessary lest some further violence should be used, and out of reverence to the Martyr's blood with which the body was bathed, they refrained from washing it and anointing it with balsams, as was usually done to the Archbishops of Canterbury. Such was also the counsel of the Abbot of Boxley and the Prior of Dover. They prepared, however, to bury him in his archiepiscopal vestments, and for this purpose they took off his black cappa with its white lambswool, and his fine linen surplice, which, enriched with the stains of his blood, were given to the poor. They were sold for a trifle, and came into the possession of William of Bourne,<sup>6</sup> a worthy priest who lived in the neighbourhood of Canterbury. Under these came two other lambswool pelisses, which were also parted with ; and Garnier speaks of them as reverently preserved as relics. Then came the Cistercian cowl that the Pope had blessed, with its sleeves cut short, that it might not be observed. When the bystanders saw the habit, they exclaimed, " See, see, he was a true monk, and we did not know it."

They left on him the Benedictine woollen

<sup>6</sup> Bened. pp. 52, 54.

shirt and cowl,<sup>7</sup> as well as his hair-shirt,<sup>8</sup> which, to their astonishment, extended down to the knees. This was covered with linen, and so made that it could be readily undone, to enable him to receive the discipline. This hair-shirt was alive with vermin, the torment of which must have made his life a martyrdom. In the breast of the hair-shirt, was the letter he had received on Sunday, warning him of his coming fate. He was vested in the vestments in which he had been consecrated; a simple superhumeral or amice, the alb, chrismatic,<sup>9</sup> mitre, stole, and maniple; all these he had preserved for this purpose: he had also the tunicle, dalmatic, chasuble, the pall with its pins, gloves, ring, sandals, and pastoral staff. The chalice as usual was placed with him, and he was laid in a new marble coffin in the crypt, behind the chapel of "Our Lady Undercroft," and before the two altars of St. John the Baptist and St. Augustine, the Apostle of England. The doors<sup>10</sup> were then securely fastened, and the vessel containing the blood and brain was placed outside. The crypt remained closed until the Easter following. If any one was admitted, it was secretly done; but

<sup>7</sup> *Stamineam videlicet et cucullam* (Bened. p. 17).

<sup>8</sup> The hair-shirt, which was afterwards hung up near the tomb, and the sacred vestments, were taken out later, probably at the Translation in 1220. See Note O.

<sup>9</sup> The chrismatic was the linen band that was bound round the head, during the consecration, to prevent the holy oil, with which the tonsure is anointed, from running down upon the vestments. The amice was "simple," that is, without apparels: the alb on the seal (*Supra*, p. 88) has apparels on the sleeves only.

<sup>10</sup> Bened. pp. 60, 77, 81; Gerv. p. 229.

the miracles becoming exceedingly frequent, as a subsequent chapter will show, and their fame very widely spread, so that the memorable places were much visited, the crypt was thrown open at the urgent petition of the people, on the 2nd of April, being the Friday in Easter week. Miracles followed in still greater numbers, and the report of them aroused anew all the hatred of the De Broc family. One day news was brought to the monks, that that night they were to be forcibly deprived of the treasure that they had learnt to prize so highly, the body of their great Martyr. They therefore moved it from the marble coffin into one of wood, which they hid behind the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and they watched all night in the church. Like the night after the martyrdom, there was a violent thunderstorm. The next day two more miracles took place, one of them at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, where the Saint's body had been placed during the night; so the monks, taking courage, restored the relics to the crypt, and built around the marble coffin walls, most solidly constructed of large wrought stones, united with iron clamps and lead. There was a space of about a foot between the top of the coffin and the roof of this structure, and they left two openings or windows, through which the devout pilgrim might touch and kiss the coffin itself.

In consequence of the violation of the church, no Mass was said; and the Cathedral remained in its widowhood and mourning for a year all but ten days, till the feast of St. Thomas the



Apostle, 1171. The Divine Office was recited by the monks without chanting, in the chapter-house; the altars were stripped, and the crucifixes veiled, as in Passion-tide. The power which had been conferred by the Pope upon the Cardinals Theodwin and Albert, of reconciling the Cathedral, was by them transferred to the Bishops of Exeter and Lichfield, at the request of Odo, the Prior.

When the account of the martyrdom reached the young King at Winton, he threw up his hands and his eyes to heaven, expressing his thanks to God that he had known nothing of it, and that none of his followers had been there. Hugh de Gondreville and William Fitz John were on their way to Canterbury, but they had not arrived at the time of the martyrdom. Doubtless his grief was sincere, for he had a true affection for his old guardian; and whatever there had lately been that seemed unkind in his conduct, was probably done under the direction of his father and his counsellors.

King Henry had gone from Bur, where the words were spoken which caused the martyrdom, to Argentan in Normandy. When he heard what had happened, he remained there for forty days in penance, on fasting diet, remaining solitary, and saying again and again, "O that it should have happened! O that it should have happened!" During this time he did not ride out, nor hear causes, nor summon councils, nor conduct any of the affairs of Government. He sent messengers to Canterbury as well as to the Pope.

The former were to say that he had given the knights no such commission, and that the body was to be properly buried; for though he had been opposed to the Archbishop when alive, he did not persecute him now that he was dead, and that he forgave his soul the injuries he had committed against him. It is impossible to avoid one conclusion, that although it would probably be unjust to attribute the martyrdom to the will of King Henry II., or to consider as insincere his sorrow for it, as an act disgraceful to himself, and going further in severity than he would have gone, yet evidently he had no contrition whatever for the course he had pursued in the life of the Saint, nor any greater regard than before for the rights of the Church. In this sense, with the sole exception of the verbal retraction of the Constitutions of Clarendon at his absolution, the blood of St. Thomas was shed in vain.

John Cumin<sup>11</sup> was at the Court of the Pope when the intelligence arrived. He had come to try to obtain the absolution of the Bishops; and though, on his first arrival, it had cost him five hundred marks and hard entreaty to obtain an audience, yet he had nearly succeeded when the sad news came. Alexander Llewellyn and Gunter, who had left the Saint so shortly before his death, were the bearers of his last letter. The report of the martyrdom reached them on their journey; and to their despatches to the Pope were added the strongest denunciations from the

<sup>11</sup> The King's messengers give this account of themselves (Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. pp. 198, 260).

Archbishop of Sens<sup>12</sup> against the guilty Bishops, and against the King as the virtual murderer. Similar letters were written by King Louis<sup>13</sup> and other personages. The Holy Father on receiving the news shut himself up in grief, not allowing even his own suite to see him for eight days, and a general order was issued, that no Englishman should be admitted into his presence.

It was fully expected that on Maundy Thursday the Pope would excommunicate the King, and lay the realm under an interdict. On the Saturday before Palm Sunday, King Henry's messengers reached Tusculum, now called Frascati, where the Pope then was. They consisted of the Abbot of Valacé, the Archdeacons of Salisbury and Lisieux, Richard Barre, Henry Pinchun, and a Templar. They were the bearers of letters<sup>14</sup> from the King, framed in very offensive terms: "On his first entrance he brought not the joy of peace, but fire and the sword, while he raised a question against me touching my realm and crown. Besides, he was the aggressor upon my servants, excommunicating them without a cause. Men not being able to bear such insolence, some of those who were excommunicated, with some others from England, attacked him, and, what I cannot say without sorrow, killed him." Henry must have had a very faint idea of the way in which the death of St. Thomas would be felt by

<sup>12</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 160.

<sup>13</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 306.

<sup>14</sup> The letter is not in Dr. Giles's collection, but is given by Martene (*Theas. Nov. Anecd.* i. p. 559).

the Church, when he wrote that letter. It is simple effrontery to write to the Pope about "fire and sword," when the censures for the coronation were passed by the Pope himself. Henry must have known that the excommunications were not "without a cause," for he had himself consented to them; and he must have said "others from England," in order to conceal from the Pope that the murderers left his own Court in consequence of expressions used by himself.

The Holy Father would not admit the Embassy to kiss his foot, nor would the Cardinals receive them. At length, by the influence of some of the King's friends, the Abbot of Valacé, and the Archdeacon of Lisieux, as the least suspected parties, were admitted to the Consistory. When they named the King, and called him a devout son of the Roman Church, all the Court cried out, "Hold, hold!" Late in the evening they went from the Court to His Holiness, "to declare all the favours which the King had conferred upon St. Thomas, and the excesses he had committed against the Crown." Alexander Llewellyn and Gunter were there, and the King's messengers made no impression, though they repeated before the Pope and Cardinals what they had said to the Pope in private. Maundy Thursday was coming on, and as yet nothing effectual had been done to stop the sentence which had been so long deserved. At length, by the advice of those Cardinals who had always been partial to Henry, the messengers declared to the Pope, that the King had empowered them to swear

in the presence of the Holy Father, that he would obey his command, and would renew the same oath in person. This oath, which, if the King had been really contrite, would have been offered at first, and which would not have required the tone of apology in which his messengers mention it in their report to him, was solemnly taken by them all, as well as by the representatives of the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Salisbury, in the full Consistory on Maundy Thursday, at three in the afternoon. The Pope then, in general terms, excommunicated the murderers of St. Thomas, and all who had given them counsel, aid, or assent, or had knowingly harboured them.

The Archbishop of Sens had been added to the commission before the martyrdom was known, and had received the same powers as the Archbishop of Rouen. The latter prelate now protested<sup>15</sup> against any exercise of that legatine power, under pretext of an appeal to the Pope; but the Archbishop of Sens laid the King's continental dominions under an interdict, and notified what he had done to his Holiness. This sentence the King's messengers on their way to the Holy See had in vain attempted to avert. The Bishops of Worcester and Evreux, with Robert of Newburgh, reached Frascati a few days after Easter. After a fortnight they were summoned to hear the decision. The Pope confirmed the interdict published by the Archbishop of Sens, and forbade the King to enter the church, until Legates should

<sup>15</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. pp. 72, 165, 206.

arrive, whom he was about to send to judge of his dispositions. With great difficulty, by the intercession of some of the Cardinals, and, it was reported, by the help of a large sum of money, they succeeded in obtaining letters to the Archbishop of Bourges, with powers to absolve the Bishops of London and Salisbury from their excommunication, on the exaction of the usual oath, if after a month from their receipt he did not hear that the Legates had crossed the Alps. These Bishops, however, as well as the others, were to remain under their suspension. About the beginning of August<sup>16</sup> the Bishop of London was so far absolved, but by the Bishops of Nevers and Beauvais, and the Abbot of Pontigny, at Gisors. On the 6th of December the Archbishop of York was freed from his suspension at Albemarle<sup>17</sup> by the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Amiens, on his taking oath that he had not received the Pope's letters prohibiting the coronation before it was performed; that he had not bound himself on that occasion to observe the Constitutions of Clarendon; and that he had not wilfully caused the death of St. Thomas

<sup>16</sup> Diceto, p. 557.

<sup>17</sup> The letter in which he announces his absolution to his clergy (Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 173; Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 265), dated December 13, Monday in the third week in Advent, is petulant in the extreme; and in it he calls St. Thomas *Pharao*, to the great indignation of his followers (Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 260). It is worthy of remark, that, in the letter (Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 172) in which he thanks the Pope for his absolution, he says that the King heard "from many" what irritated him against the Saint; and that then Gilbert Foliot did his utmost, even with tears, to pacify him.

by word, by deed, or by writing. On the Bishop of London taking an oath to the same effect, he also was absolved at the same place, by the same prelates, on the 1st of May following.

In the month of August, 1171, the King crossed the Channel on his way to Ireland. During his short stay in England he visited the venerable Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, who upbraided him severely for his share in the death of St. Thomas. The Bishop died on the 27th of that month. The King gave orders,<sup>18</sup> after his old fashion, that the ports on both sides of the Channel were to be diligently kept, and any one found bearing an interdict to be immediately imprisoned. He ordered that no cleric was to be permitted to leave the kingdom without an oath not to be a party to any measure against himself or the realm. He also added, that no one bearing letters was to have access to him. It was shrewdly conjectured, that one motive of his invasion of Ireland, in addition to his other schemes, was to be out of the way, lest any ecclesiastical censures should be served upon him.

Cardinal Albert, afterwards Pope Gregory VIII. now Cardinal of St. Lorenzo in Lucina and Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, and Theodwin, Cardinal of St. Vitalis, were sent as Legates; but the reconciliation of Canterbury Cathedral was the only work which they performed in 1171. It was difficult, after all his precautions, to get access to King Henry; but their letters of warn-

<sup>18</sup> Gerv. p. 234.

ing being at length delivered, on Easter Tuesday the King returned to England, and, having sent messengers to the Legates to ask where they would meet him, they had an interview at the Abbey of Savigny. Its only result was, that Henry refused to do what the Legates required; and it was thought that he would return to England. The next day, however, Arnulf the Bishop of Lisieux, with the two Archdeacons, came to them to say the King had given way. The Legates accordingly entered Avranches, in company with him, on the Fifth Sunday after Easter.

“The great Norman Cathedral of that beautiful city,” says a modern writer,<sup>19</sup> “stood on what was perhaps the finest situation of any Cathedral in Christendom,—on the brow of the high ridge which sustains the town of Avranches, and looking over the wide bay, in the centre of which stands the sanctuary of Norman chivalry, the majestic rock of St. Michael, crowned with its fortress and chapel. Of this vast Cathedral, one granite pillar alone has survived the storm of the French Révolution; and that pillar marks the spot where Henry performed his first penance. It bears an inscription with these words: ‘Sur cette pierre, ici, à la porte de la cathédrale d’Avranches, après le meurtre de Thomas Becket, Archevêque de Cantorbéry, Henri II. Roi d’Angleterre et Duc de Normandie, reçut à genoux, des légats du Pape, l’absolution apostolique, le Dimanche, xxii Mai, MCLXXII.’”

<sup>19</sup> Stanley's *Canterbury*, p. 116.



The young King came that he might express his assent to all that his father should do. On the Sunday before the Ascension, with his hand on the Holy Gospels, King Henry swore that he had neither commanded nor wished the death of the Saint; and, he voluntarily added, that he had grieved more for it than for his father and mother. Still, as he feared that his angry expressions had been the occasion of the sin, he vowed to accept whatever penance the Legates might inflict upon him.

They first<sup>20</sup> made him swear that he would never leave the obedience of Pope Alexander and his successors, as long as they treated him like a Catholic and Christian king. His son Henry then took the same oath. The next clause was, that for a year, dating from Pentecost, he would pay for two hundred soldiers to be placed at the disposal of the Templars. He also vowed to take the Cross for three years, to date from the following Christmas; and in the summer to proceed in person to the Holy Land, unless the Pope gave him leave to remain. His joining the Crusade was to be delayed for any length of time he might spend in fighting against the Saracens in Spain. He then swore that he would not hinder appeals in ecclesiastical causes to the Church of Rome, nor would he suffer them to be hindered; and that in good faith, without fraud or evil design, in order that the causes might be judged by the Pope, and have their free course. He was at liberty, how-

<sup>20</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. pp. 119, 122.

ever, in the case of those whom he suspected, to require bail that they would do no harm while abroad to himself and his kingdom. The possessions of the Church of Canterbury he swore to restore as they were the year before the exile of St. Thomas; and he finally promised his favour and restitution to all clerics or laymen who had been deprived of them on account of the Saint.

The customs which had been introduced against the Church in his time he renounced on oath, promising not to demand their observance from the Bishops. That he did not mean to pledge himself to much by this clause appears from his own comment upon it, in a letter written by him<sup>21</sup> to the Bishop of Exeter previous to the meeting at Caen on the subsequent Tuesday: "These customs, I think, are very few, if any." That the renunciation of the customs of Clarendon practically meant little is proved by that which Dr. Stubbs, in his *Constitutional History of England*,<sup>22</sup> calls "the fact that, notwithstanding the storm that followed, they formed the groundwork of the later customary practice in all such matters."

The young King made oath that he would observe all that his father had sworn; and that, if he survived him, and the penance were unfulfilled, he would himself fulfil it. There were added some private penances of fasting and alms, which were not published. The Archbishop of

<sup>21</sup> Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 268.

<sup>22</sup> *The Constitutional History of England*. By William Stubbs, M.A., Regius Professor of History. Oxford, 1875, vol. i. p. 466.

Tours and his suffragans were present at Caen on the Tuesday after the Ascension, when the King repeated the oaths before a still larger audience than at Avranches; and he affixed his seal to the document<sup>23</sup> which the Cardinals had drawn up and sealed.

When the King had given a free assent to all that was required of him, he added, "See, my lords, Legates, my body is in your hands. Know for certain, that if you order me to go to Jerusalem or Rome or St. James, or whatever else you may command, I am prepared to obey." The Legates then led him outside the church door, where, kneeling, he was readmitted into the church, from which he had been interdicted.

<sup>23</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 119; Gerv. p. 239.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### PENANCE.

1171—1174.

The four murderers—coronation of Margaret, wife of the young King—elections to the vacant sees—rebellion of the young King—King Henry's visit to Canterbury—his penance at the Saint's tomb—St. Thomas's sisters and their children—victory over the King of Scots—St. Thomas's dream—Herbert taxes the King with the Saint's death—pilgrimage of King Louis of France—John of Salisbury elected Bishop of Chartres—Herbert of Bosham—Alexander Llewellyn—other friends of the Saint.

THE four knights went back to St. Augustine's, and then to Saltwood, when they had done their worst. The ancient tradition says, that they were afraid to return to the King, for whose sake they had committed one of the greatest crimes on record. They went to Knaresborough,<sup>1</sup> which belonged to Hugh de Moreville, one of their number. No one would speak with them, eat with them, or drink with them: and the very dogs refused to eat of the fragments of their food. They remained there a year; and then went to the Pope, to receive from him their penance, by whom they were sent to Jerusalem. It was said, that they all died soon; and that there was good reason to hope that, by the intercession of the holy Martyr, they died penitent. Such was the

<sup>1</sup> Hoved. f. 299.

tradition: a recent writer<sup>2</sup> has, however, carefully traced the facts of their subsequent history; and he has shown that “the murderers, within the first two years of the murder, were living at Court on familiar terms with the King, and constantly joined him in the pleasures of the chase.” They were unpunished, and their social position unaffected. Tracy showed the most contrition, and went on a pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land. He also, “for the love of God, and of his soul, and of the souls of his predecessors, and for the love of blessed Thomas the Archbishop and Martyr of venerable memory,” founded a chaplaincy for the maintenance of a religious, who should say Mass in the Cathedral, where he had committed the murder.

The King of France had complained, that his daughter Margaret had not been crowned as well as her husband. By the advice of the Cardinal Legates, and under the authority of the Holy See, that ceremony was performed at Winchester, on the 27th of August, 1172, the anniversary of the death of the last Bishop of that city, by Rotrou, Archbishop of Rouen, with the assistance of Giles, Bishop of Evreux, and Geoffrey, Provost of Chartres, as well as of a few of the suffragans of Canterbury. King Louis had especially petitioned the Pope, that the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Salisbury might not be allowed to be present.

These coronations, however, which were intended as a weapon against the Church, recoiled

<sup>2</sup> See Note K.

heavily upon the head of the King, who had promoted them. The young King began to assert his right to interfere, and claimed a power independent of his father. One of his first acts against him was to protest<sup>3</sup> to the Prior of Canterbury against the election of the new Archbishop being performed without his leave. It must be acknowledged, that it is impossible to feel any sympathy with the old King, who had behaved in this election just as he used to do, showing how unstable his amendment had been. The archiepiscopal see was vacant for two years and five months: at first, the Prior was put off with fair words, when he begged for a free election; the King then tried to persuade him to name the Bishop of Bayeux, a man the very opposite in character to St. Thomas. This failing, the Prior and Convent submitted three names to the King, through Richard de Luci; of these Roger, Abbot of Bec was elected, who, however, absolutely refused to accept the dignity. The elections for the vacant suffragan sees now took place; and the names of those chosen to them prove that it was still easier to obtain promotion by having taken the King's part than by having suffered with the Martyr in the late struggle. Most of the new Bishops were the worst enemies of St. Thomas. Richard of Ilchester, and Geoffrey Ridel, who have been almost equally prominent as the King's partisans, so that they have been called more than once in this narrative "the two Archdeacons," were raised respectively to the

<sup>3</sup> Gerv. p. 245.

sees of Winchester and Ely. John of Oxford, the not less notorious Dean of Salisbury, was made Bishop of Norwich. Reginald Fitz-Jocelin the Lombard, Archdeacon of Salisbury, who was originally in the service of the Saint, but who had deserted<sup>4</sup> him to take part with the King, and who had advised Prince Henry's coronation, became Bishop of Bath. The choice of Robert Foliot, Archdeacon of Oxford, for the Cathedral of Hereford, shows the power of the recommendation of his cousin, Gilbert of London, towards whom he had evinced<sup>5</sup> sympathy. The remaining nominations were, John, Dean of Chichester, for that see, and Geoffrey, the son of King Henry and Rosamond Clifford, who was raised from the archdeaconry to the episcopal throne of Lincoln. He never was consecrated, and was ultimately obliged by the Pope to resign. Finally Richard, the Prior of Dover, was elected Archbishop of Canterbury; and on the young King protesting against the election, he went to Rome, where he was consecrated by the Pope.

The young King took up arms against his father; and his example was followed by his brother, who was afterwards the famous Richard Cœur de Lion. These rebellions led King Henry to write his famous letter to the Pope, which furnished so striking a contrast to many of the actions of his own life, and showed how submissive he could be to the Holy See, when to

<sup>4</sup> Herb. p. 525. Reginald was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1191, and died on Christmas day of that year.

Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 215.

be so furthered his interests, and did not interfere with his passions. "The realm of England is in your jurisdiction," he writes<sup>6</sup> to Pope Alexander; "and I am bound to you alone by feudal obligation: let England now experience what the Pope can do; and since he does not use the arm of flesh, let him defend the patrimony of Blessed Peter with the sword of the Spirit."

The young King threw himself into the arms of Louis of France and Philip Count of Flanders, so that his father had enough to do in defending his Norman dominions. Whilst thus engaged, William, the King of Scotland, invaded England,<sup>7</sup> successfully besieged Carlisle, and devastated all the North. Many of the powerful barons had declared for the young Henry, who, with the Earl of Flanders, was waiting only for a fair wind to invade England in force. Richard<sup>8</sup> of Ilchester, the new Bishop of Winchester, was sent over to the King at Bonneville, on St. John's day, 1174, to request his return; and so many messengers had preceded him, that the Normans said, when they saw him, "The next thing the English will send, will be the Tower of London."

King Henry immediately embarked, with his Queen, Eleanor his son's Queen, Margaret, and

<sup>6</sup> Op. Petri Blesensis, Mogunt. 1600, p. 245, ep. 136. In the Vatican Library, MS. 5221, f. 79. A copy of this valuable letter, supposed to be in Father Parsons' handwriting, on the fly-leaf of the copy of Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, used by that venerable missionary, is preserved in the library of the English College, Rome, of which that Father was once Rector.

<sup>7</sup> Hoved. f. 308.

<sup>8</sup> Diceto, p. 576.



his son John, and his daughter Jane. The wind was very high; and the King openly prayed that, if his arrival in England would promote peace, both in the clergy and people, and only in that case, his voyage might be prosperous. He landed at Southampton on Monday, the 8th of July; and neglecting public business altogether, though it was in so critical a state, he began his pilgrimage to St. Thomas. He fasted strictly upon bread and water; and avoiding the towns, but visiting chapels and hospitals, he made the best of his way with all speed to Canterbury. On the Friday following,<sup>9</sup> he came in sight of the city, at St. Nicholas's Chapel, Harbledown, about two miles from Canterbury. He then leapt off his horse, and went the rest of the way on foot. From St. Dunstan's Church, outside the city, to the tomb of the holy Martyr, he walked barefoot, and dressed in the common woollen garments of a pilgrim. His footsteps along the streets were marked with the blood which flowed freely from his feet. He went to the church-porch;<sup>10</sup> and after praying there, he visited the scene of the martyrdom, which he watered with his tears. Having said his *Confiteor* before the Bishops who were present, he went with much reverence to the tomb, where he remained in prayer a very long time. The Bishop of London, after a while, spoke to all who were present in the King's name, saying, that he knew that his angry expressions had been made the occasion of the death of the Martyr, though he never intended them to be so; and

<sup>9</sup> Gerv. p. 248.

<sup>10</sup> Grim, p. 445.

that he also felt that he had been very wrong in his persecution of him during his life; and that he had therefore come to make full satisfaction. He begged their prayers, and trusted that his humble penance would be acceptable to God and St. Thomas. He that day restored in full all the dignities and rights of that church, and whatever, either in that or other lands, in past times the church had freely held. He made an offering of four marks of pure gold, and a silk frontal for the shrine, and he offered a revenue of forty pounds as a gift to the Martyr, for lights to be kept burning at the tomb. He also promised to build a monastery in honour of St. Thomas. When the Bishop had finished saying what it must have been a great humiliation for Gilbert Foliot to utter,<sup>11</sup> the King ratified and confirmed it all.

His shoulders were then bared, and having bent his head down to one of the openings of the tomb, he received five strokes from each of the Prelates present, and then three from each of the monks, who exceeded the number of eighty. When this was over, and he had been absolved,

<sup>11</sup> Gilbert Foliot granted an Indulgence of twenty days, and a participation in all the prayers and merits of his Church, to such as should assist in building "the Hospital at Southwark, in London, in honour of God and of the Blessed Martyr Thomas" (Ep. Gilb. Fol. i. p. 318). And he calls him "Saint Thomas" in a deed in favour of Lady Cecilia Talbot (Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 50). More curious still, when Foliot was in extreme sickness, his friend Jocelin Bishop of Salisbury gave him some of the blood of St. Thomas and vowed in his name a pilgrimage to Canterbury on his recovery, which vow Gilbert soon after fulfilled, in very penitent guise (Benedict, p. 251).

he remained there on the bare ground for the whole night in watching and prayer, not suffering a carpet to be brought for him, nor even water to wash his bleeding and muddy feet.

This night a sister of St. Thomas appears in our history, almost for the first time. During the days of his worldly greatness we never hear of his relations, nor, if it had not been for his troubles, should we have known that he had any so nearly akin to him. Among those who were exiled for his sake, were his sister and her children; for the Pope thanked the monastery of Clairmarais for the hospitality they had received:<sup>12</sup> and St. Thomas wrote to his friends, Fulk, Dean of Rheims, Richard, Archbishop-elect of Syracuse, and Stephen, the Chancellor of Sicily, in behalf of his sister's sons.<sup>13</sup> And the Pope wrote a letter dated October 23, 1168, to the Archbishop-elect of Sens, asking him to give to Gilbert, one of the Saint's nephews who was going to study at Bologna, the assistance he had already given to Geoffrey, another nephew.<sup>14</sup> And now Rohesia,<sup>15</sup> a sister of the Saint, probably still with the sentence of banishment unrevoked, certainly in poverty, comes to beg "mercy" of the King, who was praying to her brother. He made a grant to her of a mill, the rent of which was ten marks a year, and which was enjoyed by her son John after her. The Saint had another sister named Mary,<sup>16</sup> of whom all that we know is, that she

<sup>12</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 242.    <sup>13</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. pp. 245, 321, 395.

<sup>14</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 485.    <sup>15</sup> Garnier, 81, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Matth. Paris, p. 126.

was a nun, and that after the martyrdom she was Abbess of Barking.

After Matins and Lauds, King Henry visited the altars of the upper church, and the relics of the saints there buried. He then returned to the crypt, to the tomb of St. Thomas. As soon as it was light on the Saturday, he asked for Mass; and having assisted at it, as well as having tasted some water in which a drop of the Martyr's blood had been diluted, he returned to London, with<sup>17</sup> one of the phials of the same, which had already become<sup>18</sup> the mark of the pilgrim to St. Thomas, as the palm was of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and the scallop to St. James at Compostella.

The news soon came, that his son Henry, with the Count of Flanders, had abandoned their intention of invading England, when they found that the King was returning. Freed from this danger,<sup>19</sup> he had sent his forces against Earl Hugh Bigod, who had joined the insurrection at Norwich. He himself was detained, after his arrival from Canterbury, for a few days in London by sickness; when one midnight there was heard a violent knocking at the gate of the King's palace. In spite of the refusal of the porter to admit him, the messenger insisted, saying that he was the bearer of good news, which the King must hear that very night. At length, by his importunity, he gained admission into the King's very chamber.

<sup>17</sup> "Signum peregrinationis asportans" (Will. Cant. p. 489).

<sup>18</sup> *Materials*, iv. p. 142; *Bened.* p. 42; *Gerv.* p. 249.

<sup>19</sup> Will. Neubrig. *Rev. Anglic.* Antwerp. 1567, p. 196.

Going up to the bed, he aroused the royal sleeper, who demanded, "Who are you?" "I am the boy of your faithful Ranulf de Glanville," was the answer; "and he has sent me to your Highness with good news." "Is our Ranulf well?" asked the King. "My lord is well," he replied; "and he has taken prisoner your enemy the King of the Scots at Richmond." The King was stupefied by the news, and said, "Tell me again." After hearing the same report, he said, "Have you any letters?" On these being presented, the King glanced at them; and leaping from the bed, with his eyes wet with tears, gave thanks to God and St. Thomas. On the very Saturday<sup>20</sup> on which the King left Canterbury, and at the hour at which he was hearing Mass at the tomb of St. Thomas, Alnwick Castle had been taken, and the King of Scotland made prisoner. Within three weeks of the pilgrimage and penance of the King, all the rebellions were quelled, and peace was restored<sup>21</sup> throughout England.

The King had made his pilgrimage in consequence of a dream,<sup>22</sup> that he had no other way of obtaining peace but by a reconciliation with the holy Martyr. St. Thomas had himself had a vision on the subject, which he had thus related to Herbert of Bosham<sup>23</sup> during their exile. "I thought I stood," said the Saint, "on a very high mountain, and the King was in the plain beneath; when on a sudden I saw flying towards him all manner of birds of prey, which with their beaks

<sup>20</sup> So the King himself told Herbert of Bosham, p. 547.

<sup>21</sup> Gerv. p. 249.

<sup>22</sup> Grim, p. 445.

<sup>23</sup> Herb. p. 548.

and talons attacked him violently, and tore his royal robes off him, leaving him half-stripped. There was a dark precipice behind him which he did not see, and towards which he was approaching as he was driven backwards by the onset of the birds of prey. When he was in this strait, one of the courtiers, whom the King had trusted, and advanced to high places, turned his hand against him, tried to tear from him the rags the birds had spared, and to urge him over the precipice. The thought then came over me of all our old friendship; and coming down from my high mountain-top, as it seemed to me, in the twinkling of an eye, his peril and my compassion giving me wings, I was by his side. I had, I know not how, a lance in my hand, and I scattered the birds of prey; and clad the King in his royal robes once more, chiding the while the courtier who had shown such ingratitude, saying that of him, at least, the King had not merited such treatment." St. Thomas told the name of the courtier; but Herbert did not publish it, as he was still alive when he wrote. The Saint's brief commentary on his vision was, that he yet should help Henry in some of his troubles. When Herbert related this story to the King in after years, he was very urgent to know the name of the courtier; but Herbert refused to tell him.

In another private conversation Herbert,<sup>24</sup> with his characteristic boldness, told him that the death of his sainted master was "for him and

<sup>24</sup> Herb. p. 542.

by him." The King quietly replied, without any signs of anger, "Your *for* I sorrowfully grant, but your *by* I boldly deny." We say, with Herbert, that on this matter "God, and God only, knows the truth." We now part from a King, whose passions were so ungovernable and produced such frightful effects, whose deliberate policy was the servitude of the Church, and whose penances were so striking and at the time probably sincere, though it is to be feared that his amendment was never of long duration.

A few years later, another royal pilgrim came to the tomb of St. Thomas; but without the feelings of remorse which had made the visit we have last related so penitential. In 1179, Philip,<sup>25</sup> the son of Louis VII. of France, then fifteen years old, fell ill, and a vision admonished the father that by the prayers of St. Thomas he should recover. He accordingly undertook this pilgrimage on his son's behalf, in spite of the danger of placing himself in the power of the King of England, with whom he was constantly at variance. On Wednesday, the 22nd of August, he landed at Dover, where he was met by Henry, who accompanied him to Canterbury. They travelled on horseback by night, in the course of which journey they witnessed an eclipse of the moon. They were received by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a large assembly of prelates and clergy, with much honour; and the French monarch spent a night at the tomb of the Saint, where he made an offering of a magnificent chalice of gold, and

<sup>25</sup> Hoved. f. 338; Diceto, p. 605; Gerv. p. 1467.

a hundred measures of wine, to be delivered annually cost free. Before leaving, he petitioned the Chapter to be admitted into their fraternity; and he carried away with him the patent which conferred upon him what he had asked. On his return to France, on the following Sunday, he found that his son Philip had perfectly recovered.

Before we return to the sacred relics of St. Thomas, we must relate in a few words the little that we know of what happened to his faithful companions. John of Salisbury, whom St. Thomas had found in the service of the church of Canterbury, having been recommended to Archbishop Theobald by the glorious St. Bernard,<sup>26</sup> and who had been the Saint's counsellor and friend in good report and evil report, at home and in exile, in life and in death, was elected Bishop in 1176 by the Chapter of Chartres, through their devotion to St. Thomas. On the 22nd of July,<sup>27</sup> the dean, precentor, and several of the clergy, came to Canterbury to announce their choice; and the Bishop-elect was conducted to the altar of the church in which he had seen his master die, for the *Te Deum* to be sung for joy. King Louis wrote<sup>28</sup> to beg his acquiescence, and to say that the Archbishop of Sens was as anxious as himself.

<sup>26</sup> Ep. ccclxxxiii. ed. Horst.

<sup>27</sup> He had written his very elegant Life of St. Thomas before this time; for Peter of Blois, Archdeacon of Bath, after congratulating him on being made Bishop, says, that by the Archbishop's orders he would certainly himself have written the Saint's life, if it had not been already so beautifully done by John of Salisbury (Pet. Bles. ep. 114, p. 204).

<sup>28</sup> Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 291.



The devotion of John of Salisbury to St. Thomas was shown by his prefixing to every act of his episcopate, and to every letter he wrote, his title as, "John, by the Divine condescension and the merits of St. Thomas, humble minister of the church of Chartres." He died on the 25th of October, 1180.

Herbert of Bosham had been sent by St. Thomas to King Louis and the Archbishop of Sens, and he had left him on the Sunday night before his martyrdom. He remained abroad, when he heard of what had happened, for some time. To his pen is attributed the letter<sup>29</sup> which the Archbishop of Sens wrote to the Pope, to pray that the King might be punished as the cause of the Martyr's death. He wrote to Pope Alexander himself some time afterwards, to complain that an oath was required of him, before he could return to England, to the effect that he would not leave the realm without the King's licence, nor send letters beyond the sea; which oath, he said, John of Salisbury and Gunter had taken, but his conscience would not permit him to take. The Pope wrote him a very kind letter in reply, recommending him to the intercession of the Legates with the King, and calling him "a special and devout son of the Church." After his return to England, and after the interviews with the King which we have mentioned, in which it is plain that he was quite restored to favour, he lived a long time, occupying himself in writing the life of St. Thomas, which was not finished

<sup>29</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 160.

until the Pontificate of Pope Urban III., fifteen years after the Saint's martyrdom. He complains sadly of the neglect he suffered at the hands of the Bishops, who, he says, "worship the Saint's dead relics, but despise his living ones." He says, that the Saint once appeared to him, and told him that the verse of the Psalms which he must ever bear in mind was, "Redeem me from the calumnies of men, that I may keep Thy commandments." Though the year of his death is unknown, we know the day on which it occurred; for his *obit* was kept on the 22nd of November, by the Christ Church monks, who had given him the privilege of fraternity with their Order, and therefore a share in their prayers.<sup>30</sup> By a curious mistake, he has been confounded by many writers with Lombard of Piacenza, who was Cardinal Archbishop of Benevento, so that he appears in some of the catalogues of English Cardinals. The author of this mistake is Christian Wolf, commonly called Lupus, who published in 1682 the *Life*<sup>31</sup> and *Correspondence* of St. Thomas from the Vatican MS., which Cardinal Baronius had used.

There are very few others of those who were with St. Thomas of whom there is anything to tell. Those only received promotion who had not been remarkable for their zeal in the cause of the Saint. Excepting, indeed, his faithful crossbearer, Alexander Llewellyn, who was, with

<sup>30</sup> 10 Kal. Dec. Obiit Magister Herebertus de Boscham, frater noster. Necrology of Christ Church, Dart's *Canterbury*, App. p. xxxiii.

<sup>31</sup> *Epistolæ et Vita S. Thomæ*, two vols. 4to, Brux. 1682; i. pp. 157, 162.

Herbert, the bearer of his last letter to the Pope. He seems to have become Archdeacon of Bangor, and this we learn from Giraldus Cambrensis, his fellow-countryman, who would probably have had better opportunities of knowing of this promotion than Herbert, whose intercourse with Alexander probably ended when the tie that bound them in their master's service was broken.<sup>32</sup>

Gerard Pucelle, who, though a friend of St. Thomas, had been dangerously near schism in the beginning of the exile, and who accepted the King's terms before its close, was made Bishop of Coventry. Hugh de Nunant, Archdeacon of Lisieux, who appeared in the Saint's train at Northampton, but who was one of the King's ambassadors to the Pope after the martyrdom, was the successor of Gerard Pucelle in that see. Gilbert de Glanville became Bishop of Rochester after the death of Walter, Archbishop Theobald's brother. He was sent by the holy Martyr to the Pope with his last letter; but he had been a very short time in his service. It is worthy of remark, that John of Salisbury is the only one of the Saint's prominent adherents who became a Bishop, and that his see was in France, in the very province of Sens in which they had spent their exile.

<sup>32</sup> Giraldus, *De Instructione Principum*. Anglia Christiana Society, 1846, ed. Brewer, p. 186.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### MIRACLES.

1170 - 1185.

The first miracle—Prior Odo's report: cures of William de Capella, William Belet, Huelina of London, Brithiva of Canterbury, William of London, an anchoret, a boy of fifteen—appearances of the Saint—Benedict's vision—story of the Patriarch of Jerusalem—Edward Grim's arm—John of Salisbury's account—St. Edmund and St. Thomas—Cure at Chartres.

THE rapidity with which miracles followed upon the martyrdom is as remarkable as their number. The first<sup>1</sup> was the case of a paralytic woman in Canterbury. Her husband was present at the martyrdom, and brought home, as all the faithful did that night, some linen dipped in the holy blood. When she had heard his account of the constancy of the martyr, and saw the stain of his blood, she was moved with so lively a faith, that she begged it might be washed, that water might be given her to drink in which it had been dipped. This was done; and she was immediately cured. The fame of this miraculous cure caused every one who came to set the highest value on the possession of some of the martyr's blood mingled with water. According to Fitzstephen, it was this that gave rise to the little leaden phials which

<sup>1</sup> Fitzstephen, p. 149. This miracle is not mentioned by William or Benedict.

have been already mentioned as the distinguishing mark of a Canterbury pilgrim.

Odo the Prior sent Philip Count of Flanders a report<sup>2</sup> of some of the miracles. The following sentence occurs in his letter, which certainly renders his testimony very trustworthy: "It is said that some lepers also have been healed; but I do not say so, because I have not seen them since they left us; though some have told me that they were much better as they were going away." He says that, on the third day after the martyrdom, that is, the Thursday in that week, December 31, 1170, Emma, the wife of Robert of St. Andrew, a soldier in Sussex, who was sick and blind, when she heard the account of the martyrdom, invoked the Saint; and before half an hour had passed, she had received her sight, and in a few days was perfectly well. This is also told by Grim and Benedict.

On Friday night, a priest of London, named William de Capella, who had lost his speech, was warned that he should go to the tomb of St. Thomas, and he should be there healed by a drop of the martyr's blood. He did so, and was cured accordingly. As speaking in favour of St. Thomas had been publicly prohibited, even by proclamation, probably by the De Brocs, this priest was very cautious in mentioning his cure.

William Belet, a soldier, of Ainesburne in Berkshire, was suffering from an arm and hand which were enormously swelled. On the Sunday after the martyrdom, as soon as he heard

<sup>2</sup> Martene, *Vet. Scriptor.* Paris, 1724, i. p. 882 b.

what had happened, he immediately invoked the Saint, praying that he might be restored to health. The following night he slept soundly, which he had not done for some time before; and when he woke he was perfectly well, without any pain, the swelling having disappeared.

On the Saturday, Huelina the daughter of Aaliza of London, a child of sixteen, was cured of a disease in the head that she had had since she was five years old. This was at Gloucester, and the cure happened on the day on which the news of the martyrdom became known there, the mother of the child making a vow in her child's name to visit the tomb of the Saint.

On Monday, the 4th of January, a poor blind woman of Canterbury, named Brithiva, entered a neighbouring hospice and asked for some thing that had belonged to the martyr. A cloth was given her that was red with his blood. She applied it to her eyes and received her sight.

On the following day William, a priest of London, who had been rendered speechless by paralysis on St. Stephen's day, was warned to go to Canterbury, and that there he would be cured by a drop of the martyr's blood. On the octave day of the martyrdom he came, and obtained leave to spend the night in prayer at the tomb. A drop of the blood was given him, and some water to drink which was sanctified by a slight admixture of the martyr's blood. The priest was cured of his paralysis, and this is said by Benedict to be the beginning of the use of water thus hallowed.

A pious woman<sup>3</sup> who lived an anchoretical life, who had never learnt to read or write, and who knew no Latin, except some Psalms, the *Pater noster*, and the *Credo*, was very sorrowful day and night on account of the martyrdom which had just happened. Sometimes she was favoured with ecstasies; and one day she sent to the monks of Canterbury a paper on which were written these words, which, she said, a very beautiful lady had spoken to her: *Noli flere pro Archiepiscopo: caput ejus in gremio Filii mei requiescit.* “Weep not for the Archbishop; his head rests in the bosom of my Son.”

A boy of fifteen years of age, who had been blind from his birth, received his sight at the tomb of the Saint. This is related by the Prior Odo, who thus concludes his letter: “There are others who were blind, deaf, dumb, lame, contracted, and suffering from other infirmities, who have been cured by the merits of St. Thomas, but which I cannot now touch upon, however briefly. The number of those who have been cured of fevers is without end.”

The Saint appeared to some persons, with the faint graceful line of blood from his right temple across the nose to the left cheek; and those who thus saw him described this mark as accurately as if they had seen his body. To others he appeared showing them that he was alive, and that his wounds had left but scars. This must have happened very soon, for it is mentioned in the letter of the Archbishop of Sens to the Pope.

3 Fitzstephen, p. 151.

On the night of the martyrdom, one of the Saint's household saw him in his pontifical vestments going up the altar-steps, as if to say Mass; seeing the same thing on the second and on the third night, he said to him, "My lord, art thou not dead?" The Saint answered, "I died; but I am alive." Then said he, "If thou art truly alive and among the martyrs, why dost thou not show thyself to the world?" The Saint replied, "I carry a light; but it is not seen for the cloud which is interposed."

The De Broc family made every effort in the beginning to check the honour which was paid to St. Thomas; so that these accounts were whispered in secret. But the fame of cures and other miracles increased so fast, and the concourse of people became so great, that they were obliged to give up the vain attempt of checking the devotion, and were forced to say, "All England is gone after him." When the doors of the crypt, which had been fastened when he was first buried, were opened at Easter, miracles increased so fast, that two volumes<sup>4</sup> containing the account of them were kept at Canterbury. One of these was compiled by Benedict, who was afterwards Prior of Christ Church, and ultimately Abbot of Peterborough, whose contribution to our knowledge of the martyrdom is particularly valuable. Benedict was succeeded, as Chronicler of the miracles, by William, like himself a monk of Canterbury. The collection made by him is an independent work, though in some instances he and Benedict

<sup>4</sup> Gerv. p. 230.



both relate the same miracle. William's work, like Benedict's, grew as time went on, for Benedict's was at last divided into five books, and William's into six. William also wrote a life and passion of St. Thomas, much fuller than Benedict's, we may safely say, though of the latter we have only fragments remaining.

The King had entertained<sup>5</sup> a great indignation against Benedict before he was made Prior. When in that office, he was obliged to go to him on some of the affairs of the Church; but his threats made him fear to go into his presence. One night, after a day when Benedict had been insulted by the King and his officials, his Majesty had a dream, which produced such an effect upon him, that he declared that he would not for any sum of money suffer the agony of such a dream again. He dreamt that he was crossing a very high bridge over a deep and rapid stream, when the plank on which his foot was gave way, and he fell through the bridge, to which he clung with desperation. The place, he thought, was lonely, and his strength was fast failing him; when, thinking all human assistance hopeless, he invoked the sacred names of Jesus and Mary and his patron saints. Then he thought that he added, "Help me, O Martyr of Christ; St. Thomas, assist me. Do not remember the injuries of late; for in the beginning I loved you above every one." He had hardly ended the words, when he imagined that Benedict came to him, and said, "The holy Archbishop, whom you

<sup>5</sup> Grim, p. 448.

have invoked in faith, has sent me to you ;” and so saying, he rescued him. The King awoke ; but he could sleep no more ; and his dream had so shaken him, that it was past midday before he could rise. When the Prior came, Henry told him his dream ; and he returned as hearty thanks to St. Thomas as if he had been really preserved from that death. The narrator says that, though it was but a dream, it had this reality about it, that the King received Benedict into favour, and gave him whatever he chose to ask.

On the 28th of January, 1185, Heraclius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, visited Canterbury. While in England he told the following story to Herbert of Bosham, who has related it,<sup>6</sup> and who must have written it almost as soon as it was told him : A monk of a religious house in Palestine, who had lived a most holy life, was near his end on the day on which St. Thomas was martyred. His singular piety had endeared him to his Superior, who begged of him, with tears, that, if God permitted it, he would appear to him after death, and tell him of his state. The monk assented, and so died. A few days afterwards, in fulfilment of his promise, the Brother appeared to his Abbot, to tell him that he saw God, and that his soul was in Heaven. “And that you may be certain and have no doubt, know that, as soon as I left the body, I was borne up by angels and saw the Lord ; when soon there came a great and eminent man with a procession, beyond expression wonderful, following him, surrounding

<sup>6</sup> Herb. p. 514.

him, and leading him, such that no man could number it for the multitude of the Angels, the laudable number of Patriarchs and Prophets, the glorious choir of the Apostles, with the countless army of Martyrs in their purple, and Confessors in white. He stood before the Lord like a martyr, with his head all torn and the blood trickling, as it seemed, through the wounds. And the Lord said to him, 'Thomas, thus oughtest thou to enter the court of thy Lord. The glory that I have given to Peter, the same will I give to thee.' And the Lord took a golden crown, of wonderful size, and placed it on the torn and wounded head. Know, then, for certain, that Thomas, the great Bishop of Canterbury, has died in these days, and so is gone to God. Meanwhile note what I have told you, and mark the time; for before long the reports of those who come hither will prove these things to be true. And now, since I have told you of the death of this glorious Martyr which has taken place, henceforward you must not doubt of my salvation." The Abbot told every one what he had heard; and Heraclius affirmed to Herbert and to others, that he consequently knew of the martyrdom within a fortnight after it had happened, and that it was generally known throughout that country.

Edward Grim gives the following interesting account<sup>7</sup> of a miracle which the Saint wrought in

<sup>7</sup> From a MS. in the Bibliotheca Casanatense at the Dominican Convent of S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome (lib. A. i. 21). It is a complete copy of the paper, of which a part has been published by Martene (*Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. p. 1737).

his behalf. It is the healing of the arm that was broken by William de Tracy, when Grim held it up to ward off the first blow from the head of the Martyr, who did not lift a hand in his own defence. The doctor had tried in vain for nearly a year to set the broken bone; when one night the venerable Martyr stood beside him, and, taking hold of his arm, wrapped it in a wet linen cloth, saying, "Go; you are healed." The cloth was wetted with holy water and the Martyr's blood, and, by the favour of God and St. Thomas, the bones united and the arm healed. "A proof of its healing," says Grim, "is the arm itself, the hand of which has written these things for you to read. And God has done many other things," he continues, "to prove His love for our blessed Martyr: by cleansing the lepers, as we have ourselves seen; by putting devils to flight, by healing the dropsical, the paralytic, the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the lame, and those suffering from all manner of sickness: in all of which things we are awaiting the faithful testimony of the church of Canterbury, in whose sight and knowledge all these things are known to have been done."

John of Salisbury writes to the Bishop of Poitiers to ask him whether he thought that they could not, even before his canonization by the Pope, treat him as a martyr in the Mass and public prayers; or whether they ought to continue to pray for one whom God had honoured by so many miracles: "For in the spot where he suffered, and by the high altar where he was placed before his burial, and at his tomb, para-

lytics are cured, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk, fevers are healed, men possessed by the devil are liberated, the sick of divers diseases are cured, those whom the devil makes to blaspheme are confounded." The monks of Canterbury could each day say, as one of them asserts, "We have seen wonderful things to-day."

From the vast number of accounts which might be here introduced, we have selected one or two others<sup>8</sup> on account of their connection with his successor St. Edmund. The Abbess of Lacoke was very ill of a fever. St. Edmund left her, after a visit, saying that he would send her a doctor who should cure her. He sent some relic of the blood of St. Thomas, and as soon as she had tasted it she recovered.

One day, before leaving England, St. Edmund saw St. Thomas in a vision; and, stooping down, he tried to kiss his feet. St. Thomas prevented him, drawing his foot away. When St. Edmund wept at this, St. Thomas said to him, "Why do you weep?" He answered, "Because my lips are not worthy to touch your feet." Then said St. Thomas, "Weep not, for the time is coming when you shall kiss me on the face."

Another miracle, of which John of Salisbury when Bishop of Chartres was witness, must not be omitted. It is reported in a hitherto unpublished<sup>9</sup> letter by the Bishop, which is addressed

<sup>8</sup> Martene, *Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. pp. 1798, 1812.

<sup>9</sup> MS. Coll. Angl. Rom. fol. 40. This must have been between 1176, when John of Salisbury was made Bishop, and 1179, when, according to Gervase, Herlewin ceased to be Prior of Canterbury.

to Richard the Archbishop, Herlewin the Prior, Herbert the Archdeacon, and to the chapter, clergy, and people of Canterbury. Peter, a native of Chartres, and a servant of Count Theobald's, professed a disbelief in the sanctity and miracles of St. Thomas. One day he was at work cutting stones for St. Peter's monastery at Chartres, when, as he and his fellow-workmen were resting, the conversation turned upon St. Thomas. All spoke of the Saint with reverence but this man, who took a morsel of bread in his hand, and said, "Now, if St. Thomas can, let him choke me with this, or make it poison to me." The others beat their breasts, and made signs of the Cross in horror of the blasphemy. The poor man soon left them, and went home, stricken dumb. The neighbours flocked in when they heard of what had happened; and, as he got rapidly worse and worse, they carried him, now half dead, into the Church of the Blessed Virgin, and laid him on the tomb of St. Leobin.<sup>10</sup> The report soon spread; and from nine o'clock till Vespers the church was crowded. The Bishop, who tells the story, happened to be out of town; but coming in in the evening, the poor man's mother and friends ran and, kneeling before him, begged his help and counsel. He went straight to the church, and there found the dumb man beating his breast and lifting up his hands and eyes to Heaven. The Bishop had taken some of the blood of St. Thomas with him to Chartres. He

<sup>10</sup> St. Leobin, Bishop of Chartres, whose feast, in the Roman Martyrology, is September 15.

now sent for it and some water. After praying before the relics, the Bishop gave him the reliquary to kiss, on which the man burst forth in a loud voice with the words, "St. Thomas, St. Thomas, have mercy on me!" He then drank some water in which the reliquary and a knife of the Saint had been washed by the Bishop, when, on being quite restored, he vowed a pilgrimage to St. Thomas in penance for his blasphemy, and in thanksgiving for his cure. He was himself the bearer of John of Salisbury's letter relating these facts.

Not a single one of the stories in this chapter has been taken from either Benedict's book or William's, and there the matter is sufficient, not for another chapter merely, but for a volume. The narratives are interesting for the insight they give us into the manner of life and the spirit of devotion of the English people of those times. In this place we will refer but to one detail, as it shows us a common practice in the manner in which those who stood in need of St. Thomas's help, had recourse to him. There is frequent mention of the body or the affected part being measured, sometimes to offer an effigy or a silver thread of the length at the shrine, more commonly for the measure of a candle to be burnt there. The practice was so well understood, that a girl in danger is described as calling out, "Measure me to St. Thomas, measure me to St. Thomas,"<sup>11</sup> meaning that a candle of that size was to be offered for her.

<sup>11</sup> Benedict, p. 265.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### HONOUR AND DISHONOUR.

1173, 1220, 1538.

Canonization of St. Thomas—the Bull—Council of Bishops—Choir of Canterbury burnt and rebuilt—Translation of St. Thomas—Cardinal Langton's sermon—the *Quadrilogue*—the altar at the sword's point—the tomb—the Crown of St. Thomas—the shrine—its description—its destruction—St. Thomas tried by Henry VIII.—Bull of Paul III.—Patronage of St. Thomas.

THE Pope deputed the Cardinals Albert and Theodwin to examine the miracles, and to make a report to him with a view to the Saint's canonization. They could not have been very long in accumulating materials; for in their letter<sup>1</sup> to the chapter authorising the reconciliation of the Church before the first year was past, they say that "God has shown how precious the Saint's death was in His sight, and has illustrated his venerable memory with so many miracles, that the odour of his unguents is now spread through the whole body of the Church, and his virtue is commonly preached both in the East and West." Accordingly, at Segni, on the 21st of February, being Ash Wednesday, 1173, having taken counsel with the Cardinals and Bishops, the Pope himself solemnly singing Mass, Alexander III.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 121.



canonized St. Thomas of Canterbury as a martyr for the cause of the Church of God.

The Bull<sup>2</sup> is remarkable for its praises of his life as well as of his martyrdom. "He who is glorious in His saints has glorified, after his death, this His Saint, whose laudable life, shining with great glory of merits, was at length consummated by the martyrdom of a glorious contest. And although no one can doubt of his sanctity, who attends to his praiseworthy conduct, and considers his glorious passion; yet our Saviour and Redeemer wished to give brilliant proofs of it by magnificent miracles, that so he, who has borne want and perils for Christ with the constancy of insuperable virtue, may now be known by all to have received the triumph of his labour and of his contest in eternal blessedness." It then relates how the Cardinal Legates had taken accurate information, and had sent the report of "numberless and great miracles." After announcing the canonization, the Bull orders the festival of St. Thomas to be observed throughout the world. This was sent to the Legates,<sup>3</sup> together with apostolic letters<sup>4</sup> to the chapter of

<sup>2</sup> *Redolet Anglia*, dated Segni, March 12, 1173. The Bull is in the Roman Bullarium. A copy was addressed to the clergy and people of England (Ep. St. Tho. ii. p. 75). St. Thomas was thus canonized two years and three months after his death. We have amongst the English Saints examples of canonizations performed in the shortest and in the longest time after death. St. Edmund of Canterbury was canonized within a year, and St. Osmund of Salisbury was canonized after four hundred and seven years (Bened. XIV. *De Canon. SS. lib. ii. cap. liv. n. 7*).

<sup>3</sup> Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 39.

Canterbury, which thus begin: "The whole body of the faithful must rejoice at the wonders of that holy and reverend man, Thomas your Archbishop; but you must be filled with a fuller joy and exultation, since you often with your own eyes look upon his miracles, and your church has deserved to be rendered illustrious by the possession of his most holy body." The Pope also bids them, on some fitting day, with a solemn procession and concourse of clergy and people, place his relics on the altar or in some fitting shrine, "and try to gain by pious prayers his patronage with God for the salvation of the faithful, and the peace of the Universal Church." There is also extant a letter<sup>5</sup> from Pope Alexander to the Bishop of Aversa, in the kingdom of Naples, informing him of the canonization, which the Pope says had been done "after counsel taken with our brethren, and after many petitions from Archbishops and Bishops;" and he bids him inform the Bishops of the province, that they were to observe the feast of the holy Martyr.

St. Thomas was canonized before his see was filled; and Bartholomew, Bishop of Exeter, writes<sup>6</sup> at once to thank the Pope for the canonization, and to recommend to him Richard, the Archbishop-elect. On the 7th of July,<sup>7</sup> in the council that was held at Westminster, in the chapel of St. Catherine, for the election, the Bull of Canonization was read, and then a solemn *Te Deum*

<sup>5</sup> Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 281.

<sup>7</sup> Matth. Paris, p. 88.

was sung. The Bishops who had opposed him confessed their fault, and, in the name of them all, one Bishop sung the prayer, *Adesto, Domine*: "Hear, O Lord, our petitions; that we, who of our iniquity acknowledge ourselves to be guilty, may be freed by the intercession of blessed Thomas, Thy Bishop and Martyr."

On the 5th of September, 1174, the choir of Canterbury Cathedral was burnt, which had been built forty-four years previously by Prior Conrad in the time of St. Anselm. It was immediately rebuilt, and we are fortunate in having a minute description of the old choir as well as of the new from the pen of Gervase the chronicler, who was himself a monk of Christ Church. The architect first employed was William of Sens, and on his being disabled when he had built as far as the eastern transepts inclusively, he was succeeded by another William, an Englishman. To him we owe all that is east of the choir, that is to say, the chapel of the Blessed Trinity, with the beautiful apse that was called "the Crown of St. Thomas," and is still known as "Becket's Crown." The crypts beneath them he also built, the tomb where the body of St. Thomas lay being protected by woodwork. The new building extended considerably further eastward than the old. The site chosen for the shrine was the Saint's favourite chapel of the Blessed Trinity, so that it was immediately over the tomb in the crypt, or perhaps a few feet further to the east.

The Priors of Christ Church, Benedict who

recorded the martyrdom and miracles, and Alan<sup>8</sup> who collected the correspondence, were very anxious to fulfil the Pope's injunction respecting the translation of the relics. Indeed, a letter of Alan's, written probably in 1185, on the completion of the chapel and crown, proposes the following May for the solemnity. Several years however elapsed before it took place.

By the year 1220 every preparation had been made. Cardinal Stephen Langton was Archbishop of Canterbury, and he celebrated the translation with a worthy magnificence.<sup>9</sup> The new shrine was a gorgeous work of gold and silver, set with precious stones, supported on stonework. Such a multitude of persons attended, that it was supposed that so many had never been collected in one place in England before. Two years previously the Cardinal Archbishop had published an edict, declaring his intention, and he had collected from all his manors and possessions all that was possible for the entertainment of such vast numbers of persons. The youthful Henry III. was present, with Pandulf

<sup>8</sup> According to Gervase, Alan became Abbot of Tewkesbury in June, 1186. He had been a Canon of Benevento, though his novitiate was passed at Canterbury.

<sup>9</sup> "The expenses arising from this ceremony were so great to Stephen Langton, then Archbishop of Canterbury, that it left a debt upon this archbishopric which Boniface, his fourth successor, could hardly discharge. Besides other vast expenses of the sumptuous entertainment made in his palace, he provided at his own cost hay and oats, on the road between Canterbury and London, for the horses of all who came to the solemnity; and he caused several pipes and conduits to run with wine in several parts of the city" (Hasted, *Hist. of Canterbury*, 1801, ii. p. 337).

the Legate, the Archbishop of Rheims, nearly all the Bishops of the realm, and some of France, in number twenty-three, as well as the abbots, priors, earls, and barons, besides the clergy and people.<sup>10</sup> The summer time was doubtless chosen for the convenience of pilgrims, who would always wish to attend one of his festivals, and that of his martyrdom was in mid-winter. The 7th of July became thus the feast of his translation.

In the sermon<sup>11</sup> made by Cardinal Langton, probably on a recurrence of this solemnity, he says, that they purposely selected a Tuesday,<sup>12</sup> as the day of the week on which the Saint had been martyred: they had not, however, adverted to the fact that it was the fiftieth year since that event; and they were much struck by the coincidence that the translation of St. Thomas happened on the anniversary of the day on which Henry II. was buried. A life of the Saint was compiled from his various biographers, which is now well known under the name of the *Quadrilogue*, probably for this occasion, and by the direction

<sup>10</sup> Matth. Paris, p. 214; Martene, *Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. p. 703.

<sup>11</sup> *Ep. et Vita S. Thomæ*, ed. Lupus, p. 901.

<sup>12</sup> The Saint was born and baptized on a Tuesday; on a Tuesday he left Northampton; on a Tuesday he returned from Flanders for England, and on that day four weeks he was martyred (*Materials*, iii. p. 326; iv. p. 78). Herbert further says that it was on a Tuesday that he fled from England, but in this, as we have seen (*Supra*, p. 194), he was mistaken. In consequence of the number of memorable Tuesdays in the Saint's life, that day of the week was chosen as the fitting day for a Votive Mass in his honour. This is noted in the Rubrics of the Sarum Missal, and it is often mentioned; for instance, by the Black Prince in the foundation of his chantries (*Stanley's Canterbury*, 7th edit. p. 165).

of Cardinal Langton. William, who was then Prior of Canterbury, published the letters<sup>13</sup> of Pope Honorius III. by which he granted an Indulgence of forty days to all who should be present at the Translation or within the Octave, and subsequently another Indulgence, to be perpetually in force, of one year and forty days, to all who should come to visit the church on the feast or within a fortnight after it. The same Pope had previously invited<sup>14</sup> all the faithful to attend, in proper dispositions, on the solemn occasion. He then said, "The heavenly King, the Lord of Angels, has honoured in our time the realm of England more highly than others, and He has adorned the English nation with an especial prerogative; for while the world is in wickedness and the malice of men increasing, He has chosen from thence for Himself a man without spot, who priestlike, not only in a time of wrath was made a reconciliation,<sup>15</sup> but when invited to the heavenly banquet, merited to taste that chalice of passion which the Lord drank. Let, then, the happy church of Canterbury sing to the Lord a new song, the church whose altar the martyr Thomas has purpled with his precious blood."

The shrine, to which the relics of St. Thomas were now translated, became a place of pilgrimage, second only to the great sanctuaries of Rome, of Jerusalem, and perhaps of Compostella.

<sup>13</sup> Rymer, *Fœdera*, i. p. 154, dated Jan. 26, 1219; Ep. Gilb. Fol. ii. pp. 118, 171, dated Dec. 18, 1221.

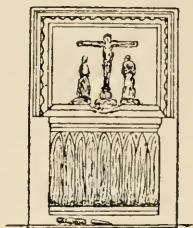
<sup>14</sup> Gilb. Fol. ii. p. 116, dated Jan. 25, 1219.

<sup>15</sup> *Ecclus.* xlv. 17.

Multitudes of pilgrims all the year round thronged to Canterbury, and that more especially on the two festivals of the Saint, on the 29th of December, the anniversary of his martyrdom, and, most of all, on the 7th of July, that of his translation. The jubilees of his death and of his translation were observed with the greatest solemnity for three centuries, 1520 being the last.

There were four places in the church that were visited by pilgrims out of devotion to St. Thomas, and there was, besides, the chapel of Our Lady Undercroft, which was one of the richest sanctuaries of the Blessed Virgin in England. The first of the altars of St. Thomas was the little wooden altar erected on the spot where he was martyred, called *ad punctum ensis*—"at the sword's point." It was placed against the wall between the steps leading to the crypt and the altar of St. Benedict; and space was provided in the transept, and pilgrims were enabled to see the little altar by the removal of the column that hid St. Thomas from the four knights as they first entered the church. This column had supported a chapel of St. Blaise over that of St. Benedict. To reach this altar and the Martyrdom conveniently, and to prevent crowds of pilgrims from being in one another's way, a passage which still exists was made under the steps leading from the nave to the choir, providing thus direct access to the northern transept from the southern. The altar "at the sword's point" was left untouched for centuries, and we can form a good idea to ourselves of the appearance of this simple little

altar, as a panel representing it still exists in the middle of the south porch, over the doorway. The fragments<sup>16</sup> of Le Breton's sword are there represented as lying at the foot of the altar.



Secondly, there was the tomb in the crypt, in which the body of the Saint had rested for fifty years, where so many of the early miracles were wrought, and where Henry II. did his penance. To reach this the pilgrims had to pass the splendid chapel of Our Lady Undercroft, the existing reredos and screens of which were erected about the year 1370. In the crypt of the Trinity chapel, immediately under the Saint's shrine, was the marble sarcophagus, remaining just as it was when the Saint's bones were transferred from it to the iron coffer, which in 1220 was placed in the shrine above. This sarcophagus stood on solid masonry between the two slender columns that support the vaulting of the crypt, which alone now remain to mark the place. Over the tomb hung the shirt and drawers of haircloth, worn by the Saint at his death. A part of the skull was kept here, showing the fatal wound, the

<sup>16</sup> Dean Stanley remarks that there is a similar representation of a broken sword in the seal of the Abbey of Aberbrothock.



silver reliquary that held it having an open part where the skull might be kissed.<sup>17</sup>

The other part of the head of the Saint was enclosed in a gold and silver bust adorned with jewels, which was exposed for veneration in the chapel east of the shrine, and this was the third place in the church where St. Thomas was venerated. Whether the chapel was called the Crown of St. Thomas because of its architectural position as the head and crown of the church, or whether it took its name from the head or crown of the Saint, is uncertain. But, though it has been questioned, there can be little doubt that there was an altar in Becket's Crown, and it is highly improbable that there was one in the crypt at the empty tomb. Both relics may well have been called the head, but the crown only was kept at an altar; and the Black Prince, by his will in 1376, left hangings "for the altar where my lord Saint Thomas lies, for the altar where the head is, and for the altar where the point of the sword is."<sup>18</sup> There is an entry in the Registers of Prior Henry of Eastry in 1314, "For ornamenting the crown of St. Thomas with gold, silver, and precious stones 115*l.* 12*s.*"<sup>19</sup> This would seem distinctly to indicate the reliquary made to receive the portion

<sup>17</sup> The skull of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle is enclosed in a reliquary answering to this description.

<sup>18</sup> *A servir devant l'autier ou monseignour Saint Thomas gist, et à l'autier la ou la teste est, et à l'autier la ou la poynte de l'espie est* (Stanley's *Canterbury*, 7th edit. p. 171).

<sup>19</sup> *Pro corona sancti Thome auro et argento et lapidibus preciosis ornanda cxv. li. xij.s.* (*Ibid.* p. 283).

of the head of the Saint that was cut off by Le Breton's blow. The greatness of the sum expended on the reliquary for the crown is shown by another entry made at the same time. "For a new cresting of gold for the shrine of St. Thomas, 7*l.* 10*s.*"<sup>20</sup> The contrast clearly proves the magnificence of the reliquary, for the cresting that was placed on the shrine in the fourteenth century must certainly have been sumptuous, and yet it cost but a twentieth part of the sum expended on the reliquary.

The altar on the western side of the shrine in the chapel of the Blessed Trinity was that which the Black Prince described as "the altar where Monseignour Saint Thomas lies," and this was the fourth and the most important of all the places in the church that devotion to St. Thomas induced the pilgrims to visit.

Each of the four places where the Saint was venerated had its *Custos* or Guardian among the officials of the monastery, to whom offerings were consigned by the pilgrims. An entry still exists in a Book of Accounts, showing the different offerings made at one time in these various places:

"From the Guardian of the Crown of St. Thomas 40*s.*

From the Guardians of the Shrine of St. Thomas 30*s.*

Also from the Guardian of the Crown of St. Thomas 20*s.*

<sup>20</sup> *Item, pro nova crista auri feretrum S. Thomæ faciendum* [sic] vii.*li.* x*s.* (Dart's *Canterbury*, in the Appendix).

Also from the Guardian of the Tomb of Blessed Thomas 3s. 4d.

Also from the Guardian of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas 3s. 4d."<sup>21</sup>

This was in the thirtieth year of Henry VI., *i.e.* 1451. The relative greatness of the offerings at the Crown seems to show that the Crown that was second only to the Shrine must have been the relic of "the part in which the martyr suffered,"<sup>22</sup> which the Church has always regarded as deserving of especial reverence.

Behind the high altar was a flight of steps, now removed, that led up to the Trinity chapel, where the Shrine was. Similar flights of steps in the choir aisles still remain, furrowed by the feet of many generations of pilgrims. Considerable portions of the well worn mosaic pavement of the chapel also remain, as well as a Crescent in the roof, brought probably as a trophy from some Eastern fight. But of the Shrine there is not now a vestige, though fortunately three beautiful stained glass windows in the aisle that once surrounded the Shrine, have escaped des-

<sup>21</sup> *Oblaciones cum obventionibus.*

*De Custode Corone beati Thome xl.s.*

*Denarii recepti pro vino conventus—*

*Item, de Custodibus Feretri Sancti Thome xxx.s.*

*Item, de Custode Corone Sancti Thome, xx.s.*

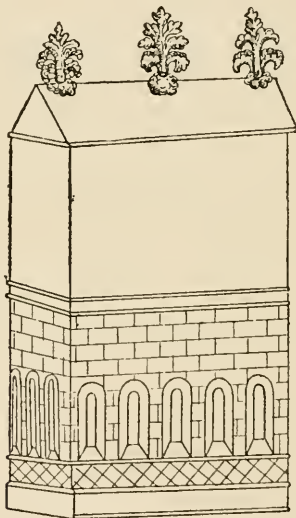
*Item, de Custode Tumbæ beati Thome, iij.s. iiij.d.*

*Item, de Custode Martyrii Sancti Thome, iij.s. iiij.d. (Ibid. p. 283).*

<sup>22</sup> *Insignes autem Reliquias S. R. C. declaravit esse caput, brachium, crus, aut illam partem corporis in qua passus est Martyr modo sit integra, et non parva, et legitime ab Ordinariis approbata* (Decree prefixed to the Roman Breviary).

truction. The Shrine was covered by a wooden case or canopy, that, from time to time, was drawn up with ropes. Of the appearance of the Shrine itself we can form some idea, partly from the descriptions we have of it, and partly from two representations that have happily come down to us.

Of these the plainest, little more indeed than an outline, is a pen-and-ink sketch among the Cottonian Manuscripts<sup>23</sup> in the British Museum; which, as it was drawn after the spoliation, seems to represent, except as far as the finials are con-



<sup>23</sup> Tib. E, viii. fol. 269. Mr. George Austin says that "there can be little doubt that it does not attempt to represent the Shrine, but only the outside covering or case" (Stanley, p. 299). But the finials are enough to show that this is not the covering. These three finials, which are marked on the sketch as "silver gilt, 60 and 80 ounces" respectively, were on the shrine itself.

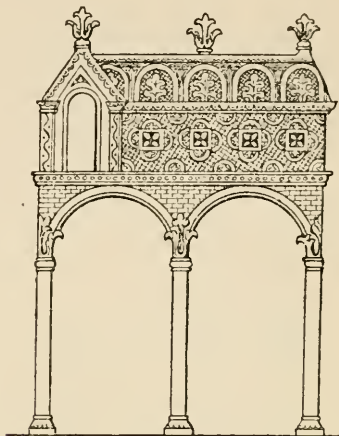
cerned, its denuded state. The portion destroyed by the fire that injured the Cottonian library in 1731 is made good in the woodcut. The sketch is accompanied by the following description, which shows how the sides were ornamented.

“Tem. Henr. VIII. All above the stone-work was first of wood, jewels of gold set with stone, covered with plates of gold, wrought upon with gold wire, then again with jewels, gold as brooches, images, angels, rings, ten or twelve together, cramped with gold into the ground of gold, the spoils of which filled two chests, such as six or eight men could but convey one out of the church. At one side was a stone with an angel of gold pointing thereunto, offered there by a King of France, which King Henry put into a ring, and wore on his thumb.”<sup>24</sup>

The other representation of the shrine is to be seen in the stained glass in the aisle of the chapel of the Blessed Trinity. This magnificent glass is a portion of that with which the Shrine was surrounded, and is not much later than the erection of the Shrine itself, at the time of the Saint's translation, in the early part of the thirteenth century. At the top of one of the lights, Benedict, the chronicler of the miracles, is represented asleep at the foot of the Shrine, and from the opening at the end of the upper part of the shrine, St. Thomas is leaning forward to speak to him. When the figures are removed, as well as the lines of the architecture of the

<sup>24</sup> The burnt parts of this description are supplied by Dean Stanley from Dugdale and Stowe (Stanley, p. 232).

church behind the Shrine, the stained glass would represent the Shrine itself as in the accompanying woodcut.



In this the substructure differs from that of the Cottonian sketch, made three centuries afterwards, as here the slab on which the shrine rests is borne on six columns with lofty arches, while in the other representation the solid masonry has five little openings or windows at the sides and three at the ends. The stained glass gives purely fanciful architecture for the church in which the shrine stands; so that perhaps the artist may not have cared to give a faithful picture of the shrine which stood close by.

Whatever may have been the construction of the lower portion, the sketches and descriptions combine to show us that the shrine was of unrivalled magnificence. Albert Archbishop of

Livonia, when writing the account<sup>25</sup> of the translation of St. Edmund at Pontigny, says that he believes that there was not in the whole world another shrine for value or beauty like that of St. Thomas at Canterbury. It is similarly described by all the writers who mention it, until the time of Henry VIII. A single instance will be sufficient. It is a description written by a Venetian,<sup>26</sup> who visited it about the year 1500, which was probably the time of its greatest splendour. "The tomb of St. Thomas the Martyr, Archbishop of Canterbury, exceeds all belief. Notwithstanding its great size, it is all covered with plates of pure gold; yet the gold is scarcely seen, because it is covered with various precious stones, as sapphires, balasses, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds; and wherever the eye turns, something more beautiful than the rest is observed. Nor, in addition to these natural beauties, is the skill of art wanting; for in the midst of the gold are the most beautiful sculptured gems, both small and large, as well as such as are in relief, as agates, onyxes, cornelians, and cameos; and some cameos are of such a size, that I am afraid to name it; but every thing is far surpassed by a ruby, not larger than a thumb nail,<sup>27</sup> which is fixed at the right of

<sup>25</sup> Martene, *Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. p. 1868.

<sup>26</sup> *A relation of England under Henry VII.*, published by the Camden Society.

<sup>27</sup> "A carbuncle that shines at night, half the size of a hen's egg," is the Bohemian Ambassador's description in 1446 (Stanley, p. 266). This gem, which was called the "Regall of France," is last mentioned as set in a collar, among the other

the altar. The church is somewhat dark, and particularly in the spot where the shrine is placed; and when we went to see it, the sun was near setting, and the weather was cloudy: nevertheless, I saw that ruby as if I had it in my hand. They say it was given by a King of France."

The history of the Church has been a series of undulations. Kings and nobles throw riches into her bosom, and then these very riches allure the covetous, and she is despoiled and becomes poor; and then offerings are made to her again, to become again in their turn the sacrilegious booty of the rapacious. The shrine of St. Thomas was not spared when the property of the Church in England fell into lay hands; and St. Thomas was himself so clearly her protector, that the despoiler waged war against his very name. The following is the account given by a lawyer<sup>28</sup> of this parody of the forms of law:

"Henry VIII., when he wished to throw off the authority of the Pope, thinking that as long as the name of St. Thomas should remain in the calendar men would be stimulated by his example to brave the ecclesiastical authority of the Sovereign, instructed his Attorney-General to file a *quo-warranto* information against him for usurping the office of a saint, and he was formally

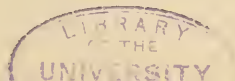
jewels delivered to Queen Mary, March 10, 1554 (Nichols' *Erasmus*, p. 224). If indeed this be the same "Regall of France," for Mary's seems to have been a diamond, and it is hard to imagine how a diamond could have been taken for a ruby or carbuncle.

<sup>28</sup> Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. i. p. 95.



cited to appear in court to answer the charge. Judgment of *ouster* would have passed against him by default, had not the King, to show his impartiality and great regard for the due administration of justice, assigned him counsel at the public expense. The cause being called, and the Attorney-General and the advocate for the accused being fully heard, with such proofs as were offered on both sides, sentence was pronounced, that 'Thomas, some time Archbishop of Canterbury, had been guilty of contumacy, treason, and rebellion; that his bones should be publicly burnt, to admonish the living of their duty by the punishment of the dead; and that the offerings made at his shrine should be forfeited to the Crown.'<sup>29</sup> A proclamation followed, stating that, 'forasmuch as it now clearly appeared that Thomas Becket had been killed in a riot excited by his own obstinacy and intemperate language, and had been afterwards canonized by the Bishop of Rome as the champion of his usurped authority, the King's Majesty thought it expedient to declare to his loving subjects that he was no saint, but rather a rebel and traitor to his prince, and therefore strictly charged and commanded

<sup>29</sup> Doubt has been thrown on this narrative by Mr. Gough Nichols, in his *Erasmus*, p. 232, but though there is some confusion in the dates, there does not seem to be sufficient reason for denying the positive statements of Sanders and Pollini, and the contemporary Bull of Pope Paul III. The arguments for and against are given by Dean Stanley, p. 251, note 2. Stowe asserts that not only the head but all the bones of the Saint were burnt, and this is strong evidence in favour of the mock trial, for those who deny the trial, deny the burning of the relics.



that he should not be esteemed or called a saint ; that all images and pictures of him should be destroyed, the festivals in his honour be abolished, and his name and remembrance be erased out of all books, under pain of his Majesty's indignation, and imprisonment at his Grace's pleasure.'"

This did not pass unnoticed in the Rome for which St. Thomas lived and died. Pope Paul III. in a Bull<sup>30</sup> against Henry VIII. recounting his crimes, said: "After he had, for the greater contempt of religion, summoned St. Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury into court, and caused him to be condemned as contumacious, and to be declared a traitor, he has ordered his bones, which in the realm of England, for the numberless miracles there wrought by Almighty God, were kept in a golden shrine at Canterbury, to be disinterred and burnt, and the ashes to be scattered to the winds: thus far surpassing the cruelty of all nations; for even in war conquerors do not rage against the bodies of the dead. And in addition to this, he has usurped possession of all the offerings given by the liberality of different kings, some of them of England, and of other princes, which were attached to the shrine, and were of immense value; and with all this, he thinks he has done religion no injury."

Such events as these have placed St. Thomas in a peculiar position among the saints, as the protector of every effort to resist the spirit of King Henry VIII. and his successors in all their

<sup>30</sup> Bulla *Cum Redemptor*, Dec. 17, 1538.

attempts to exercise an ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Church.

The English Hospital in Rome was under his invocation, and the College which has succeeded to it is under the same august patronage; and its members, in common with their brethren of the English clergy secular and regular, have so far trodden in his footsteps, that Cardinal Baronius is naturally led, when speaking of the Saint, to praise the martyrs who have followed him in England.

The following fact shows the devotion towards this great Saint which was entertained in the Colleges, whence the "Seminary priests," as Missionaries Apostolic were called, proceeded. In 1599, the Cardinals Borghese and Farnese received from Pope Clement VIII. power over all the English Seminaries, and amongst other matters, to grant two festivals to each of them with the privileges of the feasts of the Blessed Trinity and St. Thomas, as celebrated in the English College at Rome. It is remarkable that the five Seminaries in different parts of Europe, choosing in the second place various great English saints, unanimously named in the first instance St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Northampton, where St. Thomas fought a good fight, has in our time been made a Bishop's see by the Apostolic authority in whose behalf he fought, and the new diocese<sup>31</sup> has been very

<sup>31</sup> In the diocese of Northampton St. Thomas is commemorated by a proper antiphon and versicle, approved Jan. 26, 1852.

*Ant.* Ego sum Pastor bonus, et cognosco oves meas, et

fitly placed under his patronage. Our Saint is usually called the Protector of the English secular clergy; and though no document of the Holy See is extant expressly ordaining this, he has been mentioned as such in recent rescripts. But the most venerable body of whom St. Thomas is the patron is the Sacred Congregation of Ecclesiastical Immunities, which assembles every year on his festival and at his altar, and at whose petition Pope Gregory XVI. made his feast of double rite for the States of the Church. At the instance of the Cardinal Duke of York, Pope Benedict XIV. (Jan. 8, 1749) gave leave for all ecclesiastics of the English nation, wherever they might be living, to keep his festival as a double of the second class with an octave; and previously to these Decrees Pope Urban VIII. (March 23, 1641) had granted to all English people the power of celebrating the octave, notwithstanding its occurrence at a season when, by the ordinary rubrics, it would be forbidden. Finally, Pope Pius IX. (June 3, 1857), confirmed the celebration of the festival as a double of the first class with an octave, the rite with which it has been observed in England from time immemorial.

*cognoscunt me meæ, et animam meam pono pro ovibus meis.*

*V. In patientia vestra.*

*R. Possidebitis animas vestras.*

*Deus pro cujus Ecclesia, as on the feast of the Saint.*

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### LEGENDS.

The Saracen Princess—St. Mark's day at Sens—the water made wine—the chasuble turning red—the Mass of a Martyr—the eagle and the oil-cruet—the tails of the people of Stroud—St. Thomas's well—the nightingales at Oxford—our Lady's little chasuble—the Seven Joys of our Lady.

AN account of St. Thomas of Canterbury which should make no mention of the legends respecting him would be very incomplete. The first that would naturally deserve a place in this chapter is the account of the Saracen princess, who was said to have been the mother of the Saint. As this, however, has been already given, we may pass on; adding merely that it naturally became a favourite subject for ballads, in the hands of whose writers the story slightly changed its shape. Gilbert is there said to have been urged to marry after his return to England; and he having at length consented, though grievously against his will, the Saracen lady, who had procured his freedom when a captive in the East, arrived in her wanderings at his house on the very morning of the wedding.

The following extracts are taken from an exceedingly rare old *Lyfe of Saynt Thomas of Caunturbury*, printed by Rycharde Pynson. The

spelling alone has been changed. It begins by saying that St. Thomas was born in the place where now standeth the church called St. Thomas of Akers. When forty-four, "he was sacred and stilled, and became an holy man, suddenly changed into a new man, doing great penance, as in wearing hair with knots, and a breech of the same down to the knees. Under his habit he wore the habit of a monk, and outward a clerk; and did great abstinence, making his body lean and his soul fat."

We now make a leap to Sens. "And anon, after St. Thomas came to come on St. Mark's day at afternoon. And when his caterer should have brought fish for his dinner, because it was a fasting day, he could get none for no money, and came and told his lord St. Thomas so; and he bade him buy such as he could get. And then he bought flesh, and made it ready for their dinner, and St. Thomas was served with a capon roasted, and his man with boiled meat. And so it was that the Pope heard that he was come, and sent a Cardinal to welcome him; and he found him at his dinner eating flesh, which anon returned and told to the Pope how he was not so perfect a man as he had supposed; for, contrary to the rule of the Church, he eateth this day flesh. The Pope would not believe him, but sent another Cardinal, which, for more evidence, took the leg of the capon in his kerchief, and affirmed the same, and opened his kerchief before the Pope; and he found the leg turned into a fish called a carp. And when the Pope saw it, he said they

were not true men to say such things of this good Bishop; they said faithfully that it was flesh that he eat. And after this, St. Thomas came to the Pope, and did his reverence and obedience; whom the Pope welcomed, and after certain communications, he demanded him what meat that he had eaten, and said, Flesh, as ye have heard before, because he could find no fish, and very need compelled him thereto. Then the Pope understood of the miracle that the capon's leg was turned into a carp, of his goodness granted to him and to all them of the diocese of Canterbury license to eat flesh ever after on St. Mark's day when it falleth on a fish-day, and pardon withal; which is kept and accustomed."

If this was "kept and accustomed," it is singular that our Catholic ancestors should have lost the tradition, for amongst English Catholics St. Mark has been a day of abstinence until lately. By a Rescript of July 8, 1781, Pope Pius VI. abrogated the fast which, in consequence of an immemorial tradition, was kept in England on all the Fridays of the year, with the exception of the Paschal season. The Pope then refused to dispense with the abstinence on St. Mark's day and the three Rogation days, which the Vicars Apostolic had asked at the same time, but this was granted by Pope Pius VIII. by a Rescript dated May 29, 1830.

Another legend, that deserves to be classed with that of the carp, is narrated by Roger Hoveden the chronicler. "One day the Archbishop was sitting at the table of Pope Alexander,

when his domestic placed before him a bowl of water. The Pope tasted it, and found it to be an excellent wine, and saying, 'I thought you drank water,' put it back before the Archbishop, when straightway the wine returned to its former taste of water." It is a pretty story, but it must be confessed that St. Thomas was not a water-drinker. "Being of a very chilly temperament," says Herbert of Bosham,<sup>1</sup> "water did not agree with him, so that he never drank it, and but seldom beer, but he always took wine, though in great moderation and with all sobriety." The testimony of Garnier de Pont St. Maxence is to the same effect.<sup>2</sup>

Le meillur vin useit que il poeit trover ;  
 Mès pur le freit ventreil, eschaffé le beveit ;  
 Kar le ventreil aveit et le cors forment freit.  
 Gimgibre et mult girofre, pur eschalfer, mangeit,  
 Ne pur quant tut adès l'eve od le vin mesleit.

Another version of the story is given by a German chronicler<sup>3</sup> early in the thirteenth century. "One day the Apostolic [*i.e.*, the Pope] was sitting with the Bishop, he chanced to be thirsty, and he said to the boy who was waiting on him, 'Bring me water from the fountain to drink.' When it was brought, the Apostolic said to the Bishop, 'Bless it and drink.' He blessed it and it was changed into wine, and when he had tasted, he gave it to the Apostolic. When the Apostolic perceived that it was wine, he called the boy aside and said, 'What did you

<sup>1</sup> Herbert, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Edit. Hippeau, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold of Lubeck, *Materials*, ii. p. 291.



bring me?’ The boy answered, ‘Water.’ Then said he, ‘Bring me some more of the same.’ And when he had done so a second time, the Apostolic again said to the Bishop, ‘Brother, bless it and drink.’ And he, not being aware that virtue had gone out of him, and thinking that wine had been purposely brought, simply blessed it and it was again changed into wine, which he drank and gave to the Apostolic. And he not yet believing, and thinking that a mistake had been made, a third time secretly asked for water, and the third time it was changed into wine. Then the Apostolic was afraid, perceiving that the man was a saint and that the virtue of God was manifested in him.”

We have not, however, yet finished with Richard Pynson’s *Lyfe*, so to it we return.

“And after, St. Thomas said Mass before the Pope in a white chasuble; and after Mass he said to the Pope, that he knew by revelation that he should die for the right of Holy Church, and when it should fall, the chasuble should be turned from white to red.”

We now pass to Canterbury. “On Christmas Day, St. Thomas made a sermon at Canterbury in his own church, and weeping, prayed the people to pray for him; for he knew well his time was nigh, and there executed the sentence on them that were against the right of Holy Church. And that same day, as the King sat at meat, all the bread that they handled waxed anon mouldy and hoar, that no man might eat of it, and the bread that they touched not was fair and good for

to eat. And these four knights aforesaid came to Canterbury on the Wednesday in Christmas week, about evensong time."

"Then said Sir Reynold, 'But if thou assoil the King and us under standing the curse, it shall cost thee thy life.' And St. Thomas said, 'Thou knowest well enough that the King and I were accorded on Mary Magdalen's day, and that this curse should go forth on them that had offended the Church.' Then one of the knights smote him as he kneeled before the altar, on the head; and one Sir Edward Grim, that was his crozier, put forth his arm with the cross to bear off the stroke, and the stroke smote the cross in sunder, and his arm almost off, wherefore he fled for fear, and so did all the monks that were that time at Compline. And they smote each at him, that they smote off a great piece of the skull of his head, that his brain fell on the pavement. And so they slew him and martyred him, and there cruelly that one of them brake the point of his sword against the pavement; and thus this holy Archbishop St. Thomas suffered death in his own church for the right of Holy Church. And when he was dead, they stirred his brain; and after went into his chamber and took away his goods, and his horse out of his stable, and took away his bulls and writing, and delivered them to Sir Robert Broke to bear into France to the King. And as they searched his chamber, they found in a chest ij shirts of hair, made full of great knots; and they said, Certainly he was a good man. And coming down into the church-

yard, they began to dread and fear the ground would not have borne them, and were sore aghast; for they supposed that the earth would have swallowed them all quick[alive]; then they knew that they had done amiss. And anon it was known all about how that he was martyred, and anon after took this holy body and unclothed him, and found bishop's clothing above, and the habit of a monk under, and next his flesh a hard hair full of knots, which was his shirt; and his breech was of the same, and the knots stuck fast within the skin, and all his body full of worms. He suffered great pain, and was thus martyred the year of our Lord XI.C.LXXI., and was liij years old. And soon after tidings came to the King how he was slain; wherefore the King took great sorrow, and sent to Rome for his absolution. And after that St. Thomas departed from the Pope, the Pope would daily look upon the white chasuble that St. Thomas had said Mass in, and that same day that he was martyred he saw it turn into red; whereby he knew well that that same day he suffered martyrdom for the right of Holy Church, and commanded a Mass of *Requiem* solemnly to be sung for his soul. And when that the quire began for to sing *Requiem*, an angel on high above began the Office of a martyr, *Lætabitur justus*; and then anon after, all the whole quire followed singing forth the Mass of the Office of a martyr. And then the Pope thanked God that it pleased Him to show such miracles for His holy Martyr, at whose tomb, by the merit and prayers of this holy Martyr, our Blessed Lord there hath

showed many miracles ; the blind have recovered there their sight, the dumb their speech, the deaf their hearing, the lame their limbs, and the dead their life. Therefore let us pray to this glorious Martyr to be our advocate, that by his petition we may come unto everlasting bliss. Amen."

There is another very curious legend connected with St. Thomas of Canterbury which runs thus in the first person, as if it were related by the Saint himself : "When I Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury fled from England into France, I went to Pope Alexander, who was then at Sens, where I showed him the evil customs and abuses which the King of England had introduced. One night, when I was in prayer in the Church of St. Columba, I prayed to the Queen of Virgins to give the King of England and his heirs purpose and will of amendment towards the Church, and that Christ of His mercy would make him love the Church with a fuller love. Straightway the Blessed Virgin appeared to me, having in her bosom this golden eagle, and holding in her hand a little stone cruet. Taking the eagle from her bosom, she shut the cruet in it, and placed the cruet with the eagle in my hand ; and spoke to me these words in order : 'This is the unction wherewith the Kings of England should be anointed, not these who now reign and will reign, who are and will be wicked, and for their sins have lost and will lose much ; but there are Kings of England to come, who shall be anointed with this unction, who shall be kind and champions of the Church ; for they will recover in

peace the land which their fathers have lost, when they shall have the eagle with the cruet. For there shall be a King of England who shall first be anointed with this unction; he shall recover without force the land lost by his fathers, to wit, Normandy and Aquitaine. The King shall be the greatest among Kings; and he shall build many churches in the Holy Land; and he shall put to flight all pagans from Babylon; and shall build therein many churches. As often as the King shall carry the eagle in his bosom, he shall have victory over his enemies; and his kingdom in like manner shall be increased. And thou shalt be a martyr.' Then I asked the Blessed Virgin to show me who should keep so precious a treasure; and she said to me, 'There is in this city a monk of St. Cyprian of Poitiers named William, who has been unjustly expelled by his Abbot from his abbey, and who is petitioning the Pope to compel his Abbot to restore him to his abbey. Give him the eagle with the cruet, for him to take it to the city of Poitiers; and let him hide it in the Church of St. Gregory, near the Church of St. Hilary, at the head of the church, towards the west, under a great stone. There it shall be found at a fitting time, and shall be the unction of the Kings of England.' The cause of the finding of this eagle shall be among the pagans. And all these things I gave him shut up in a vessel of lead." The old MS. goes on to say, that "the above-written was accidentally found by my lord the King of England, on the vigil of St. Gregory, in the year of our Lord 1337, in an old chest." Walsingham

says, that King Richard II. found it in the Tower of London in 1399; and that Henry IV. was the first King who was anointed with this oil.

Lambarde, an historian of the county of Kent in the seventeenth century, recounts various traditional legends of St. Thomas, of which the following are specimens. It is curious to see how the old affectionate feeling for St. Thomas had died out, while nothing remained in the mind of the Kentishmen respecting him, but a sense of his power.

“Polydore Virgil (handling that hot contention between King Henry II. and Thomas Becket) saith that Becket (being at the length reputed for the King’s enemy) began to be so commonly neglected, contemned, and hated, that when as it happened him upon a time to come to Stroud, the inhabitants thereabouts (being desirous to despite that good Father) sticked not to cut the tail from the horse on which he rode, binding themselves thereby with a perpetual reproach: for afterwards (by the will of God) it so happened that every one which came of that kindred of men which had played that naughty prank, were born with tails, even as brute beasts be.”<sup>4</sup>

“It was long since fancied, and is yet of too many believed, that while Thomas Becket lay at the old house at Otford (which of long time, as you see, belonged to the Archbishops, and whereof the old hall and chapel only do now remain) and saw that it wanted a fit spring to water it, that he stuck his staff into the dry

<sup>4</sup> *Perambulations of Kent*, Chatham, 1826, p. 356.

ground (in a place thereof now called St. Thomas's Well), and that immediately the same water appeared, which running plentifully, serveth the offices of the new house till this present day. They say also, that as he walked on a time in the old Park (busy at his prayers) that he was much hindered in devotion by the sweet note and melody of a nightingale that sang in a bush beside him: and that therefore (in the might of his holiness) he enjoined that from thenceforth no bird of that kind should be so bold as to sing thereabout. Some men report likewise, that forasmuch as a smith (then dwelling in the town) had cloyed his horse, he enacted by like authority, that after that time no smith should thrive within the parish."<sup>5</sup>

A story of a very different kind comes to us from the Icelandic *Thomas Saga*, a fourteenth century compilation. The same story was known in the south of Europe in the last century, necessarily from an entirely independent source, for it is inserted by St. Alphonsus Liguori in his *Glories of Mary*. The quaintness of the wording is due to the literalness of the translation from the Icelandic.<sup>6</sup>

“The school of Paris is a large congregation wherein there be many sons of well-born fathers, . . . Out of all their number scarce one might be found who had not one woman-friend with

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 460.

<sup>6</sup> *Thomas Saga Erkibyskuþs.* By Eirikr Magnusson, Sub-Librarian of the University of Cambridge. Rolls Series, vol. i. p. 21.

whom he kept fellowship; and none do we know outtaken therefrom but Thomas the English; he alone hath no sweetheart of earth, nay but rather is she his only beloved who is the Queen of the maidens; her he serveth even now to the utmost of his power, in purity of life, both as to spirit and body, in beauty of mind and fair prayers. Unto this he addeth what has since become widely renowned, in that he compoundeth praises of our Lady, both for private reading and for proses in the church. He was of all men the first to find, as far as has become known here in the north, how to draw meditation out of every psalm in the Psalter, out of which meditations he afterwards made verses of praise to our Lady. Following his example, Stephen Langton did the same in England, and later still the same was done by three masters west in Scotland, at the request of Queen Isabell, whom Eric Magnusson had for wife.<sup>7</sup> It is also averred by all folk that the blessed Thomas composed the prose *Imperatrix gloriosa*, and another, a lesser one, *Hodiernæ lux dici*. Now for such things, and other good works which he wrought, he got such love from our Lady, that it may well be said she took him unto her bosom, thus saying unto him: *Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi*.

“Next to these things let us see what the

7 “The marriage of King Eric Magnusson of Norway and Isabella Bruce took place in 1293. The King died six years afterwards, July 13, 1299, and the dowager Queen in 1358” (*Mr. Magnusson's note*).



clerks busy them about, since now time passeth on and weareth towards Lent. . . . They now hold a great parliament whereat in a brawly wise each one praiseth his own beloved, saying that she is goodly of look, and wise of speech, and dealeth with all things with a deft hand. This is a meeting whereat Thomas the English sitteth and sayeth nought at all. They now cast glances at him with some rude jeering or mockery. . . . At the playmote, which was to be the next morning, . . . there was to be brought forth for show the cleverest trifle in needlework which each one's mistress had wrought. And when as the blessed Thomas is threatened with hard dealing, he betaketh him to his well-beloved, and kneeling down prayeth unto our Lady that she might deign to spare him of her needlework something fit to be shown among his companions, no matter if it were not a thing of great worth. Thus he prayeth, and the night passeth away and the parliament taketh place. And he, as well as each and all of them, beareth forth unto the show-stand the glitter which each one hath got for himself. Now again they look askance to Thomas, asking what he might be about. He answered even thus: 'I shall go forthwith and show you what mine own beloved brought to me last night;' whereupon he went to his private study, where he found that a certain casket had come, snow-white, of shining ivory, locked and fashioned with images in a manner to surpass all polish that might be wrought by the hand of man.

This little thing he now taketh with him and showeth to his companions. The casket being unlocked, it appeareth what it containeth, which in short was this, there here was found, folded down, a full set of bishop's robes, so heedfully gathered together that even the staff was thereamong also. At this the noise of the clerks abateth somewhat, since by this wonder they understand that an election hath already fallen to the lot of this very Thomas, and that his path lieth somewhat higher than the ways of such folk, who sink into the sins and the filth of this miserable life. But that which was told of these robes is by right understanding to be taken to mean as much as that they were of such smallness of size, that they could be kept within a small space before the eyes of man."

This extract has mentioned the belief in Iceland in the fourteenth century that St. Thomas was the author of hymns to the Blessed Virgin. One such hymn, believed to be his, may here be given from a paper<sup>8</sup> taken from a very different source, that is to say, from a manuscript in one of the great libraries at Rome.

"These are the Seven Temporal Joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Gaude Virgo, Mater Christi,  
 Quem per aurem concepisti,  
 Gabriele nuntio :

Gaude, quia Deo plena  
 Peperisti sine pœna  
 Cum pudoris lilio :

<sup>8</sup> Miscell. MSS. in 4to, Bibl. Casanatense, D. v. 26, f. 108.

Gaude, quia Magi dona  
Tuo Nato ferunt bona,  
Quem tenes in gremio :

Gaude, quia reperisti  
Tuum natum quem quæsisti  
In doctorum medio :

Gaude, quia tui Nati  
Quem dolebas morte pati  
Fulget resurrectio :

Gaude, Christo ascendente  
Et in cælum te tuente  
Cum Sanctorum nubilo :

Gaude, quæ post Christum scandis,  
Et est tibi honor grandis  
In cæli palatio.

“ We read that Blessed Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was wont to repeat with great devotion the Seven Temporal Joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Once when he was saying these joys in his oratory, as he was accustomed, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and said, ‘ Why are you glad only for my joys which were temporal, and do not rather rejoice over the present joys which I now enjoy in Heaven, which are eternal? Rejoice, therefore, and exult with me for the future. First, because my glory surpasses the happiness of all the saints. Secondly, because as the sun gives light to the day, so my brightness gives light to the whole court of Heaven. Thirdly, because all the hosts of Heaven obey me, and ever honour me. Fourthly, because my Son and I have but one will. Fifthly, because God rewards, at my pleasure, all my servants, both now and hereafter. Sixthly, because I sit

next to the Holy Trinity, and my body is glorified. Seventhly, because I am certainly sure that these joys will last for ever, and never end. And whoever shall honour me by rejoicing in these my joys, shall receive the consolation of my presence at the departure of his soul from the body, and I will free his soul from evil enemies, and I will present him in the sight of my Son, that he may possess with me the everlasting joys of Paradise.' Blessed Thomas the Martyr aforesaid composed these seven joys, as they here follow.

“These are the Seven Heavenly Joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Gaude flore virginali  
 Quæ honore speciali  
 Transcendis splendiferum  
 Angelorum principatum,  
 Et sanctorum decoratum  
 Dignitate munerum.

Gaude Sponsa cara Dei,  
 Nam ut lux clara diei  
 Solis datur lumine,  
 Sic tu facis orbem vere  
 Tuæ pacis resplendere  
 Lucis plenitudine.

Gaude, splendens vas virtutum,  
 Tuæ sedis est ad nutum  
 Tota cœli curia :  
 Te benignam et felicem  
 Jesu dignam Genitricem  
 Veneratur gloria.

Gaude, nexu voluntatis  
 Et amplexu charitatis  
 Juncta sic altissimo

Ut ad nutum consequaris  
 Quicquid, Virgo, postularis  
 A Jesu dilectissimo.

Gaude, mater miserorum,  
 Quia Pater præmiorum  
 Dabit te colentibus  
 Congruentem hic mercedem,  
 Et felicem poli sedem  
 Sursum in cœlestibus.

Gaude, humilis beata,  
 Corpore glorificata,  
 Meruisti maxima  
 Flore tantæ dignitatis  
 Ut sis Sanctæ Trinitatis  
 Sessione proxima.

Gaude Virgo, Mater pura,  
 Certa manens et segura  
 Quod hæc tua gaudia  
 Non cessabunt, non durescent,  
 Sed durabunt et florescent  
 In perenni gloria. Amen.

V. Exaltata es Sancta Dei Genitrix.

R. Super choros Angelorum ad cœlestia regna.

*Oratio.*

O dulcissime Jesu Christe, qui beatissimam Genitricem Tuam, gloriosam Virginem Mariam perpetuis gaudiis in cœlo lætificasti, concede propitius ut ejus meritis et precibus continuis, salutem et prosperitatem mentis et corporis consequamur, et ad gaudia Tuæ Beatitudinis ac ejusdem Virginis feliciter perveniamus æternam. Per Te, Jesu Christe, Salvator mundi, qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen."

Dr. Smith, the Bishop of Chalcedon, quotes, from Parker's *History of St. Thomas*, that there was a hymn composed in his praise by St. Thomas of Aquin, which was sung daily. It is

much to be regretted that it has not come down to us, for it would indeed have been pleasing to have connected the name of our Saint with that of his holy Dominican namesake, as we have had occasion in different ways to associate him with the memory of Saints Bernard and William, and Gilbert, as well as Saints Anselm and Edmund.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### KINDRED AND MEMORIALS.

The Butlers, Earls of Ormond—the Saint's sisters—two nephews buried at Verona—Blessed John and Peter Becket, Augustinian Hermits at Fabriano—Minerbetti—Becchetti—Morselli—St. Catherine of Bologna—Mosaics at Monreale—vestments at Anagni—chapels at Fourvières and St. Lo—mitre at Namur—altars at Liège and Rome—relics at Veroli and Marsala—relics now existing and many more that have perished.

SPEAKING of the Butlers, Earls of Ormond, Father Campion<sup>1</sup> says, “The Latin History calleth him *Dominum de Pincerna*, the English *Le Bottiller*, whereby it appeareth that he had some such honour about the Prince. His very surname is Becket, who was advanced by H. le 2 in recompense of the injury done to Thomas of Canterbury their kinsman.”

Of the family of the Saint, we have already seen something<sup>2</sup> on the occasion when Rohesia his sister presented herself at Canterbury before the King in his penitential mood. There are some few further points of history to note respecting St. Thomas's sisters. The community of Christ Church continued to keep up some relation with

<sup>1</sup> *History of Ireland*, cap. 2, Dublin, 1633, reprinted 1809, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 445.

them, as in a Necrology<sup>3</sup> of the monks and their friends and benefactors, the *obits* of two of them occur. On the 21st of January Mary the Abbess of Barking died; and the same day was the anniversary of William the priest, the martyr's chaplain—perhaps the William whom he had made chaplain of Penshurst,<sup>4</sup> who might well have been called, as by a special sort of title, “the martyr's chaplain.” On the 2nd of February there is the entry of the death of another sister of St. Thomas, Agnes, the widow of Thomas,<sup>5</sup> son of Theobald of Helles in Tipperary, foundress in conjunction with her husband of the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acre, on the site where Gilbert Becket's house had stood, where St. Thomas was born, and where the Mercers' Chapel now stands. She gave ten shillings rent to St. Saviour's Hospital, Bermondsey, and the deed of gift was witnessed by Sir Theobald, “the nephew of Blessed Thomas the Martyr,” who may have been her son. It is supposed that the Butlers of Ormond were descended from Agnes, and this relationship is mentioned in a petition to Parliament in 1454.

Of the other members of the family who were scattered over Europe in exile for his sake, we are told that two of his nephews were buried at Verona, which will probably account for the pos-

3 12 Kal. 7Feb. *Obiit Maria Abbatissa de Berkin, soror beati Thomæ Martyris, et Wilhelmus sacerdos, ejusdem Martyris capellanus.*

4 *Idus Feb. Obiit Agnes, soror beati Thomæ Martyris* (Cott. MSS. Nero, C. ix, 2, fol. 1, printed by Dart, *History of the Church of Canterbury*, App. p. xxxiii.).

4 *Supra*, pp. 389, 397.

5 Robertson's *Becket, a Biography*, p. 353.



session of a relic of him by the parish church of S. Tommaso Cantuariense, which was built in his honour in 1316.

Some other relatives were at Rome, who under Innocent III., finally settled at Fabriano, where, in the fourteenth century, two were born of the family,<sup>6</sup> who imitated his sanctity and were raised to the dignity of the altar. Blessed John and Peter Becket were of the Augustinian Eremitical Order at Fabriano. The first went to Oxford about the year 1385, being then a Bachelor in Theology, to give lectures in that University, where he had assigned to him, by the general chapter of his Order, held at Strigonia, or Gran, in Hungary on the 24th of May, 1385, "the first place given to foreigners by the University of Oxford in the Lectureship of the Sentences." Various favours are recorded in the registry of the order, as conferred upon him by the General; amongst others that of going to London with one companion when he thought proper, of remaining in the convent at Oxford during the vacations, and of having a scribe. He returned with his master's degree, about 1392, to the convent where he had been professed, in which, on the 7th of May, 1420, he had the full powers of the General delegated to him.

Blessed Peter Becket was chosen, in 1388, joint visitor of the convent of his Order at Rimini, as a substitute for the famous Gregory de Arimino. In the following year he received leave

<sup>6</sup> This account is entirely taken from the documents presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1835.

to preach; but this occupation was not allowed to distract him from his studies, for in 1391 he was made second lecturer at Venice. Two years later he was permitted to visit the Holy Sepulchre; and his name reappears in the chronicles of the order, in 1421, as being allowed an attendant, probably because of his advanced age. It is said, that on his return from the Holy Sepulchre, he awakened in his saintly relative a desire to visit those holy places also, and that they made their pilgrimage together. On their return, they built in their native town a church in honour of the Holy Sepulchre, with two chapels and five altars, on one of which the relics of the two holy religious ultimately rested. Their translation from the burial-place of the convent was owing to a miracle; for a bundle of dry thorns left between their graves budded and blossomed with numerous and beautiful flowers. They were moved to the convent church; and afterwards, in 1565, they were solemnly translated to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Fabriano, where their festival is kept on the 1st of January, the anniversary of their translation. The little church in which they are is now called by their name; and the wooden shrine in which their bodies rest is covered with paintings representing miracles wrought by their intercession, considered to be of about the date of 1450. In 1591 the community of Fabriano made a vow to observe their festival as a day of obligation for twelve years, to obtain their deliverance from pestilence and

famine. Their claim to the title of Blessed, and the confirmation of the honour hitherto shown to them, were allowed by Pope Gregory XVI. on the 28th of August, 1835.

In a Life of St. Thomas published at Lucca in 1696, by John Baptist Cola, of the Congregation of the Mother of God, various Italian families are named as claiming descent from the banished relations of the Saint. Of these the author gives the first place to F. Andrea Minerbetti, a Knight Commander of the Order of St. John at Florence, and then he enumerates the Signori Becchetti of Piacenza, Fabriano, Verona, of Sacca in Sicily, and of Berceto in the territory of Parma, to which latter place he attributes the possession of a precious relic of our Saint. He then speaks of the Signori Morselli of Vigerano and Piacenza. In the former place this family rejoiced in the possession of a fountain which St. Thomas had caused to spring up miraculously on one of his journeys to Rome, which favour was recorded in verses engraved on the city standard, which it was their privilege to carry in procession on St. Mark's day.

The same book contains an interesting account of a vision of St. Catherine of Bologna. In order to devote herself to prayer, this Saint had deprived herself of her natural rest to such an extent that her spiritual daughters, fearing both for her mind and body, implored her to devote less time to this holy exercise. St. Catherine, after asking fervently for God's guidance, fell asleep and saw St. Thomas of Canterbury, to whom

she was particularly devoted, appear to her in his pontifical vestments, and make a sign to her to observe what he should do. She noticed that he prayed for some time and then devoted a while to rest, and then returned again to prayer; and then, drawing near to St. Catherine, he gave his hand to her to kiss, on which she awoke and saw him and kissed his hand before he disappeared. The account of this the Saint wrote in her breviary, "which is still amongst her relics at Bologna," with these words: "Oratio pro Sancto Thomâ meo gloriosissimo Martyre, tam benignissimo, qui manus suas sanctissimas concessit mihi, et osculata sum illas in corde et corpore meo; ad laudem Dei et illius scripsi, et narraui hoc cum omni veritate." In both the lives of St. Catherine given by the Bollandists (March 9), this is narrated, with a slight variation in the words written by the Saint in her breviary. "S. Thomas meus gloriosissimus et clementissimus Patronus," one says are the words used respecting our great English martyr by the wonderful virgin who now for four hundred years has dwelt incorrupt amongst her Poor Clares at Bologna.

The devotion to St. Thomas spread very rapidly. The earliest known representation of the Saint is executed in mosaic, in the church of Monreale, near Palermo, built by William the Good, King of Sicily, who began its erection in the very year St. Thomas was canonized. This King married Princess Jane of England, daughter of our Henry II., who arrived in Sicily in the year 1177.

In the Cathedral at Anagni are preserved a full set of very beautiful vestments, given in the year 1200 by Pope Innocent III.; and on one of the dalmatics,<sup>7</sup> amongst some representations of other English saints, is the martyrdom of St. Thomas. In the history of Anagni by De Magistris, it is said that in 1169, while Alexander III. was living in the canonica of that Cathedral, St. Thomas himself arrived not long after the ambassadors of King Henry; and that during his stay there he always celebrated Mass in the basilica. Such a journey, however, would surely have been betrayed at least in the voluminous correspondence, if not in the biographies of the Saint. The local tradition is very strong that the Saint came thither in person during his exile; and an altar in the crypt, which has been removed to form a burial-place for the canons, is stated to be that on which he used to celebrate. In the choir-chapel an inscription<sup>8</sup> on a picture, which may once have formed the door of a treasury, tells us that in 1325 they possessed a relic of him.

It is said that when the Saint was at Lyons, he was asked to consecrate the church on the hill to our Blessed Lady, which has since become so famous as Notre Dame de Fourvières. When the function was over, there

<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Jameson is wrong in calling it the cope (*Legends of Monastic Orders*. London, 1850, p. 115).

<sup>8</sup> *Hoc opus fieri fecit Dominus Raynaldus Presbyter et Clericus istius Ecclesiæ sub anno Domini 1325, mense Maii. Ibi sunt de Reliquiis Sanctorum Thomæ Archiepiscopi Cant., Thomæ de Aquino, et Petri Episcopi Anagnini.*

was a little chapel close by, which he was asked to dedicate also. He inquired in whose honour it was to be consecrated. They told him that a titular Saint had not been chosen, but that he himself must select one. He thought for a few moments, and then said that he would not consecrate it; but that they must reserve it to be dedicated to the first martyr who should give his blood for Christ. The chapel was accordingly, a few years after, dedicated to God in honour of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

A precisely similar story is told of St. Lo. "In another part of the town is a building, now La Halle au Bled, which before the Revolution was a church dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. The original church was finished in 1174. It was in progress when Thomas à Becket, having incurred the resentment of Henry, went abroad and passed through St. Lo. There was a dispute at the time to whom the new church should be dedicated. The illustrious stranger was consulted; and his reply was, 'Let it be dedicated to the first saint who shall shed his blood for the Catholic faith.' Providence allowed it to be dedicated to himself. He was murdered in 1171, and canonized in 1173. The original church, however, was pulled down in 1571, to make room for improvement in the fortifications, and rebuilt in its present situation in 1630."<sup>9</sup>

In the convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame at Namur, his martyrdom is represented on a mitre

<sup>9</sup> *Architectural Tour in Normandy*. By H. Gally Knight, Esq., M.P. London, 1836, p. 123.

which formerly belonged to the celebrated Cardinal James de Vitry, the director and biographer of Blessed Mary of Oignies, which he left in 1244 to the Abbey of Oignies, whence at the death of the last prior it, with the abbey relics, passed to Namur.

The first altar erected to him in Belgium<sup>10</sup> was in the Monastery of St. Laurence at Liège, by Abbot Everlin, "for the love which he bore him, as he studied with him at Paris." In Rome, the earliest altar known to have been raised in his honour<sup>11</sup> is that in the chapel dedicated to him in the crypt or Confession of the Church of St. Alexius on the Aventine, which was consecrated, in 1218, by Pelagius, Cardinal Bishop of Albano, who placed therein some of his relics, together with those of several other saints. There is a fine relic at Veroli, preserved in a very handsome bust decorated by a canon of the church two centuries ago. And at Marsala, where the feast of St. Thomas is a day of obligation, there is also a large relic in a silver bust, given to the church in that place by Antonio Lombardo, a native of Marsala, who became Archbishop of Messina in 1572.

<sup>10</sup> Martene, *Vet. Scriptor.* Paris, 1724, vol. iv. p. 1090. In 1196 Adalbert III., Archbishop of Saltzburg, ordered the monastery of Admont to celebrate the feast as a double of the second class, "et ut meliori pane et vino et etiam piscibus ob honorem ejusdem Martyris nostrique memoriam illa die congregationi ministretur."

<sup>11</sup> "Ex pervetusto membran. cod. qui Lectionarium dicebatur, ad Alexianorum usum monachorum" (Felix Nerinius, Abbas Hieronymianus, *De templo et coenob. SS. Bonifacii et Alexis.* Romæ, 1752, p. 220).

A chasuble of the Saint is at Courtrai, a chasuble and chalice are preserved at Dixmude, and a set of vestments at Sens; his Eminence Cardinal Wiseman obtained a mitre, and the apparel of an amice is at Erdington, both from the same treasury. The late Bishop Gillis obtained permission to take from the Cathedral of Sens one half of the altar stone, on which, according to the local tradition, St. Thomas said Mass. With this he made an altar for his domestic chapel in Edinburgh, and at the altar's foot he placed the heart of King Henry II.

Perhaps the most interesting relics which remain are those at St. Mary Major's at Rome. Baronius says<sup>12</sup> that the Cardinal Legates, Albert and Theodwin, brought back with them a portion of his brain which had been scattered on the pavement, and his tunic stained with blood, and that they were then placed in that church.

Vast numbers of other relics have been honoured in different churches, but no longer survive the various storms which have assailed religion. Prior Benedict, when he was made Abbot of Peterborough in 1176, made two altars in that Minster of stones taken from the floor of the martyrdom. He also enriched his new abbey with two vases of the blood of St. Thomas and parts of his clothing.<sup>13</sup> Roger, who had become

<sup>12</sup> *Annales*, vol. xii. p. 655.

<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to see why Dean Stanley should call this "an act of plunder." Nothing could have been more natural than that the monks of Canterbury should help their own Prior on his promotion, himself the historian of the martyrdom and miracles, to spread the devotion to St. Thomas.



keeper of the shrine when Benedict was made Prior, was elected Abbot of St. Augustine's in the place of Clarembald, in the hope that he might take with him some relic of St. Thomas; and Thorn, a monk of that abbey, who records it, says that they were enriched by him with some portion of the Martyr's blood, brain, and skull. Prior Geoffrey took some relics with him to Rouen, and he was accustomed to wear a reliquary containing a small piece of the crown of the Saint. In the books of miracles written by William of Canterbury<sup>14</sup> and Benedict very frequent mention is made of relics, usually small pieces of the Saint's clothing, as at Hythe, Whitchurch, Bapaume, Châtillon near Laon, and in the house of the Bishop of Moray at Spynie.

From more recent records we learn that a hair-shirt<sup>15</sup> was shown in a reliquary in the English College at Douay, a small part of one in the Abbey of Liesse, another<sup>16</sup> in St. Victor's at Paris; a bone of his arm in the great Church of St. Waldetrude at Mons; his chalice in the great nunnery of Bourbourg;<sup>17</sup> his mitre and linen dipped in his blood at St. Bertin's at St. Omer; the rochet<sup>18</sup> that he wore at his martyrdom was in the Abbey of St. Josse-au-Bois or St. Judoc's, commonly called Dammartin;

<sup>14</sup> Will. Cant. pp. 188, 244, 250, 305, 384.

<sup>15</sup> Alban Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, Dec. 29.

<sup>16</sup> *La Vie de S. Thomas*. Par De Beaulieu, Paris, 1674, p. 388.

<sup>17</sup> Destombes, *Vies des Saints*, Cambrai, 1852, tome iv. p. 167.

For various other memorials in the Low Countries mentioned by this author, see Note F.

<sup>18</sup> Stapleton, *Tres Thomæ*, Colon. Agr. 1612, p. 108.

vestments in many other monasteries in the Low Countries.

The ring<sup>19</sup> which he wore when he was martyred was among the relics at Glastonbury: at Windsor was a portion of his blood, and also a shirt: at Warwick a portion of a hair-shirt: at St. Alban's a portion also of a hair-shirt, of his cowl, his chasuble, his dalmatic and pallium: in the nunnery of St. Mary at Derby a piece of a shirt: at St. Mary's, Chester, a girdle:<sup>20</sup> and the Commissioners for the Suppression of Monasteries<sup>21</sup> say that they found at Bury St. Edmund's his penknife and boots. With a little pains this list of relics in England could be largely increased.<sup>22</sup>

In conclusion we turn to the church from whose stores most other churches derived their treasured relics of St. Thomas, Christ Church, at Canterbury. There, besides the body of St. Thomas in its shrine, the head in one reliquary and the crown in another, we have the following, which are here selected as the more interesting,<sup>23</sup> from a list made in 1315 by Prior Henry of Eastry.

“In a wooden lectern at the altar of the Holy Cross in the nave of the church, covered in part with silver gilt and jewelled, with a cross in the middle, are contained a silver gilt cross with

<sup>19</sup> *Mon. Angl.* Lond. 1682, vol. i. p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> All these are mentioned by Gough Nichols, p. 228.

<sup>21</sup> Wright, *Letters on the Dissolution*, Camden Society, p. 85.

<sup>22</sup> See Note O.

<sup>23</sup> Cotton. MSS.; Galba E iv. f. 122; Dart's *History of the Church of Canterbury*, App. p. xlii.

gems, with the wood of our Lord in the middle, and relics of St. Thomas the Martyr, part of a finger of St. Andrew, a bone of St. Stephen, and some of the body of St. Wulstan." This wooden lectern cannot be a bookstand on the altar, as until recent times the missal was placed on a cushion.

"In a little silver gilt cup is contained the pallium of St. Thomas the Martyr." This pallium the engraving of the Saint's seal has shown us<sup>24</sup> was covered with embroidery, which is very unusual; for generally the pallium is of pure white wool, with black crosses. Erasmus says: "A pall was shown, which, though wholly of silk, was of a coarse texture, and unadorned with gold or jewels." If Erasmus is speaking of the pallium, he can only mean that it was embroidered in silk.

"In a great round ivory coffer, oblong at its head, with a lock<sup>25</sup> of copper—The white mitre with an orfrey of St. Thomas the Martyr, in which he was buried; another white mitre of the same, which he used on simple feasts; gloves of the same, adorned with three orfreys; shoes of the same, of Inde, embroidered with gold roses, besants and crescents, with stockings<sup>26</sup> of black samit [silk], embroidered; his hair-shirt; part of his bed and girdle.

<sup>24</sup> *Supra*, p. 88.

<sup>25</sup> *Serura* (MS.), which Mr. Nichols translates "rimmed with copper."

<sup>26</sup> *Subtalaribus* (MS.), which Mr. Nichols translates "strings." *Subtalares* and *sotulares* (*sub talis*, under the ankles) usually mean shoes, but here they are in conjunction with *sandalia*.

“In the same coffer, folded up in a white diapered<sup>27</sup> cloth—Some of the dust of the body of Blessed Thomas the Martyr; part of his cappa and his other clothing; part of his coverlet; of his cowl; of the fastening of his hair-shirt; some of his flesh and blood dried up; part of his girdle, and of his pillow; some of his hair.

“In the same coffer, folded up in another cloth, of silk—Part of the chasuble of St. Thomas; part of his dalmatic; of his tunic; of his monastic woollen shirt; of his cope; some cloth dipped in his blood; part of his cowl, and of his cap; his discipline made of thongs.”

Most of the relics here mentioned must have been buried with the Saint—of the white mitre it is expressly said—and disinterred at his translation just a century before this list of relics was made. At that time, among the chasubles in the sacristy, one is noted as “St. Thomas’s red chasuble, with gold crescents and stars;” among the amices, “St. Thomas’s amice adorned with gems;” and among the croziers, “the pastoral staff of St. Thomas, of pear wood, with the head of black horn.” Some time during the next two hundred years this simple crozier was covered with silver, and probably it was shortened by portions being given away as relics. Erasmus mentions it thus: “After this we were led into the sacristy. What a display was there of silken vestments, what an array of golden candlesticks! There we saw the pastoral staff of St. Thomas.

<sup>27</sup> *Diasperato* (MS.), “from O.F. diaspre, later diapre, a jasper, a stone much used for ornamental jewellery” (Skeat).

It appeared to be a cane covered with silver plate; it was of very little weight, and no workmanship, nor stood higher than to the waist." The saint's seal, to which attention has already been drawn, shows that the pastoral staff there depicted was not originally as short as it is described by Erasmus. The extreme simplicity of the crozier used by St. Thomas is remarkable. His Archiepiscopal Cross does not seem to have been preserved.

We have lingered with affectionate interest among the memorials and relics of our Saint, as a Catholic might linger in the aisles of the old Cathedral Church of Canterbury, itself our best relic of him. The footprints left in the hard stone by the multitudes who once thronged that Church vividly recall the past, and fill our minds with memories of the days that were so like and so unlike our own. They were like to our times, because the strife between the Church and the world ever continues, but the aspect of the strife differs widely. The battle is always substantially the same. The world is, and ever will be, the Church's foe, and however the appearance of the battle may change, the Church always needs the loyal devotion and self-sacrifice of her sons. In her contest of every age she looks for generous souls, to whom the will of God shall be dearer than wealth, dearer than position and influence and power, dearer than home and country, dearer than family and friends, dearer than life itself. Such a one, and a prince among

such, was St. Thomas of Canterbury. The Church's battles are not fought and won, as the world supposes. In them the wounded and the slain are the conquerors, and to die is to live. The Prince of Peace Himself has said, "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> St. Matt. x. 34, 39.

NOTES.





NOTE A (page 5).

THE SARACEN PRINCESS.

Writers so various as Godwin, Cave, Thierry and Sharon Turner, Froude and Giles, the author of the Cologne Life of 1639, Cola, Beaulieu, and our own accurate Alban Butler, all admit the story of Gilbert's escape from a Saracen prison, and his marriage with a Saracen princess. Mr. Berington was the first to reject it.

About the time of the Translation of the relics of St. Thomas by Cardinal Langton, in 1220, a compilation was made from the several biographers, which has since gone by the name of the *Quadrilogue*. A large number of copies of this book exist, and, if one may say so, it has passed through several editions, as it has many different prefaces or prologues. The best-known *Quadrilogue* is that published by Christian Lupus, or Wolf, at Brussels in 1682. It had been previously printed at Paris in black letter, in 1495, under the title of "Vita et Processus S. Thomæ." This latter book is sometimes called the first *Quadrilogue*; though it has no claim to the distinction except in having been the first in print. It differs from the second *Quadrilogue* not only in the opening chapters, in which the story of the Saracen princess is related, but also by quotations from Fitzstephen and Grim, so that in its case, at least, the title of *Quadrilogue* is a misnomer. This greater fulness shows that it is the later compilation.

John of Brompton is generally quoted as the authority for this legend; but he has simply copied the first seven chapters of the first *Quadrilogue*, altering only the beginnings and endings of the chapters, and omitting the names of the various authors; and, when the history begins to be rather intricate, he refers his readers to the Life “quam iiii viri famosi scripserunt” (Ed. Twysden, pp. 1051, 1058).

John Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (from 18th October 1327, until his death, 15th July 1369), informed his old Professor of Divinity at Paris (Doctor James Fournier), who was elected Pope on 20th December 1334, and crowned by the name of Benedict XII. on the following 8th January, in his complimentary letter on his promotion, that he himself had compiled a Life of St. Thomas the Martyr, which he intended to submit to his Holiness. “Vitam beati Thomæ Martyris, ex multis scriptoribus per me noviter redactam, Sanctitatis vestræ oculis destino intuendam” (Registr. Grandissoni, vol. i. fol. 40). The book has not been printed, but copies exist in the British Museum, the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in the Students’ Library of the English College, Rome, and in the Vatican (Chr. 623). This compilation also contains the story of the Saracen princess, written rather more concisely than the first *Quadrilogue*.

The anonymous author of the Lambeth MS. (*Materials*, iv. p. 81) says, “Habuit uxorem nomine Roesam,<sup>1</sup> natione Cadomensem, genere burgensium non disparem:” giving a Christian name and nationality to St. Thomas’s mother different from any other writer, but agreeing with all the biographers in the rank of life assigned to her. St. Thomas himself says, “Non sum revera atavis editus regi-

<sup>1</sup> It will have been noticed that St. Thomas had a sister named Rohesia (*Supra*, p. 445).

bus" (*Materials*, v. p. 499); and again, "Quod si ad generis mei radicem et progenitores meos intenderis, cives quidem fuerunt Londonienses, in medio concivium suorum habitantes sine querela, nec omnino infimi" (*Ibid.* p. 515). At least Garnier, who took such pains with his "bons romanz," would have introduced a tale so well adapted to his "rime en cinc clauses cuplez," if he had but heard of it. He thus disposes of the parentage of our Saint :

Saint Thomas l'arceueske, dunt precher m'oez,  
 en Lundres la cité fu pur ueir engendrez,  
 des barons de la cit estraiz e aleuez.  
 e Gilebert Beket fu sis pere apelez,  
 e sa mere Mahalt. de neite gent fu nez.

(fol. \*4, l. 21.)

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NOTE B (page 19).

THE SAXON SCHOOL IN ROME.

"The Cardinal-Deacon Peter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.—We believe that your lordship is aware that the Church of Blessed Mary of the Saxons (*quæ Sassonorum dicitur*) in Rome is appointed by the considerate provision of the Roman Pontiffs for the reception of the English who visit the threshold of the Apostles, that they may here find and receive consolation and charitable assistance after their various labours, as in a house of their own. Through our sins, it has come to such poverty, that but a few clerics and hardly any lay person can be found to serve the church and attend upon the pilgrims. Our Holy Father, Pope Alexander, out of compassion for its poverty and misery, has given in its favour exhortatory letters for England, which you will see. Since we know how ready and willing your goodness is in everything relating to piety and

religion, we much trust in your brotherliness, and we pray you in the Lord to receive kindly the bearer of these presents, Nicholas, a canon of the aforesaid church, and, according to the tenor of the letters of our lord the Pope, to vouchsafe at our prayer to grant him your letters for reverence of the Mother of God. Farewell in the Lord" (*Materials*, v. p. 64.)

This is the latest notice of the church of the Saxon school with which the writer is acquainted. The Bull of Innocent III., which erected the hospital of S. Spirito, gives to that new foundation "the Church of Blessed Mary in Sassia, *formerly* attached to the Saxon school;" and in the hall of the hospital is an inscription commemorating the good deeds of that Pope, amongst which is recorded, *Angeli monitu, expositis infantibus excipiendis educandisque, hospitium in veteri Saxonum schola designat.*

Ven. Bede (*Hist. Eccl.* v. 8) relates, that in 727, Ina, King of the West Saxons, visited Rome in the pontificate of Gregory II., and that at that time many English of all ranks and states of life were accustomed to perform the same pilgrimage. Matthew of Westminster (ad ann. 727, ed. Francof. 1601, p. 135) adds, that he founded in Rome "the English school, to which the kings and royal family of England, with the bishops, priests, and clerics, might come to be instructed in doctrine and the Catholic faith. And near this house he built a church in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in which the English might say Mass, and where they might be buried, if they happened to die in Rome. For the support of this foundation, he enacted that the penny called Romescot should be paid from every family to Blessed Peter and the Church of Rome."

Matthew Paris (Ed. 1644, p. 19) tells us, that Offa II., King of the Mercians, in 794, in thanks-

giving for the canonization of St. Alban by Pope Adrian, extended the contribution of Peter's pence in behalf of the English school, *quæ tunc Romæ floruit*, to his province. According to Anastasius Bibliothecarius, this school and church were burnt down in 817, and Pope Paschal I. rebuilt them; and they were again destroyed by fire in the conflagration of the Borgo, that the pencil of Raffæelle has rendered so famous; after which they were rebuilt from the foundations by Pope St. Leo IV. One of the gates of the Leonine city, from which Leo IV. gave his blessing to the burning suburb, was called, from the neighbourhood of the school, "the Saxon postern," *Saxonum posterula*; and the same writer assures us that the name of the "Borgo" was derived from our countrymen: *Per quorundam gentis Anglorum desidiã omnis Anglorum habitatio, quæ in eorum lingua Burgus dicitur, flamma ignis combusta est.*

Passing over the visits of several Saxon kings to Rome, by which new privileges were conferred upon the national establishment, we find the following interesting mention of it in the letter of Pope Alexander II. to William the Conqueror, in 1068 (Baron. ad ann.): *Nam ut bene nosti, donec Angli fideles erant, piæ devotionis respectu ad cognitionem religionis annuam pensionem Apostolicæ Sedi exhibebant, ex qua pars Romano Pontifici, pars Ecclesiæ S. Mariæ quæ vocatur Schola Anglorum in usum fratrum deferebatur.*

## NOTE C (page 43).

GILBERT FOLIOT'S PAMPHLET.

Lord Campbell, in his *Lives of the Chancellors* (i. p. 68) says, "The Chancellor overruled their scruples, and compelled them to pay up their arrears" of the tax substituted for personal service. "Upon this, the heads of the Church uttered the most violent invectives against him. Foliot, Bishop of London, publicly accused him of plunging a sword into the bosom of his mother, the Church; and Archbishop Theobald, his former patron, threatened to excommunicate him. Becket still showed an entire indifference to ecclesiastical censures, and established Henry's right to personal service and scutage for all the lands held by the Church." Then follows an exaggerated account of the Battle Abbey controversy. Archbishop Theobald's sole threat of censures the reader will find mentioned in the text, a sportive threat that if the Chancellor did not return to England, he would lay him under anathema, and confiscate all the revenue he derived from Canterbury; and Foliot (who was not Bishop of London until St. Thomas ceased to be Chancellor), if he wrote the letter which contains the passage Lord Campbell refers to, did so long afterwards, when St. Thomas was in exile for opposing the King. This is not the only instance in which Lord Campbell has made a most unjustifiable use of this letter. Any one reading this passage would conclude that the violent invectives were uttered by "the heads of the Church" at the time; whereas it is years afterwards, when every conceivable accusation was heaped together against St. Thomas, that they are met for

the first time, and then only in a doubtful letter of a single Bishop.

The letter in question evidently never reached St. Thomas's hands, or he would have answered it, as he did all the others. It is a very specious *ex parte* pamphlet, and so unscrupulous, that Mr. Berington (*Henry II.* p. 657) considers that it is unjustly attributed to Gilbert Foliot. "Who in the world is so stupid," it says, "as not to know that you bought the dignity of Chancellor for several thousand marks? . . . Our father Theobald died; and you, who had ever been on the watch for this event, immediately returned from Normandy to England." Theobald died on the 18th of April, 1161, and the election was in May, 1162. "When we saw that the Church of God was overpowered, we spoke out in defence of her liberty; we had straightway a sentence of proscription passed against us, and we were cruelly doomed to exile; and not our own person merely, but our father's house and all our relations and connections." In answer to an assertion made by Gilbert in another letter (*Materials*, v. p. 412) of the opposition made to the election, John of Salisbury wrote (*Ibid.* v. p. 161; Froude, p. 591): "I do not mind the lies which he has dared to insert concerning your election, for I was present, and both heard and saw. He alone was not pleased when you were elected; for, above every one else, as then appeared and still appears, he aspired to be placed in your see. Yet he did not dare to speak against it for long, while the others found fault with his ambition and insolence. Whatever, therefore, might be his inmost thoughts, of which God is the judge, he was amongst the first who voted for you; and when your election was made, he applauded it, almost more than they all."

Mr. Berington (*Henry II.* p. 663) considers that Foliot, if he was the writer of the pamphlet, has confused together the Councils of Clarendon and Northampton, attributing to the former the violence of the latter; but there was quite violence enough at Clarendon to justify so far the account given by him. The most singular part of the letter is the tone in which it speaks of the King's proceedings. It condemns St. Thomas, not for resisting them, but for not resisting them sufficiently. Not merely does it blame him for being the cause of the submission of all the Bishops at Clarendon, but it attacks him for giving up the immunity of the clergy by giving sureties at Northampton for the payment of the fines. As might be imagined, the letter is not consistent, and at once brings every accusation, even though one answers the other. Lord Campbell has chosen to attribute to St. Thomas the exclamation at Clarendon: "It is my master's pleasure that I should forswear myself, which I resolve to do, and to repent afterwards as I may" (*Chancellors*, i. p. 75). Surely he should have told his readers, that his sole authority for his assertion was this production of a bitter enemy, and that even of this, doubts of the genuineness have been entertained. It is certainly not contained in Alan's collection of the correspondence, nor in the Vatican MS. from which Wolf's edition of Alan's collection was taken, though, singularly enough, it is twice named in the index of that MS.; but it is given by Dr. Giles from two MSS., both in the Bodleian (Douce, 287, part 2, n. 18, and Cave, 249, n. 447). Canon Robertson, in the fifth volume of the *Materials*, p. 521, gives the further authority for it of the Cottonian, Claud. B. II. in the British Museum.

It is greatly to be regretted that Canon Robertson, who has generally been quick to correct Lord Camp-



bell's unfairnesses, should, in his *Becket, a Biography*, which was published in 1859, have put the same exclamation into the mouth of the saint that Lord Campbell had adopted: and, to make the matter worse, he has subjoined this note. "Dr. Lingard attempts to throw discredit on this statement [that St. Thomas confessed himself to be guilty of wilful perjury] on account of the source from which it comes—the letter or pamphlet of Foliot. But even if that letter were a forgery, the accounts of the biographers bear it out in all essential points as to the occurrences at Clarendon, except that the letter named Jocelin of Salisbury as having stood firm with the other bishops, whom it accuses Becket of deserting" (p. 101, note b). This can be met only by repeating that Foliot's letter is the *sole* authority for this speech. Canon Robertson gives in his text these words. "At length the Archbishop was moved, he withdrew for a short time for consideration, and on returning said to his brethren, 'It is the Lord's will that I should forswear myself; for the present I submit, and incur the guilt of perjury, to repent hereafter as I may.'" These words he has not found, nor anything like them, in *any one* of the biographers.

In order to complete all that need be said of Lord Campbell's blunders, it may be well to add here a letter by John of Salisbury to St. Thomas with Lord Campbell's comment on it.

This letter (*Materials*, v. p. 161) begins with an account of the dispositions in which John of Salisbury found King Louis, which were not encouraging. It then proceeds thus: "Wherefore my counsel and the height of my wishes is, that you should turn to the Lord with all your mind, and to the help of prayer. Put off meanwhile, as much as you can, all other occupations; for though they may seem very necessary, what I now recommend is to be preferred

as more necessary. Laws and canons are very good ; but, believe me, there is no need of them now, for they rather promote curiosity than devotion. Do you not remember how it is written, that in the trouble of the people the priests and ministers of the Lord shall weep between the porch and the altar, saying, ‘ Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people ? ’ ‘ I was exercised,’ says the Prophet, ‘ and I swept my spirit, searching with my hands for God, in the day of tribulation.’ Who ever rose with a feeling of compunction from the study of law or the canons ? I say more than this : the exercises of the schools sometimes increase knowledge till a man is puffed up, but seldom, if ever, inflame devotion. I would rather that you meditated on the Psalms, or read the moral books of St. Gregory, than that you philosophized in scholastic fashion. It is good to confer on moral matters with some spiritual man, by whose example you may be inflamed, rather than to study and discuss the disputatious articles of secular learning. God knows in what sense, with what devotion I propose these things. *Take them as you please.* But if you do them, God will be your helper, that you need not fear what man may scheme. He knows that we have no mortal to trust to, as I think, in our present trouble. But I have heard that the King of France has spoken to the Pope for you, and has thanked the monks of Pontigny.” He then refers to a rumour he had heard of earthquakes at Canterbury, London, and Winchester ; mentions how some English Bishops were taking advantage of the Archbishop’s absence to usurp some of his peculiars in their dioceses ; and he concludes with an offer of the Bishop of Chalons to give a refuge to one of the Saint’s clerics, who “ must behave himself modestly, like the people of this country.”

Lord Campbell refers to this letter in the fol.

lowing wonderful note (*Chancellors*, i. p. 79, note *q*): "John of Salisbury wrote him a private letter in a still severer strain, concluding with the words, 'Take it as you please'—'Vos accipiatis ut placet;' and was excommunicated for his pains." His lordship has confused the faithful John of Salisbury, who wrote the letter, with the notorious John of Oxford, Archdeacon of Salisbury, who *was* excommunicated—though not, certainly, for writing a letter like this.

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## NOTE D (page 47).

## BATTLE ABBEY.

Though the story of the lawsuit between the Bishop of Chichester and the Abbot of Battle is far too long for insertion in the text, it is but right, as St. Thomas was so much concerned in it through his official position as Chancellor, that we should put it in our readers' power to acquaint themselves with its details. For this purpose we have recourse to the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, excellently edited for the *Anglia Christiana Society* in 1846, and translated into English by Mr. Lower in 1851. The *Chronicle* embraces 110 years from the foundation of the abbey, that is, from 1066 to 1176.

The Abbey of Battle was founded in honour of St. Martin, by King William the Conqueror, on the spot where the Battle of Hastings was fought, in suffrage for the souls of those who died there, and in thanksgiving for the victory there gained. Its royal founder conferred upon it many privileges, especially of exemptions from burdens, and amongst other grants in the act of its foundation occur the words:

“Let it be free and quit for ever from all subjection to bishops, and from the rule of all persons whatever, as is Christ Church at Canterbury.”

Hilary had not long succeeded to Seffrid in the See of Chichester, when he began to try to extend his jurisdiction over the exempt Abbey of St. Martin at Battle. His claims were that the Abbot should be blessed in the Church of Chichester, having first made his profession of canonical obedience to it; next, that the Abbot was bound to attend the Diocesan Synod; and further, that the Bishop had the right of lodging in the Abbey and its manors, by which latter claim he hoped in time to subject it altogether to himself. The Abbot, on his side, with all patience and humility, pleaded the exemption in the Act of Foundation, which bore the signatures of Lanfranc the Primate, and Stigand, the Bishop of Chichester. The Bishop, however, hoped to be successful through the favour of Pope Eugenius and of Archbishop Theobald.

In the time of King Stephen, the Bishop began the strife by summoning the Abbot to his Synod, and on his non-appearance he punished him with suspension, unless he should make satisfaction within forty days. When this came to the Abbot's ears, he immediately complained to the King, whose Court was at St. Albans, who sent Robert de Corneville, one of his clerics, to the Bishop, warning him to leave the Abbey as free as the chapel royal itself. The contending parties were cited to appear before the King in London, in the presence of the Bishops and Barons, but on the appointed day the Bishop was not present. The charters and grants were produced and read, and in the Bishop's absence the King decreed the exemption of the Abbey.

Thus matters remained during the life of King Stephen. Immediately on the King's death, which

occurred October 28, 1154, Hilary summoned the Abbot to his Synod once more, and on his non-appearance he excommunicated him in solemn council. One of the Brothers of the Temple hastened with the news to London, where, by Archbishop Theobald's advice, the Abbot was waiting for the new King's arrival, with his brother Richard de Luci, a nobleman whose name often appears in the history of St. Thomas. On this Theobald sent a message to the Bishop by Salamon, one of his clerics, to the effect that the Abbot was absent at his bidding, and that the Bishop should withdraw the sentence until they could meet. This Hilary accordingly did.

In 1155, the first year of King Henry's reign, in the Council which was held in London, in Lent, some Bishops and Abbots brought forward their charters to have them confirmed by the King; and amongst the others was the Abbot of Battle. The Bishop of Chichester hastened to Archbishop Theobald, and warning him that the liberties and dignities of Canterbury and Chichester were in danger, requested him to interfere. The King, "yielding to the wishes of so eminent a personage, by whom he had so recently been invested with his sovereignty," ordered the Chancellor not to put the Great Seal to the charter of Battle Abbey. The day following the Abbot went to Court, but as the King was going out to hunt, he returned to his dwelling-house at Battlebridge, in Southwark. On the third day he went to Westminster, where he found the King before the altar, about to hear Mass. After the Introit, he went up to the King, and said: "My lord, your Excellency ordered that the charter of our Church was to be confirmed with the royal seal: why it is now refused, I do not know: let your clemency command that the royal word be kept, and

not overthrown by any one's envy." The Chancellor<sup>2</sup> was then summoned, and the King ordered him to place the seal to the charter; but while he was yet speaking, the Bishop, guessing what was going forward, hurried up, and said: "My lord, your clemency must remember that the day before yesterday the venerable Archbishop of Canterbury and myself laid a complaint before you of the Abbot of Battle, who is seeking for charters against the dignities of our Churches, so that if his subtlety prevails, they will lament the loss of those rights which they have canonically possessed hitherto. Let your royal dignity therefore prohibit its having any confirmation, lest through his example others should rise against their Bishops." The King, however, ordered the charter to be sealed, and bade the Bishop and Abbot, together with the Chancellor, to appear before the Archbishop, when, if the matter could not be arranged, the charter was to be left in the chapel royal in the keeping of the Chancellor, until the King's pleasure should be known. When the Mass had been sung as far as the *Pax Domini*, the Bishop took the *Pax* as usual to the King, and afterwards, to the astonishment of many, to the Abbot also.

The Chancellor accordingly accompanied the Bishop and the Abbot to the Archbishop at Lambeth, before whom the charter of King William the Conqueror was read. At the clause declaring the Abbey to be as free from all jurisdiction of Bishops as Christ Church, Canterbury, there was a great outcry, some declaring it to be against the canons, others against the dignities of Canterbury, while others said that the words were "frivolous." Hilary

<sup>2</sup> We thus learn from the Chronicle that St. Thomas was appointed to the chancellorship within the first few months of Henry's reign.

not finding the names of any of his predecessors to attest the grant, and holding the clause to be uncanonical, declared that it ought to be erased by the authority of the judges there present. The Archbishop was of the same opinion. Although the opposition of the Abbot was but reasonable, they would not rest quiet. When the Chancellor perceived the difference of opinion amongst them, he carried off the Abbot's charter to the chapel royal. The Abbot returned home, and the Bishop rejoiced as if he had won the day.

The Abbot, however, took the opportunity of a Parliament which was held in the summer of the same year, in order to receive the submission of a noble rebel, called Hugh de Mortimer, to renew his petition for his charter, and owing to the interest of Reginald, Earl of Cornwall, and Richard de Humet, "the King's Tribune," who were members of his council, and friends of Richard de Luci and of his brother the Abbot Walter, the petition was successful.

[<sup>3</sup> The Abbot took leave of the King with thanks, retired from the Court with his charter, and in due time arrived at Battle, to the great joy of the brethren.

In the following Lent the Bishop renewed hostilities by summoning the Abbot to Chichester, and there, in the Chapter-house, on Mid-Lent Sunday, a long debate ensued between the Dean on the one side and the Abbot on the other; the text being a mandate from Adrian IV., the English Pope then reigning, to the Abbot to give due obedience to Hilary "to whom he had made profession thereof." The Dean demanded a written and sealed profession of obedience: the Abbot asked for a respite that he

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of these brackets will be subsequently explained.

might visit and consult the King, "whose chapel royal and a pledge of whose royal crown Battle Abbey is acknowledged to be." By quiet pertinacity, the Abbot carried his point; and, "having made his prayers before the altar of the Holy Trinity there, and fortified himself with the sign of the holy Cross, he returned home with his friends."

King Henry had celebrated the anniversary of his accession at Westminster, and at the beginning of 1156, he passed over to Normandy. It was Easter 1157 before he returned to England, and, for the last six months Hilary, the Bishop of Chichester, had been in attendance on the King's Court. On the complaint of the Abbot, made through his powerful brother Richard de Luci, the King commanded the Bishop "that he should permit the Abbot of Battle, as his own chaplain, to rest in peace from all complaints, till he should return to England."

After landing at Southampton, Henry proceeded to Ongar in Essex, which belonged to Richard de Luci, and when the Abbot came to meet him there, the King summoned him "to attend on the coming Whit Sunday at St. Edmund's (where he was then to be ensigned with the royal crown)," when, he promised him, the cause between him and the Bishop should be tried. The Abbot awaited the appointed day at his manor of Hou, not far from Ongar.]

In the year 1157, the King was solemnly crowned anew in the third year of his reign at Bury St. Edmund's, in the presence of the prelates, nobles, and a multitude of people, on the feast of Pentecost, which fell that year upon St. Dunstan's day (May 19).<sup>4</sup> Hilary, Bishop of Chichester, and Walter, Abbot of Battle, were present, having been summoned, that their long dispute might be brought

<sup>4</sup> This coronation, Mr. Brewer tells us, is unmentioned by any other writer.



to a conclusion. The cause was adjourned for a few days to be heard at Colchester, where the parties arrived on Thursday in Whitsun week. On the Friday, the Abbot, with Richard de Luci, went to the King, who bade them wait in the Chapter-house of the monks for him. When the King had heard Mass, [he entered the Chapter-house, strictly ordering that no one but those whom he should summon by name should follow. He then called Thomas the Chancellor, Robert Earl of Leicester, Richard de Humet the Tribune, Richard de Luci, Warine Fitzgerald, and Nicholas de Sigillo. There was also present a certain physician named Ralph; and likewise Henry of Essex, the King's Tribune, who had been previously sent to the Chapter-house to the Abbot by the King. In addition to these, William, the King's younger brother came, and took his seat with the rest, near the King.

All having taken their places, and the Abbot sitting by with three of his monks, Richard de Luci opened the proceedings: stating that the Abbot was prepared to produce his charters. This the King directed should be done, and] Thomas the Chancellor read the charter of the great King William before them. [The King thereupon took the charter into his own hands, and having closely examined it, deigned to commend it in high terms, blessing the soul of that noble King, who had regarded the Abbey he had erected with so strong affection as to bestow upon it such great liberties and dignities.] The Chancellor next read another charter of King William upon the personal affairs of the Abbot, and [this, in the same manner, the King took and examined, and commanded to be put up with the rest, and carefully kept. He also declared that if ever he himself, under Divine inspiration, should found an Abbey, he would prescribe for it similar liberties and

dignities to those of Battle Abbey. He also examined] the charters of the other Kings, namely, those of King William the younger, and of King Henry [and at the same time, the charter confirmed by his own seal, and commanded that they should be carefully preserved. Then] the Chancellor looking to the Abbot, said, "My Lord Abbot, the Bishop of Chichester has, what seems to many, a strong argument against you, when he says that you made your profession in the Church at Chichester." The Abbot protested that he had done nothing against the dignity and liberty of his Church. The King, looking towards the Chancellor, said, "Profession is not against the dignities of Churches; for they who make profession promise only what they owe." Richard de Luci, hearing this, again spoke:

My lord, your Highness has heard the privileges granted by the noble King William to his Abbey, which he styled *Battle*, because God had there given him victory over his enemies, and which that Abbey—which is your own royal chapel, and the pledge of your royal crown—has preserved inviolate until now. Wherefore I avow that that Abbey ought to be held in high account by you and by all of us Normans, inasmuch as at that place the most noble King William, by God's grace, and the aid of our ancestors, acquired that whereby you, my lord King, at this time hold the crown of England by hereditary right, and whereby we have all been enriched with great wealth. We therefore pray your clemency to protect with the right hand of your authority that Abbey, with its dignities and liberties, in order that it, with all its possessions, may remain as free as it has ever been known to be in the times of your ancestors. But if this please you not, I humbly beg that you will remove my brother the Abbot from his place, that the Abbey may not mourn the loss, in his time, of the liberties which it had preserved inviolate in that of his predecessors.

And Robert, Earl of Leicester [and others, cried out that the King would take equal care to preserve this Abbey as he would his crown, or the acquisitions of their ancestors] and the King declared that he

never could bring his mind to permit the Church in question to lose its dignities and liberties in his time, and that he would speak to the Bishop, and arrange all the matter peaceably.

On the Tuesday after the Octave of Pentecost (May 28), the King entered the monks' chapter-house in the company of the two Archbishops, Theobald of Canterbury, and Roger of York, the Bishops Richard of London, Robert of Exeter, and Robert of Lincoln, Silvester, Abbot of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and Geoffrey, Abbot of Holme, Thomas the King's Chancellor, Robert Earl of Leicester, and Patrick Earl of Salisbury, and amongst the Barons, Henry of Essex, Reginald de Warenne, Richard de Luci, and Warine FitzGerald, together with a great number of commoners. Hilary and Walter were also present. When a dispute between Archbishop Theobald and Abbot Silvester, of much the same character, had been decided, Richard de Luci rose and made a speech to the King in his brother's behalf, in much the same words as before.

[The Abbot then expressed himself as ready to answer all objections that might be alleged against the privileges of Battle, "which is your own free chapel, and the pledge of your crown;" but he prayed that the charter of the Conqueror, granted at the foundation of the Abbey, might be first read.] When this had been done by one of the clerics present, Thomas, the King's Chancellor, said to the Bishop of Chichester :

My lord Bishop, your charity has heard what has been here done before our lord the King, in the hearing of all present. And now if it pleases your prudence to make answer against these things, it is lawful for you to do so : for to you, as it seems to us, this parable appertaineth.

The Bishop then rose, and thus began :

With no desire of wandering, as many have, but from our love and honour towards you, my lord the King, and

knowing nought of this opposition, have we come with others here present into these parts of the kingdom. Wherefore if it should please you and the Abbot and the others who are before you that a peaceful arrangement should be made by your mediation, between myself and the Abbot, saving the right of our Church of Chichester, it might be done. For, therefore, am I come hither.

But when some refused a compromise, saying that the matter had been so long pending, that it ought to be definitely settled, the Bishop, in a loud voice, amidst a strict silence, resumed :

Since you have rendered a peaceful compromise impossible, I will expound before the King and all here assembled the rights of the Church of Chichester, and the previous state of the question.

Jesus Christ, my lord King (and then repeating himself) our Lord Jesus (and saying the same a third time) hear all of you and understand, Jesus Christ our Lord appointed two mansions and two powers in the constitution of this world, the one spiritual and the other temporal. The spiritual is that of which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to our first Pastor, Peter the Apostle, and his successors, saying, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." So your charity knows that from the earliest times the custom has prevailed in the Church of God, that the Pastors of the Church being the Vicars of the same Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, shall preside in due rule over Holy Church. Hence in those blessed Apostles to us who preside over the Church of God, was it said by our Lord Jesus Christ, *He who hears you, hears Me.* So also the Roman Church, adorned with the Apostolate of the same Prince of the Apostles, hath held through the breadth of all the world so great and magnificent a princely dignity that no Bishop and no ecclesiastical person can, without its judgment and permission, be deposed.

To this the King said, holding out his hands :

It is most true that a Bishop cannot be deposed, but he can be driven out by hands held thus.

Everybody laughed, and the Bishop went on again :

What I said before, I now repeat. The Roman Law proves that this state of the Church has been so appointed

from ancient times, and that no lay person, not even a King, can give to Churches ecclesiastical dignities or liberties, or confirm the same, except by the permission of the same Father.

Then the King got angry, and said :

Dost thou think with thy subtle cunning to strive *for the Pope's authority which was given him by man*, against the authority of royal dignity which was given me by God? I bid thee by thy fealty and oath of allegiance to submit to right reason thy presumptuous words, which are contrary to my crown and royal dignity. I beseech the Archbishops and Bishops who are present, saving the right of my royal crown given me by the Supreme Majesty, to do me right justice on thee; for thou actest, it is plain, against my royal dignities, and thou art working to take away from the King's majesty the liberties of old rightfully granted to me.

A murmur arose amongst the people against the Bishop, which could hardly be suppressed. Then the Chancellor :

[It is not worthy that it should] have dropped from the memory of your heart, venerated Bishop [whose excellency].....for you.....against our lord the King, to whom, beyond doubt, [you made] the oath of allegiance. Wherefore your prudence must provide.

The Bishop, seeing that the King was offended, and that all were against him, as soon as the murmur was quieted, continued his speech thus :

My lord, if anything has been uttered by my mouth offensive to your royal majesty, I call the Lord of Heaven and your royal dignity to witness, that I have not said, with studied cunning, anything against you or the excellence of your dignity. For I have by all means had the highest regard for your paternity, extolled your excellency, magnified your dignity, and ever loved you with the most hearty affection as my dearest lord. May your Royal Highness then, I pray, suspect no evil in me, nor easily believe any one who suggests it. I wish to diminish nothing of your power, which I have always loved and magnified with all my might. All that I have said has been to the honour and glory of your Highness.

To this the King answered :

Far be such honour and glory from us and ours, and away with all by which, as all can see, you try in your soft and deceitful speech to annul what has been granted to me, by the help of God's grace, by the authority of the Kings, my predecessors, and by hereditary right.

Then said the Bishop :

All things, my lord, which in your hearing have been pronounced by me, by your leave, and that of all here present, I now bring to an end. And since my preface does not please, omitting these things, we will despatch the business in a few words.

Hitherto we have given our account of this controversy, almost in the words of the chronicler. It has been of importance to give our report in full up to this point, but it will not be necessary to do more than give a summary of the conclusion of the discussion, which runs to a length worthy of a modern Chancery suit.

Hilary's speech stated that the Abbot had been present at his consecration and installation, that he had attended at a Synod, and had received him as his Diocesan at a Visitation. Henry of Essex interrupted him with, "And now you repay evil for the good services he showed you!" The Bishop resumed with an account of how the controversy had arisen by the Abbot's refusal to attend a subsequent Synod, and that when the see of London had fallen vacant, the Abbot thought that he had interfered to prevent his advancement. Henry of Essex and Richard de Luci both protested that the Abbot's desire for the bishopric had been in no way unworthy or simoniacal. The Bishop continued his statement of the case by recounting how he had been summoned before King Stephen on this question, but that the Abbot had not appeared, and how, finally, at the expiration of the year, he had excommunicated the

Abbot for his contumacy. This sentence he had relaxed at the Archbishop's request. "If so," said Henry of Essex, "you did that after King Stephen's death which you would not have done in his lifetime. What the King is now about to do belongs to *his* prerogative." The Bishop concluded his speech by referring to all that had happened since the King's accession, complaining in every respect of the Abbot's conduct, and praying the King "to order the ancient and rightful institutions of the canons to be confirmed between us in all things, and to decide these matters in accordance with the customs of the Church."

To this the King replied, "We have heard a statement which has much surprised us, that you, my lord Bishop, esteem as frivolous, the charters of the Kings, my predecessors, confirmed by the lawful authority of the Crown of England, with eminent men as witnesses." This word "frivolous"—*peremptorias*<sup>5</sup>—was used when the matter was argued before the Archbishop at Lambeth, and St. Thomas seems to have reported it to the King.

The Abbot then handed in King William's charter, and pointed out that it was confirmed by the attestation of Archbishop Lanfranc and of Stigand, then Bishop of Chichester. In it, it was specified that the Abbot should not be bound to attend the Synod, though he might do so voluntarily. The Bishop said that he had never seen this charter, and on the Abbot commencing a reply, the King interrupted him: "From henceforth it is not for your prudence to make good your claim; but it becomes *me* to defend it, as my own royal prerogative." After much

<sup>5</sup> In giving this singular meaning to the word, Mr. Lower (pp. 83, 111) is borne out by a passage given by Ducange from the Statutes of Liège of 1287. *Cum iudex viderit aliquam partium per exceptiones frivolas, dilatorias et peremptorias litem protrahere.*

further talking, at the suggestion of Richard de Luci, and with the King's permission, the Abbot retired to another part of the chapter-house to consult with his friends, who are enumerated, and prove to be nearly all the influential persons present: Roger Archbishop of York, Thomas the King's Chancellor, John Treasurer of York, Robert Earl of Leicester, Patrick Earl of Salisbury, Henry of Essex, Reginald de Warenne, Warine FitzGerald, and some other barons, and a considerable number of knights. The King, in the meantime, went into the church to hear Mass, and this being over, returned to his seat, and Thomas, the Chancellor, was called upon to deliver judgment—as, from its effect, we suppose we must style what certainly reads more like the speech of an advocate.

He began with a little sarcasm of the Abbot's thankfulness for the account the Bishop had given of the hospitality he had received at the Abbey. He admitted the fact of the Abbot's presence at the consecration, installation, and Synod, but he said it was from no ecclesiastical obligation, as the charter proved: it had been at the command of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Theobald hereupon acknowledged that he had given such a mandate. As to the sermon in the chapter-house at Battle, a Bishop from Ireland, or from Seville, might have done the same. In the matter of the see of London, the Bishop's conscience must have suggested suspicions that the Abbot never entertained. The Abbot averred that he attended before King Stephen in the King's chapel at the Tower of London, and that the Bishops of Winchester and Ely were present, and heard the King's confirmation of the charters. He could not have been excommunicated by the Bishop, the Chancellor argued, for when hearing Mass with the King at Westminster Abbey, he had given the



*Pax* to the Abbot after the King had received it. "For this, if I have done wrong," apologized Hilary, "I will confess my fault to the Archbishop, and do penance."

The Chancellor then spoke of letters of Pope Adrian IV., commanding the Abbot to attend at Chichester. The King, on hearing of this, demanded with evident signs of anger, whether the Bishop had procured them. The Bishop declared that he had not, and that they were sent by the Pope, who was our countryman, Nicholas Breakspeare—as the Abbot had defamed him in Rome, and thus had procured them against himself. The Archbishop, hearing this denial, made the sign of the Cross in token of astonishment. The Chancellor demanded whether there were any other letters that could affect the Abbey of Battle, and the Bishop solemnly affirmed that there were none.

Archbishop Theobald now addressed the King: "Will your Excellency command us to retire and determine these matters according to the legal method of ecclesiastical custom?" "Nay," said the King, "I will order you to determine them in my presence, and after due deliberation *I* will decide." So saying he arose and retired to the cemetery of the monks, the rest, except the Bishop and the Abbot, accompanying him. After some consultation, the King sent for the Bishop, and after much discussion, the King commanded Henry of Essex to bring in the Abbot and the monks. The Bishop then solemnly liberated and "quit-claimed" the Abbey of Battle, as a chapel royal, of all the rights he had hitherto maintained—that he had not, nor ought to have any authority over it—and that he absolved the Abbot as having been unjustly excommunicated by him, and finally, he declared him, from that day for ever, free from all episcopal exactions and customs.

“Is this done of your own free will, and not by compulsion?” demanded the King. The Bishop replied: “I have done this of my own accord, induced by considerations of justice.” After this, on Theobald’s proposal, the kiss of peace was given by the Bishop to the King, the Abbot, and Richard de Luci. And now, with the rejoicings of the Abbot, and the list of the witnesses to the final arrangement, the chronicler brings to a close his account of this memorable suit.

The reader will have seen, with the liveliest surprise, the speech put by the chronicler into the mouth of the angry King, to the effect that the Pope’s authority was of human origin, while his own royal power was Divine,—a phrase absolutely without parallel in the records of that age,—and he will ask whether the sentence is genuine, or at least on what evidence it rests. We now proceed to examine the MSS. of the Chronicle, and in so doing we will direct our attention to the speech of King Henry to which we have just referred, and to the short speech in which St. Thomas reminds Hilary of his oath of allegiance, the fragmentary state of which is most tantalizing.

The MS. from which Mr. Brewer has printed his edition of the Battle Abbey Chronicle is a beautiful parchment MS. of the latter part of the twelfth century, or, in other words, dating from the very time when its record closes. It is in the Cottonian Library in the British Museum—Domitian II. It is remarkable for two erasures—one in each of the two speeches we have now under consideration. In the King’s speech, the words attributing a Divine origin to his own authority are given, but not those which in the narrative above speak of the Pope’s power as human, and are given in italics. Consequently, in Mr. Brewer’s edition and in Mr. Lower’s

translation those words do not appear, and the former gentleman supposed that the gap had once been filled with some profane Norman oath, erased by some puritanical hand.

We were not quite without knowledge of this portion of the history of Battle Abbey, even before the whole of it was printed by the Anglia Christiana Society. Spelman, and after him, Wilkins,<sup>6</sup> had published long ago the greater part of this portion of the narrative; but singularly enough, the extract given by them has not been collated by Mr. Brewer, and seems to have been entirely overlooked by him. The manuscript from which Spelman printed is also in the Cottonian Library (Vitellius D. vii. fol. 152). It suffered much in the fire, but it is perfectly legible. It was written by Joscelyn, whom Hearne<sup>7</sup> calls "Archbishop Parker's Domestic Antiquary," and the true author of the lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury that appeared under Parker's name. That Spelman printed from it, is clearly seen by a comparison, the last sentence in Joscelyn being scored out, and printed by Spelman with the note *Sequentia tenui linea cancellantur*.

The twelfth century MS. is very much more full than Joscelyn, as the reader will at once see by observing what large portions of the narrative we have given between brackets. All these portions are omitted by Joscelyn, but in the King's speech is found the phrase given by us in italics, in the place of the erasure in the old MS. Joscelyn has underlined it, perhaps because it was marked for omission in the MS. he copied. The other gap exists exactly as *it once did* in the old MS., ending even with the same part of a word—*tis*.

<sup>6</sup> Spelman, *Concil. Orbis Britan.* (Lond. 1644), vol. ii. p. 53; Wilkins, *Conc. Magn. Britan.* (Lond. 1737), vol. i. p. 427.

<sup>7</sup> Rob. de Avesbury (Oxon, 1720), p. xxiii.

At first sight it would seem from this that the erasures in Domitian II. had been made at two different periods, the one before and the other after the transcript was taken, and that the copyist had omitted some of the speeches for the sake of shortness. This is, however, very improbable. The clause respecting the Pope's authority is not likely to have been erased since Parker's time; and as to the other gap, though Joscelyn has exactly the gap that Domitian II. once had, as we have said, even to the half word, it is not a copy of the present state of this speech. We believe that Joscelyn did not copy from Domitian II. at all: and that the erasures in the latter were made by the hand that wrote it. Of the latter point a careful examination of the MS. leaves us in little doubt.

The speech of St. Thomas, the appearance of which in the MS. has convinced us that the erasure is as old as the MS. itself, ran originally thus:

.....deme

re elaboras. Murmure itaq in poplo contra  
epm ccitato vix sedari potuit. Tunc cancell  
A cord vri excidisse memoria psul venande  
*a line erased*  
tis eni in dnm nrm regē, cui fidem sacramtū  
*erasure* Unde prudentie vre pvidendū

The scribe then erased the "A" in the third of these lines, and the "m" of "fidem" in the fifth; and he wrote partly in the margin and partly over the erasure of the fourth line, as well as over the erasure of the sixth, so that the MS. now stands thus:

.....deme

re elaboras. Murmure itaq in poplo contra  
epm ccitato vix sedari potuit. Tunc cancell  
Haut dignū e a cord vri excidisse memoria psul venande  
cui' excellentiā  
tis eni in dnm nrm regē. cui fidei sacramtū  
vos fecisse nulli dubiū e. Unde prudentie vre pvidendū

These amendments are in the same hand as the rest of the MS., but the colour of ink shows clearly where the writing is over an erasure. The word "excell-entiam" is half on the margin and half over the erasure.

From this examination we have come to the conclusion that the original which Joscelyn copied was not Domitian II., but a transcript taken from it, while it was in the state of transition which we have here first given, and before it received the partial amendments which we now find in the MS. The gap ending with the part of the word "*peccatis*" (if that was the word) renders it very difficult to doubt that it was from this MS. Joscelyn's original was derived: and the erasures in this speech having been made by the scribe himself render it exceedingly probable that the erasure in the King's speech was made by the same hand. This seems to us to prove that we have but one report, and that the reporter in these two instances doubted the accuracy of his narrative. We should certainly not place much confidence in the genuineness of a sentence in a judgment, if the shorthand writer himself were to erase it from his notes. In all probability the italicized words in the speech of Henry II. once stood in the MS., but it is exceedingly improbable that even that irascible monarch ever spoke them, blasphemous as his speeches sometimes were in his anger. This the compiler of the Chronicle felt, and he has erased it. This being the case, it would be futile for us to attempt to complete by conjecture the fragmentary speech attributed to St. Thomas. If a sentence once correct has been corrupted in transcription or erased in part since it left its author's hands, something may be done in the way of restoration by plausible conjecture: but what can be done when the writer himself does not know how to complete

his sentence? There is, however, no reason in the world that we should assume that the missing line here was of a similar character with the erased line in the King's speech; in fact, the words *cujus excellentiam* require something complimentary to the Bishop.

In estimating the value of the Chronicle as an historical record, we must bear in mind that it is a thoroughly *ex parte* statement. It was written by a religious of the Abbey, the privileges of which were at stake: and it is the account we might expect from one of the three monks who accompanied the Abbot to Colchester, and who sat by his side and shared his anxiety in that Chapter House. As a partisan, the writer was consequently anxious to make the Chancellor, St. Thomas, speak as much in favour of the Abbot, and against the Bishop, as possible.

Before we leave this point of the trustworthiness of the Chronicle as evidence, one further consideration must be duly weighed. St. Thomas himself, when in exile, mentions this very controversy in a way which Mr. Hurrell Froude considered<sup>8</sup> to be fatal to the authority of the Battle Chronicle. In a letter to the Pope,<sup>9</sup> the Saint meets the accusation that the troubles of England were to be imputed to himself by citing the proofs of tyranny and oppression of the Church which had taken place before his own promotion to the archbishopric. After several instances he says: "And how did the Bishop of Chichester succeed against the Abbot of Battle, when, in virtue of apostolic privileges, having named and denounced the Abbot in Court as excommunicate, he was straightway compelled to communicate with him before them all, without any absolution,

<sup>8</sup> Froude's *Remains*, pt. ii. vol. ii. p. 576.

<sup>9</sup> Lupus, bk. 4, ep. 14. vol. ii. p. 648; Giles, ep. S. Thomæ, i. p. 54; Froude, p. 348; *Supra*, p. 292.

and to receive him to the kiss of peace? For so it pleased the King and the Court, whom he did not dare to contradict in anything. And this, Most Holy Father, happened in the time of your predecessor and of ours." This does not read like the statement of the man who had taken the part ascribed to him by the Chronicler of the Abbey.

We will not only leave it to the reader to say how far these considerations affect the credibility of the narrative we have placed before him, but we will ask him also to judge what view should be taken of the conduct of St. Thomas. We will content ourselves with summing up what it seems to us may be said for and against him, if the correctness of the report of the Colchester trial be assumed.

Against him, it may be and has been said, that his principles respecting ecclesiastical independence of the royal authority were very different during his chancellorship to what they were when he previously held a purely clerical office under Theobald, or subsequently, after his own elevation to the primacy. In this instance, the Bishop of Chichester had the authority of a letter from Pope Adrian IV., which enjoined the Abbot of Battle to submit and obey; he had Archbishop Theobald on his side, who, when the matter was referred to him by the King, declined to give judgment in the Abbot's favour, and who is evidently anxious all through the controversy, that the King should permit a purely ecclesiastical cause to be tried "according to the legal method of ecclesiastical custom:" while the sole argument against the Bishop was a Charter of William the Conqueror, no Papal confirmation of which was alleged: and yet the Chancellor delivered judgment against the Bishop.

For the line of conduct followed by St. Thomas as Chancellor in this affair there is more to be said than

at first sight appears. Pope Adrian had said to the Abbot, "It has come to our knowledge that you refuse due obedience to our venerable Brother Hilary, Bishop of Chichester, to whom you have made profession thereof." The very foundation therefore of the Pope's judgment rested on a misrepresentation, which was that the Abbey was not exempt, and that the profession of obedience was therefore absolute. The exemption of the Abbey was expressly assented to by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Stigand, the Bishop of Chichester, at the time of its erection, and in the original Charter of the Conqueror, which is confirmed by the anathema against its violators, not only of these prelates, but also of one of no less venerable a name than St. Wulstan, then Bishop of Worcester. The canon law was not as express in its enactments then as it was after its codification into the *Corpus Juris* a century later by St. Raymund of Pennafort. The reservations to the Holy See were by no means as explicit. An archbishop received his pallium from Rome, and then his powers were very little short of what, in our time, we should consider patriarchal. The Holy See exercised its higher jurisdiction by Legates, and on every point appeals were carried to Rome in the last instance; but subject to these limitations the power of an archbishop was hardly restricted, and his acts, unless overruled, were held to be canonical if they did not go counter to the decrees of Synods or to ecclesiastical tradition. It is not to be wondered at that he who could confirm the election of a bishop and consecrate him to his see without reference to Rome, could also, especially when in conjunction with the bishop of the diocese, give exemption to an abbey from episcopal control.

There are, besides, viewing this transaction by the light of modern canon law, two points well worthy



of consideration. The privileges of royal chapels are well known, and it is to be remarked that the argument most frequently brought forward in the controversy was that Battle Abbey was a *Dominica Capella*. And next, all canonists acknowledge in a founder the power even of derogating from the canon law in the act of his foundation. Conditions that he might ask for in vain when the act was completed, a founder might impose of his own authority before the transfer to the Church was carried into effect. It was for the Church to choose whether she would accept the foundation so hampered; and in the case of Battle Abbey, the Church was a party to the conditions imposed in the Conqueror's Charter. We are therefore inclined to regard the opposition of the Bishop of Chichester and the manifest tendencies of Archbishop Theobald, not so much as zeal for ecclesiastical liberty as jealousy of monastic exemption. When St. Thomas afterwards in his exile came to refer to this matter, it was to blame the King for having compelled a bishop to give the kiss of peace to an abbot whom he had excommunicated, and not for having, by an encroachment on a Papal privilege, exempted an abbey from episcopal jurisdiction. The conclusion now arrived at was never afterwards disputed, but received all manner of subsequent ecclesiastical sanction, for not only is Archbishop Theobald's confirmation of the exemption of the Abbey extant, but we have similar confirmation by Popes Honorius and Gregory, which recite the recognition of the rights of the Abbey by Bishop Hilary, in the presence of Henry King of England, of illustrious memory, and of Theobald the Archbishop, his Metropolitan and Legate of the Apostolic See; which recognition the Archbishop confirmed by apostolic and metropolitan authority.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Chron. de Bello; Appendix ex Registro de Bello*, p. 187.

We have said nothing of the temper King Henry displayed on this occasion, a temper worthy of the Norman monarchs and of Henry Plantagenet. It was cunningly fostered by Richard de Luci, the most powerful nobleman of the Court, and the brother of the abbot whose cause was at stake. Nothing could have been suggested more certain to move the King's irascibility than the insinuations that the attack on the Abbey was to be attributed to English jealousy of this great monument of the Norman Conquest, and that it was therefore a proof of disloyalty to the King himself. Little wonder when the King had silenced the Abbot by saying that he would be spokesman for him, that Roger de Pont l'Eveque, the Archbishop of York, should be found in consultation with the Chancellor, whom, years before, he had nicknamed "Clerk Baillehache," and on the side of the regular against the secular, though he so hated religious himself that he used to say that his predecessor Thurstan had never done a worse thing than when he built Fountains.<sup>11</sup> Considering the circumstances, the Chancellor, who was by his office the mouthpiece of the King, spoke most temperately in his concluding speech, even according to an *ex parte* report. He answers in detail the various arguments adduced by the Bishop, but he in no way claims the right to decide the matter by secular authority. After he had concluded, the King having been irritated anew by mention of the letter of Pope Adrian which the Bishop had obtained without his consent, declares that *he*, and not the Archbishop of Canterbury, shall decide the cause; and it is brought to an end by the *quiet-clamatio*, or quit-claim, of the Bishop himself. We cannot, however, wonder that the remembrance of scenes such as this, in which the Chancellor found himself powerless in the presence of his jealous and

<sup>11</sup> *Chron. Walteri de Hemingburgh* (Histor. Soc.) vol. i. p. 119.

violent master, should have led him to the well-known conclusion, that if he were, by virtue of his office, bound to defend the liberties of the Church, the love between them would speedily be turned to hatred. "I knew," he said, when the King offered him the archbishopric, "that you would require many things, as even now you do require them, in Church matters, which I could never bear quietly; and so the envious would take occasion to provoke an endless strife between us."

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## NOTE E (page 49).

## THE CHANCELLOR'S POLICY.

Two contemporary documents express an opposite view to that given in the text, and it is but right that the reader should have the opportunity of forming his own judgment. Of these two passages, one has been often quoted, but it does not seem to furnish much ground for an unfavourable view of the conduct of St. Thomas while Chancellor towards the Church; the other, which has not been referred to by modern writers, is very much more to the point, and if it stood alone, would go far to settle the matter unfavourably. The first is the passage in which John of Salisbury rhetorically contrasts the treatment St. Thomas received when he was Chancellor and a man of the world, and that which he met with when Archbishop and thoroughly ecclesiastical. In it the writer may have been led by his rhetoric to strengthen his antithesis. The letter (*Materials*, vi. p. 101) was written by John of Salisbury to his friend Baldwin, Archdeacon of Exeter, and in it this passage occurs: "What do they now persecute in the Archbishop of Canterbury,

except that in the sight of kings he has dared to uphold God's justice, defend the law, and protect the liberty of the Church? Certainly when he was a splendid trifler in the Court, when he seemed to despise the law and the clergy, when with the powerful he followed the follies of the world, he was held to be a great and famous man, pleasing to everybody, and he was proclaimed by one and all as the only one quite fit for the archbishopric. But from the moment when he was made a Bishop, and, mindful of his condition and profession, he chose to show that he was a priest, and preferred to take the Word of God for his master rather than the world, he has become their enemy, telling them the truth and correcting his life: and thus they fill up the measure of their fathers, who for like reason persecuted the Prophets and Apostles, persecuting yet the martyrs of Christ, that is, the witnesses of truth and justice."

A much stronger expression is to be found in one of the miracles recorded by Benedict (*Materials*, ii. p. 163). Henry of Houghton, one of St. Thomas's clerics, reports a conversation that took place after the martyrdom between himself and a nobleman, who during the Saint's life had been one of his opponents. It would appear from the context, in which Newington, where miracles were wrought, is spoken of as his manor, that the nobleman in question was Richard de Luci, Justiciar of England. He said that he should have had difficulty in believing the miracles attributed to St. Thomas, unless he had seen one of them with his own eyes. A priest with whom he was well acquainted, had long been paralyzed in his right arm, so as not to be able to raise his hand to his mouth. He had thus for some years been unable to say Mass, but after a visit to Canterbury, he not only could

perform his priestly duties freely and quickly, but when the esquires and servants were throwing weights, he beat them all by throwing the weight the furthest. "Now, Henry," the nobleman continued, "how do you account for this? None of us was harder on the Church of God than he was, when he was Chancellor, and now he excels all the saints in the calendar in the number and greatness of his miracles." Henry of Houghton might have pleaded, Benedict says, the holy Martyr's hard and most holy life, but he preferred to take a lower ground.<sup>1</sup> "Which is worst," he asked, "to deny Christ or to be hard on the Church, as you accuse yourself or the Saint of being? And if tears washed away Peter's crime; if confession of guilt and short penance took the thief to Paradise before the other saints; what will not seven years of exile, violent despoiling of his goods, banishment of his relations, imprisonment of his friends, his hair-shirt, and most of all, this cruel death, its cause, its time, and its place, have done for the anointed of the Lord and the champion of the Church?" The nobleman acknowledged that the answer was satisfactory, and thanked him for it, saying that "he would not have had that tumour rooted in his heart for twenty pounds." The story is not remarkable precisely because Richard de Luci, if it were he, took that view of St. Thomas's life, but because Prior Benedict and Henry of Houghton do not deny the wrong done of old to the Church, regarding it as atoned for by his subsequent life. Such testimony should be taken at its full worth, but it must be remembered that no facts are quoted to counter-balance the plain and convincing facts given in the text, chiefly from Fitzstephen, who certainly had

<sup>1</sup> It is not easy to see how Benedict's proposed answer differs from that given by Henry.

no interest in making out the Saint to have been consistent all through his life in his allegiance to the Church.

Undoubtedly the King thought that St. Thomas would not oppose him in his oppression of the Church, in spite of the Saint's outspoken declaration to the contrary, or he would not have urged his appointment to the Archbishopric. And this belief of Henry's must have been due to St. Thomas's conduct as Chancellor, where his duty was simply to do his best under difficult circumstances. Indeed Roger of Pontigny (*Materials* iv. p. 14) says expressly that "Thomas of set purpose showed himself as if he were very severe on ecclesiastical persons and things so to avert from himself any mark of suspicion and to be able better under this cloak to meet [and counteract] the King's intention, which he thoroughly understood. The King then, believing that he could best fulfil his purpose against the Church through him, whom he had found to be most faithful to him in all things, and very prone to his intentions, firmly resolved that he should be made Archbishop of Canterbury." Our question is not, What did the King expect of St. Thomas? The answer to that is plain enough. Our question is, In what sense did St. Thomas, when Chancellor, justify Roger of Pontigny's statement that he showed himself "as if he were very severe"—*quasi severissimum*—on ecclesiastics? Roger himself gives the answer (*Ibid.* p. 12) when he speaks of the Saint's chancellorship. "And though the King had already conceived the idea [of the oppression of the Church] that he afterwards carried out, yet meanwhile under Thomas's protection the state of the Church remained safe and quiet, for he frustrated in all things the evil intentions of the King and the covert plots of the courtiers, but cautiously and as it were secretly, lest

he might be open to suspicion." This means that he did not put forward his churchmanship, but substantially, and in all important matters, prevented any harm being done to the Church; and this is the very opposite to the statement that, when Chancellor, St. Thomas was an open persecutor of the Church, that on the strength of this severity, he was made Archbishop, and that he then suddenly changed his policy. We may safely say that St. Thomas did what Theobald expected and hoped of him when he recommended him to the King. That Theobald should have recommended one who would, with great prudence and moderation, avert evil that he feared, surely does not deserve the hard title of "confessedly an ecclesiastical plot," given to it by Mr. Magnusson in his Preface (p. xcix) to the Icelandic Thomas Saga. The passage that calls forth this comment is here appended, as it is probably derived from Prior Robert of Cricklade. It is further interesting for the curious statement that the Archdeacon of Canterbury was King Henry's Chamberlain for a short time, before he was made Chancellor.

"The King was still a youth, yielding an open ear to his councillors, who were both overbearing and not of the most righteous in their ways, froward withal, and nowise men of any great prudence. Now whereas there stand many ready to break the barge of St. Peter, the Archbishop was fain to find a man who might steady the craft somewhat, lest it should go adrift to utter wreck. But the craft of the elected ones for the Kingdom of Heaven is Holy Church, the which, it may well be said, was disabled by William Rufus, first of all men in England, but after his day things went on as if the kings went along hand in hand towards the fire,

when as each dragged the right and the freedom of the Church headlong under the Crown. But for this place one so difficult to fill with a fit person to stand between the authority of God's laws and the grasping greed of the King and his men, the Archbishop seeth no one likelier than Archdeacon Thomas, he being proven in manifold wise a man of wisdom and good will. And to wise folk it will be clear enough that the Archbishop putteth a dissembling face upon his device when he setteth it forth to the King to take Thomas into his Court. And herein the Archbishop did rightfully, in that such is a holy craft which harmeth no one, yet increaseth the glory of God. Now it cometh to pass that the blessed Thomas betaketh him for awhile away from Canterbury and entereth the King's Court a second time. At this time it is recorded that by the tale of his age he was even thirty and eight years old, having been in the Archbishop's Court for fifteen winters. Thus for a time he putteth away the service of an Archdeacon and taken thereinstead to kingly attendance and courtly manners. And now it becometh his concern to keep watch of the King, when he sleeps as well as when he sitteth in his seat, with all heed and good will. No long time passeth by ere the King judgeth wisely this Thomas worthy of a higher honour than having this simple service to give his heed to, and therefore he leadeth this friend of the Lord into a station which is called the chancellorship" (pp. 45—49).



## NOTE F (pages 195, 196).

## ST. THOMAS IN FLANDERS.

Oye, a village three leagues and a half N.E. of Calais, and about a league from Gravelines, was in existence as far back as the Roman occupation under Julius Cæsar. In 1216 Renard Count of Boulogne ceded Oye to Philip of France, on occasion of the King's marriage to his daughter Matilda. At the request of the Duchess of Burgundy, daughter of the King of Portugal, two conferences were held at Oye to establish peace between France and England, which were followed by the truce concluded at Tours in 1446 and by the marriage of Margaret of Anjou with the King of England. In 1347, as a consequence of the capture of Calais by Edward III., the English took possession of the fort of Oye, and they held it till 1436, when the Duke of Burgundy took it, and it was destroyed by the Duke of Guise in 1558 (*Notice historique sur l'état ancien et moderne du Calaisis*. Par M. P. J. M. Collet. Calais, 1833).

Eldemenstre is the name that Herbert of Bosham tells us (p. 331) the inhabitants gave to a hermitage of St. Bertin. The place, now called St. Momelin, is a small village about four kilometres from Clairmarais and five from the town of St. Omer. It was there, on the little river Aa, that St. Omer in 626 established in the first instance the three saints, St. Bertin, St. Momelin, and St. Ebertian, and as St. Momelin was the oldest of the three, St. Omer made him the Superior. After the foundation of St. Bertin's Abbey, the beautiful ruins of which still adorn the town of St. Omer, the original foundation was known by the name of Vieux Moustier,

*Vetus monasterium*, and this is evidently the interesting Flemish word *Eldemenstre* preserved by Herbert of Bosham. The river Aa, in Latin *Agnio*, on which St. Thomas passed from Clairmarais to St. Momelin, was familiar enough in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the students of the English College of St. Omer, as their country house called Blendecque was upon it, and so, lower down the river, was the village of Watten, on the height above which was the Novitiate of the English Jesuits.

Many places in the Low Countries claimed the honour of having been visited by St. Thomas, but it is not easy to see when such visits can have taken place. L'Abbé Destombes, in his *Vies des Saints* (Cambrai, 1852, tom. iv. p. 167), enumerates a long list. He begins with Bourbourg as having been visited before the Saint went to Clairmarais. Then he states that he left at the Monastery of Anchin a chasuble, a dalmatic, a little tunicle, and a cope, green in colour: while to Marchiennes he gave a pallium and a cross adorned with pearls and relics. It is plain that St. Thomas was not in a position to make costly presents, either on his exile or when he passed through the Low Countries again on returning to England. These however may well have been vestments that were used by him, which, on account of the veneration in which they were held, were brought to the great monasteries for preservation. At Marchiennes there was a manuscript Pontifical, which is now in the Public Library at Douai, No. 94, on the first page of which a librarian of Marchiennes Abbey has written, "Pontificale hoc ad usum ecclesiarum anglicarum recepisse nos a S. Thoma Cantuariensi traditione constanti habemus." At Arras in St. Anthony's there was an inscription in old characters, "Icy Saint Thomas célébra messe certainement." Near the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in the same

town a fountain was called St. Thomas's, the water of which was regarded as a specific against fever. In the Church of St. Vaast in Arras a chalice of pure gold, said to have been used by the Saint, was long preserved. After Dixmude, where a chasuble and chalice still exist, St. Thomas is supposed to have gone to the Monastery of Auchy-les-Moines near Hesdin, where the religious had an especial veneration for their Abbot's oratory, as the Saint had said Mass there. At Blangy, where he is said to have gone next, a gold ring was kept in which a large topaz was set. The only reason for saying that St. Thomas was at La Motte-au-Bois is that an altar was there dedicated to him, in which some of his relics were enclosed. That he was at Lille is asserted in an inscription still existing on the front of No. 8, Rue d'Angleterre: "Sancto Thomæ Cantuariensi hujus ædis quondam hospiti sit laus, honor et gloria." In the church of Beaucamps-en-Weppes a wooden porringer was kept that St. Thomas had received from a countryman to quench his thirst on his journey. The religious of St. Nicolas-des-Près at Tournay had a tradition that they had been visited by the Saint. At St. Médard in like manner they claimed the honour of having had St. Thomas as a guest, and a dark red chasuble left by him there was afterwards in the Cathedral of Tournay. In the Cathedral windows the martyrdom of St. Thomas was depicted, and an altar was erected in his honour in 1171, which, if the date be correct, was before his canonization. Its place was between the columns in the fifth bay, and its three chaplains, Baldwin Hamdis, Arnold de Gand, and William de Vacques, are said to have founded it. Stephen the Bishop of Tournay calls St. Thomas in his letters *olim dominum et amicum*. All these details are taken from Destombes.

## NOTE G (page 397).

## THE EARL OF NORFOLK AND THE CANONS OF PENTNEY.

Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, and William de Vaux were excommunicated by the Pope, who by letter (*Materials*, vi. p. 550) dated from the Lateran, July 7, 1166, ordered St. Thomas to proclaim the excommunication with lighted candles. As the name of William de Vaux is not mentioned in the list of those excommunicated at Clairvaux (*Supra*, p. 310), he probably withdrew from his position and was absolved. On the 22nd of April, apparently of the year 1167, the Pope (*Materials*, vi. p. 557) empowered the Bishops of Winchester and Worcester to absolve the Earl of Norfolk under certain conditions, but if these were not fulfilled he was again to be excommunicated, and after a year of obstinacy his land was to be interdicted. That he did not amend is clear, as we find his name among the excommunicates of Clairvaux.

The cause of this censure was that the Earl and William de Vaux took possession of Pentney, which belonged to the Canons of Pentney. The Pope commissioned Gilbert Foliot, in the first instance, to obtain restitution. This he did, he says (*Ibid.* p. 548), with the help of the King's intervention; but the whole matter was brought as an action by the Earl of Norfolk before the King in person at Oxford, in January or February, 1166, and the Prior of Pentney, we may well imagine how, was brought to assent to a compromise which was very unfavourable to his community. Against it protest was made by the Canons, and both parties appealed to the Holy See. The Pope's decision was against the

Earl of Norfolk, and his obedience was enforced by sentence of excommunication, as we have seen.

The matter is memorable on account of two letters (*Materials*, vi. pp. 545, 553), one from the Bishop of London to the Cardinal William of Pavia, and the other from Pope Alexander to King Henry. The difference of principles between the two is very striking, and this was in 1165, when Gilbert Foliot would still claim to be a good churchman.

“I have received the Pope’s command to straitly summon Hugh Earl of Norfolk, and unless on admonition he restores to the canons of Pentney the village of Pentney and all that they complain has been taken from them, to place him and all his land under interdict, and then unless he repent within forty days, to excommunicate him without delay. But in this we have been gravely opposed by the royal authority, for the King asserts that it belongs to the supreme dignity of his kingdom, that when he is ready to give full justice to any one who has a complaint about lands or fiefs against one of his earls or barons, neither the Archbishop nor any bishop of his kingdom may place him under interdict or excommunication. This he declares his predecessors have held up to the present time by assent of the Roman Pontiffs, and he reminds us that all the bishops of his kingdom have confirmed it to him by oath, so that he requires of us that we should stand by antiquity, and not diminish the privileges of his crown by leaving what we have sworn to. He supports by heavy penalties what his authority commands. We are therefore in straits, so that unless the Pope shall mercifully relax his mandate, we must either incur the peril of disobedience, which God forbid, or the King’s reproach of perjury and breach of fealty. I had rather I had never been a bishop than have incurred

either one or the other. Both swords are heavy, for one kills the soul and the other the body; the first is the heavier sword, but the second strikes more heavily. And what utility will there be in my blood to my dearest lord the Pope, if I go down into the misery of being held to be a perjurer or of becoming disobedient?—which again may Heaven forefend. If I do not obey his Holiness it is death to me; if I do obey him, nothing remains for me but to quit the kingdom, the laws of which I break, fealty to the King of which I desert. If the cause were one that merited death or exile, I should rejoice that by my banishment or death I should show the Pope good service. But is the cause of six Brothers of Pentney, living miserably without any observance of rule or order, such that, because some few acres have not been restored to them, a question on the eminence of their dignities should be raised between the Supreme Pontiff and his old friend—by God's help his firm friend in the future—the King of England? Especially as in this cause each side may easily have its rights, and this disturbance may be brought back to peace and justice. If the King be allowed he will straightway determine the cause by the counsel of the Bishops and other prudent men. If the Pope delegates judges, Earl Hugh will not refuse to abide by their sentence."

Gilbert clearly shows how the Constitutions of Clarendon practically worked. A few sentences from the Pope's letter to Henry will show how far Gilbert Foliot's position was from that of the Holy See. "Though your filial devotion to us and your mother, Holy Church, seems to have grown somewhat cold, we have never withdrawn our paternal affection from you or the kingdom you govern. Your Serenity knows that the blows of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy. Consider

then more carefully and see, that as clerics are distinguished from seculars in life and habit, so the judgments of clerics are altogether different from the judgments of laymen. If you upset that order and usurp the things of Jesus Christ, making new laws at your pleasure to oppress the Church and Christ's poor, bringing in customs that you call ancestral, you yourself beyond all doubt, in the Last Judgment which you will not be able to avoid, will be judged in like manner, and with the same measure that you have measured withal, it shall be measured to you. . . . We especially commend to your royal magnificence the Brothers of the church of Pentney, and their goods and possessions, which your lieges Earl Hugh and William de Vaux, laying aside the fear of God, have occupied, contrary to their own writings and concessions, and therefore we have excommunicated them by Apostolic authority and separated them from the Body of Christ, that is, the Church. By these Apostolic writings we pray, admonish, and exhort your Serenity, and for the remission of your sins we order you, for the love of God and the reverence of St. Peter and of ourselves, to maintain, protect, and defend these Brothers, the church in which they serve God, and their goods and possessions, and preserve them against the invasions of your subjects by your royal protection, that you may deserve happily to obtain an eternal reward from Almighty God and to be helped by the prayers of the Brothers and of all the other religious of your kingdom. And avoid the men who are thus excommunicated, for as leprosy spreads, so the same penalty extends from those who do wrong to those who consent thereto. And further, we greatly wonder that you unlawfully made the Prior of these Brothers, without their knowledge and assent, give over to the Earl in your

presence the possessions of his church which were entrusted to him for improvement, not for injury, contrary to the authentic writings of the Popes our predecessors; for in this you have without doubt gravely offended God and have no little injured His honour and glory. This concession by the Prior, which by the Canons is void, we by Apostolic authority do altogether annul, and declare to have no force for the future."

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## NOTE H (page 398).

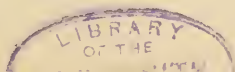
## ST. THOMAS AND ST. GODRIC.

A monk of Westminster was on a visit to the holy hermit of Finchale, who asked him one day whether he knew Thomas, "the new Archbishop of Canterbury." The monk replied that he knew him, and added, "And do you know him, sir?" St. Godric's answer was, "With my bodily eye I have never seen him, but with the inward eye of my heart I have often seen him, and I know him so well, that if now I were to see his face, though no one were to tell me, and he were to be placed amongst many persons whom I did not know, I should recognize him immediately." The monk not making any remark, St. Godric continued: "I wish to send him some secret messages, if you will be my messenger." His companion expressed readiness, provided there was nothing wrong in the message. The old man smiled, and said that he hoped his injunction would be good. "When you see him," he said, "remember, I pray you, to salute him in the name of poor Godric, and say that he must steadily persevere in carrying out those things which he has resolved to do, for all the things he has resolved are most pleasing and accept-



able to Almighty God. Yet he will suffer very great adversity, and he will very soon be driven into exile from England; he will for some time remain a stranger and a sojourner in foreign lands, until the period of his appointed penance is fulfilled. At last he will return to England, to his own archiepiscopal see, and he will then be loftier in dignity than when he left England. For that Archbishop and Malcolm King of the Scots, of all the rich men between the Alps and the furthest limits of Scotland, are the two who will be most pleasing and acceptable to God. And King Malcolm will receive from God the penny of the heavenly reward. Now, when you have told him this, I beg you to send me by some one his absolution of my sins, written and sent me by him." "Why do you ask his absolution," inquired the monk, "seeing that you are not of his flock?" "I know that it will benefit me," said St. Godric, "and therefore I ask you to send it to me." The monk marvelled at this conversation, for St. Thomas had not been very long Archbishop, and people did not think that he had seriously lost the King's favour. On his return he went with his Abbot to St. Thomas at "Warrennes Stanes," near Windsor, and when our Saint had heard St. Godric's message, he made inquiry from the Abbot respecting him. "I recommend you," said the Abbot, "to receive his message with gratitude, for he often foretells things to come." The next morning St. Thomas wrote to him, sending the absolution he had asked for, and recommending himself to his fatherly prayers. Within three months of the prediction, the biographer of St. Godric tells us that it was fulfilled by the exile of the Saint.

When St. Thomas had spent some years in exile, the same monk, being once more in the neighbourhood, consulted St. Godric respecting it. "The



Archbishop of Canterbury has now been a long time in exile, and there seems to be no possible hope left of a reconciliation, for we have heard that so many adverse things press upon him, that we are afraid he will never again return to England." "Yet a little while longer," replied St. Godric, "will he suffer his exile, for he has not yet passed his time of penance. Then the King will permit him to return to his see in Kent, with greater power and honour than when he went into exile."

This was the message of which St. Thomas was reminded on the day before his passion.

There is another similar narrative in another part of the same Life, which from the interest of being thus enabled to link two English saints together, we may be permitted to give at equal length. Reginald, the monk of Durham, who wrote the Life, speaks here in the first person.

"It was now mid-Lent, and the vigil of St. Cuthbert's day had come (March 19), on which his monks from all parts are accustomed to meet in chapter for the feast. And since I had kept half my Lent with the man of God (St. Godric), I spoke to him about it on the evening before, that I might get his leave to say Mass early the next morning and go home. As I was about to start after Mass, I knelt for his blessing, when he smiled and said, 'Though you are in such a hurry to go, it is possible that before you leave the gate you may come back again.' I went out, and immediately met some Cistercian abbots, who made me return, and asked to be allowed to speak to the man of God. I went in to him, and he said with a smile, 'See, how soon you have returned.' I then thought of his words, and when the interview with the abbots was over, I returned to ask his leave to depart: he gave it me with his blessing, but he added, 'If you go now, before you

get out of the garden fence, you may be obliged, however unwillingly, to return again.' I did not give much consideration to his prediction, but I started for Durham as quickly as I could. But before I was clear of the place, a Brother in grey met me, who called upon me in the name of the Holy Trinity to stop and hear his message; and he commanded me in the name of the lord Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury, then in exile, that in virtue of the Holy Spirit and of obedience, I should tell no man what he was about to tell me, until I saw the end. This I promised. Having received the message of the lord Archbishop to the servant of God, I returned into his cell, and timidly and anxiously I began to consult him on some text of Scripture. He saw that there was something that I wished to say to him, and so he said: 'You always treat me like an unlearned person with your circumlocutions: say briefly and plainly what you are thinking of, and I will willingly answer you as God shall enable me.'

"Somewhat confused by this truthful and pleasant speech, but taking courage, I said that I wondered exceedingly why the long altercation between the King and the Archbishop had not been brought to an end by the mediation of some of the nobles. He answered: 'Because both of them did wrong in the gift and the receipt of that dignity, and therefore the Lord hath chastised them both with the rod of their own fault: but the Lord's clemency can bring good out of men's evil, and give a good end to evil beginnings.' Then speaking freely I told him all. 'Sir,' I said, 'a messenger from the exiled Archbishop of Canterbury is outside, and binding me by the authority of the Archbishop and by solemn pledges, he has told me that he has come here as his secret messenger, so secretly that scarcely any even of his

domestics were aware of it, for if he were taken by the King's officials, he would certainly be punished with death. His lordship of Canterbury ordered him to give his precept in a secret manner to whichever of the monks of Durham he found in attendance upon you. So in his name and as his messenger, and in the name of the Holy Trinity, he bade me secretly to go to you, whom he called the servant of God, and tell you his message. Three times you have sent to the Archbishop the knowledge of secret and future things, in each of which he has found you to be a true prophet in the Spirit of the Lord; for in each of them the end has come to pass as you have foretold. In the name of the Holy Trinity he adjured me to ask of you how long this dissension will last, when he will be in accord with the King, and whether he shall ever return to England, or what the end will be; for on these points he is very anxious. Now he prays you as a father, he adjures you as a fellow-soldier, he asks of you as an ancient servant of the Lord, to tell him by me the end of all this calamity, for he has heard that you have predicted of him that within seven years his exile should have a happy end, and now those years have all but elapsed, and they have brought him sorrow rather than consolation.'

“After a long silence, he replied—‘Three times I have sent him secret messages which the Holy Ghost revealed to me, and which I felt would come true in his regard; and now tell his messenger who is outside, that when you came to me for leave to go home, I foresaw how your journey would be hindered. Tell him not to be troubled if for a little while he have much to suffer, for the longer the trial is, the fuller will be the crown, and the light burden of this tribulation brings forth an increase of everlasting beatitude. For within six months peace by

word of mouth will be made between him and the King, but Godric will not then be living here; and within nine months his honours and possessions will be restored to him, and he will return to his see in Kent, where, not long after, an end shall come to him altogether and of all things—an end that shall be for his saving good, his joy and perfection; and to many men a remedy of salvation, a help and consolation. Tell these last words of mine frequently to his messenger, and repeat them again and again, for by the help of the Holy Spirit, as soon as he has heard them, the Archbishop will know their secret meaning. And there will be greater joy amongst all the English for his return than there was sorrow for his exile.'

"I then went out and told all this to his messenger, but nothing would satisfy him but that he should be admitted to speak to the servant of God; and when I had obtained this for him, St. Godric rehearsed to him over and over again what I have given above, and repeatedly told him that he must remember that in a little while the end of all was coming. Having received his blessing we departed together, and we understood nothing of the prophetic things we had heard. Once more I returned, after I had had his blessing, and he said: 'This morning you were in such haste to get to Durham; now you will not get there for the Chapter, but you will be there by dinner-time,' It happened as he said, and finding the monks going to the refectory, his prophecy came back to my mind.

"In about two months after this, the man of God departed this life, and before the martyrdom of my lord of Canterbury none of these words came to my memory; but after the solemn martyrdom of the Archbishop's death, then all the ambiguity of the prophecy was made clear. For all things happened

as the man of God had foretold, and the end came as the Spirit of God had made known to him" (*Vita S. Godrici*, pp. 293, 297, § 27—280).

Fr. Stevenson, who edited this interesting volume for the Surtees Society, remarks that this prophecy was uttered in 1170, on the 19th of March, that St. Godric died on the 21st of May, that it was in October that St. Thomas of Canterbury was, "to all appearance," reconciled to King Henry, and his martyrdom followed on the 29th December. These dates show that Hoveden,<sup>1</sup> the chronicler, was mistaken when he says that the death of St. Thomas was revealed to St. Godric at Finchale, on the day on which it happened, for St. Godric, as we have seen, predeceased St. Thomas seven months.

Speaking of the connection between St. Thomas of Canterbury and the Saints of Durham, we are not aware whether any notice has been taken of a passage in the compilation of Thomas of Froimont, published by Dr. Giles under the name of Philip of Liège. Whosoever it may be, it is certainly not later than the generation next after that of St. Thomas, and it contains this anecdote.

"When he raised from the earth to his shrine the blessed Cuthbert, the bishop beloved of God and venerable amongst men, and touched each of his limbs and his face and all the members of the Saint which had suffered no corruption, though six hundred years had passed, for he had lived a virgin from his childhood, famous for holiness and miracles, the King asked the Archbishop how he presumed to touch all the members of so great a saint; on which the man of God replied—'Do not wonder, sire, at

<sup>1</sup> "Eodem die passio beati Thomæ revelata est beato Godrico Anachoritæ per Spiritum Sanctum apud Finkhale, qui locus distat Cantuaria plusquam per (? ter) centum sexaginta milliaria" (*Savile, Scriptores post Bedam*, 1601, p. 522).

this, that with my consecrated hands I have touched him, for far higher is that Sacrament which day by day I, as other priests, handle on the altar, the Blessed Body of Christ, which is committed to three orders of priests, deacons, and subdeacons' ” (*Anecdota Bedæ*, &c, Ed. Giles. Caxton Soc., 1851, p. 234).

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NOTE I (page 416).

THE MARTYRDOM.

THE north transept, in which St. Thomas met his death, has ever since gone by the name of the Martyrdom. The entrance from the cloister was then, as now, in the south-western corner, adjoining which, at the east end of the north nave aisle, was the chapel of the Blessed Virgin. The eastern side of the transept consisted, first of the flight of steps leading up to the north choir aisle, which St. Thomas was ascending on his way either to the high altar or to the patriarchal chair behind it, when he was induced to return to the transept by the voices of the knights. Next to these steps upward were the steps that led downward to the crypt. This arrangement remains undisturbed on the opposite side of the church. There was then a small space of wall between the crypt stairs and an apse in which was the altar of St. Benedict. It was with his back to this wall that the Saint stood at his martyrdom, and it was here that the altar “at the sword’s point” was afterwards placed. In the middle of the transept was a column which supported a low vaulting over the corner of the transept, and above this was the chapel of St. Blaise.

William of Canterbury says that the Saint had a

statue of our Blessed Lady before him as he stood with his back to the wall. *Habens a læva præviam crucem suam, a tergo parietem, præ se beatæ Mariæ Virginis iconiam, circumquaque memorias et reliquias sanctorum* (p. 132). Grim, describing the Saint's position as he turned to the right under the column in the midst of the transept, says that he had on one side of him the Lady Altar, and on the other the altar of St. Benedict. *Divertit in dextram sub columna, hinc habens altare beatæ Dei Genitricis et perpetuæ Virginis Mariæ, illinc vero sancti confessoris Benedicti* (p. 436). The distinct mention of a statue by William of Canterbury, who knew the place so well, seems to indicate that, at the back of the altar of the Blessed Virgin in the nave aisle, there was a statue facing across the transept, standing probably upon a column. Of this column we have apparently mention made by Leo von Rotzmital, who came to England as Bohemian Ambassador in 1446. He speaks of *columna ante sacellum Genitricis Dei, juxta quam orare, et colloquio beatæ Virginis (quod a multis visum et auditum esse nobis certo affirmabatur) perfrui solitus est* (Stanley's *Canterbury*, p. 266). He calls it a column *before* the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, while a statue, to have been seen by St. Thomas, must have been *behind* the Lady Altar; but a visitor, standing in the transept, might well speak of a column that was between him as he stood and the altar, as *before* that altar. The new Lady Chapel, on the site of the chapel of St. Benedict, was built by Prior Goldstone I., between 1449 and 1468, just after Leo's visit, so that the Lady Altar in the nave aisle had not yet been removed. It is worth noting that Erasmus calls the little altar at the sword's point an altar of the Blessed Virgin. A column *behind* the old Lady Chapel would have been *before* this; but it seems more probable that Erasmus was mistaken in calling the altar at the



sword's point a Lady altar, and that the column belonged to the Lady Chapel in the nave.

Dean Stanley takes this view. "The site of the older Lady Chapel in the nave was still marked by a stone column. On this column—such was the story told to foreign pilgrims" (and here he refers to Leo von Rotzmital)—"had formerly stood a statue of the Virgin, which had often conversed with St. Thomas as he prayed before it. The statue itself was now shown in the choir, covered with pearls and precious stones" (*Canterbury*, p. 225). Dean Stanley was not acquainted with William of Canterbury, whose narrative bears out this part at least of the local tradition, that on that column there was a statue of our Lady. But Leo does not say that the *statue* had often conversed with St. Thomas, but that the Blessed Virgin had done so.

It may be well to remark that Dean Stanley, following Mr. Gough Nichols, attacks as a "mistaken tradition, repeated in books, in pictures, and in sculptures, that the Primate was slain whilst praying at an altar" (p. 103). And in a note he says: "The gradual growth of the story is curious—(1) The posthumous altar of the martyrdom is represented as standing there at the time of his death. (2) This altar is next confounded with the altar within the chapel of St. Benedict. (3) This altar is again transformed into the high altar; and (4) in these successive changes the furious altercation is converted into an assault on a meek unprepared worshipper, kneeling before the altar."

As to the attitude of kneeling, an artist might perhaps be justified in selecting that posture if he thought fit, as Fitzurse's third blow brought the martyr on his knees first, and then on his face. *Tertio percussus martyr genua flexit et cubitos* (Grim, p. 437). *Positis primo genibus, conjunctis et extensis ad Decum manibus* (Fitz-

stephen, p. 141). *Orantis instar, junctis manibus et flexis genibus* (Herbert, p. 506).

Next, as to the "furious altercation" and the "meek worshipper," the only resistance St. Thomas made was at the attempt of Fitzurse to drag him from the church. He did not so much as raise a hand to ward off a blow, and all remark that he met his end like a man in prayer. *Ad modum prostrati in oratione jacebat immotus* (Will. Cant. p. 135). *Recto corpore quasi ad orationem prostratus* (Bened. p. 13). *Videns carnifices eductis gladiis, in modum orantis inclinavit caput . . . nec brachium aut vestem opposuit ferienti, sed caput, quod inclinatum gladiis exposuerat, donec consummaretur tenebat immobile* (Jo. Sar. p. 320). *Genu flexo, et orantis modo junctis ante se manibus* (Herb. p. 498). *Martyr insignis nec manum nec vestem opposuit percussori, nec percussus verbum protulit, nec clamorem edidit, non gemitum, non sonum cujuscumque doloris indicem; sed caput quod inclinaverat gladiis evaginatibus immobile tenuit, donec confusus sanguine et cerebro, tanquam ad orandum pronus, in pavimento corpus, in sinum Abrahæ spiritum, collocavit* (Grim, p. 438). Which do the descriptions of those actually present resemble the most, a man killed in a "furious altercation," or an "assault on a meek worshipper"?

Lastly, is it also a "mistaken tradition" that St. Thomas was killed "at the altar"? Erasmus may have thought that the little wooden altar "at the sword's point" was in existence at the time of the martyrdom, but it would be hard to find any picture or sculpture representing it. Fanciful pictures may represent the high altar; but the altar that might be represented with historical accuracy is that of St. Benedict, which was close by. The Saint fell, according to Fitzstephen, *secus aram, quæ ibi erat, sancti Benedicti* (p. 141). *In templo ante altare sacerdos obtulit seipsum hostiam vivam Deo* (Herb. p. 498). *Coram*

*altari inter consecratos et manus religiosorum* (Jo. Sar. p. 317). *Coram altari prostratus* (*Id.* p. 318). *Ante altare sancti Benedicti* (Lamb MS. Anon II. p. 131). *Inter crucis et altaris cornua*. This last description, in the letter of the Archbishop of Sens (Ep. S. Tho. ii. p. 161) is literally true, for his cross was on his left, and the altar on his right. As the Saint fell to the right, he must have been just before the altar.

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NOTE J (page 419).

ISABEL COUNTESS OF WARRENNE.

“William, the King’s brother,” of whom Le Breton spoke as he dealt his blow on the head of the Martyr, was the third son of Geoffrey Plantagenet and the Empress Maud. He died at Rouen on the 30th of January, 1164. The grievance that Le Breton was avenging was therefore not a recent one. Indeed Isabel had married Hamelin the King’s half-brother (*Supra*, p. 180) in 1163, her first husband William of Blois having died in October, 1159. The resistance of St. Thomas to the marriage of Isabel and William may therefore have been while he was Chancellor, and must have been before his rupture with the King at Westminster and Clarendon. If it was during the chancellorship, it will have been one instance the more of the care of the Chancellor for the observance of ecclesiastical law. Another uncanonical marriage hindered by him when Chancellor was that of Matthew Count of Boulogne and Mary of Blois (*Supra*, p. 198).

There are three views as to the relationship between the Countess Isabel and William, the brother of King Henry II. Isabel of Warrenne

was the great-grand-daughter of Gundreda; and the old and popular belief was that she was a daughter of William the Conqueror. If this were true, Isabel would have been in the third and fourth degrees of consanguinity, or, as we say, second cousin once removed, both to her first husband William of Blois, and to William Plantagenet, who wanted to be her second husband, for these two men were both great-grandsons of the Conqueror, the one by Adela and King Stephen, the other by King Henry I. and the Empress Maud. Hamelin, whom she did marry, though he was half-brother of Henry II., was not in the same kindred to her, as he was not the son of the Empress Maud.

The second opinion, started first by Mr. Thomas Stapleton in 1846, and accepted by Mr. Freeman and many recent writers, among others by Mr. Edwards (the Editor of the *Liber Monasterii de Hyde* in the Rolls Series, 1866, p. xcvi.), is that "Gundreda, wife of William first Earl of Warren and Surrey, was the sister of Gherbod or Gorbodo, the Fleming (first Earl of Chester after the Conquest), and therefore not the daughter of the Conqueror, but of his Queen Matilda by a former marriage." If this were so, there was no relationship between Isabel and either of the Williams, who were descendants of the Conqueror. So the question could not arise, why she should have been permitted to marry one and not the other, when the relationship was the same. She was related to neither, and therefore could have married either, but the laws of the Church would not allow her to marry both. William Plantagenet, the King's brother, was second cousin to William of Blois, Isabel's husband; and therefore she was in that degree of *affinity* to him, and for that reason

could not marry him. Hamelin Plantagenet, as we have seen, was not related to her first husband at all, and thus there was nothing to prevent his becoming her second husband. St. Thomas's opposition to the marriage of Isabel and William the King's brother is perfectly intelligible, and indeed was a strict and simple duty. This relationship is exactly described by Fitzstephen (p. 142) in the words: "This William [Plantagenet] by his mother the Empress Mahalt, and this William [of Blois] Earl of Warrenne [*jure uxoris*] by his father King Stephen, were the sons of cousins." I am indebted to Mr. Everard Green, F.S.A., for the reference that makes this matter clear.

The third opinion is that of Mr. Edmond Chester Waters (*Archæological Journal*, No. 163, 1884, p. 300) who regards it that "we may safely take it as proved that Gundreda was neither daughter nor near relation of Queen Matilda." The proof adduced by Mr. Waters brings in a second impediment into our case, and shows that Isabel de Warrenne and even her first as well as her proposed husband were really within the degrees of kindred, within which at that time marriage could not be contracted. The fourth General Council of Lateran in 1215, limited the impediment, which had previously extended to the seventh degree of consanguinity or sixth cousins, to the fourth degree or third cousins, which is the present law of the Church. Henry I. of England wished to marry his natural daughter to William de Warrenne II. who was the son of Gundreda. St. Anselm prohibited the marriage because the parties were related to one another in the fourth and sixth degree. St. Anselm would never have based the prohibition on their being third cousins twice removed, if they had been first cousins; and Mr. Waters reasonably concludes that Gundreda

was not a daughter, nor indeed a near relation of the wife of the Conqueror.

But, in showing us that there was a relationship, according to the then existing law, between William de Warrenne II. and a daughter of King Henry I., Mr. Waters makes the conclusion plain that a relationship, still within the prohibited degrees, though very distant, existed also between Isabel, the grand-daughter of that William de Warrenne II. and William Plantagenet, the grandson of Henry I. They were in the sixth and seventh degree, or as we say fifth cousins once removed. The same relationship existed between Isabel and her first husband William of Blois. These very distant degrees seem to have been overlooked in the case, and we may be sure that the impediment that caused St. Thomas to prevent the marriage of Isabel with William Plantagenet was that of affinity, as he was her late husband's second cousin.

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NOTE K (page 439).

THE MURDERERS.

“FITZURSE, Moreville, and Tracy had all sworn homage to Becket while Chancellor. Fitzurse, Tracy, and Bret had all connections with Somersetshire. Their rank and lineage can even now be accurately traced through the medium of our county historians and legal records. Moreville was of higher rank and office than the others. He was this very year Justice Itinerant of the counties of Northumberland and Cumberland, where he inherited the barony of Burgh-on-the-Sands and other possessions from his father Roger and his grandfather Simon. He was likewise Forester of Cumberland, owner of the

castle of Knaresborough, and added to his paternal property that of his wife, Helwise de Stuteville. Tracy was the younger of two brothers, sons of John de Studely and Grace de Traci. He took the name of his mother, who was daughter of William de Traci, a natural son of Henry I. On his father's side he was descended from the Saxon Ethelred. He was born at Toddington in Gloucestershire, where, as well as in Devonshire, he held large estates. Fitzurse was the descendant of Urso or Ours, who had under the Conqueror held Grittlestone in Wiltshire, of the Abbey of Glastonbury. His father, Richard Fitzurse, became possessed, in the reign of Stephen, of the manor of Willeton in Somersetshire, which had descended to Reginald a few years before the time of which we are speaking. He was also a tenant in chief in Northamptonshire, in tail in Leicestershire. Richard the Breton was, it would appear from an incident in the murder, intimate with Prince William, the King's brother. He and his brother Edmund had succeeded to their father Simon le Bret, who had probably come over with the Conqueror from Brittany, and settled in Somersetshire, where the property of the family long continued in the same rich vale under the Quantock Hills, which contains Willeton, the seat of the Fitzurses. There is some reason to suppose that he was related to Gilbert Foliot. If so, his enmity to the Archbishop is easily explained. . . .

“The murderers themselves, within the first two years of the murder were living at Court on familiar terms with the King, and constantly joined him in the pleasures of the chase, or else hawking and hunting in England. Moreville, who had been Justice Itinerant in the counties of Northumberland and Cumberland at the time of the murder, was discontinued from his office the ensuing year; but

in the first year of King John he is recorded as paying twenty-five marks and three good palfreys, for holding his court as long as Helwise his wife should continue in a secular habit. He procured about the same period a charter for a fair and market at Kirk Oswald, and died shortly afterwards, leaving two daughters. The sword which he wore during the murder is stated by Camden to have been preserved in his time; and is believed to be the one still shown in the hall of Brayton Castle,<sup>1</sup> between Carlisle and Whitehaven. A cross near the castle of Egremont, which passed into his family, was dedicated to St. Thomas, and the spot where it stood is still called St. Thomas's Cross. Fitzurse is said to have gone to Ireland, and there to have become the ancestor of the M'Mahon family in the north of Ireland—M'Mahon being the Celtic translation of Bear's son. On his flight, the estate which he held in the Isle of Thanet, Barham or Berham Court, lapsed to his kinsman Robert of Berham—Berham being, as it would seem, the English, as M'Mahon was the Irish version, of the name Fitzurse. His estate of Willetton in Somersetshire he made over, half to the Knights of St. John the year after the murder, probably in expiation—the other half to his brother Robert, who built the chapel of Willetton. The descendants of the family lingered for a long time in the neighbourhood under the same name, successively corrupted into Fitzour, Fishour, and Fisher. The family of Bret or Brito was carried on through at least two generations of female descendants. The village of Sanford in Somersetshire is still called from the family Sanford *Bret*.

<sup>1</sup> "Now the property of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., where I saw it in 1856. The sword bears an inscription *Gott bewahr die aufrichten Schotten*. The word *bewahr* proves that the inscription (whatever may be the date of the sword) cannot be older than the sixteenth century" (*Dean Stanley's footnote*).



“ Robert Fitzranulph, who had followed the four knights into the Church retired at that time from the shrievalty of Nottingham and Derby, which he had held during the six previous years, and is said to have founded a priory of Beauchief in expiation of his crime. But his son William succeeded to the office, and was in places of trust about the Court till the reign of John. Robert Brock appears to have had the custody of the castle of Hagenett or Agenet in East Anglia.

“ The history of Tracy is the most remarkable of the whole. Within four years from the murder he appears as Justiciary of Normandy; he was present at Falaise in 1174, when William King of Scotland did homage to Henry II., and in 1176 was succeeded in his office by the Bishop of Winchester. This is the last authentic notice of him. But his name appears long subsequently in the somewhat conflicting traditions of Gloucestershire and Devonshire, the two counties where his chief estates lay. The local histories of the former endeavour to identify him in the wars of John and of Henry III., as late as 1216 and 1222. But even without cutting short his career by any untimely end, such longevity as this would ascribe to him—bringing him to a good old age of ninety—makes it probable that he has been confounded with his son or grandson. There can be little doubt, however, that his family still continues in Gloucestershire. His daughter married Sir Gervase de Courtenay, and it is apparently from their son Oliver de Tracy, who took the name of his mother, that the present Lord Wemyss and Lord Sudley are both descended. The pedigree, in fact, contrary to all received opinions on the subject of judgments on sacrilege, ‘ exhibits a very singular instance of an estate descending for upwards of seven hundred years in the male line of the same

family.' The Devonshire story is more romantic, and probably contains more both of truth and of fable. There are two points on the coast of North Devon to which local tradition has attached his name. One is a huge rent or cavern called *Crookhorn* (from a crooked crag, now washed away) in the dark rocks immediately west of Ilfracombe, which is left dry at low water, but filled with the tide except for three months in the year. At one period within those three months, 'Sir William Tracy,' according to the story of the Ilfracombe boatmen, 'hid himself for a fortnight immediately after the murder, and was fed by his daughter. The other and more remarkable spot is Morthoe, a village situated a few miles further west on the same coast—'the height or hold of Morte.' In the south transept of the parish church of this village, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, is a tomb, for which the transept has evidently been built. On the black marble covering, which lies on a freestone base, is an inscription closing with the name of 'Sir William Tracy—the Lord have mercy on his soul.' This tomb was long supposed, and is still believed by the inhabitants of the village, to contain the remains of the murderer, who is further stated to have founded the church. The female figures sculptured on the tomb—namely, St. Catherine and St. Mary Magdalene, are represented as his wife and daughter. That this story is fabulous has now been clearly proved by documentary evidence, as well as by the appearance of the architecture and the style of the inscription. The present edifice is of the reign of Henry VII.: the tomb and transept are of the reign of Edward II. 'Sir William Tracy' was the rector of the parish who died and left this chantry in 1322; and the figure carved on the tomb represents him in his sacerdotal vestments, with the chalice in his hand. But although there is no proof

that the murderer was buried in the church, and although it is possible that the whole story may have arisen from the mistake concerning this monument, there is still no reason to doubt that in this neighbourhood 'he lived a private life, when wind and weather turned against him.' William of Worcester states that he retired to the western parts of England, and this statement is confirmed by the well-attested fact of his confession to Bartholomew, Bishop of Exeter. The property belonged to the family, and there is an old farm-house, close to the seashore, still called *Woollacombe Tracy*, which is said to mark the spot where he lived in banishment. Beneath it, enclosed in black jagged headlands, extends Morte Bay. Across the bay stretch the *Woollacombe Sands*, remarkable as being the only sands along the north coast, and as presenting a pure and driven expanse for some miles. Here, so runs the legend, he was banished 'to make bundles of the sand, and binds (wisps) of the same.'

"Besides these floating traditions, there are what may be called two standing monuments of his connection with the murder. One is the Priory of *Woodspring*, near the Bristol Channel, which was founded in 1210 by William de Courtenay, probably his grandson, in honour of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Thomas of Canterbury. To this priory lands were bequeathed by Maud the daughter, and Alice the grand-daughter, of the third murderer, Bret or Brito, in the hope, expressed by Alice, that the intercession of the glorious martyr might never be wanting to her and her children. Its ruins still remain under the long promontory, called from it 'St. Thomas's Head.' In the old church of *Kewstoke*, about three miles from *Woodspring*, during some repairs in 1852, a wooden cup, much decayed, was discovered in a hollow in the

back of a statue of the Virgin fixed against the north wall of the choir. The cup contained a substance, which was decided to be the dried residuum of blood. From the connection of the priory with the murderers of Becket, and from the fact that the seal of the Prior contained a cup or chalice as part of its device, there can be little doubt that this ancient cup [now in the Museum at Taunton] was thus preserved at the time of the Dissolution as a valuable relic, and that the blood which it contained was that of the murdered Primate.

“The other memorial of Tracy is still more curious, as partially confirming, and certainly illustrating, the legendary account<sup>2</sup> of his adventure in Calabria. In the archives of Canterbury Cathedral a deed exists by which ‘William de Tracy, for the love of God and the salvation of his own soul and his ancestors, and for the love of the blessed Thomas Archbishop and Martyr,’ makes over to the Chapter of Canterbury the manor of Dacombe, for the clothing and support of a monk to celebrate Masses for the souls of the living and dead. The deed is without date, and it might possibly, therefore, have been ascribed to a descendant of Tracy, and not to the murderer himself. But its date is fixed, by the confirmation of Henry, attested as that confirmation is by ‘Richard elect of Winchester’ and ‘Robert elect of Hereford,’ to the year 1174 (the only year when Henry’s presence in England coincided with such a conjunction in the two sees). The manor of Dacombe or Dockham in Devonshire is still held under the Chapter of Canterbury, and is

<sup>2</sup> “According to this story, he reached the coast of Calabria, and was then seized at Cosenza with a dreadful disorder, which caused him to tear his flesh from his bones with his own hands, calling, ‘Mercy, St. Thomas,’ and there he died miserably, after having made his confession to the Bishop of the place” (p. 105).

thus a present witness of the remorse with which Tracy humbly begged that, on the scene of his deed of blood, Masses might be offered—not for himself individually (this, perhaps, could hardly have been granted)—but as included in the general category of ‘the living and the dead.’ But, further, this deed is found in company with another document, by which it appears that one William Thaun, *before his departure to the Holy Land with his master*, made his wife swear to render up to the Blessed Thomas and the monks of Canterbury all his lands, given him by his lord, William de Tracy. He died on his journey, his widow married again, and her second husband prevented her fulfilment of her oath; she, however, survived him, and the lands were duly rendered up. From this statement we learn that Tracy really did attempt, if not fulfil, a journey to the Holy Land. But the attestation of the bequest of Tracy himself enables us to identify the story still further. One of the witnesses is the Abbot of St. Euphemia, and there can be little doubt that this Abbey of St. Euphemia was the celebrated convent of that name in Calabria, not twenty miles from Cosenza, the very spot where the detention, though not the death, of Tracy, is thus, as it would appear, justly placed by the old story” (Dean Stanley’s *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, 9th edition, pp. 70, 106).

## NOTE L (page 469).

## CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

In Lanfranc's church the central tower was surmounted by a golden cherub, whence it obtained the name of "Angel Steeple." The nave had eight columns on each side, and ended with two lofty towers with gilt pinnacles. A gilded corona hung in this nave. The roodloft separated the central tower from the nave, and before it on the western side stood the altar of the Holy Cross. The rood-beam upheld a great cross and two cherubs besides the images of the Blessed Virgin and St. John. The Lady Chapel was at the eastern end of the north aisle. The two western transepts were alike, each having a strong pillar in the middle which supported a groining that sprung from the transept walls. In the south transept on the groining was the organ, and beside it in an apse the altar of All Saints; beneath in the same apse on the church floor the altar of St. Michael. Between this and the choir were two flights of steps, one that went down into the crypt, the other a longer flight that led to the upper parts of the church. In the south transept the lower altar was that of St. Benedict, and above the vault was the altar of St. Blaise. On this side also there were two flights of steps, leading down to the crypt and up to the choir aisle. Before Gervase wrote, the pillar in the north transept was taken away with the vaulting it supported, that the altar erected where the martyrdom took place there might be better seen, and where the vaulting had been a triforium or passage was made from which curtains and tapestry might be hung. From the transept there were steps up to

the floor of the central tower, and thence again steps that led up to the choir.

The choir was built by Conrad, who was Prior under St. Anselm, Lanfranc's successor, and it was called his "glorious" choir. This choir was burnt on the 5th of September, 1174. There were nine pillars on each side of the choir, which ended in an apse composed of six of the pillars. In the wall over the arches on these pillars were "small and obscure" windows, above which were the triforium and the upper windows. Then came the ceiling, which was beautifully painted. It was here that the fire seized the church, by sparks from houses burning outside, which sparks were driven by a strong south wind under the lead roof.

A low wall between the pillars shut in the monks' choir from the aisles, and the enclosure embraced the high altar and the altars of St. Elphege on the north side of the high altar, and that of St. Dunstan on the south, where the bodies of those two saints rested. The presbytery was raised three steps above the choir, and the high altar three steps higher still. The patriarchal chair [of one stone, says Gervase; of great stones cemented, according to Eadmer] was immediately behind the high altar, looking towards it, raised on eight steps. At the eastern corners of the high altar were two wooden columns, decorated with gold and silver, which supported a large crossbeam over the altar. On it was a statue of our Lord in majesty, statues of St. Dunstan and St. Elphege, and seven shrines containing relics. Between the columns stood a cross gilt, adorned with sixty bright crystals. The choir was lighted by a gilded corona containing four-and-twenty wax candles. Under the high altar in the crypt was the altar of the Blessed Virgin, to whom the whole crypt was dedicated.

There were three windows between Lanfranc's transepts and the eastern transepts, the walls of which were opposite to the fifth and seventh pillar of the choir on each side. Each of these eastern transepts had two apses containing altars, the southernmost of the two in the north-east transept being the altar of St. Stephen, with that of St. Nicholas beneath it in the crypt, the other being St. Martin's, the corresponding altar in the crypt being that of St. Mary Magdalene. The south-east transept had the altars of St. Gregory and St. John the Evangelist, with those of St. Ouen and St. Paulinus beneath them in the crypt, and St. Catherine's in front of St. Ouen's. Following the choir aisle eastwards, there was on each side a tower. That on the north side of the church had in it the altar of St. Andrew, with the altar of the Holy Innocents in the crypt; the tower on the south side, which had been originally dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, had been called St. Anselm's, since the body of that Saint was placed behind its altar, and beneath it in the crypt was the altar of St. Gabriel. Between these two towers the chapel of the Blessed Trinity extended eastwards. Behind the altar on the right side was St. Odo, on the left St. Wilfrid of York; on the south side by the wall lay Lanfranc, by the north wall Theobald. Beneath in the crypt were two altars, on the south that of St. Augustine, the Apostle of England, on the north St. John the Baptist's. In this lower chapel in the crypt was a column in the middle that bore the vault, and on its eastern side was the place chosen for the tomb of St. Thomas.

Such was the church as St. Thomas knew it, Lanfranc's church with Conrad's glorious choir. When the choir was burnt, William of Sens superintended the work for four years (1175 to 1178) till



he was disabled by a fall of the scaffolding. He was succeeded in the fifth year (1179) by his namesake William, an Englishman, who completed the north and south eastern transepts and the vault over the high altar. The chapel of the Blessed Trinity was then enlarged, the old chapel being pulled down, and the crypt beneath, where St. Thomas lay in a temporary wooden chapel, was rebuilt, eight columns extending beyond the old foundations into the churchyard of the monks east of the church. The altar of the Holy Trinity, where St. Thomas used to say Mass, was taken down on the 8th of July, 1180, and the altar of St. John, the northernmost of the two altars in the south-eastern transept, was made of it, which Gervase notes lest the memory of St. Thomas's favourite altar should be lost. As a temporary arrangement St. Odo was placed beneath St. Dunstan's shrine, and St. Wilfrid beneath St. Elphege's; and Lanfranc was transferred to St. Martin's chapel, and Theobald to that of our Lady in the nave. Ultimately (Cotton MSS. Galba, E. iv.; Dart, App. p. xlii.), St. Odo and St. Wilfrid were placed in shrines "at the Crown" on the south and north sides respectively, and St. Blaise behind the high altar. St. Andrew's and St. Anselm's towers were carefully preserved, but as they radiated from the original apse of the church, the space between them was narrower than the old choir, and the new chapel of the Blessed Trinity being made wider than the old one, the line of the pillars follows an unusual and strikingly beautiful curve.

Such is Gervase's account of Christ Church, Canterbury, as it was in the days of St. Thomas, and as it was rebuilt shortly after the fire that followed so closely on his death. Of Lanfranc's work not much is now remaining. His nave and transepts were rebuilt by Prior Chillenden between

1379 and 1400, and a turret stair in the north transept and perhaps some flagstones are all that were there at the time of the martyrdom. The descent to the crypt on both sides is however part of the old work. About 1450 or 1460 Prior Goldston I. transferred the Lady Chapel from the nave aisle to a new chapel which took the place of St. Benedict's altar. The central tower was built by Prior Goldston II. between 1495 and 1503, with arches between the piers to serve as buttresses, the arch however towards the Martyrdom being left open. A lantern above Becket's Crown was begun by the same Prior, but the work was abandoned when a few courses had been built, and in 1748 the fragment of a lantern base was finished off as at present, at the expense of Capt. Humphrey Pudner, R.N. (*Christ Church, Canterbury, a Chronological Conspectus of the existing Architecture.* By W. A. Scott Robertson, Hon. Can., 1881).

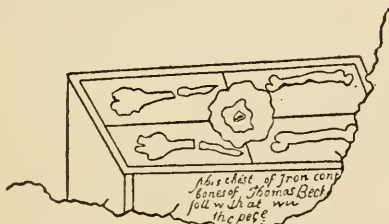
There is little therefore in the upper church that can be pointed out as having existed in the time of St. Thomas, excepting the outer walls of the choir aisles, the eastern transepts with their beautiful towers, and the chapels of St. Andrew and St. Anselm. But the grand crypt under the choir, built between 1096 and 1100 by Prior Ernulf, when St. Anselm was Archbishop, and the sculptures of its piers and capitals, added between 1135 and 1165, remain substantially what they were when St. Thomas was Archbishop.

## NOTE M (page 475).

## THE HEAD OF ST. THOMAS.

Mr. Gough Nichols in his *Erasmus* (p. 118) refers to a sketch of the coffer containing the relics of St. Thomas, given on the same page of the Cottonian MS. (Tib. E. viii. fol. 269) as the sketch of the shrine already given (*Supra*, p. 478). He reproduces the sketch very unfaithfully, and describes it as if the head of the Saint had been "exhibited on a square table, together with bones."

This error is very properly corrected by Dean Stanley (p. 232), who rightly calls it, "not a table, but the identical iron chest deposited by Langton within the golden shrine."



The inscription, which was injured by the Cottonian fire, is thus restored by Dean Stanley from Dugdale. "*This chest of iron contained the bones of Thomas Becket, skull and all, with the wound of his death and the pece cut out of his skull laid in the same wound.*"

Dean Stanley further says (p. 254), that in Henry VIII.'s time "the reputed skull in the golden 'Head' was treated as an imposture, from its being so much larger than the portion that was found in the shrine with the rest of the bones." But, in truth, no such assertion was made of the

skull or of the crown *in the golden head*. The passage from the Royal Declaration of 1539 is given by Mr. Albert Way in his note to Dean Stanley's work (p. 285), that Becket's "head almost whole was found with the rest of the bones closed within the shrine, and that there was in that church a great skull of another head, but much greater by three quarter parts than that part which was lacking in the head closed within the shrine."

Now we know from Erasmus, who wrote about 1524, that "the perforated skull of the martyr" was shown in the crypt. "Hinc," that is from the "sword's point," "digressi subimus cryptoporticum: ea habet suos mystagogos: illic primum exhibetur calvaria martyris perforata; reliqua tecta sunt argento, summa cranii pars nuda patet osculo" (Stanley, p. 284). The portion cut off, the *corona capitis tota amputata* of Fitzstephen, we have seen was kept in a gilt head or bust of the Saint in "Becket's Crown" in the upper church, of which Erasmus says, "Illic in sacello quodam ostenditur tota facies optimi viri inaurata, multisque gemmis insignita"—in fact, the costly reliquary made by Prior Henry of Eastry *pro corona S. Thomæ*. "Matthew Parker, in his *Antiquitates Britannicæ Ecclesiæ*, at the close of his Life of Becket, observes that at first St. Thomas was placed less ostentatiously in the crypt: 'Deinde sublimiori et excelso ac sumptuoso delubro conditus fuerit, in quo caput ejus seorsim a cadavere situm, Thomæ Martyris Corona appellabatur, ad quod peregrinantes undique confluerent, muneraque pretiosa deferrent'" (Stanley, p. 282). This would seem to be, not the *caput* but the *corona*, which was kept in the upper church. Then we have the narrative of the visit of Madame de Montreuil in August, 1538. "By ten of the clock, she, her gentlewomen, and the [French] Ambassador went to

the church, where I showed her St. Thomas's shrine, and all such other things worthy the sight; at the which she was not a little marvelled of the great riches thereof, saying it to be innumerable, and that if she had not seen it, all the men in the world could never have made her to believe it. Thus overlooking and viewing more than an hour, as well the shrine as St. Thomas's head, being at both set cushions to kneel, and the Prior opening St. Thomas's head, saying to her three times, 'This is Saint Thomas's head,' and offered her to kiss; but she neither kneeled, nor would kiss it, but still viewing the riches thereof" (Nichols' *Erasmus*, p. 119). This may have been the head of St. Thomas in the crypt, as the Prior opened the reliquary that the head might be kissed, which is in accordance with the account given by Erasmus. Or, not improbably, the crown of the head in the upper church was also given to be kissed, called, like the other relic, "St. Thomas's head," as we have seen it was called by the Black Prince.

The very next month after this visit the Royal Commissioners for the destruction of shrines reached Canterbury. We may be sure that the first thing done was the removal of the precious stones and the gold and silver. The shrine was stripped till it was as plain as the sketch in the Cottonian MS., and we may be sure that the reliquaries of the head and of the crown did not escape. So far, however, the war was against the shrine rather than the Saint, and the Commissioners cared more for chests of gold and jewels, "such as six or eight men could but convey one out of the church" than for the bones of the saints. The head when taken out of its reliquary and the crown from the bust, were placed by the monks in the iron chest which was taken out of the shrine. This we learn from the sketch in the Cottonian MS.,

which must have been made after the despoiling of the shrine, and Mr. Way finds a needless difficulty "in reconciling the discrepancies" between the preceding accounts and the inscription on the Cottonian sketch. Dean Stanley's conjecture does not seem probable, that the sketch was "not meant to portray the actual relics (which were inside), but only a carving or painting of them on the lid." It is much more likely that the draughtsman desired to place on record at once the appearance of the iron chest and its contents. If, a month before, the head was shown in a reliquary apart from the chest, why should it have been painted or carved on the lid of the chest? As to the statement of the Royal Declaration of the following year, that the "head almost whole was found with the rest of the bones closed within the shrine," this must mean that it was "found" later, for earlier than the despoiling it was not within the shrine. Now this might easily be, for it seems very probable that the relics of St. Thomas were first buried in the iron chest, and thus Harpsfeld comes to say, "We have of late unshrined him and buried his holy relics" (Stanley, p. 254); and Pope Paul III. declares that King Henry VIII. "*Divi Thomæ . . . ossa . . . exhumari et comburi et cineres in ventum spargi jussit.*" This inference, that the bones of St. Thomas were buried and before long exhumed and burnt, may perhaps help to reconcile the conflicting statements that they were buried and not burnt, burnt and not buried. First, the shrine was despoiled and the reliquaries taken away; then the iron chest, now for the first time containing both parts of the head, with the other bones, was buried; then it was exhumed, and "the head almost whole was found with the rest of the bones;" and lastly, all were burnt. This reconciles every statement.

## NOTE N (page 481).

## ERASMUS' VISIT TO CANTERBURY.

The following extracts are taken from Mr. Gough Nichols' translation of the account (*Pilgrimages of St. Mary of Walsingham and St. Thomas of Canterbury*. By Desiderius Erasmus. Translated with notes by John Gough Nichols, F.S.A. Westminster, 1849, pp. 44—58) that Erasmus wrote, half or more than half in mockery, of his visit to St. Thomas.

“That part of England which is opposite to France and Flanders is called Kent. Its chief city is Canterbury. In this city there are two monasteries nearly contiguous, each following the Rule of St. Benedict. That which is dedicated to St. Augustine seems the older; the other, which is now called St. Thomas's,<sup>1</sup> appears to have been the see of the Archbishop, where with a few chosen monks he passed his life, as prelates still have houses near to the church, but separate from the houses of the other canons. For formerly almost all bishops and canons were alike monks. That is evidenced by clear remains of antiquity. But the church dedicated to St. Thomas erects itself to heaven with such majesty that even from a distance it strikes religious awe into the beholders. So now

<sup>1</sup> It is not true that the dedication of the Church was changed, but it is true that the universal phrase was “going to St. Thomas.” “Though the Metropolitan Church, in which he suffered, bore the title of the Blessed Trinity, God yielded it to His Martyr, as though he had bought it at the price of his blood, and it began rather to be called by his name, so that any one would count it no slight fault if, on going to Canterbury or returning, he were not to say that he was ‘going to St. Thomas,’ or that he was ‘returning from St. Thomas.’” (Lambeth MS. *Materials*, iv. p. 142).

with its splendour it dazzles the eyes of its neighbour, and as it were casts into the shade a place which was anciently most sacred. There are two vast towers, that seem to salute the visitor from afar, and make the surrounding country far and wide resound with the wonderful booming of their brazen bells. In the porch of the church, which is towards the south, are stone statues of the three knights who with impious hands murdered the most holy man. Their family names are inscribed: Tuscus, Fuscus, and Berrus.<sup>2</sup> . . .

“On your entrance the edifice at once displays itself in all its spaciousness and majesty. To that part any one is admitted. . . .

“Is nothing to be seen there?

“Nothing, except the magnitude of the structure, and some books fixed to the pillars, among which is the Gospel of Nicodemus, and the monument of I know not who.

“What comes next?

“The iron screens stop further progress, but yet admit a view of the whole space from the choir to the end of the church. To the choir you mount by many steps, under which is a passage leading north. At that spot is shown a wooden altar, dedicated to the holy Virgin, but mean, nor remarkable in any respect, unless as a monument of antiquity, putting to shame the extravagance of these times. There the pious man is said to have breathed his last farewell to the Virgin when his death was at hand. On the altar is the point of the sword, with which the head of the most excellent prelate was cleft, and his brain stirred, that he

<sup>2</sup> Dean Stanley says (p. 113 *note*) that in Hentzner's *Travels in England*, 1598, it is mentioned that the names engraved in the south porch, under incised figures of three soldiers, were Tusci, Fusci, and Berri.



might be the more instantly despatched. The sacred rust of this iron, through love of the Martyr, was religiously kissed. Leaving this spot, we descended to the crypt. It has its own priests. There was first exhibited the perforated skull of the Martyr; the forehead is left bare to be kissed, while the other parts are covered with silver. At the same time is shown a slip of lead, engraved with his name, 'Thomas Acrensis.' There also hang in the dark the hair-shirts, the girdles and bandages, with which that prelate subdued his flesh; striking horror with their very appearance, and reproaching us for our indulgence and our luxuries. . . .

"From hence we returned into the choir. On the north side the armories were unlocked: it is wonderful to tell what a quantity of bones was there brought out. . . . We next viewed the table of the altar and its ornaments, and then the articles which are kept under the altar, all most sumptuous. . . . After this we were led to the sacristy. . . . There we saw the pastoral staff of St. Thomas. It appeared to be a cane covered with silver plate; it was of very little weight and no workmanship, nor stood higher than to the waist.

"Was there no cross?"

"I saw none. A pall was shown, which, though wholly of silk, was of a coarse texture and unadorned with gold or jewels. There was also a sudary, dirty from wear, and retaining manifest signs of blood. These monuments of the simplicity of ancient times we willingly kissed.

"Are not they shown to anybody?"

"By no means, my good friend.

"Whence then was such confidence reposed in you, that no secret thing was reserved?"

"I had some acquaintance with the Reverend

Father William Warham, the Archbishop; he had given me a note of introduction. . . .

“From this place, then, we were conducted back to the upper floor, for behind the high altar you ascend again, as into a new church. There in a little chapel is shown the whole figure of the excellent man, gilt, and adorned with many jewels (*Illic in sacello quodam ostenditur tota facies optimi viri inaurata, multisque gemmis insignita*).<sup>3</sup> . . .

The Prior “opened to us the shrine, in which what is left of the body of the holy man is said to rest.

“Did you see the bones?”

“That is not permitted: nor indeed is it possible without the aid of a ladder: but a wooden canopy covers the golden shrine, and when that is drawn up with ropes, inestimable treasures are opened to view. . . . The least valuable portion was gold: every part glistened, shone, and sparkled with rare and very large jewels, some of them exceeding the size of a goose’s egg. There some monks stood around with much veneration: the covering being raised, we all worshipped. The Prior with a white rod pointed out each jewel, telling its name in French, its value, and the name of its donor; for the principal of them were offerings sent by sovereign princes. . . .

“From hence we returned to the crypt, where the Virgin Mother has her abode, but a somewhat

3 In an additional note (p. 245) Mr. Gough Nichols abandons the translation here given, and considers it “most probable that this was a portrait of Becket, painted in brilliant colours upon a gold ground.” Far more probable is Mr. Way’s conclusion that it was “one of those gorgeously enriched busts, of life size, covered with precious metals and jewels, a class of reliquaries of which remarkable examples still exist” (Stanley’s *Canterbury*, p. 285).

dark one, being hedged in by more than one iron screen.

“What was she afraid of?”

“Nothing, I imagine, except thieves. For I have never seen anything more burdened with riches.

“You are telling me of untold wealth.

“When lamps were brought, we beheld a more than royal spectacle.

“Does it surpass Walsingham in riches?”

“In outward show it far surpasses her; what her hidden riches are she only knows herself. This is not shown except to men of high rank, or great friends. Lastly, we were conducted back to the sacristy: there was brought out a box covered with black leather; it was laid upon the table and opened; immediately all knelt and worshipped.

“What was in it?”

“Some torn fragments of linen, and most of them retaining marks of dirt.”

## NOTE O (page 516).

## MEMORIALS AND RELICS OF ST. THOMAS.

“ Far and wide the fame of St. Thomas of Canterbury spread. Other English saints, however great their local celebrity, were for the most part not known beyond the limits of Britain. . . . But there is probably no country in Europe which does not exhibit traces of Becket. In Rome, the chapel of the English College marks the site of the ancient Church dedicated to him, and the relics attesting his martyrdom are laid up in the Basilica of St. Maria Maggiore beside the cradle of Bethlehem. In Verona, the Church of St. Tommaso Cantuariense contains a tooth, and did contain till recently part of his much contested skull. A portion of an arm is still shown to inquiring travellers in a convent at Florence; another portion in the Church of St. Waldetrude at Mons; at Lisbon, in the time of Fuller, both arms were exhibited in the English nunnery;<sup>1</sup> his chalice at Bourbourg, his hair-shirt at Douay, his mitre at St. Omer. In France, the

<sup>1</sup> “The English Nuns do pretend that they have both the arms of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury; and yet Pope Paul III. in a public Bull set down by Sanders doth pitifully complain of the cruelty of King Henry VIII. for causing the bones of Becket to be burned, and the ashes scattered in the wind: the solemnity whereof is recorded in our chronicles. And how his arms should escape that *bone-fire*, is to me incredible” (Fuller, *Church History*, book vi. quoted by Mr. Gough Nichols). Two things are worth remarking here: that Fuller should distinctly agree with Stowe that St. Thomas's bones were burnt; and secondly, that the English Nuns of Lisbon, the direct descendants of Sion House, now at Spetisbury, have no such relics of St. Thomas and have no record that their convent ever had them.

scene of his exile, his history can be tracked again and again. On the heights of Fourvières, overlooking the city of Lyons, is a chapel dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. Four years before his death, it is said, he was walking on the terraced bank of the river underneath, and being asked to whom the chapel should be dedicated, he replied, 'To the next martyr,' on which his companion remarked, 'Perhaps then to you.' The same story with the same issue is also told at St. Lo in Normandy. In the same province, at Val Richer, a tract of ground, still within the memory of men, was left unploughed, in recollection of a great English saint who had there performed his devotions. In Sens the vestments in which he officiated<sup>2</sup> and an ancient altar at which he said Mass, are exhibited in the Cathedral; and the old convent at St. Colombe, where he resided, is shown outside the city. At Lille there is a house with an inscription commemorative of his having passed a night there. In the magnificent windows of Chartres, of Sens, and of St. Ouen, the story of his life holds a conspicuous place. At Palermo, his figure is still to be seen in the Church of Monreale, founded by William the Good in the year of his canonization. Even far away in Syria, St. Thomas was not forgotten by the crusading army. His name was inscribed on the banner of Archbishop Baldwin, at Acre. William, chaplain of the Dean of St. Paul's, on his voyage thither, made a vow that, if he entered the place in safety, he would build there a chapel to the Martyr, with an adjoining cemetery

<sup>2</sup> The length of these vestments confirms the account of his great stature. On the feast of St. Thomas, till very recently, they were worn for that one day by the officiating priest. The tallest priest was always selected—and, even then, it was necessary to pin them up (*Dean Stanley's note*).

to bury the departed. The city was taken and the vow accomplished. William passed his life within the precincts of his church, engaged as Prior in the pious work of interring the dead. King Richard, at the same time and place, founded an Order of St. Thomas under the jurisdiction of the Templars. And from these circumstances, one of the names by which the Saint henceforward was most frequently known was 'Thomas Acrensis,' or 'St. Thomas of Acon or Acre.'

"To trace his churches and memorials through the British dominions would be an endless labour. In Scotland, within seven years from the murder, the noble Abbey of Aberbrothock was raised to his memory by William the Lion, who chose it for the place of his own interment, partly, it would seem, from an early friendship contracted with the Archbishop at Henry's Court, partly from a lively sense of the Martyr's power in bringing about his defeat and capture at Alnwick. A mutilated figure of St. Thomas has survived amidst the ruins of the monastery. In the rough border-land between the two kingdoms, no oath was considered so binding in the thirteenth century, as one which was sworn upon 'the holy mysteries' and 'the sword of St. Thomas.' This, in all probability was the sword which Hugh de Moreville wore on the fatal day, and which, being preserved in his native province, thus obtained the same kind of honour in the north as that of Richard le Bret in the south, and was long regarded as the chief glory of Carlisle Cathedral. In England there was hardly a county which did not possess some church or convent connected with St. Thomas. The immense preponderance of the name of 'Thomas' in England, as compared with its use in other countries, probably arose from the reverence due to the great English Saint. Next to

the name of 'John,' common to all Christendom, the most familiar to English ears is 'Tom' or 'Thomas.'<sup>3</sup> How few of these who bear or give it, reflect that it is a vestige of the national feeling of the twelfth century! Another instance may be found in the frequency of the name of 'Thomas,' 'the great Tom,' applied to so many of our ancient bells. But at that time the reminiscences of St. Thomas were more substantial. Besides the swords already mentioned, probably of Moreville and of Le Bret, a third sword, perhaps of Tracy or Fitzurse, was preserved in the Temple Church of London. At Derby, at Warwick, at St. Albans, at Glastonbury, were portions of his dress; at Chester his girdle, at Alnwick or at Corby his cup,<sup>4</sup> at Bury his knife and boots, at Windsor and Peterborough drops of his blood. The Priory of Woodspring on the Bristol Channel, the Abbey of Beauchief in Derbyshire, were direct expiations of the crime. The very name of the latter was traced by popular, though probably erroneous belief, to its connection with the 'Bellum caput' or 'Beautiful head' of the slaughtered Archbishop.<sup>5</sup> London was crowded with memorials of its illustrious citizen. The chapel

3 William was, in St. Thomas's time, the commonest of Christian names among the Normans. Canon Robertson quotes a story from Robert of Thorigny, saying that when the younger King Henry kept the Christmas of 1171-2 at Bur, it was ordered that no one who did not bear the name should dine in a certain room; and that, when all others had been turned out, a hundred and seventeen knights, all named William, remained, besides many other Williams who dined with the King in his hall (Migne, *Patrol.* clx. 514; *Materials*, i. p. xxviii.).

4 Mr. Gough Nichols (p. 229 note) says that the cup at Corby Castle is really of the early part of the sixteenth century.

5 Pegge proves that the ground on which the Abbey stands was called Beauchief or the *Beautiful headland*, prior to the building of the convent (*Dean Stanley's note*).

of St. Thomas of Acre, now merged in the Mercers' Hall, marked the place of his birth, and formed one of the chief stations in the procession of the Lord Mayor. The chapel which guarded the ancient London Bridge was dedicated to St. Thomas. The seal of the bridge 'had of old the effigies of Thomas of Becket [a Londoner born] upon it with this inscription in the name of the city,

Me quæ te peperit, ne cesses, Thoma, tueri.'<sup>6</sup>

The solitary vacant niche, which is seen in the front of Lambeth Palace, facing the river, was once filled by a statue of the great Primate, to which the watermen of the Thames doffed their caps as they rowed by in their countless barges" (Dean Stanley's *Canterbury*, pp. 196—199).

<sup>6</sup> Howel, *Londinopolis*, p. 395.



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