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Transcriber's note

Some of the spellings and hyphenations in the original are unusual; they have not been changed. A few obvious typographical errors have been corrected, and they and other possible errors are indicated with a mouse-hover and listed at the end of this etext.

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HUGH, BISHOP OF LINCOLN

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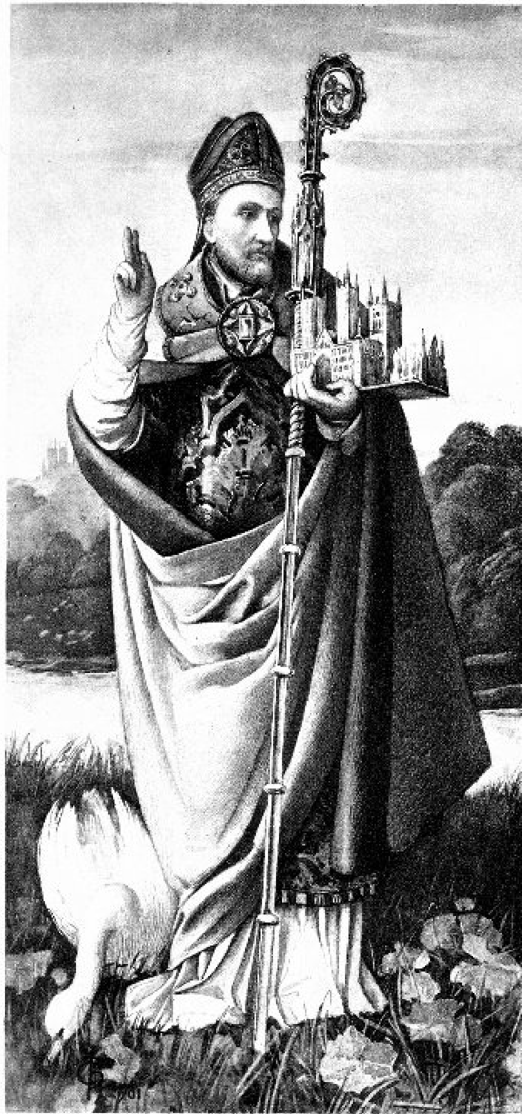

Hugh of Lincoln.

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[Pg iii]

HUGH
BISHOP OF LINCOLN

A SHORT STORY

OF ONE OF

THE MAKERS OF MEDIÆVAL ENGLAND

BY

CHARLES L. MARSON

CURATE OF HAMBRIDGE

AUTHOR OF “THE PSALMS AT WORK,” ETC.

Tua me, genitor, tua tristis imago
Sæpius occurens, hæc limina tendere adegit.
Stant sale Tyrrheno classes. Da jungere dextram
Da, genitor; teque amplexu ne subtrahe nostro.

Æn. VI. 695.

LONDON
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INTRODUCTION

In a short biography the reader must expect short statements, rather than detailed arguments, and in a popular tale he will not look for embattled lists of authorities. But if he can be stirred up to search further into the matter for himself, he will find a list of authorities ancient and modern come not unacceptable to begin upon.

The author has incurred so many debts of kindness in this work from many friends, and from many who were before not even acquaintances, that he must flatly declare himself bankrupt to his creditors, and rejoice if they will but grant him even a second-class certificate. Among the major creditors he must acknowledge his great obligations to the hospitable Chancellor of Lincoln and Mrs. Crowfoot, to the Rev. A. Curtois, Mr. Haig, and some others, all of whom were willing and even anxious that the story of their saint should be told abroad, even by the halting tongues of far-away messengers. The same kind readiness appeared at Witham: and indeed

everybody, who knew already about St. Hugh, has seemed anxious that the knowledge of him [Pg viii] should be spread abroad. It has snowed books, pamphlets, articles, views, maps, and guesses; and if much has remained unsaid or been said with incautious brusqueness, rather than with balanced oppressiveness, the reader who carps will always be welcome to such material as the author has by him, for elucidating the truth. If he has been misled by a blind guide, that guide must plead that he has consulted good oculists and worthy spectacle-makers, and has had every good intention of steering clear of the ditch.

Though what a man is counts for more than what he does, yet the services of St. Hugh to England may be briefly summed up. They were (1) Spiritual. He made for personal holiness, uncorruptness of public and private life. He raised the sense of the dignity of spiritual work, which was being rapidly subordinated to civic work and rule. He made people understand that moral obligations were very binding upon all men. (2) Political. He made for peace at home and abroad: at home by restraining the excesses of forestars and tyrants; abroad by opposing the constant war policy against France. (3) Constitutional. He first encountered and checked the overgrown power of the Crown, and laid down limits and principles which resulted in the Church policy of John's reign and the triumph of Magna Carta. (4) Architectural. He fully developed—even if he did not, as some assert, invent—the Early English style. (5) Ecclesiastical. He counterbalanced St. Thomas of Canterbury, and diverted much of that martyr's influence from an [Pg ix] irreconcileable Church policy to a more reasonable, if less exalted, notion of liberty. (6) He was a patron of letters, and encouraged learning by supporting schools, libraries, historians, poets, and commentators.

Ancient authorities for his Life are:—(1) The Magna Vita, by Chaplain Adam (Rolls); (2) Metrical Life, Ed. Dimock, Lincoln, 1860; (3) Giraldus Cambrensis, VII. (Rolls); (4) Hoveden's Chronicle (Rolls); (5) Benedicti, Gesta R. Henry II. (Rolls); (6) for trifles, Matthew Paris, I. and II. (Rolls), John de Oxenden (ditto), Ralph de Diceto (ditto), Flores Histor. (ditto), Annales Monastici (ditto); (7) also for collateral information, Capgrave Illustrious Henries (Rolls), William of Newburgh, Richard of Devizes, Gervase's Archbishops of Canterbury, and Robert de Monte, Walter de Mapes' De Nugis (Camden Soc). Of modern authorities, (1) Canon Perry's Life (Murray, 1879) and his article in the Dictionary of National Biography come first; (2) Vie de St. Hughues (Montreuil, 1890); (3) Fr. Thurston's translation and adaptation of this last (Burns and Oates, 1898); (4) St. Hugh's Day at Lincoln, A.D. 1900, Ed. Precentor Bramley (pub. by Clifford Thomas, Lincoln, N.D.); (5) Guides to the Cathedral, by Precentor Venables, and also by Mr. Kendrick; (6) Archæological matter, Archæological Institute (1848), Somerset Archæolog. XXXIV., Somerset Notes and Queries, vol. IV., 1895, Lincoln Topographical Soc., 1841-2; (7) Collateral information —*cf.* Miss Norgate's "England under Angevin Kings" (Macmillan), Robert Grosseteste, F. E. Stevenson (ditto), Stubbs' "Opera Omnia" of course, Diocesan History of Lincoln, Grande [Pg x] Chartreuse (Burns and Oates), "Court Life under Plantagenets" (Hall), "Highways in Normandy" (Dearmer);(8) of short studies, Mr. Froude's and an article in the *Church Quarterly*, XXXIII., and Mrs. Charles' "Martyrs and Saints" (S.P.C.K.) are the chief.

Of this last book it is perhaps worth saying that if any man will take the trouble to compare it with John Brady's *Clavis Calendaria*, of which the third edition came out in 1815, he will see how much the tone of the public has improved, both in courtesy towards and in knowledge of the great and good men of the Christian faith.

St. Hugh's Post-Reformation history is worth noting for the humour of it. He is allowed in the Primer Calendar by unauthorised Marshall, 1535; out in Crumwell and Hilsey's, 1539; out by the authorised Primer of King and Clergy, 1545; still out in the Prayer-books of 1549 and 1552; in again in the authorised Primer of 1553; out of the Prayer-book of 1559; in the Latin one of 1560; still in both the Orarium and the New Calendar of the next year, though out of the Primer 1559; in the Preces Privatas 1564, with a scornful *admonitio* to say that "the names of saints, as they call them, are left, not because we count them divine, or even reckon some of them good, or, even if they were greatly good, pay them divine honour and worship; but because they are the mark and index of certain matters dependent upon fixed times, to be ignorant of which is most inconvenient to our people"—to wit, fairs and so on. Since which time St. Hugh has not been cast out of the Calendar, but is in for ever.

[Pg xi] In the text is no mention of the poor swineherd, God rest him! His stone original lives in Lincoln cloisters, and a reproduction stands on the north pinnacle of the west front (whereas Hugh is on

the south pinnacle), put there because he hoarded a peck of silver pennies to help build the House of God. He lives on in stone and in the memories of the people, a little flouted in literature, but, if moral evidence counts, unscathedly genuine: honourable in himself, to the saint who inspired him, and to the men who hailed him as the bishop's mate—no mean builder in the house [Pg xii] not made with hands.

[Pg 1]

CHAPTER I

THE BOY HUGH

St. Hugh is exactly the kind of saint for English folk to study with advantage. Some of us listen with difficulty to tales of heroic virgins, who pluck out their eyes and dish them up, or to the report of antique bishops whose claim to honour rests less upon the nobility of their characters than upon the medicinal effect of their post-mortem humours; but no one can fail to be struck with this brave, clean, smiling face, which looks out upon us from a not impossible past, radiant with sense and wit, with holiness and sanity combined, whom we can all reverence as at once a saint of God and also one of the fine masculine Makers of England. We cherish a good deal of romance about the age in which St. Hugh lived. It is the age of fair Rosamond, of Crusades, of lion-hearted King Richard, and of Robin Hood. It is more soberly an age of builders, of reformers, of scholars, and of poets. If troubadours did not exactly "touch guitars," at least songsters tackled verse-making and helped to refine the table manners of barons and retainers by singing at dinner [Pg 2] time. The voice of law too was not silent amid arms. Our constitutional government, already begotten, was being born and swaddled. The races were being blended. Though England was still but a northern province of a kingdom, whose metropolis was Rouen, yet that kingdom was becoming rather top-heavy, and inclined to shift its centre of gravity northwards. So from any point of view the time is interesting. It is essentially an age of monks and of monasteries; perhaps one should say the end of the age of monastic influence. Pope Eugenius III., the great Suger and St. Bernard, all died when Hugh was a young man. The great enthusiasm for founding monasteries was just beginning to ebb. Yet a hundred and fifteen English houses were founded in Stephen's reign, and a hundred and thirteen in the reign of Henry II., and the power of the monastic bodies was still almost paramount in the church. It was to the monasteries that men still looked for learning and peace, and the monasteries were the natural harbours of refuge for valiant men of action, who grew sick of the life of everlasting turmoil in a brutal and anarchic world. Indeed, the very tumults and disorders of the state gave the monasteries their hold over the best of the men of action. As the civil life grew more quiet and ordered, the enthusiasm for the cloister waned, and with it the standard of zeal perceptibly fell to a lower level, not without grand protest and immense effort of holy men to keep the divine fire from sinking.

Hugh of Avalon was born in Avalon Castle in 1140, a year in which the great tempest of Stephen's misrule was raging. In France, Louis VII. has already succeeded his father, Louis VI.; [Pg 3] the Moors are in Spain, and Arnold of Brescia is the centre of controversy. Avalon Castle lies near Pontcharra, which is a small town on the Bredo, which flows into the Isere and thence into the Rhone. It is not to be confused with Avallon of Yonne. The Alpine valleys about Pontcharra are lovely with flowers and waters, and have in them the "foot-prints of lost Paradise." Burgundy here owed some loyalty to the empire rather than to France, and its dukes tried to keep up a semi-independent kingdom by a balanced submission to their more powerful neighbours. The very name Hugh was an old ducal name, and there is little doubt that William de Avalon, Hugh's father, claimed kin with the princes of his land. He was a "flower of knighthood" in battles not now known. He was also by heredity of a pious mind. Hugh's mother, Anna, a lovely and wealthy lady, of what stock does not appear, was herself of saintly make. She "worshipped Christ in His limbs," by constantly washing the feet of lepers, filling these wretched outcasts with hope, reading to them and supplying their wants. She seems to have been a woman of intellectual parts, for though she died before Hugh was ten, he had already learned under her, if not from her, to use language as the sacrament of understanding and understanding as the symbol of truth. He had some grip of grammar and logic, and though he did not brood over "Ovid's leasings

or Juvenal's rascalities," rather choosing to ponder upon the two Testaments, yet we may gather that his Latin classics were not neglected. The spiritual life of Grenoble had been nourished by a [Pg 4] noble bishop, also Hugh, who had seen the vision of seven stars resting upon a certain plot of ground, which induced him to grant the same to St. Bruno, the founder of the Grande Chartreuse. Here he served himself as a simple monk, laying aside his bishop's robes, not a score of miles from Avalon. This Hugh was a religious and free thinking man, who, though he found evil a great metaphysical stumbling block to faith, yet walked painfully by the latter. He died in 1132 or thereabouts, and his life was most probably the occasion of our Hugh's name, and of much else about him.

The De Avalons had two other boys both older than Hugh: William, who inherited the lands, and Peter, who was settled by his brother Hugh at Histon, in Cambridge, but he does not seem to have made England his home. Hugh had also at least one cousin, William, on his mother's side, who attended upon him at Lincoln, and who (unless there were two of the same name) developed from a knight into an holy Canon after his great relative's decease. These relatives were always ready to lend a hand and a sword if required in the good bishop's quarrels. The last particularly distinguished himself in a brawl in Lincolnshire Holland, when an armed and censured ruffian threatened the bishop with death. The good Burgundian blood rose, and William twisted the sword from the villain's hand, and with difficulty was prevented from driving it into his body.

When the Lady Anna died, her husband, tired of war, power, and governance, distributed his property among his children. Under his armour he had long worn the monk's heart, and now he [Pg 5] was able to take the monk's dress, and to "labour for peace after life, as he had already won it in life." So he took Hugh and Hugh's money with him, and went off to the little priory of Villarbenoit (of seven canon power), which bordered upon his own lands, and which he and his forbears had cherished. This little priory was a daughter of Grenoble (St. Hugh of Grenoble being, as we infer, a spiritual splendour to the De Avalons), and, not least in attraction, there was a canon therein, far-famed for heavenly wisdom and for scholarship besides, who kept a school and taught sound theology and classics, under whom sharp young Hugh might climb to heights both of ecclesiastical and also of heavenly preferment. Great was the delight of the canons at their powerful postulant and his son, and great the pains taken over the latter's education. The schoolmaster laid stress upon authors such as Prudentius, Sedulius, and Fulgentius. By these means the boy not only learnt Latin, but he also tackled questions of Predestination and Grace, glosses upon St. Paul, hymns and methods of frustrating the Arian. Above all, he was exercised in the Divine Library, as they called the Bible, taught by St. Jerome. Hugh was of course the favourite of the master, who whipt him with difficulty, and kept him from the rough sports of his fellow scholars, the future soldiers, and "reared him for Christ." The boy had a masterly memory and a good grip of his work, whether it were as scholar, server, or comrade. The Prior assigned to him the special task of waiting upon his old father. That modest, kind-hearted gentleman was [Pg 6] getting infirm, and the young fellow was delighted to be told off to lead him, carry him, dress and undress him, tie his shoes, towel him, make his bed, cook for him and feed him, until the time of the old knight's departure arrived.

The dates of St. Hugh's life and ministrations must be taken with a grain of salt. The authorities differ considerably, and it is impossible to clap a date to some of the saint's way-marks without first slapping in the face some venerable chronicler, or some thought-worn modern historian. If we say with the Great Life that Hugh was ordained Levite in his nineteenth year, we upset Giraldus Cambrensis and the metrical biographer, who put it in his fifteenth; and Matthew Paris and the Legend, who write him down as over sixteen. Mr. Dimock would have us count from his entry into the canonry, and so counts him as twenty-four; Canon Perry and Father Thurston say "nineteenth year," or "nineteen." The Canons Regular of Villarbenoit seem to have been rather liberal in their interpretation of church regulations, but it is hardly likely that the bishop of Grenoble would so far stretch a point as to ordain a lad much below the canonical age, even if he were of a great house and great piety. Anyhow it is hardly worth while for the general reader to waste time over these ticklish points. It is enough to say that Hugh was ordained young, that he looked pink and white over his white stole and broidered tunic, and that he soon preached vigorously, warmly, and movingly to the crowd and to his old acquaintances. Sinners heard a very straightforward message, and holy persons were edified by the clever way in which he handled [Pg 7] difficult topics, and in him they "blessed the true Joseph, who had placed his own cup in the mouth of his younger brother's sack." Indeed, he must have been a captivating and interesting

young man, and since he was so strikingly like Henry II. of England that folks' tongues wagged freely about it, we may picture him as a young man of moderate height, rather large in the brow, with red brown hair, bright grey eyes, large chest, and generally of an athletic build and carriage. He had a face which easily flushed and told both of anger and a lively sense of humour.

He was the delight of his house, and of the people about, who welcomed him with enthusiasm when he came back after nearly forty years' absence. But most of all he was the apple of the eye to his old scholarly father prior, who loved him as his own soul. It is not wonderful that when one of the scanty brotherhood was called upon to take charge of a small country living, the "cell of St. Maximin," the zealous deacon was chosen to administer the same. The tiny benefice could hardly support one, with small household, but Hugh insisted upon having an old priest to share the benefice. A little parcel of glebe and a few vines, tended by honest rustics, were his. They were able by pious frugality to nourish the poor and grace the rich. The parishioners grew in holiness. The congregation swelled from many sources, and the sermons (of life and word) were translated into sound faith and good conversation. This experience of parish work must have been of the greatest value to the future bishop, for the tragedy and comedy of life is just as visible in the [Pg 8] smallest village as it is in the largest empire. The cloister-bred lad must have learnt on this small organ to play that good part which he afterwards was called upon to play upon a larger instrument. One instance is recorded of his discipline. A case of open adultery came under his notice. He sent for the man and gave him what he considered to be a suitable admonition. The offender replied with threats and abuse. Hugh, gospel in hand, pursued him first with two and then with three witnesses, offering pardon upon reform and penance. No amendment was promised. Both guilt and scandal continued. Then Hugh waited for a festival, and before a full congregation rebuked him publicly, declared the greatness of his sin, handed him over to Satan for the death of his flesh with fearful denunciations, except he speedily came to his senses. The man was thunderstruck, and brought to his knees at a blow. With groans and tears he confessed, did penance (probably at the point of the deacon's stick), was absolved and received back to the fold; so irresistible was this young administrator who knew St. Augustine's advice that "in reproof, if one loves one's neighbour enough, one can even say anything to him."

But Hugh was ill at ease in his charge, and his heart burned towards the mountains, where the Grande Chartreuse had revived the austerities of ancient monasticism. It seemed so grand to be out of and above the world, in solitary congregation, with hair shirt, hard diet, empty flesh pot, and full library, in the deep silence and keen air of the mountains. Here hands that had gripped the sword and the sceptre were turned to the spade and lifted only in prayer. There were not only [Pg 9] the allurements of hardship, but also his parents' faith and his own early lessons tugging at his heart strings. He found means to go with his prior into the awful enclosure, and the austere passion seized him. He told his heart's desire to an old ex-baron, who probably felt some alarm that a young gentleman who had campaigned so slightly in the plains of active life should aspire to dwell upon these stern hills of contemplation. "My dear boy, how dare you think of such a thing?" he answered, and then, looking at the refined young face before him, warned the deacon against the life. The men were harder than stones, pitiless to themselves and to others. The place dreary, the rule most burdensome. The rough robe would rake the skin and flesh from young bones. The harsh discipline would crush the very frame of tender youth.

The other monks were less forbidding. They warmly encouraged the aspiration, and the pair returned to their home, Hugh struggling to hide the new fire from his aged friend. But the old man saw through the artless cloakings and was in despair. He used every entreaty to save Hugh for the good work he was doing, and to keep his darling at his side. Hugh's affectionate heart and ready obedience gave way, and he took a solemn oath not to desert his canonry, and so went back to his parishing.

But then came, as it naturally would come to so charming and vigorous a lad, the strong return of that Dame Nature who had been so long forked forth by his cloistral life. A lady took a liking to this heavenly curate. Other biographers hint at this pathetic little romance, and cover up the [Pg 10] story with tales of a wilderness of women; but the metrical biographer is less discreetly vague, and breaks into a tirade against that race of serpents, plunderers, robbers, net weavers, and spiders—the fair sex. Still, he cannot refrain from giving us a graphic picture of the presumptuous she-rascal who fell in love with Hugh, and although most of his copyists excise his thirty-nine graphic lines of Zuleika's portrait, the amused reader is glad to find that all were not of so edifying a mind. Her lovely hair that vied with gold was partly veiled and partly strayed

around her ivory neck. Her little ear, a curved shell, bore up the golden mesh. Under the smooth clear white brow she had curved black eyebrows without a criss-cross hair in them, and these disclosed and heightened the clear white of the skin. And her nose, too—not flat nor arched, not long nor snub, but beyond the fineness of geometry, with light, soft breath, and the sweet scent of incense. Such shining eyes too: like emeralds starring her face with light! And the face, blended lilies and roses in a third lovely hue that one could not withdraw one's eyes from beholding. The gentle pout of her red lips seemed to challenge kisses. Shining as glass, white as a bell flower, she had a breast and head joined by a noble poised throat, which baited the very hook of love. Upon her lily finger she wore a red and golden ring. Even her frock was a miracle of millinery. This lovely creature, complete to a nail, much disturbed the mind of Hugh, and played her pretty tricks upon her unexercised pastor: now demure, now smiling, now darting soft [Pg 11] glances, now reining in her eyes. But he, good man, was rock or diamond. At last the fair creature actually stroked his arm, and then Hugh was startled into a panic. His experience and training had not been such as to fit him to deal with situations of this sort. He fled. He cut out the skin of the arm where her rosy fingers had rested. He found it impossible to escape from the sight of many fair maids of Burgundy. Zuleika was fascinating enough, but his original Adam within (whom he called Dalilah) was worse. He forsook his post, broke his vow, and bolted to the Grande Chartreuse.

One modern biographer, who is shocked at his perjury to the prior, would no doubt have absolved him if he had married the lass against his canonic vows. Another thinks him most edifyingly liberal in his interpretation of duty. Is there any need to forestall Doomsday in these matters? The poor fellow was in both a fix and a fright. Alas! that duties should ever clash! His own view is given with his own decisiveness. “No! I never had a scruple at all about it. I have always felt great delight of mind when I recall the deed which started me upon so great an undertaking.” The brothers of the Charterhouse gladly took him in, the year being about 1160, and his age about twenty, let us say; hardly an age anyhow which would fit him for dealing with pert minxes and escaping the witcheries of the beauty which still makes beautiful old hexameters.

[Pg 12]

CHAPTER II

BROTHER HUGH

“Ye might write th' doin's iv all th' convents iv th' wurruld on the back of a postage stamp, an' have room to spare,” says Mr. Dooley; and we rather expect some hiatus in our history here. Goodbye to beef, butter, and good red wheat; white corn, sad vegetables, cold water, sackcloth take their place, with fasts on bread and water, and festivals mitigated by fish. Goodbye to pillows and bolsters and linen shirts. Welcome horse-hair vests, sacking sheets, and the “bitter bite of the flea,”—sad entertainment for gentlemen! Instead of wise and merry talk, wherein he excelled, solitary confinement in a wooden cell (the brethren now foist off a stone one upon credulous tourists) with willing slavery to stern Prior Basil. The long days of prayer and meditation, the nights short with psalmody, every spare five minutes filled with reading, copying, gardening and the recitation of offices. All these the novice took with gusto, safe hidden from the flash of emerald eyes and the witchery of hypergeometrical noses. But temptation is not to be [Pg 13] kept out by the diet of Adam and of Esau, by locked doors, spades, and inkpots. The key had hardly turned upon the poor refugee when he found he had locked in his enemies with him. His austerities redoubled, but as he says he “only beat the air” until He who watches over Israel without slumber or sleep laid His hand upon him and fed him with a hidden manna, so fine and so plentiful that the pleasures of life seemed paltry after the first taste of it. After this experience our Hugh used to be conscious always of a Voice and a Hand, giving him cheer and strength, although the strong appetites of his large nature troubled him to the last. Here Hugh devoured books, too, until the time floated by him all too fleetly.

His great affectionate heart poured itself out upon wild birds and squirrels which came in from the beech and pine woods, and learned to feed from his platter and his fingers. It is difficult to

read with patience that his prior, fearing lest he should enjoy these innocent loves too much, and they would "hinder his devotion," banished these pretty dears from the dreary cell. But in charity let us suppose that the prior more than supplied their place, for Hugh was told off to tend a weak old monk, to sing him the offices, and to nurse the invalid. This godly old man, at once his schoolmaster and his patient, sounded him whether he wished to be ordained priest. When he learned that, as far as lay in Hugh he desired nothing more, he was greatly shocked, and reduced his nurse-pupil to tears by scolding him for presumption; but he presently raised him from his knees and prophesied that he would soon be a priest and some day a bishop. Hugh was soon after [Pg 14] this ordained priest, and was distinguished for the great fervour of his behaviour in celebrating the Mass "as if he handled a visible Lord Saviour"—a touching devoutness which never left him, and which contrasted strikingly with the perfunctory, careless or bored ways of other priests. He injured his health by over-abstinence, one effect of which was to cause him to grow fat, Nature thus revenging herself by fortifying his frame against such ill-treatment.

In the talk time after Nones, the brothers had much to hear about the storms which raged outside their walls. It is rather hard for us nowadays to see things through Charterhouse spectacles. There is our lord the Pope, Alexander III., slow and yet persistent, wrestling hard with the terrible Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who is often marching away to seiges of Milan, reducing strong rogues and deeply wronging the church (whose forged documents are all purely genuine). Then what a hubbub there is in the church! Monstrous anti-popes, one of whom, Victor, dies, and a satanic bishop Henry of Liége consecrates another, Pascal, and the dismal schism continues. Then our lord Alexander returns to Rome, and the Emperor slaughters the Romans and beseiges their city and enthrones Pascal. There are big imperial plans afoot, unions of East and West, which end in talk: but Sennacherib Frederick is defeated by a divine and opportune pestilence. Then Pascal dies, and the schism flickers, the Emperor crawls to kiss the foot of St. Peter, and finally, in 1179, Alexander reigns again in Rome for a space. Meantime, Louis VII., a pious Crusader, and dutiful son of the Regulars, plays a long, and mostly a losing, game of buffets with [Pg 15] Henry of Anjou, lord of Normandy, Maine, Touraine, Poitou, Aquitaine and Gascony, and leader of much else besides, King also of England, and conqueror of Ireland—a terrible man, who had dared to aspire to hang priestly murderers. He has forced some awful Constitutions of Clarendon upon a groaning church, or a church which ought to groan and does not much, but rather talks of the laws and usage of England being with the king. But the noble Thomas has withstood him, and is banished and beggared and his kith and kin with him. The holy man is harboured by our good Cistercian brothers of Pontigny, where he makes hay and reaps and see visions. He is hounded thence. These things ignite wars, and thereout come conferences. Thomas will not compromise, and even Louis fretfully docks his alimony and sends him dish in hand to beg; but he, great soul, is instant in excommunication, whereafter come renewed brawls, fresh (depraved) articles. Even the king's son is crowned by Roger of York, "an execration, not a consecration." At last (woeful day!) Thomas goes home still cursing, and gets his sacred head split open, and thus wins the day, and has immense glory and sympathy, which tames the fierce anti-anarchist king. He, too, kneels to our lord Alexander, and swears to go crusading in three years' time, meanwhile paying Templars to do it for him. All this comes out in driblets after Nones, and brings us to 1171 A.D., brother Hugh being aged about one and thirty. When the old monk died Hugh was given another old man to wait upon—Peter, the Archbishop of Tarentaise, who came there often for retreat and [Pg 16] study. This renowned old man had been a friend of St. Bernard, and was a great stickler and miracle worker for Alexander III., and he was a delegate to make peace between Henry and Louis, when he died in 1174. Hugh found his quotations, compiled any *catena* he wished to make, retrieved saintly instances, washed his feet, walked with him, and sat with him on a seat between two large fir trees, which seat "miraculously grew no higher, as the trees grew." In this manner Hugh knew and was known of the outside world, for Archbishop Peter was a man of large following and acquaintance.

And now Hugh is made, wincingly, the procurator or bursar of the Grande Chartreuse, after he has spent eight years there, and is plunged in a sea of worldly business. The prior makes good use of his tact, business capacity, and honourable nature. He had thought and read to some purpose, for he ruled the lay brothers with diligence, and instructed the monks with great care, stirring up the sluggish and bitting the heady into restfulness. He did his worldly work vigorously, and turned it swiftly to spiritual gain. He had strong wine of doctrine for the chapter-house, milk for the auditorium. The secular people, if they were rich, he taught not to trust in riches; if they were poor, he refreshed them with such rations as the Order allowed. If he had

nothing else, he always had a kind and cheery word to give. Among the travellers must have been many noble postmen, who carried letters in their hands and messages in their heads from Henry to Humbert of Maurienne, who held the keys of all the Alpine roads to Italy and Germany and [Pg 17] whose infant daughter was betrothed to the boy John Lackland with dowries disputable, whereat Henry junior rebels, and makes uncommon mischief. The procurator was keen and accurate in his work. He never mislaid the books, forgot, fumbled, or made a "loiter," *morantia*, as they called it, when the office halted or was unpunctual. The lay brethren did not have to cough at any trips in his reading, which was their quaint way of rebuking mistakes.

Henry II. was reconciled in 1172 and his crusade was to begin in 1175; but during these years his dominions were in constant flame. Scotland and France harried him. His sons leagued against him. His nobles rose. He fought hard battles, did humble penances at St. Thomas' tomb, and came out victorious, over his political and ecclesiastical opponents too, and began again the ordering of his unruly realms. What a rough and tumble world the Chronicles reveal as we turn them over! There is a crusade in Asia Minor in 1176. Manuel Commenus relates his success and failure. There are heretics in Toulouse who are Puritans, half Quaker and half Arian, condemned by a Council of Lombers, 1176. Next year Henry seems to have begun his penance, which was commuted from a crusade into three religious foundations, and rather shabbily he did it. Some people try to put Newstead in Selwood in the list, but this was founded in 1174; and Le Liget has been mentioned, a Charterhouse in Touraine founded in 1178. The most probable explanation is this. Henry tried to do the penance (α) by buying out the Secular Canons of Waltham at a price determined by Archbishop Richard. He replaced these by Canons Regular under Walter de Cant. [Pg 18] He then endowed them handsomely and had papal authority for this. (β) He found this so expensive that he tried to do the other two more cheaply. A scandal had arisen in Amesbury. He expelled the incontinent nuns, and brought over from Font Evroult a colony of more devout ladies in their room. The chroniclers show that this evasion was severely commented upon, and we may conclude that Le Liget was a tardy substitute—a cheap strip of forest land granted to an order which was celebrated for its dislike of covetousness, and whose rules required manual labour and a desert (and so valueless) land. Le Liget, be it noticed, is founded after the peace of Venice has given more power to the Papal elbow. The Lateran Council is also a little threatening towards King Henry in March, 1179, particularly on the question of the ferocity of mercenaries. Young Philip Augustus is also evidently succeeding his waning father, and generally speaking it is better to be conciliatory and to admit that the Amesbury plan was perhaps insufficient. At any rate, it is well to found another house: Carthusians of course, for they are holy, popular, and inexpensive. Henry, who was generous enough for lepers, hospitals, and active workers, did not usually care very much for contemplative orders, though his mother, the Empress Matilda, affected the Cistercians and founded the De Voto Monastery near Calais, and he inherited something from her. These considerations may have first prompted and then fortified Henry's very slow and reluctant steps in the work of founding Witham, in substance and not in shadow. It is also quite possible that he had not entirely given up the notion of going on a crusade after all.

[Pg 19] The first attempt was little more than a sketch. 5,497 acres were marked off for the new house, in a wet corner of Selwood forest. But the land was not transferred from William FitzJohn and the villeins were not evicted or otherwise disposed of. The place was worse than a desert, for it contained possessors not dispossessed. The poor monks, few and unprepared, who came over at their own expense, probably expecting a roof and a welcome, found their mud flat was inhabited by indignant Somersetæ, whose ways, manners, language, and food were unknown to them. The welcome still customarily given in these parts to strangers was warmer than usual. The foreign English, even if their lands were not pegged out for Charterhouses, were persuaded that the brethren were landsharks of the most omnivorous type. The poor prior quailed, despaired, and hastily bolted, leaving an old and an angry monkish comrade to face the situation with a small company of lay brothers. Another prior arrived, and to the vexation of the king shuffled off his maltreated coil in a very short time. After spending Christmas (1179-80) in Nottingham, the king crossed into Normandy with young Henry before Easter, meaning to avenge the wrongs Philip Augustus did to his relatives. Here most probably it was that a noble of the region of Maurienne (come no doubt upon business of the impending war), chatted with him about the Charterhouse. He paid a warm tribute to Hugh in words of this kind, "My lord king, there is only one sure way of getting free from these straits. There is in the Charterhouse a certain monk, of high birth but [Pg 20] far higher moral vigour. His name is Hugh of Avalon. He carries on him all the grace of the virtues; but besides, every one who knows him takes to him and likes him, so that all who see him

find their hearts fairly caught. Those who are privileged to hear him talk are delighted to find his speech divinely or angelically inspired. If the new plantation of this most holy order in your lands should deserve to have this man to dress and rule it, you will see it go joyfully forward straight away towards fruiting in every grace. Moreover, as I am certain, the whole English Church will be very greatly beautified by the radiance of his most pure religion and most religious purity. But his people will not easily let him go from their house, and he will never go to live elsewhere unless it be under compulsion and against his will, so your legation must be strong and strenuous: you must struggle to compass the matter even with urgent prayers until you get this man and him only. Then for the future your mind will be released from the anxieties of this care, and this lofty religion will make a noble growth to your excellency's renown. You will discover in this one man, with the whole circle of the other virtues, whatever mortal yet has shown of longsuffering, sweetness, magnanimity, and meekness. No one will dislike him for a neighbour or house-mate; no one will avoid him as a foreigner. No one will hold him other than a fellow politically, socially, and by blood, for he regards the whole race of men as part and parcel of himself, and he takes all men and comforts them in the arms and lap of his unique charity." The [Pg 21] king was delighted with this sketch, and sent off post haste Reginald, Bishop of Bath (in whose diocese Witham lay), and an influential embassage to secure the treasure, if it could be done.

But the man who was being sought had just about then been finding the burden of this flesh so extremely heavy that he was more inclined to run riot in the things that do not belong to our peace than to settle comfortably upon a saint's pedestal or to take up a new and disagreeably dull work. The fatal temptations of forty, being usually unexpected, are apt to upset the innocent more surely than are the storms of youth; and poor Hugh was now so badly tried that the long life of discipline must have seemed fruitless. He just escaped, as he told his too-little reticent biographer, from one nearly fatal bout by crying out, "By Thy passion, cross, and life-giving death, deliver me." But neither frequent confession, nor floggings, nor orisons, seemed to bring the clean and quiet heart. He was much comforted by a vision of his old prior Basil, who had some days before migrated to God. This dear old friend and father stood by him radiant in face and robe, and said with a gentle voice, "Dearest son, how is it with thee? Why this face down on the ground? Rise, and please tell thy friend the exact matter." Hugh answered, "Good father, and my most kind nurser, the law of sin and death in my members troubles me even to the death, and except I have thy wonted help, thy lad will even die." "Yes, I will help thee." The visitor took a razor in his hand and cut out an internal inflamed tumour, flung it far away, blessed his patient, [Pg 22] and disappeared, leaving no trace of his surgery in heart or flesh. Hugh told this story in his last illness to Adam, his chaplain, and added that though after this the flesh troubled him, its assaults were easy to scorn and to repress, though always obliging him to walk humbly.

The king's messengers took with them the Bishop of Grenoble and unfolded their errand. The Charterhouse was horrified, and the prior most of all. He delayed a reply. The first prior refused the request. The votes varied. Bovo, a monk who afterwards succeeded to Witham, declared strongly that it was a divine call, that the holiness of the order might be advertised to the ends of the earth. Hugh was too large a light to keep under their bushel. He seems better fitted to be a bishop than a monk, he said. Hugh was then bidden to speak. He told them that with all the holy advice and examples about him he had never managed to keep his own soul for one day, so how could any wise person think him fit to rule other folk? Could he set up a new house, if he could not even keep the rules of the old one? This is childishness and waste of time. "Let us for the future leave such matters alone, and since the business is hard and urgent do you only occupy yourselves to see that this king's undertaking be frittered no longer away half done, to the peril of souls and the dishonour of the holy order, and so from among you or from your other houses choose a man fit for this work and send him with these men. Since these are wise, do you too answer them wisely. Grant their desire, not their request. Give them a man not such as they seek [Pg 23] under a mistake, but such as they devoutly and discreetly demand. It is not right that men should be heard unadvisedly who mistake the man of their request and who do not really want to be mistaken in the man's qualifications. So, in a word, do not grant their request, but cheer them by bettering it." The prior and Hugh were of one decision. The former declared point blank that he would not say go, and finally he turned to the Carthusian Bishop of Grenoble, "our bishop, father, and brother in one," and bade him decide. The bishop accepted the responsibility, reminded them of the grief which arose when St. Benedict sent forth St. Maur to Western Gaul, and exhorted Hugh that the Son of God had left the deepest recess of His Deity to be manifest for the salvation of many. "You too must pilgrimage for a little time from your dearest, breaking for a while the

silence of the quiet you have loved.” After much interruption from Hugh, the sentence was given. They all kissed him and sent him away forthwith. The king received him with much graciousness and ordered him to be carried honourably to Witham, and the wretched remnant in the mud flat received him as an angel of God. Well they might do so, for they seemed to have passed a melancholy winter in twig huts, now called “weeps,” in a little paled enclosure, not only without the requisites of their order, but with barely bread to their teeth. There was no monastery, not even a plan of one. William FitzJohn and his clayey serfs scowled upon the shivering interlopers, uncertain what injustice might be done to them and to their fathers’ homes, in sacrifices to the ghost of St. Thomas.

[Pg 24] Witham is a sort of glorified soup-plate, still bearing traces of its old Selwood Forest origin, for the woodlands ring round it. The infant river Avon creeps through its clayey bottom, and there are remains of the old dams which pent it into fish-ponds. Of the convent nothing remains except a few stumps in a field called “Buildings,” unless the stout foundations of a room, S.E. of the church, called the reading-room, mark the guest house, as tradition asserts. Much of the superstructure of this cannot go back beyond the early sixteenth century, but the solid walls, the small size (two cottage area), allow of the fancy that here was the site of many colloquies between our Hugh and Henry Fitz-Empress.[1]

The church itself is one of the two erected by St. Hugh, partly with his own hands. It is the lay brothers’ church (called since pre-Franciscan days, the Friary). The conventual church has left no wrack behind. The style is entirely Burgundian, a single nave, with Romanesque windows, ending in an apse. The “tortoise” roof, of vaulted stone, is as lovely as it is severe. In 1760 the Tudor oaken bell-turret survived. The horrid story of how a jerry-built tower was added and the old post-Hugonian font built into it, how a new font was after long interval added, does not concern [Pg 25] us. The tower was happily removed, the old font found and remounted (as if the text ran, “One faith, two baptisms”), and a stone nozzle built to uphold three bells. The buttresses are copied from St. Hugh’s Lincoln work.

[1] The present Vicar is anxious to turn this place, which has been alternately cottages, a lock-up, and a reading-room, into a lecture hall and parish room; but the inhabitants, unworthy of their historical glories, seem rather disposed to let the old building tumble into road metal, to their great shame and reproach.

[Pg 26]

CHAPTER III

PRIOR HUGH

It did not require much talent to see that the first requisite of the foundation was a little money, and consequently we find ten white pounds paid from the Exchequer to the Charterhouse brethren, and a note in the Great Life to say that the king was pleased with Hugh’s modesty, and granted him what he asked for. Next there was a meeting of all who had a stake of any kind in the place, who would be obliged to be removed lest their noise and movement should break the deep calm of the community. It was put to each to choose whether he would like a place in any royal manor, with cottage and land equal to those they gave up, or else to be entirely free from serfdom, and to go where they chose. It is noteworthy that some chose one alternative, some the other, not finding villeinage intolerable. Next came the question of compensation for houses, crops, and improvements, that the transfer might be made without injustice but with joy on both sides. Here Henry boggled a little. “In truth, my lord,” said the prior, “unless every one of them is [Pg 27] paid to the last doight for every single thing the place cannot be given to us.” So the king was forced to do a little traffic, which he considered to be a dead loss, and acquired some very old cottages with rotten rafters and cracked walls at a handsome price. The salesmen liked this new business; it filled their pockets, and they blessed the new influence. This good merchant had traded so as to gain both justice and mercy, but he tackled the king once more, with twinkling eye. “Well, my lord king, you see I am new and poor, yet I have enriched you in your own land

with a number of houses.” The king smiled. “I did not covet riches of this nature. They have made me almost a beggar, and I cannot tell of what good such goods may be.” Hugh wanted this very answer. “Of course, of course,” he rejoined, “I see you do not reck much of your purchase. It would befit your greatness if these dwellings were handed over to me, for I have nowhere to lay my head.” The king opened his eyes and stared at his petitioner. “Thou wouldst be a fine landlord. Dost thou think we cannot build thee a new house? What on earth shouldest thou do with these?” “It does not befit royal generosity to ask questions about trifles. This is my first petition to thee, and why, when it is so small, should I be kept waiting about it?” The king merrily answered, “Hear the fellow! Almost using violence too, in a strange land. What would he do if he used force, when he gets so much out of us by words? Lest we should be served worse by him, he must have it so.” The cat was soon out of the bag. Each house was presented back to the man [Pg 28] who had sold it, either to sell or to remove as he chose, lest in any way Jerusalem should be built with blood.

Then the building began, but no more; for the ten white pounds did not go far, and the workmen angrily and abusively asked for wages. A deputation went off to Henry, who was collecting troops and dismissing them, ordering, codifying, defending, enlarging and strengthening his heterogeneous empire. Now he was on one side of the sea, now on the other. He promised succour, and the brethren brought back—promises. The work stopped, and the Prior endured in grim silence. Another embassage is sent, and again the lean wallets return still flabby. Then the brethren began to turn their anger against the Prior. He was slothful and neglectful for not approaching the king in person (although the man was abroad and busy). Brother Gerard, a white-haired gentleman, “very successful in speaking to the great and to princes,” fell upon his superior for glozing with a hard-hearted king and not telling him instantly to complete the buildings under pain of a Carthusian stampede. Not only was the Order wronged, but themselves were made fools of, who had stuck so long there without being able even to finish their mere dolls’ houses. Brother Gerard himself would be delighted to din something into the King’s ears in the presence of his prior. To this all the brethren said “Aye.” Hugh gratefully accepted their counsel, and added, “All the same, Brother Gerard, you will have to see to it that you are as modest as you are free in your discourse. It may well be, that in order to be able to know us well, [Pg 29] that sagaciously clever and inscrutable minded prince pretends not to hear us, just to prove our mettle. Doubtless he knows that it belongs to that perfection which we profess to fulfil, that lesson of our Lord which tells us, ‘In your patience ye shall possess your souls,’ and that too of most blessed Paul, ‘In all things let us shew forth ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience.’ But much patience is assured in this, if much longsuffering bears with much gentleness much that opposes and thwarts. For patience without longsuffering will not be much, but short; and without gentleness will merely not exist.” So said, Hugh Gerard and old Ainard (a man of immense age and curious story) set out to the king. They were all received like angels, with honour, polite speeches, excuses, instant promises, but neither cash nor certain credit. Then Gerard fumed and forgot the advice of his superior, and broke out into a furious declaration that he was off and quit of England, and would go back to his Alpine rocks, and not conflict with a man who thought it lost labour to be saved. “Let him keep the riches he loves so well. He will soon lose them, and leave them to some ungrateful heir or other. Christ ought not to share in them; no, nor any good Christian.” These, and harsher words, too, were Gerard’s coaxes. Poor Hugh used often, in after life, to remember them with horror. He got red and confused. He told his brother to speak gentlier, to eschew such terms, or even to hold his tongue: but Gerard (of holy life, grey head, and gentle blood) scolded on without bridle. Henry listened in a brown study. Neither by look, nor word, did he appear hit. He let the monk rate, kept silence and self control, [Pg 30] and when the man had talked himself out, and an awkward silence reigned, he glanced at Hugh’s confused and downcast face. “Well, good man,” he said, “and what are you thinking about within yourself? You are not preparing to go off too, and leave our kingdom to us, are you?” The answer came humbly and gently, but with perfect manliness. “I do not despair of you so far, my lord. I am rather sorry for all your hindrances and business, which block the salutary studies of your soul. You are busy, and when God helps, we shall get on well with these health-giving projects.” Henry felt the spell at once; flung his arms round Hugh, and said with an oath, “By my soul’s salvation, while I live and breathe, thou shalt never depart from my kingdom. With thee I will share my life’s plans, and the needful studies of my soul.” The money was found at once, and a royal hint given. The demon blood of the Angevins, which frightened most men, and kept Henry in loneliness, had no terrors for Hugh; and Henry could hardly express the pleasure he felt in a rare

friendship which began here. He loved and honoured no other man so much, for he had found a man who sympathised with him without slavishness, and whose good opinion was worth having. This close friendship, combined with physical likeness, made it generally believed that Hugh was Henry's own son. Hugh did not always agree with the king, and if he felt strongly that any course was bad for king and kingdom would say so roundly in direct words of reproof, but withal so reasonably and sweetly that he made "the rhinoceros harrow the valleys" after him, as his [Pg 31] biographer quaintly puts it, glancing at Job. The counsel was not limited to celestial themes. Hugh checked his temper, softened his sentences, and got him to do good turns to churches and religious places. He unloosed the king's rather tight fist, and made him a good almsgiver. One offence Hugh was instant in rebuking—the habit of keeping bishoprics and abbacies vacant. He used also to point out that unworthy bishops were the grand cause of mischiefs in God's people, which mischiefs they cherished, caused to wax and grow great. Those who dared to promote or favour such were laying up great punishments against the Doomsday. "What is the need, most wise prince, of bringing dreadful death on so many souls just to get the empty favour of some person, and the loss of so many folk redeemed by Christ's death? You invoke God's anger, and you heap up tortures for yourself hereafter." Hugh was for free canonical election, with no more royal interference than was required to prevent jobbery and quicken responsibility.

The two friends visited each other often, and the troubles of Henry's last years were softened for him by his ghostly friend. It is quite possible that Hugh's hand may be traced in the resignation of Geoffrey Plantagenet, the king's dear illegitimate son, who was (while a mere deacon) bishop-elect of Lincoln from 1173 to 1181. From the age of twenty to twenty-eight he enjoyed the revenues of that great see without consecration. The Pope objected to his birth and his youth. Both obstacles could have been surmounted, but Geoffrey resigns his claims in the Epiphany of [Pg 32] the latter year, and gets a chancellorship with five hundred marks in England and the same in Normandy. His case is a bold instance of "that divorce of salary from duty" which even in those times was thoroughly understood.

There is a story, one might almost say the usual story, of the storm at sea. The king with a fleet is between Normandy and England, when a midnight storm of super-Virgilian boisterousness burst upon them. After the manner of Erasmus' shipwreck, every one prays, groans, and invokes both he and she saints. The king himself audibly says, "Oh, if only my Charterhouse Hugh were awake and instant at his secret prayers, or if even he were engaged with the brethren in the solemn watch of the divine offices, God would not so long forget me." Then, with a deep groan, he prayed, "God, whom the William Prior serves in truth, by his intervention and merits, take kindly pity upon us, who for our sins are justly set in so sore a strait." Needless to say the storm ceased at once, and Henry felt that he was indeed upon the right tack, both nautically and spiritually. Whatever view we take of this tale (storms being frequent, and fervent prayers of the righteous availing much), the historic peep into King Henry's mind is worth our notice. The simplicity and self-abasement of his ejaculation shew a more religious mind than some would allow to him.

Anyhow, the prior was hard at work. He soon transformed the "weeps" into stone. He built the two houses, the friary for the lay brethren and the monastery for the monks. He prayed, read, meditated and preached. His body slept, but his heart woke, and he repeated "Amens" [Pg 33] innumerable in his holy dreams. On feast days, when the brethren dined together, he ate with them, and then he had the meal sauced with reading. If he ate alone, he had a book by his trencher of dry bread rarely garnished with relishes. A water pot served him for both flagon and tureen. He allowed himself one little human enjoyment. A small bird called a burnet made friends with him and lived in his cell, ate from his fingers and his trencher, and only left him at the breeding season, after which it brought its fledged family back with it. This little friend lived for three years with the prior, and to his great grief came no more in the fourth. The learned have exhausted their arts to discover what a burnet can be, and have given up the chase. Some would have him to be a barnacle goose, others a dab-chick or coot—none of which can fairly be classed as *aviculæ* small birds. Burnet is brown or red brown, and rather bright at that. We have it in Chaucer's "Romaunt of the Rose" [4756]:

> "For also welle wole love be sette
> Under ragges as rich rochette,
> And else as wel be amourettes
> In mournyng blak, as bright burnettes."

Consequently if the reader likes to guess (in default of knowledge) he might do worse than think

of the Robin Redbreast as a likely candidate. He is called in Celtic Broindeag, is a small, friendly, crumb-eating, and burnet bird, and behaves much as these ancient legends describe. The name burnet still survives in Somerset.

Not only the burnet bird felt the fascination of the prior, but monks drew towards Witham and [Pg 34] men of letters also. Men of the world would come to be taught the vanity of their wisdom; clergy whose dry times afflicted them found a rich meal of Witham doctrine well worth the spare diet of the place. The prior by no means courted his public, and the Order itself was not opened at every knuckle tap. Even those who were admitted did not always find quite what they wanted. We read of one man, a Prior of Bath, who left the Charterhouse because he "thought it better to save many souls than one," and returned to what we should call parish work. Alexander of Lewes, a regular Canon, well versed in the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), found the solitude intolerable to his objective wits. He was not convinced of the higher spirituality of co-operative hermitages. He found it too heavy to believe that there was no Christendom outside the Charterhouse plot, and no way of salvation except for a handful of mannikins. Alexander, with stinging and satiric terms, left in a huff, followed by acrimonious epithets from his late brethren. He became a monk at Reading, and filled a larger part upon a more spacious stage, and yet would have most gladly returned; but the strait cell was shut to him relentlessly and for ever. Andrew, erst sacristan of Muchelney, was another who left the Order for his first love, but his dislike of the life was less cogently put. It was not exactly that the prior could not brook opposition: but he hated a man who did not know his own mind, and nothing would induce him to allow an inmate who eddied about.

The Charterhouse now had ecclesiastical independence. The bishop's power ended outside its [Pg 35] pale. Bruton Convent could tithe the land no more, nor feed their swine or cattle there, nor cut fuel, instead of which the rectory of South Petherton, and its four daughter chapelries, was handed over to this bereaved convent. This was in April, 1181. This transaction was some gain to the game-loving king, for the Withamites ate neither pork nor beef, and so the stags had freer space and more fodder.

But nevertheless the monks' poverty was almost ludicrous. Hugh wanted even a complete and accurate copy of the scriptures, which he used to say were the solitary's delight and riches in peace, his darts and arms in war, his food in famine and his medicine in sickness. Henry asked why his scribes did not make copies. The answer was that there was no parchment. "How much money do you want?" asked the king. "One silver mark," was the ungrasping request. Henry laughed and ordered ten marks to be counted out and promised a complete "divine library" besides. The Winchester monks had just completed a lovely copy (still in existence). King Henry heard from a student of this fine work and promptly sent for the prior. With fair words and fine promises he asked for the Bible. The embarrassed monk could not well say no, and the book was soon in Hugh's hands. This Prior Robert shortly after visited Witham and politely hoped the copy was satisfactory. If not, a better one could be made, for great pains had been taken by St. Swithun's brethren to make this one agreeably to their own use and custom. Hugh was astonished. "And so the king has beguiled your Church thus of your needful labour? Believe me, [Pg 36] my very dear brother, the Library shall be restored to you instantly. And I beg most earnestly through you that your whole fraternity will deign to grant pardon to our humility because we have ignorantly been the occasion of this loss of their codex." The prior was in a fright, as well he might be, at the shadow of the king's wrath. He assured Hugh that his monks were all delighted at the incident. "To make their delight continue, we must all keep quiet about the honest restoration of your precious work. If you do not agree to take it back secretly, I shall restore it to him who sent it hither; but if you only carry it off with you, we shall give him no inkling of the matter." So the Winchester monks got back their Bible, and Witham got the said Prior Robert as one of its pupils instead, fairly captured by the electric personality of the Carthusian.

Though Hugh's influence was very great, we must not quite suppose that the king became an ideal character even under his direction. There is an interregnum not only in Lincoln but in Exeter Diocese between Bishop Bartholomew and John the Chaunter, 1184-1186; one in Worcester between the translation of Baldwin and William de Northale, 1184-1186; and a bad one in York after the death of Roger, 1181, before King Richard appointed his half-brother Geoffrey aforementioned, who was not consecrated until August, 1191. But Hugh's chief work at Witham was in his building, his spiritual and intellectual influence upon the men he came to know, in the direction of personal and social holiness: and, above all, he was mastering the ways

and works of England so sympathetically that he was able to take a place afterwards as no longer a Burgundian but a thorough son of the nation and the church. One instance may be given of his teaching and its wholesome outlook. He lived in an age of miracles, when these things were demanded with an insatiable appetite and supplied in a competitive plenty which seems equally inexhaustible, almost as bewildering to our age as our deep thirst for bad sermons and quack medicines will be to generations which have outgrown our superstitions. St. Hugh had drunk so deeply and utterly and with all his mind of the gravity and the humility which was traditional from the holy authors of the Carthusian Order, that "there was nothing he seemed to wonder at or to wish to copy less than the marvels of miracles. Still, when these were read or known in connection with holy men, he would speak of them gently and very highly respect them. He would speak of them, I say, as commending of those who showed them forth, and giving proof to those who marvelled at such things, for to him the great miracle of the saints was their sanctity, and this by itself was enough for guidance. The heartfelt sense of his Creator, which never failed him, and the overwhelming and fathomless number of His mighty works, were for him the one and all-pervading miracle." If we remember that Adam, his biographer, wrote these words not for us, but for his miracle-mongering contemporaries, they will seem very strong indeed. He goes on to say that all the same, whether Hugh knew it or not, God worked many miracles through him, as none of his intimates could doubt, and we could rather have wished that he had left the saint's opinion intact, for it breathes a lofty atmosphere of bright piety, and is above the controversies of our lower plane.

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The time was now coming when Witham had to lose its prior. Geoffrey (son, not of fair Rosamond, but of Hickenay) had resigned in January, 1182. After sixteen months' hiatus, Walter de Coutances, a courtier, was elected, ordained, and consecrated, and enthroned December, 1183; but in fifteen months he was translated to the then central See of Rouen and the wretched diocese had another fifteen months without a bishop, during which time (April 15, 1185, on holy Monday) an earthquake cracked the cathedral from top to bottom.[2]

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In May, 1186, an eight-day council was held at Eynsham, and the king attended each sitting from his palace at Woodstock. Among other business done was the election, not very free election, to certain bishoprics and abbeys. Among the people who served or sauntered about the Court were the canons of Lincoln, great men of affairs, learned, and so wealthy that their incomes overtopped any bishop's rent-roll, and indeed they affected rather to despise bishoprics—until one offered. The See of Lincoln had been vacant (with one short exception) for nearly eighteen years. It contained ten of the shires of England—Lincoln, Leicester, Rutland, Northampton, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Bedford, Buckingham, Oxford, and Hertford. The canons chose three men, all courtiers, all rich, and all well beneficed, viz., their dean, Richard Fitz Neal, a bishop's bastard, who had bought himself into the treasurership; Godfrey de Lucy, one of their number, an extravagant son of Richard the chief justice; and thirdly another of themselves, Herbert le Poor, Archdeacon of Canterbury, a young man of better stuff. But the king declared that this time he would choose not by favour, blood, counsel, prayer, or price; but considering the dreadful abuses of the neglected diocese he wished for a really good bishop, and since the canons could not agree he pressed home to them the Prior of Witham, the best man and the best-loved one. With shouts of laughter the canons heard the jest and mentioned his worship, his habit, and his talk, as detestable; but the king's eye soon changed their note, and after a little foolishness they all voted for the royal favourite. The king approves, the nobles and bishops applaud, my lord of Canterbury confirms, and all seems settled. The canons rode off to Witham to explain the honours they have condescended to bestow upon its prior. He heard their tale, read their letters. Then he astonished their complacency by telling them that he could understand the king's mind in the matter and that of Archbishop Baldwin, himself a Cistercian; but that they, the canons, had not acted freely. They ought to choose a ruler whose yoke and ways they could abide, and, moreover, they ought not to hold their election in the Court or the pontifical council, but in their own chapter. "And so, to tell you my small opinion, you must know that I hold all election made in this way to be absolutely vain and void." He then bade them go home and ask for God's blessing, and choose solely by the blessing and help of the Holy Ghost, looking not to king's, bishop's, nor any man's approval. "That is the only answer to return from my littleness. So go, and God's good angel be with you." They begged him to reconsider it, to see the king or the archbishop; but the prior was inflexible, and they left the Guest House in wonder not unmixed with delight. The king's man was not the pet boor they had taken him for, but single-eyed, a gentleman, a clever fellow, and a good churchman. The very men who had cried out that they had been tricked now elected him soon

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and with one consent; and off they post again to Witham.

This time he read the letters first, and then heard their tale and expressed his wonder that men so wise and mannerly should take such pains to court an ignoramus and recluse, to undertake such unwonted and uncongenial cares, but they must be well aware that he was a monk and under authority. He had to deal not with the primate and chief of the English Church in this matter, but with his superior overseas, and so they must either give up the plan altogether or undertake a toilsome journey to the Charterhouse; for none but his own prior could load his shoulders with such a burden. In vain they argued. A strong embassy had to be sent, and sent it was without delay, and the Chartreuse Chapter made no bones about it, but charged brother Hugh to transfer his obedience to Canterbury; and thus the burden of this splendid unhappy See was forced upon the shoulders which were most able to bear the weight of it.

One would be glad to know what Henry thought of it all, and whether he liked the tutoring his courtiers got and were about to get. The humour, shrewdness, tact, and piety combined must have appealed to his many-sided mind and now saddened heart. He had lost his heir and was tossed upon stormy seas, so perhaps he had small leisure to spare for the next act of the drama.

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[2] The king crossed to Normandy the very next day, and it is possible that this was the date of the sea scene mentioned above.

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CHAPTER IV

THE BISHOP ELECT AND CONSECRATE

Hugh knew well enough what the Chartreuse Chapter would say if the English meant to have him, and so he began his preparations at once. Other men fussed about fine copes, chasubles, and mitres, and dogged the clerical tailors, or pottered about in goldsmiths' shops to get a grand equipment of goblets. To him the approaching dignity was like a black cloud to a sailor, or a forest of charging lances to the soldier under arms. He fell hard to prayer and repentance, to meditation upon the spiritual needs of his new duties, lest he should have holy oil on his head and a dry and dirty conscience. He gave no time to the *menu* of the banquet, to the delicacies, the authorities, and the lacquey-smoothed amenities of the new life. He was racked with misery at the bare imagination of the fruitless trouble of palace business exchanged for the fruitful quiet of his cell. He feared that psalms would give way to tussles, holy reading to cackle, inward meditation to ugly shadows, inward purity to outer nothingness. His words to the brethren took a higher and a humbler tone, which surprised them, for even they were used to see bishoprics looked upon as plums, and sought with every device of dodgery. Yet here was a man who could keep his soul unhurt and cure the hurts of others, yet whose cry was, “In my house is neither bread nor clothing; make me not a ruler of the people.” St. Augustine's fierce words upon the Good Shepherd and the hireling were in his mind. “The soul's lawful husband is God. Whoso seeks aught but God from God is no chaste bride of God. See, brothers, if the wife loves her husband because he is rich she is not chaste. She loves, not her husband, but her husband's gold. For if she loves her husband she loves him bare, she loves him beggared.” So Hugh prepared his soul as for a bridal with the coming bridegroom.

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When the inevitable command came, more than three months after his first election, he meekly set out for his duties at “the mount of the Lord, not Lebanon,[3] but Lincoln.” He was white in dress, white in face, but radiant white within. He sat a horse without trappings, but with a roll of fleece and clothes, his day and night gear. Around him pricked his clergy upon their gold-buttoned saddles. They tried various devices to get his bundle away to carry it upon their own cruppers, but neither jest nor earnest could unstrap that homely pack. The truth was that he would not allow himself to change his old simple habits one jot, lest he should develop the carnal mind. So they drew across Salisbury Plain and on to Marlborough. Here was the Court and a great throng, and this public disgrace of the pack was too much for the Lincoln exquisites. They

[Pg 44] cut the straps of the objectionable bundle and impounded it. From Marlborough the cavalcade rode into London, and Hugh was consecrated on Sunday, September 21 (Feast of St. Matthew, the converted capitalist), 1186. King Henry was in fine feather, and, forgetting his rather near habits, produced some fine gold plate, a large service of silver, a substantial set of pots and pans, and a good sum of ready money to meet the expenses of the festive occasion. Without some such help a penniless Carthusian could hardly have climbed up that Lebanon at all, unless by the sore scandal of a suit to the Lincoln Jewry. This handsome present was made at Marlborough. William de Northalle was consecrated Bishop of Worcester on the same day, of whom nothing else transpires than that he died not long after, and is supposed to have been an old and toothless bishop promoted for his ready fees. The place of consecration was Westminster Abbey, in its præ-Edwardian state, and so no longer extant.

Hugh would undoubtedly sleep in the house in which he afterwards died. This lay at the back of Staple Inn, where the new bursar, whom the king had given him, bestowed the royal pots and crocks. Consecration like necessity brings strange bedfellows, and plain, cheap-habited Hugh, by gaudily trimmed William in his jewelled mitre, must have raised a few smiles that Sunday morning.

Hugh's delays had ended with his prior's order, and he saw nothing now to stay his journey northwards. With him rode Gilbert de Glanville, Bishop of Rochester, a *malleus monachorum*, a [Pg 45] great hammerer of monks, and perhaps told off for the duty of enthroning the new bishop to silence those who had a distaste for all monkery. Herbert le Poor, late rival candidate for the See, also pranced alongside with all the importance of a great functionary, whose archidiaconal duty it was to enthrone all bishops of the Province of Canterbury. For this duty he used to have the bishop's horse and trappings and much besides; but alas! the new man slept at St. Catherine's Priory on Michaelmas Eve and walked upon his bare toes to the cracked cathedral next morning. When he was fairly and ceremonially seated the archdeacon held out his practised palm for the customary fee (archdeacons are still fee-extracting creatures). He was astonished to hear the radical retort, "What I gave for my mitre" (it was a very cheap one) "that and no more will I give for my throne." Both Herbert and with him Simon Magus fell backward breathless at this blow.[4] But Hugh had a short way of demolishing his enemies, and the archdeacon appears hereafter as his stout follower knocked, no doubt, into a friend. All who were present at this ceremony had their penances remitted for thirteen days. Two other incidents are recorded of this time. One is that the bursar asked how many small fallow deer from the bishop's park should be killed for the inauguration feast. "Let three hundred be taken, and if you find more wanted do not stickle to add to this number." In this answer the reader must not see the witless, bad arithmetic of a vegetarian unskilled in catering, but a fine determination, first to feed all the poor folk of his [Pg 46] metropolis with the monopolies of princes; and secondly, to sever himself wholly and dramatically from the accursed oppression of the game and forest laws. When Hugh told the story at Court it served as a merry jest, often broken, no doubt, against game (but not soul) preserving prelates, but, as the sequel shows, there was method in it. The other incident is that in the convent after Matins, on the morning of his enthronement, he slept and heard a voice which comforted his doubtful heart, too fearful lest this step should not be for the people's health or his own. "Thou hast entered for the waxing of thy people, for the waxing of salvation to be taken with thy Christ."

The new bishop lived at his manor at Stowe (of which part of the moat and a farmhouse are now to be seen by the curious), a place parked and ponded deliciously. Almost as soon as he was installed a new swan came upon the waters, huge and flat-beaked, with yellow fleshings to his mandibles. This large wild bird dwarfed the tame swans into geese by comparison, and no doubt tame swans and geese were small things in those days compared to our selected fatlings. This bird drove off and killed the other swans, all but one female, with whom he companied but did not breed. The servants easily caught him and brought him to the bishop's room as a wonder. The beast-loving man, instead of sending him to the spit, offered him some bread, which he ate, and immediately struck up an enthusiastic friendship with his master, caring nothing for any throngs about him. After a time he would nestle his long neck far up into the bishop's wide sleeve, toying [Pg 47] with him and asking him for things with pretty little clatterings. The bird seemed to know some days before he was due that he was coming, for it flapped about the lake and made cries. It would leave the water and stalk through the house walking wide in the legs. It would neither notice nor brook any other man, but rather seemed jealous, and would hiss and flap away the rest of the

company. If the bishop slept or watched, the swan would keep dogs and other animals at bay. With true spiritual instinct it would peck hard at the calves of chaplains. If the bishop was abed no one was allowed near him without a most distressing scene, and there was no cajoling this zealous watchman. When the bishop went away the bird would retire to the middle of its pool, and merely condescend to take rations from the steward; but if its friend returned it would have none of servants. Even two years' interval made no difference to the faithful swan. It prophetically proclaimed his unexpected arrival. When the carts and forerunners arrived (with the household stuffs) the swan would push boldly in among the crowd and cry aloud with delight when at last it caught the sound of its master's voice, and it would go with him through the cloister to his room, upstairs and all, and could not be got out without force. Hugh fed it with fingers of bread he sliced with his own hand. This went on for nearly all Hugh's episcopate. But in his last Easter the swan seemed ill and sullen, and kept to his pond. After some chase they caught him in the sedge, and brought him in, the picture of unhappiness, with drooping head and trailing wing, before the bishop. The poor bird was to lose its friend six months after, and seemed to resent the cruel severance of coming death, though it was itself to live for many a day after its master had gone home to his rest. There, floating conspicuous on the lake, it reminded orphaned hearts of their innocent, kind, and pure friend who had lived patiently and fearlessly, and taken death with a song—the new song of the Redeemed.

The first act of the new bishop was naturally to enlist captains for the severe campaign, and he ran his keen eye over England and beyond it for wise, learned, and godly men who could help a stranger. He wrote a touchingly humble letter to Archbishop Baldwin to help him to find worthy right-hand men, "for you are bred among them, you have long been a leader, and you know them 'inside and under the skin,' as the saying goes." Baldwin, an Exeter labourer by birth, by turns a schoolmaster, archdeacon, Cistercian abbot, Bishop of Worcester, and primate—a silent, dark, strong man, gentle, studious, and unworldly—was delighted at the request. He sent off Robert of Bedford, an ardent reformer and brilliant scholar, and Roger Roldeston, another distinguished scholar, who afterwards was Dean of Lincoln. These, like Aaron and Hur, upheld the lawgiver's hands, and they, with others of a like kidney, soon changed the face of affairs. Robert died early, but Roger was made Archdeacon of Leicester, confessor, and at the end executor to the bishop. After gathering captains the next thing was an eight-fold lash for abuses—decrees (1) against bribes; (2) against vicars who would not sing Mass save for extra pay; (3) against swaggering archdeacons who suspended churches, and persons beyond their beat. These gentlemen, in the absence of a bishop, seem to have grown into popes at the least. (4) Mass not to be laid as a penance upon any non-priestly person. This was a nimble way by which confessors fined penitents to their own profit. (5) Annual and other customary masses to be said without temporal gain. (6) Priestly administration only to be undertaken by those who are proved to be duly ordained by the archbishop or one of his suffragans: forged orders being plentiful. (7) Incumbents to be tonsured, and clergy to wear "the crown" instead of love-locks. (8) Clergy not to sue clergy in ecclesiastical cases before civil justices, Erastian knaves being active, even then.

Next year brought a much more fighting foe, Godfrey the chief forestar. There was a Forest Assize only three years back, and a great outbreak of game preserving, dog licensing, bow confiscating, fines, imprisonment and slaughter, new rights for old tyrants, boys of twelve and clergy to be sworn to the hunting peace, mangling of mastiffs, banishment of tanners and parchmenters from woodlands—and if this was within the law, what could not be done without the law by these far away and favoured gamekeepers? The country groaned. Robbers and wolves could easily demolish those whom the foresters did not choose to protect, and the forest men went through the land like a scourge. Some flagrant injustice to one of Hugh's men brought down an excommunication upon Godfrey, who sent off to the king in fury and astonishment; and Henry was in a fine fit of anger at the news, for the Conqueror long ago had forbidden unauthorised anathemas against his men. Certain courtiers, thinking to put Hugh in the way of obliging the king, suggested that a vacant prebend at Lincoln should be given to one of themselves. The king sent a letter to that effect, which he did with some curiosity, suggesting this tit for tat. The messengers jingled through Oxford from Woodstock and found the bishop at Dorchester touring round his weedy diocese, who addressed the expectant prebendary and his friends with these words: "Benefices are not for courtiers but for ecclesiastics. Their holders should not minister to the palace, revenue, or treasury, but as Scripture teachers to the altar. The lord king has wherewith to reward those who serve him in his business, wherewith to recompense soldiers' work in temporals with temporals. It is good for him to allow the soldiers of the highest King to

enjoy what is set aside for their future necessities and not to agree to deprive them of their due stipends.” With these words he unhesitatingly sent the courtiers empty and packing. The fat was in the fire, and the angry courtiers took care that the chimney should draw. A man galloped off to say “Come to the king at once,” and when the bishop was nearing Rosamond’s bower, the king and his nobles rode off to the park, and sat down in a ring. The bishop followed at once. No one replied to his salute, or took the least notice of him. He laid hands upon a great officer next the king and moved him and sat down, in the circle of black looks. Then the king called for a needle. He had hurt one of his left fingers, and he sewed a stall upon it. The bishop was practised in silence, and was not put out by it. At last he said gently, “You are very like your relatives in Falaise.” Henry threw himself back and laughed in a healthy roar. The courtiers who understood the sarcasm were aghast at its audacity. They could not but smile, but waited for the king, who, when he had had his laugh out, explained the allusion to the Conqueror’s leather dressing and gloving lineage. “All the same, my good man, you must say why you chose, without our leave, to put our chief forester under the ban, why moreover you so flouted our little request that you neither came in person to explain your repulse nor sent a polite message by our messengers.” Hugh answered simply that he knew the king had taken great trouble about his election, so it was his business to keep the king from spiritual dangers, to coerce the oppressor and to dismiss the covetous nonsuited. It would be useless and stupid to come to court for either matter, for the king’s discretion was prompt to notice proper action and quick to approve the right. Hugh was irresistible. The king embraced him, asked for his prayers, gave the forester to his mercy. Godfrey and his accomplices were all publicly flogged and absolved, and the enemy, as usual, became his faithful friend and supporter. The courtiers ceased to act like kites and never troubled him again. On the contrary, some of them helped him so heartily that, if they had not been tied by the court, he would have loved to have beneficed them in the diocese. But non-residence was one of the scandals of the age and Hugh was inflexible in this matter. Salary and service at the altar were never to be parted. Even the Rector of the University of Paris, who once said how much he would like to be associated with Lincoln by accepting a canonry, heard that this would also be a great pleasure to the bishop, “if only you are willing to reside there, and if, too, your morals will keep pace with your learning.” The gentleman was stricter in scholarship than in life, but no one had ever taken the liberty to tell him of it, and he is said to have taken the hint. Herein Hugh was quite consistent. He would not take any amount of *quadrivium* as a substitute for honest living, and next after honest living he valued a peaceable, meek, conformist spirit, which was not always agape for division and the sowing of discords. He took some pains to compose quarrels elsewhere, as for instance, between Archbishop Baldwin and the monks of Canterbury. The archbishop wished to found a house of secular canons at Hackington in honour of SS. Stephen and Thomas of Canterbury. The monks were furious; the quarrel grew. Hugh thought and advised, when asked, that the question of division outweighed the use of the new church, and that it would be better to stop at the onset than to have to give up the finished work. But, objected Baldwin, holy Thomas himself wanted to build this church. “Let it suffice that you are like the martyr in proposing the same. Hear my simplicity and go no further.” He preached union with constant fervour, and used to say that the knowledge that his spiritual sons were all at his back made him fear neither king nor any mortal, “neither do I lose the inward freedom from care, which is the earnest of, and the practice for, the eternal calm. Nor do my masters (so he called his canons) break and destroy a quiet that knows no dissent, for they think me gentle and mild. I am really tarter and more stinging than pepper, so that even when I am presiding over them at the chapter, the smallest thing fires me with anger. But they, as they ought, know their man of their choice and bear with him. They turn necessity into virtue and give place to me. I am deeply grateful to them. They have never opposed a single word of mine since I first came to live among them. When they all go out and the chapter is over, not one of them, I think, but knows I love him, nor do I believe I am unloved by a single one of them.” This fact and temper of mind it was which made it possible to work the large diocese, for, of course, the bishop did not act in any public matter without his clergy. But personally his work was much helped by his self-denial and simplicity of his life. He never touched flesh but often used fish. He would drink a little wine, not only for health, but for company’s sake. He was a merry and jest-loving table companion, though he never was undignified or unseemly. He would allow tumblers and musicians to perform at banquets, but he then appeared detached and abstracted rather than interested; but he was most attentive when meals were accompanied by readings about martyrs’ passions, or saints’ lives, and he had the scriptures (except the four gospels, which were treated apart) read at dinner and at the nightly office. He found the work of a bishop obliged him to treat that baggage animal, the

body, better than of yore. His earlier austerities were avenged by constant pains in the bowels and stomach troubles, but in dedications of churches, ordinations, and other offices he would out-tire and knock up every one else, as he went from work to work. He rose before dawn and often times did not break his fast till after midday. In hot summer weather, he would oblige his ministers (deacon, sub-deacon, acolytes, &c.) to take a little bread and wine lest they should faint at the solemn Mass. When they hesitated, he upbraided them with want of faith and of sense, because they could not obey orders or see the force of them. When he journeyed and crowds came to be confirmed themselves or to present their little ones, he would get off his horse at a suitable spot and perform that rite. Neither tiredness, weakness, haste, rough ground, nor rain would induce him to confirm from the saddle. A young bishop afterwards, with no possible excuse, would order the frightened children up among restive horses. They came weeping and whipped by insolent attendants at no small risk—but his lordship cared nothing for their woe and danger. Not so dear Father Hugh. He took the babes gently and in due order, and if he caught any lay assistants troubling them would reproach them terribly, sometimes even thrashing the rascals with his own heavy hand. Then he would bless the audience, pray for the sick, and go on with his journey.

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He was passionately fond of children, not only because they were innocent, but because they were young: and he loved to romp with them—anticipating by nearly seven centuries the simple discovery of their charm, and he would coax half words of wondrous wit from their little stammering lips. They made close friends with him at once, just as did the mesenges or blue tits who used to come from woods and orchards of Thornholm, in Lindsey, and perch upon him, to get or to ask for food.[5]

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There is a story of a six months' old infant which jumped in its mother's arms to see him, waved its armlets, wagged its head, and made mysterious wrigglings (hitherto unobserved by bachelor monks) to greet him. It dragged his hand with its plump palm to its mouth as if to kiss it, although truth compels biographer Adam to acknowledge the kiss was but a suck. "These things are marvellous and to be deeply astonished at," he says. Hugh gave the boy apples or other small apposites (let us hope it was not apples, or the consequences of such gross ignorance would be equally marvellous), but the child was too interested in the bishop to notice the gifts. The bishop would tell how while he was still Prior he once went abroad to the Carthusian Chapter and stopped with brother William at Avalon. There his nephew, a child who could not even speak, was laid down upon his bed and (above the force of nature) chuckled at him—actually chuckled. Adam expected these two to grow up into prodigies and heard good of the latter, but the former he lost sight of—a little low-born boy in Newark Castle. Hugh used to put his baby friends to school when they grew older. Benedict of Caen was one of these, and he slipped off Roger de Roldeston's horse into a rushing stream, but was miraculously not drowned: and Robert of Noyon was another whom he picked up at Lambeth in the archbishop's train and put to school with the nuns at Elstow.

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These tender passages are to be contrasted with quite other sides to the man. Once an old rustic arrived late for a roadside confirmation. The bishop was in the saddle and trotting off to another place near, when the old fellow bawled after him that he, too, wished to be bishopped. Hugh more than once bade him hurry with the rest to the next place, but the man sat plump on the ground and said it was the bishop's fault and not his if he missed that Grace. The prelate looked back, and at last pulled up, turned his horse, rode back, and was off saddle again, and had the rite administered swiftly; but having laid holy hands upon him, he laid also a disciplinary one, for he boxed the old fellow's ears pretty smartly, which spanking some would have us to believe was a technical act of ritual, a sort of *accolade* in fact. The same has been suggested about the flogging of forester Godfrey; for the mere resonance of these blows it seems, is too much for the tender nerves of our generation. Another bumpkin with his son once ran after the bishop's horse. The holy man descended, opened his chrism box, and donned his stole, but the boy had been confirmed already. The father wanted to change the boy's name; it would bring him luck. The bishop, horrified at such paganism, asked the boy's name. When he heard that it was John he was furious. "John, a Hebrew name for God's Grace. How dare you ask for a better one? Do you want him called 'hoe' or 'fork'? For your foolish request, take a year's penance, Wednesday's Lenten diet and Friday's bread and water."[6]

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He was hardly abreast of his very legal time in reverence for the feudal system. One of his tenants died and his bailiffs seized the best thing he had, to wit, an ox, as heriot due to the lord.

The poor widow in tears begged and prayed for her ox back again, as the beast was breadwinner for her young children. The seneschal of the place chimed in, “But, my lord, if you remit these and similar legal dues, you will be absolutely unable to hold the land at all.” The bishop heard him and leapt from his horse to the ground, which was very muddy. He dug both hands into the dirt. “Now I have got the land,” he said, “and yet I do remit the poor little woman her ox,” and then he flung the mud away, and lifting his eyes added, “I do not want the land down here; I want heaven. This woman had only two to work for her. Death has taken the better one and are we to take the other? Perish such avarice! Why, in the throes of such wretchedness, she ought to have comfort much rather than further trouble.” Another time he remitted £5 due from a knight’s son, at his father’s death, saying it was unjust and mischievous that he should lose his money because he had lost his father too. “He shall not have double misfortune at any rate at our hands.” Even in the twelfth century piety and business sometimes clashed.

[Pg 58] Hugh had not been enthroned a year, when Christendom was aghast and alarmed at the news from the East. Saladin with eighty thousand men had met the armies of the Cross at Tiberias (or Hittin), had slaughtered them around the Holy Rood itself, in the Saviour’s own country, had beheaded all the knights of the Temple and the Hospital who would not betray the faith. Jerusalem had fallen, and Mahomet was lord of the holy fields. “The rejoicing in hell was as great as the grief when Christ harrowed it,” men said. The news came in terrible bursts; not a country but lost its great ones. Hugh Beauchamp is killed, Roger Mowbray taken. The Pope, Urban III., has died of grief. The Crusade has begun to be preached. Gregory VIII. has offered great indulgences to true penitents and believers who will up and at the Saracens. He bade men fear lest Christians lose what land they have left. Fasting three days a week has been ordered. Prince Richard has the cross (and is one, to his father). Berter of Orleans sings a Jeremiad. Gilbert Foliot (foe to St. Thomas) is dead. Peace has been made between France of the red cross and England of the white, and Flanders of the green. King Henry has ordered a tax of a tenth, under pain of cursing, to be collected before the clergy in the parishes from all stay-at-homes. Our Hugh is not among the bishops present at this Le Mans proclamation. The kingdom is overrun, in patches, with tithe collectors. Awful letters come from Christian remnants, but still there is no crusade; France and England are at war. The new Pope is dead. Now old Frederick Barbarossa is really off [Pg 59] to Armenia. Prayers and psalms for Jerusalem fill the air. The Emperor is drowned. Archbishop Baldwin and Hugh of Durham, notwithstanding, quarrel with their monks. Scotland is always in a tangle. Great King Henry, with evil sons and failing health, makes a sad peace in a fearful storm, learns that son John too has betrayed him, curses his day and his sons, and refuses to withdraw his curse, dies at Chinon before the altar, houselled and anhealed, on the 6th of July, 1189. But when dead he is plundered of every rag and forsaken.

That last Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity, Hugh had been abroad with the poor king, and had been the only bishop who insisted upon keeping his festivals with full sung Mass and not a hasty, low Mass.

Hugh de Nonant, the new bishop of Coventry, one Confessor’s Day had begun saying the introit, when his Lincoln namesake lifted up his voice and began the long melic intonation. “No, no, we must haste. The king has told us to come quickly,” said the former. The answer was, “Nay, for the sake of the King of kings, who is most powerfully to be served, and whose service must bate nothing for worldly cares, we must not haste but feast on this feast,” and so he came later, but missed nothing. Before the king died Hugh had gone back to his diocese again, and heard the sorrowful news there.

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[3] The white.

[4] He was acting by a Canon of 1138, passed at Westminster.

[5] Thornholm is near Appleby, and is a wooded part of the county even to this day.

[6] From this and from various incidental remarks it may be concluded that Hugh knew Hebrew, which is not remarkable, because the learned just then had taken vigorously to that tongue and had to be restrained from taking lessons too ardently in the Ghetto. Some of his incidental remarks certainly did not come from St. Jerome, the great cistern of mediæval Hebrew.

CHAPTER V

THE BISHOP AT WORK

Henry was dead before his friend was three years a bishop, and with him died Hugh's hopes of better men on the bench, for Richard's bishops were treasurers, justiciars and everything but fathers of their dioceses. Tall, blue-eyed, golden-haired Richard the Viking, had a simple view of his father's Empire. It was a fine basis for military operations.[7] He loosed some of the people's burdens to make them pay more groats. He unlocked the gaols. He made concessions to France and Scotland. He frowned upon the Jews, a frown which only meant that he was going to squeeze them, but which his people interpreted into a permission to wreak their hatred, malice, and revenge upon the favoured usurers.

The massacre of Jews which began in London and finally culminated in the fearful scenes of York, spread to other parts and broke out in place after place. In Lent (1190) the enlisting for the crusade was going on in Stamford. The recruits, "indignant that the enemies of the Cross of Christ who lived there should possess so much, while they themselves had so little for the expenses of so great a journey," rushed upon the Jews. The men of Stamford tried to stop the riot, but were overcome, and if it had not been for the Castle the Jews would have been killed to a man. Two of the plunderers fell out over the booty. One, John by name, was killed, martyred it was supposed. The old women had dreams about him. Miracles began. A shrine was set up and robber John began to develop into Saint John. Then down came the bishop, scattered the watchers and worshippers, hacked down the shrine and forbade any more such adoration of Jew-baiting thieves, with a thundering anathema. The Lincoln people next began the same game, but they did not reckon with the new warden, Gerard de Camville, who had bought the revenues and provided a harbour there for the Israelites. We may believe that the bishop also was not behind hand in quelling such bloody ruffianism, for the Jews were afterwards very conspicuous in their grief at his death, evidently owing him something.

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King Richard, athirst for adventure, sold all that he could, taxed all that he could, and then set off for the crusade, carrying with him Baldwin the gentle archbishop, who was to die in despair at the gross habits and loose morals of the crusading hosts. He left behind him brother John, whom he had tried to bribe into fidelity, and a little lame, black foreigner, Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, who had been adviser, schemer, general brain box and jackal to the Lionheart, and who now swept through England with a thousand knights, trying cleverly and faithfully to rule the restive English and to keep them in some order and loyalty, in his ill-bred, active way. But the whole position was impossible and more impossible, first, because of John the always treasonable; and secondly, because of Walter, late Bishop of Lincoln and now of Rouen (the Pilate or Pilot?) whom Richard sent to guard the guardian. Geoffrey, half brother to the king, next came upon the scenes as a new complication. He had been made Archbishop of York and overlord of Durham. Black William's sister Richenda seized this archbishop and imprisoned him: and then Hugh joined the anti-Longchamp party, sided actively with John and with Gerard de Camville, who was beseiged in Lincoln. Hugh excommunicated Richenda. His influence turned the scale against Longchamp.

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It would require a treatise in itself to unfold all the tangled story of the first half of Richard's reign till the king returned to England after war, prison, and heavy ransom, in March 1194. Practically, at this date the Bishop of Lincoln disappears as much as possible from political life; or at least tried to do so. He was building the cathedral and doing his duty as bishop, befriending the needy and the outcast, and showing himself the enemy of wrong-doers. Now we hear of him clipping the love locks of his young sacristan Martin, who straightway became a monk; now following in the steps of great St. Martin by some passionate acts of pity, and now retiring mostly in harvest time (when all hands are busy and all hearts are out of reach) to his beloved Witham for a month's retreat.

Of course all devout people in the Middle Ages had an especial care for lepers because of that most fortunate mistranslation in Isaiah liii. 4. which we render "we did esteem Him stricken," but which the Vulgate renders *putavimus eum quasi leprosum*: we did esteem Him as it were a leper. Hence service to lepers was especially part of service to Christ. At Maiden Bradley, in Somerset, was a colony of leprous sisters; and at Witham Church a leper window looked towards their house. At Lincoln[8] was the Hospital of the Holy Innocents called La Malandrie. It was founded by

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St. Remigius, the Norman cathedral builder, with thirteen marks revenue and further endowed by Henry I. and Henry II. The condition of all these leper outcasts was more than miserable. The disease was divided into the breeding, full and shipwreck periods. When the first was detected the patient was led to church, clothed in black, Mass and Matins for the dead were said over him, earth was thrown upon his foot, and then he was taken to a hovel on waste land where he was to be buried at the last. Here he found a parti-coloured robe, a coat, two shirts, a rattle, knife, staff, copper girdle, bed, table, and lamp, a chair, chest, pail, cask and funnel, and this was his portion for ever. He was not before 1179 allowed even a leprous priest to say Mass for him. The disease rotted away his flesh till he died, limbless or faceless in fearful shipwreck, and unhouselled. These wretches this bishop took under his peculiar care. He would wash them with his own [Pg 64] hands, as his mother did before him, kiss them, serve them with meat, drink, and money. He would have thirteen together in his room, if he could find that number. He maintained many, both men and women. He would go to the Malandry, stop in a cell there, accompanied by a few of his devoutest and closest friends, and cosset the lepers motheringly, telling them they were desolate and afflicted only to be rewarded for ever, persuading them to a holy life with his pitying words, reproving them for their evil deeds (and many lepers were horribly immoral); but before ever he talked to them he kissed the men, embracing longer and more lovingly those who were worst smitten. The swelled, black, gathered, deformed faces, eyeless or lipless, were a horror to behold, but to Hugh they seemed lovely, in the body of their humiliation. Such he said were happy, were Paradise flowers, great crown gems of the King Eternal. He would use these as a text and speak of Christ's compassion to the wretched, Christ who now took ulcerous Lazarus by angels to Abraham's bosom and now became weak with our weakness. "Oh, how happy they were who were close about that so sweet man as his friends! Whatever his foot trod upon, or any part of him had touched, or his hands had handled, it would be sweet indeed to me, to devour with kisses, to put to my eyes, to bury in my very heart if I could. What of this superfluous humour, if one may use the word of what flowed from the tree of life? What am I to feel of that humour which used to be poured from a vase of such blessing because He bare our infirmity? Why, of course, if I only could, I should diligently gather Him, yes, and drain Him with my lips, drink Him [Pg 65] in with my jaws, and hide just Him in my inward parts. Those are the really wretched, who fear aught else than to offend One so sweet. Those are the pitiful who esteem aught else sweet, or seek aught else than sweetly to cleave to this sweet One and sweetly obey Him. I do not know what he can feel to be bitter, who with the inner palate of the heart has learnt by continuous meditation to feed on the sweetness of this Sweet." Thus inspired, he looked upon the weaker limbs of Christ, honouring those whom others passed by.

Not only was he bountiful to lepers, but what with the alms asked of him and given by a hand that often outran the tongue of need, he gave away a third of all he had in this way alone. Once at Newark he met a leper and kissed him. There a most learned Canon from Paris, William de Montibus, a great master and author, an early Cruden, and the Chancellor of the Diocese, said to him, "Martin's kiss cleansed the leper." The bishop answered humbly, "Martin kissed the leper and cured his body, but the leper's kiss has cured my soul."

Of Hugh's courage several instances are cited (but impossible now to date). He went several times unarmed against threatening bands of men who flourished naked swords. In Lincoln Church, in Holland as aforementioned, and in Northampton, he faced angry clerks and laymen, knights and men at arms, and burgesses with equal vigour, and excommunicated them. It is not unlikely that the first was in defence of the Jews, and the third when he stopped the worship of a thief at the last place. The second may have been when he placed himself among the enemies of Longchamp.

[Pg 66] He was believed, and he believed himself, to be able to cause death to those whom he excommunicated. This was so firmly acknowledged that it saved him in many a severe pinch, and shielded him from indifference, beggary, and defeat. Many instances are given us, in which misfortune and death followed upon his censures. If any one likes to plead *post hoc, non ergo propter hoc*, judgment may go by default; but at any rate the stories show the life of the time most vividly, and the battle for righteousness which a good bishop had to wage.

There lived at Cokewald an oldish knight, Thomas de Saleby, whose wife Agnes was barren. William, his brother, also a knight, but of Hardredeshill, was the heir to the estate. Dame Agnes detested William and schemed to disappoint him. She gave out that she was with child. William disbelieved, consulted friends, but could find no remedy. About Easter, 1194, the lady affected to

be confined. A baby, Grace by name, was smuggled into the room, and sent back to its mother to be suckled. Outwitted, William went off in distress to the bishop, who sent for Sir Thomas, in private, charged him, and tried to make him confess. But he, "fearing the scoldings of his too tongue-banging wife more than God's justice, and being, moreover, spell-bound by her viperine hissings," affected utter innocence. The bishop plied him vigorously, urging public opinion and his own old weak state. At last he promised that he would go home and talk with Agnes, and report the next day, and if he found these things so, would obey orders. "Do so," said the bishop, [Pg 67] "but know that if you bate your promise, the sentence of excommunication will strike solemnly and fearfully all the doers and abetters of this wrong." But Agnes' tongue outdid the bishop's, and Thomas sulked indoors. The bishop preached about this in public, on the Easter Monday, and said it was a sin unto death. He then knotted the cord of anathema round the daring conspirators. Satan was soon up and at Thomas. He wrenched away the soul of the unhappy knight, who had gone to bed to escape the worry, and there died a sad example to wife-ruled husbands. Agnes, however, defied them all and braved out her story; and here is the crux: the infant was legally legitimate because Thomas had acknowledged it to be such. King Richard allowed little Grace, aged four, to be betrothed to Adam, a brother of Hugh de Neville, his chief forestar. Hugh, who was always at war with child marriages, issued a special *caveat* in this case. But when he was away in Normandy they found a priest (a fool or bribed) to tie the knot. The priest was suspended and the rest excommunicated. In the next act the chambermaid confessed; and lastly Agnes' nerve gave way, and she did the same. But Adam still claimed the lands, won a suit in London, although William bid five hundred marks against him, and died drunk at an inn, with his baby bride. Hugh's comment was that "the name forestar is right and aptly given, for they will stand far from the kingdom of God." But the little heiress was again hunted into marriage, this time by a valet of John's, Norman of the chamber, who bought her for two hundred marks. He died, and the little girl was sold for three hundred marks to Brien de Insula, a man known to history. Grace [Pg 68] at the last died childless, though she seems to have been a pious wife; and Saleby came back at the last to William's long defrauded line.

Yet another forestar also under ban found some men in his forest cutting brush-wood, handled them insolently and was cut to pieces and stuck together again with twigs and left at the cross roads.

Again a deacon, Richard de Waure, quarrelled with a knight, Reginald de Argentun, and maliciously accused him of treason. The bishop forbade the suit, but the deacon danced off to my lord of Canterbury, Hubert the Justiciar, who was the real King of England and one of the ablest men the country had to serve her. He felt it right that the suit should continue. Hugh declared that he had acted as Justiciar, not as Metropolitan, and suspended Richard, who again went off to Hubert and got the sentence relaxed, and boasted that he was free from Lincoln jurisdiction. Hugh simply added excommunication to the contumacious deacon. Again the archbishop loosed, and Hugh bound. "If a hundred times you get absolved by the lord archbishop, know that we re-excommunicate you a hundred times or more, as long as we see you so all too hardened in your mad presumption. It is evident what you care for our sentence. But it is utterly fixed and settled." Then the deacon hesitated, but before he could make up his mind his man cracked open his head with an axe.

Then again there was a girl at Oxford, who, backed by a Herodias mother, left her husband for another love. The husband appealed to the bishop, who told her to go back. She kept repeating [Pg 69] that she would sooner die. Hugh tried coaxing. He took her husband's hand and said, "Be my daughter and do what I bid you. Take your husband in the kiss of peace with God's benison. Otherwise I will not spare you, be sure, nor your baneful advisers." He told the husband to give her the kiss of peace. But when he advanced to do so the hussey spat in his face near the altar (of Carfax) and before many reverend fathers. With a fearful voice the bishop said, "You have eschewed the blessing and chosen the curse. Lo! the curse shall catch you." He gave her a few days' respite and then pronounced the curse. "She was suffocated by the enemy of mankind, and suddenly changed lawless and vanishing pleasures for unending and just tortures," says the unhesitating scribe.

Once a Yorkshire clerk was turned out of his benefice by a knight (who was in our sense also a squire) simply that the gentleman might clap in his brother. The poor parson appealed to Courts Christian and Courts Civil, but found his enemy was much too favoured for him to effect anything. He tried Rome, but, poor Lackpenny, got what he might have expected from that

distant tribunal. In his distress he turned to the chivalrous Bishop of Lincoln. Now, Hugh had no business at all to meddle with Archbishop Geoffrey Plantagenet's diocese, but it was a case of "Who said oppression?" He banned the obtruding priest by name and all his accomplices. Some died, some went mad or blind. Thus William got his own again, for, as all who knew expected, Hugh's anathema meant repentance or death.

[Pg 70] These anecdotes explain much that follows, and not a little the great strain that there was between Archbishop Hubert Walter and the Bishop of Lincoln. Perhaps this strain was bound to be felt, because the policy of the former was to employ churchmen largely in political and secular affairs, the policy of the other to exclude them as much as possible. In the abstract we can hardly think that it is well that priests should rule the State or bishops manipulate the national finances. But to lay down that rule at the close of the twelfth century was to cut the spine between the brains of the State and its members. Hugh, perhaps, allowed too little for the present distress; Hubert for the distant goal. Anyhow they collided.

Hubert, in his capacity of financial viceroy, the moment Richard had come back from captivity, been re-crowned, and gone off again, sent off the visiting justices to look after various pleas of the Crown, among which was a question of defaults. These gentlemen began their milking process in September, 1194. It was discovered that an old tribute of an expensive mantel had been paid in times past by Lincoln See to the King. This pall was a matter of 100 marks (say £2,000 of our money). In the long vacancy and under Bishop Walter there had been no payment, and the royal claim was for a good many years back, there being apparently some limitations. Arrears of 1,000 marks were demanded, or a lump sum of 3,000 to have done with the tribute. Hugh thought it an unworthy and intolerable thing that our Lady's Church and he, as its warder, [Pg 71] should be under tribute at all, and he was prepared to do anything to end the "slavery." However little we can share this notion, at least it was a generous one. The demand came after the Saladin taxes, the drain for the Crusade, for the king's ransom, and during the building of the cathedral. It came to a man who gave a third of his money in alms and who lived from hand to mouth, often borrowing on his revenues before he got them. He proposed to meet this new huge call by retiring to Witham and devoting the whole emoluments of the See to redeeming this fictitious mantel. But the clergy, who knew by experience both order and chaos, rose in arms, and monastic advisers added their dissuading voices. Well might the clergy support their bishop. They had in times past paid for the king's mantel with episcopal trimmings, and other prelates had not scorned a little cabbage over this rich tailoring. Richard cynically expected that Hugh would do the same, but his clergy knew him better. They offered to find the money. But Hugh, though he allowed them to do so, would not allow one fruitful vein to be worked. He absolutely forbade penance fines, lest, for money's sake, the innocent should be oppressed and the guilty be given less pains than were needed. Some folk told the bishop that rascals had more feeling in their purses than in their banned souls or banged bodies. He replied that this was because their spiritual fathers laid on too lightly upon the sinners. "But," they pleaded, "Thomas the Martyr, of most blessed memory, fined sinners." Hugh answered, "Believe me, it was not on that head that [Pg 72] he was a saint. Quite other virtue merits marked him a saint; by quite another story he won the meed of martyr palm."

Hubert must have felt it more of a financial than a moral victory when the 3,000 marks clinked in the treasurer's box.

The next battle between these two doughty men (or shall we say systems of thought?) was fought about Eynsham Abbey. Old Abbot Geoffrey died, and at his election the Abbey had been under the See of Lincoln; but since then King Henry had claimed the gift of abbacies, a claim his son was not likely to bate. A suit with the Crown, Hugh's friends argued, was hopeless or not worth the trouble; but this argument seemed sacrilegious to the intrepid bishop. What? Allow God and the Queen of Heaven to be robbed? Who ever agreed to let Lincoln be so pilled? He is but a useless and craven ruler who does not enlarge instead of lessen the dignities and liberties of the Holy Church. He went stoutly to the contest, crossed and recrossed the sea, and at last persuaded a sort of grand jury of twenty-four clerks and laymen that he was the patron. In a year's time he won his case and saw Robert of Dore, a good abbot, well in his chair. Hugh spent a week with his almost bereft family, gave the new man a fine chased silver and ivory crook and a great glorious goblet, and amplified the place with a generous hand.

This was a legal triumph for the bishop, but surely it was a moral triumph for the *Curia Regis* to

do ample justice to a strong opponent of the Crown? Of course, nobody wanted another St. [Pg 73] Thomas episode again, least of all enacted against a man who carried the Church of England with him, as St. Thomas, living, never did; but Hugh had small favour with the king at this time. By these successive battles the Bishop of Lincoln had come to be looked upon as the leader of the Church and the champion of her liberties. To us those "liberties" seem a strange claim, beyond our faith and our ken, too. It seems obvious to us that men, whether clerks or laymen, who eat, drink, wear, build, and possess on the temporal plane, should requite those who safeguard them in these things with tribute, honour, and obedience; and freedom from State control in things temporal seems like freedom to eat buns without paying the baker. Free bilking, free burgling, and so on, sound no less contradictory. But the best minds of England seven centuries ago dreamed of another citizenship and a higher, of which the Church was the city—a city not future only and invisible, but manifest in their midst, which they loved with passion and were jealous over, too exclusively perhaps, but in the event not unwisely. It is less difficult for us to see that any cause which would set the unselfish and lofty-minded men of that time against the preponderating power of the Crown made for the welfare and peace of the country in the future. The anarchy of Stephen's reign, Henry's mastery, and Richard's might, with Hubert Walter's genius, resulted in a dangerous accumulation of power that did actually prove almost disastrous to the State. Consequently Bishop Hugh's greatest contest with the Crown demands the sympathy both of men who still dream of the spiritual city in (but unsoiled by) hands of mortals, [Pg 74] and also of those who value constitutional liberties in modern politics. The war with France kept Richard active abroad. The flow of money from England was too thin to enable him to strike the final blow he wished to strike. Hubert Walter's power was so hampered he could do little beyond scutages, but in December, 1197, he called together a Council at Oxford. He told this universal assembly of the barons of all England that the king was in straits. He was outclassed and outmanned and like to be even dispossessed by a most powerful and determined enemy. He asked their deliberations as to help for the king in his difficulties. Oxford was the king's birthplace and was also in Lincoln diocese.[9] The Court party, who advocated abject submission to the king's becks, at once proposed that the barons of England, among whom were the bishops, should furnish three hundred knights to the king, which knights should serve for a year without furlough. The Bishop of Lincoln's consent was asked, and he made no reply at first, but turned it over in his mind. The archbishop, of course, spoke for the motion. Richard FitzNigel, Bishop of London, a man of finance, purchase, and political sagacity, one of the historians of the time, assured them that he and his would try every fetch to relieve the royal need. This brought up Hugh in an instant. "You, wise and noble gentlemen here before me, know that I am a stranger in this country of yours and was raised to a bishop's office from a simple hermit life. So when the [Pg 75] Church of my Lady Mary the Holy Mother of God was handed over to my inexperience to rule I applied myself to explore its customs, dignities, dues, and burdens. For near thirteen years, up till now, I have not trod out of the straight tracks of my forerunners. I know the Lincoln Church is bound to furnish military service for the King, but only in this country. Beyond the bounds of England none such is due from her. Hence I think it would be wiser for me to foot it back to my native soil and till the wilderness in my wonted way, rather than bear a bishopric here, lose the ancient immunities of the Church entrusted to me, and subject her to unprecedented vexations." This answer the archbishop took very ill. His voice choked, his lips quivered. He took up the tale, however, without comment, and asked Herbert le Poor, Bishop of Salisbury, the very man who, as Archdeacon of Canterbury, had been snubbed for simony at Hugh's installation, and who might be expected to render a public nothing now for his then empty hand. But he had learnt something since that day, and he replied curtly that he could give no other answer than that of my lord of Lincoln, unless it were to the enormous prejudice of his Church. Then the archbishop blazed into fury. He loosed many a bitter shaft against Bishop Hugh. He broke up the assembly and told the king who it was had made the whole matter to miscarry. Two and even three postmen were sent off to lash the Lion into frenzy, and Richard ordered all that the bishop had to be confiscated as soon as possible. Herbert, the seconder, had the same sentence, and was soon Poor in estate as [Pg 76] well as name, and only got peace and possession back after injuries, losses, vexings, and many insults. But no man laid a finger even upon the most trumpery temporal of the Bishop of Lincoln. His anathema meant death. For nine months Richard hounded his minions on, but they dared not bite. Instead they beseeched the bishop's pity for their unhappy position, and he resolved to seek the king and talk him over. He had no friend at Court to prepare his way. Fine old William Earl Marshall and the Earl of Albemarle tried to stop him or to make some way for him; but he did not allow them to sacrifice themselves, but sent word to the king that he was coming. Two things had

happened since that December. Innocent III. had become Pope—the Augustus of the papal empire, and he was already acting most vigorously and unhesitatingly. Secondly, Hubert Walter had resigned, because the Pope took Lincoln views of bishops being judges, councillors, treasurers, and the like. These things made Hugh's chances more favourable. Richard's wrath, too, was a straw fire, and it had time to cool, and cooled quicklier because it had shocked his English subjects. Moreover, though highly abominable as he considered the Bishop's checkmate, he had got the cash after all by breaking the great seal and having a new one made, which necessitated a new sealing of all old parchments, and royal wax is dear to this day. It would, therefore, not be amiss to smooth those English who were smarting at the broken seal and broken faith. Hugh's chances, then, were not quite desperate, although he had been able to stop [Pg 77] the mouth of the Lion for nine whole months by his intrepidity, fame, and the help of heaven. The rest of the story, which is given minutely, gives one a little window into the times hard to equal for its clearness.

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[7] Plato's Aristocrat has a son, who is a great timocrat.

[8] "South-east of the Great Bar Gate between that and the little Bar Gate in the north-west angle of the Great South Common."

[9] Perhaps for both reasons chosen as the trysting-place.

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CHAPTER VI

IN TROUBLES—

The king had before this time noticed a spot of immense military importance on the Seine between Rouen and Paris, the rock of Andelys. Indeed he had once tossed three Frenchmen from the rock. It was, or might be, the key to Normandy on the French side, and he feared lest Philip should seize upon it and use it against him. Consequently he pounced upon it, and began to fortify it at lavish expense. Archbishop Walter of Rouen, and late of Lincoln, in whose ecclesiastical patrimony it lay, was furious, and obtained an Interdict, and Philip was chafed too.[10] The former was appeased by the gift of Dieppe, and the latter left to digest his spleen as best he might. The work was just about finished in May when a shower of red rain fell, to the horror of all except the dauntless king, who "would have cursed an angel" who had told him to desist from this his great delight. Here it was that the king lay waiting for the truce with France to expire.

[Pg 79] The bishop arrived at the Rock castle in the morning of St. Augustine's day (Aug. 28th). The king was in the chapel hearing Mass, and thither the bishop followed him, and straightway saluted him. Now the king was in the royal daïs, near the outer door. Two bishops were standing just below him. (We must think of something like a small upstair college chapel for the theatre of this tale.) These two were old Hugh Pudsey, Bishop of Durham, and young Eustace, Bishop of Ely: the former a generous, loose-handed, loose-living old gentleman, the latter Longchamp's successor, a great scholar and revenue officer. Hugh looked past the shoulders of these two and saluted again. The king glared at him for a few seconds and then turned his face. The unabashed bishop put his face nearer: "Give me the kiss, lord king." The king turned his face further away, and drew his head back. Then the bishop clutched the king's clothes at the chest, vigorously shook them, and said again, "You owe me the kiss, for I have come a long way to you." The king, seemingly not astonished in the least, said, "You have not deserved my kiss." The strong hand shook him still harder, and across the cape which he still held taut, the bold suppliant answered confidently, "Oh yes, I have deserved it. Kiss me." The king, taken aback by this audacious importunity, smiled and kissed him. Two archbishops (Walter of Rouen most likely being one) and five other bishops were between the royal seat and the altar. They moved to make room for their uncourtly brother. But he passed through their ranks and went right up to the horn of the altar, [Pg 80] fixed his looks firmly on the ground, and gave his whole attention to the celebration of the Divine mysteries. The king could hardly take his eyes off the bishop all through the service. So they

continued until the threefold invocation of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Then the celebrant, the king's chaplain, gave the kiss of peace to a certain foreign archbishop, whose business it was, by court custom, to bring it to the king. Richard came from his place right up to the altar steps to meet him, received "the sign of the peace which we get from the sacrifice of the Heavenly Lamb," and then with humble reverence yielded the same to the Bishop of Lincoln by the kiss of his mouth. This respectful service, which the other archbishop was making ready to receive, as the custom was, and to pass on himself, was thus given direct to the holy man. The king stept quickly up to him, when Hugh was expecting nothing of the sort, but was wrapt in prayer.[11]

When the Mass was over, Hugh went to the king and spoke a few strong words of remonstrance against his unjustifiable anger, and explained his own innocence. The king could answer nothing to the purpose, but said that the Archbishop had often written suspicious suggestions against him. The bishop soon showed that these were groundless, and added, "God's honour apart, and the salvation of your soul and mine, I have never opposed your interests even in the least degree." The king immediately asked him to come next day to the recently constructed castle of Château Gaillard, and ordered the bishop to be given a big Seine pike, knowing that he would not eat meat. But before they left the chapel Hugh gripped him by the hand and led him from his high seat to a place near the altar. There he set him down and sat beside him. "You are our parishioner, lord king" (he was born in Oxford), "and we must answer at the tremendous judgment of the Lord of all for your soul, which He redeemed with His own blood. So I wish you to tell me how stands it with your soul in its inner state? so that I may be able to give it some effectual counsel and help, as the Divine breathing shall direct. A whole year has gone by since I last spoke with you."

The king answered that his conscience was clear, nearly in everything, except that he was troubled by hatred against the enemies whom he was apt to find doing him wrong, and wickedly attacking him. The reply was, "If in all things you please the grace of the Ruler of all, He will easily appease your enemies or give them into your hand. But you must beware with all your might, that you are not living against the laws of your Maker in any way (and God forbid you should) or even doing any wrong to your neighbours. The Scripture says that 'When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.' On the other hand it says of others, 'The world shall fight with him, against the unwise,' and again the holy man saith of the Lord, 'Who hath hardened himself against Him and hath prospered?'

"Now there is a public report of you, and I grieve to say it, that you neither keep faithful to the marriage bed of your own wife, nor do you guard untouched the privileges of churches, especially in providing and choosing their rulers. Yes, it is said, and a huge piece of villainy it is, that moved by money or favour, you are used to promote some to the rule of souls. If this is true, then without any doubt, peace cannot be granted to you by God." When he had given this careful and timely admonition and instruction, the king excused himself on some points, on others asked earnestly for the bishop's intercession, and was sent off with a blessing. The bishop then went in gladness to his pike. Richard's opinion was that "if all the other bishops were like him, no king or prince would dare to rear his neck against them." Such salutary treatment now-a-days is the sole perquisite of the very poor. The higher up men get on the social scale, the less they need such honest dealing, it now appears.

But Hugh was not quite out of the toils. The king's counsellors suggested that he should carry back letters to the barons demanding aid and succour, letters which it was known would be well weighted by the authority of the postman, and would ensure their bearer continuance of the royal favour. The king's servants informed the bishop of this move, and his clerkly friends pointed out the great advantage to himself of this service. He answered: "That be far from me. It jumps neither with my intention nor my office. It is not my part to become the carrier of letters royal. It is not my part to co-operate in the least degree in exactions of this sort. Do not you know that this

mighty man begs as it were with a drawn sword? Particularly this power (of the Crown), under guise of asking, really forces. Our English first attract with their gentle greetings, and then they force men with harshest compulsion to pay not what is voluntary but just what they choose to exact. They often compel unwilling folk to do what they know was once done spontaneously, either by this generation or the last. I have no cause to be mixed up in such dealings. These may please an earthly king at one's neighbour's expense, but afterwards they move the indignation of Almighty God." He asked the counsellors to arrange that this burden should not be laid upon him

with its consequent refusal, conflict, and disfavour. Richard heard the tale and sent a message, "God bless you, but get away home, and do not come here to-morrow as we said, but pray for us to the Lord without ceasing," which message was most grateful to the bishop, and he soon set his face north. His exultant chaplains felt sure that all would turn out well, for on the steps of the chapel, when their hearts were all pit-a-pat, they had heard the chorus prose of St. Austin being chaunted, "Hail, noble prelate of Christ, most lovely flower," a lucky omen! And again when they reached chapel doors they heard the bishops and clerks within in unison continue the introit, "O blessed, O holy Augustine, help thou this company."

A month later Richard won a smart little victory near Gisors, where King Philip drank moat water, and nearly got knocked on the head. The king announced this in a letter, and asked for more prayers, and Adam, the biographer, felt that the heavenly triumph of his friend was complete. He would have been less elate if he had known that all the bishops got a similar letter, even wicked old Hugh de Pudsey.

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Lincoln by this time was the home of learned and reliable men. The canons, prebends, and placemen had been chosen with great care. Hugh had cast his net far and wide and enclosed some very edible fishes. We know of not a few. William of Leicester, Montanus, has already been mentioned. Giraldus Cambrensis (a most learned, amusing, and malicious writer, on the lines of Anthony A. Wood, or even of Horace Walpole) was another. Walter de Map a third.[12] It was part of Hugh's high sense of duty which made him fight with all his weight for a worthy though a broad-minded use of patronage. He often upbraided the archbishop with his careless use of this power, who was immersed in worldly business and too given to bestow benefices for political or useful services. He said himself that the most grievous worldly misfortune he ever suffered was to find men whom he trusted and advanced turn out to be immoral sluggards. Yet another of his promotions was that of William de Blois, who afterwards succeeded him. In fact, like every great bishop of the time, he gathered his *eruditi*, his scholars, around him, and these were not looked [Pg 85] upon as mere dreamers and impracticable bookworms. Lore and action went hand in hand. The men of affairs and the men of learning, in this age, were interchangeable persons. Consequently when Richard's attention was directed to Lincoln and its bishop, when he noticed that it was a centre for sound and steady clerks whose wallets were by no means unstuffed, and when he reflected that he had failed to lay hands upon the bishop's money, he resolved to have something at any rate from this fine magazine. He wrote to the archbishop to order, by letter, twelve eminent clerks, who had prudence, counsel, and eloquence, to serve at their own expense in the Roman Court, in Germany, Spain, and elsewhere. The post from Canterbury duly arrived with twelve sealed "pair of letters," to be directed to eminent men, and with a special letter to order the bishop to hasten and obey. The bearer found the bishop at his Buckden House, and dinner was just on the board. There was much buzz and hum among those present when the tale was told, but Hugh made no reply. He simply sat down to table. The clergy, a pavid flock, chattered their fears between the mouthfuls. They hoped rather hopelessly, that the answer would be all sugary and smiling; at any rate that their master would try a little ogling of the archbishop, who could, if he would, make things ever so much better. While they were exchanging their views upon expediency and the great propriety of saving one's skin, the stout-hearted bishop rose from table. He had consulted none of these scared advisers, so that he might not throw the [Pg 86] responsibility upon their shivering backs. He turned to the messenger and said, "These are novelties, and hitherto unheard of, both the things which my lord has ordered on the king's authority and on his own. Still he may know that I never was, nor will be, a letter carrier of his epistles; and I never have, nor will now, oblige our clergy to undertake royal service. I have often stopped even clerks of other parts, beneficed in our bishopric, from daring to make themselves beholden to secular patronage in public offices, such as forest diversion, and other like administrations. Some, who were less obedient on this point, we have even chastened by long sequestration of their livings. On what reasonable count, then, ought we to pluck men from the very vitals of our Church, and send them by order on the royal service? Let it be enough for our lord the king that (certainly a danger to their soul's salvation) the archbishops, neglecting the duty of their calling, are already utterly given over to the performance of his business. If that is not enough for him, then this bishop will come with his people. He will come, I say, and hear his orders from the king's own lips. He will come ready to carry out what is right next after those same orders.

"But as for you, take the bundle of twelve letters which you say you have brought to us, and be

off with them and make just what use you please of them. But every single word which I speak to you, be sure to repeat to our lord the archbishop: and do not fail to end with the message that if the arrangement holds that our clergy are to go to the king, I myself likewise will go with them. I have not gone before without them; and they will not go without me now. This is the right relation between a good shepherd and good sheep: he must not scatter them by foolishly letting them out of his ken. They must not get into trouble by rash escape from him."

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The letter carrier, a court cleric, was finely indignant. He was a man careful-chosen, haughty by nature, but still more haughty as royal envoy. He was bridling up for a volley of threats when the bishop cut him short, and ordered him off at the double. He slunk away abashed. A deputation, of weight, from Lincoln next waited upon the archbishop to expostulate with him for playing chuck taw with the immunity of the church, and franking with his authority such messages. He smiled graciously, after the manner of his kind, and hid his spleen. He meant no harm, of course: if harm there were, he was glad to be disobeyed, and he would make all quiet and right. Of course in reality he took care to twist the Lion's tail with both hands, and the next thing was a public edict, that all the goods of the bishop were to be taken care of by the king's collectors. The good man heard and remarked, "Did I not tell you truly of these men: their voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau?" It was easier to order than to execute. The anathema counted for much, but the public conscience no doubt for more. The officers balked and remonstrated. Richard insisted, but his tools bent in his hand. "Those English are scared at shadows," he said; "let us send Mercadier. He will know how to play with the Burgundian fellow." This amiable man was the captain of the Routiers, whose playful habits may be guessed from the fact that he is the gentleman who afterwards skinned Bertrand de Gourdon for shooting the king. One of the king's friends answered, "Mercadier is necessary, my lord the king, to your war. We should lose our pains and also his services if the Lincoln bishop's anathema should take effect." The king agreed that the risk was too heavy, so he ordered Stephen de Turnham to take charge of the bishop's goods, as he loved his life and limbs. This man had been seneschal of Anjou under the king's father, and was well affected to the bishop; but he was between the devil and the deep sea. With some heaviness and nervousness Stephen moved upon Sleaford. Between Peterborough and Market Deeping, whom should he fall in with but the bishop and his party! The uneasy disseizers fetched a compass, halted, and got hold of some of the clergy. They were as humble as Ahaziah's third captain before Elijah. They were obliged to do it, but, poor lambs, they would not hurt so much as a swan's feather. And would the bishop, by all that was invokeable, kindly defer his anathema? or else the king would be royally angry, and they would get more than they deserved. The bishop answered the clergy, "It is not their parts to keep our things whole. Let them go. Let them finger and break in upon the goods, as they think fit. They are not ours but our Lady's, the holy Mother of God." He then brought out the end of his linen stole from his cloak (which stole he always wore, ready for confirmation and excommunication) shook it and added, "This little bit of stuff will bring back to the last halfpenny whatever they reeve away." He then passed on to Buckden (near Huntingdon), where he issued orders to all the archdeacons and rural deans, that so soon as the officers should arrive they should clang bells, light candles and solemnly ban all who should violently and unrighteously touch the property of their Church. The flutter in the clerical dovecot was immense, but the bishop simply said good-night to his excited chaplains and was soon in the sweetest slumber. Except that he said Amen in his sleep a few more times than usual, and more earnestly, they saw no trace of neural tremours about his sedate carriage. He seems to have been well aware of the gravity of the struggle, for he had already announced at Lincoln that he would have to go abroad. He had gathered his children at the Mass, where he added the priestly blessing from the law of Moses,[13] had commended himself to their prayers, given them the kiss of peace and commended them to God, and was already on the way to the archbishop. He stayed a few days at Buckden. Thence he slowly made his way to London. On the road a rural dean consulted him upon the case of a girl with second sight and a terrific tongue. This damsel would prophetically discover things stolen or lost, and she had a large following. If any discreet and learned man tackled her she would talk him down, and put him to rout. She was brought to meet Hugh by the roadside, amid a crowd of confirmation candidates. He addressed her, chiding not so much the damsel as the demon within her, "Come now, unhappy girl, what can you divine for us? Tell me please, if you can, what this hand holds in it?" He held out his right hand closed over his stole end. She made no reply, but fell at his feet in a sort of faint. After a pause he bade them lift her up and asked through the dean (for he was ignorant of the country woman's talk) how she had learnt to divine? "I cannot divine. I implore the mercy of this holy

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bishop," she replied, and knelt at his feet. He laid his hands upon her head, prayed, blessed her, and sent her to the Prior of Huntingdon, the penitentiary priest of the district, to hear her confession. She not only gave up witchcraft, but ceased to be brazen-faced and a shrew: so that people bruited this matter as a miracle, and a handsome one it was. The bishop probably saved her from the vengeance of this rural dean, for witch-burning was not unknown even then, as Walter de Map witnesses. This was not the first essay of our bishop in witch-laying. When he was still Prior of Witham, Bartholomew, Bishop of Exeter, a learned and pious man, and one of St. Thomas' opposers, consulted him upon a sad case. Bishop Bartholomew was interested in spiritualism (which shews the same face in every century, and never adds much to its phenomena), as Matthew Paris recounts. A poor girl was the prey of a most violent and cruel Incubus, whom no fasts or austerities could divorce from her. Hugh suggested united prayer on her behalf, which was made, but not answered. A rival Incubus, however, came upon the scenes, of a softer mood, and wooed with mild speeches. He promised to deliver her, and pointed out the perforated St. John's wort as a herb odious to devils. This the artful woman put in her bosom and [Pg 91] her house, and kept both suitors at bay.[14] The bishop was much struck with this story, as well he might be, and used often to tell it. A monk told him another similar tale from Essex; but enough of such fables.

When he left Huntingdon the bishop went on to St. Albans, seemingly in a leisurely way, and as he drew near to this place, he met a crowd of provost's men dragging a condemned thief to the gallows. The poor creature's arms were braced behind his back. The word went round quickly that it was Hugh of Lincoln, and there was the usual rush to beg for his blessing, police craft and piety being wedded in those officers. The captive by some acrobatics managed to rush too, and came against the horse's neck, was knocked down, and in the dust cried for mercy. The bishop drew rein and asked who the man was and what he wanted. His attendants, who knew the language, answered him, "It is not your part, my lord, to ask more about the fellow. Indeed, you must let him just pass." They feared lest the bishop, already in deep water, should fall into still deeper by some chivalrous audacity. But he would know the tale and why the man cried him mercy: and when he knew it, he cried, "Lackaday! God be blessed!" and turning to the hangmen, he said, "Come back, my sons, with us to St. Albans. Hand the man over to us, and tell your masters and the judges that we have taken him from you. We will see that you take no harm." They did not dare to resist, but gave up their victim. He was quickly untied and given to the almoner. When they reached the abbey the clergy and attendant came to the bishop and begged [Pg 92] him most earnestly to allow the civil magistrates to do their office. "Up till now, my lord, neither the king nor any other man who lay in wait for you, could bring a just or a just-seeming charge against you. But if when the legal judges have passed sentence and handed the case to the executive, you quash that sentence by your pontifical authority, your ill-wishers will call it a blow against the king's crown, and you will fall into the condemnation of flat treason." "I am assured of your kindness," he answered; "but let these judges come in to us and you shall hear what we have to say to each other." The judges were already tapping at the doors, for a word with the audacious bishop. "Gentlemen, you are wise enough to know that your holy Mother the Church has everywhere this prerogative: all who are falling into any danger of condemnation and fly to her, may get freedom, and be kept unhurt." This they well knew and believed to be quite right. "If you know this, you ought to know that where the bishop is, united to the faithful in Christ, there too is the church. He who is used by his ministry to dedicate the material stones of the church to the Lord; who also has the work of sanctifying the living stones, the real stuff of the church, by each of the Sacraments, to rear from them the Lord's temple, he by right must enjoy the privileges of ecclesiastical dignity, wherever he be, and succour all who are in danger, according to his legal order."

The judges gratefully agreed, remembered that this was so expressed in ancient English law, but now obsolete, thanks to bishops' sloth or princes' tyranny. They summed up by this politeness, [Pg 93] "My lord, we are your sons and parishioners. You are our father and pastor. So it will not be ours to run counter to your privilege or to dispute it: nor yours, by your leave, to bring us into any hazard. If you decide upon the man's release, we offer no opposition; but by your leave we trust you to see that we incur no danger from the king." "Well and rightly spoken," said he, "and on these terms I take him from your hands. For this infraction, I will make answer where I must." So the man escaped the gallows, and was set free again when they reached London.

Two remarks are worth making here. First, that the right of sanctuary, both for accused and of

guilty persons, were guaranteed by the old Laws Ecclesiastical of King Edward the Confessor, as collected by William the First in the fourth year of his reign, which laws were romantically dear to the English people. The stretch came in where the Church was interpreted to mean the bishop and faithful. Secondly, Saint Nicholas similarly rescued two men from the scaffold, but not at a moment so inopportune for himself. If the rescue had law behind it, and it might be so defended, it was a very awkward moment to choose to champion a hangdog. But this was the age of chivalry, and without such innate chivalry Hugh would never have cast the spell he did over King Richard's England.

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[10] "I will take it, though it were built of iron," he said; to which Richard replied, "And I will defend it, though it were of butter."

[11] There is no osculatory to be found in the records. This is a slightly later invention, and no one seems to kneel in this picture.

[12] Whom some wish to acquit of writing that jovial drinking song,

> "I intend to end my days,
> In a tavern drinking."

[13] "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," &c. Numbers, vi., 24.

[14] If the reader disbelieves this story, let him read Bede upon Luke viii., 30, says the narrator.

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CHAPTER VII

—AND DISPUTES

When Hugh, under this new cloud, did at last reach London the archbishop had no counsel to give, except that he should shear his clergy rather tight and send their golden fleeces to appease the king. "Do not you know that the king thirsts for money as a dropsical man does for water, my lord bishop?" To this the answer was, "Yes. He is a dropsical man, but I will not be water for him to swallow." It was plain that the archbishop was no friend in need, and back they went towards Lincoln. At Cheshunt he found a poor, mad sailor triced up in a doorway by hands and feet. Hugh ran to him, made the holy sign, and then with outstretched right hand began the Gospel, low and quick, "In the beginning was the Word." The rabid patient cowered, like a frightened hound; but when the words "full of grace and truth" were reached, he put out his tongue derisively. Hugh, not to be beaten, consecrated holy water, sprinkled him, and bade folk put some in his mouth. [Pg 95] Then he went on his way; and the mad man, no longer mad, sanely went on pilgrimage, men said, and made a fine end at the last. His own bishop, who had met him, had clapped spurs to his horse and bolted. It may be suspected that this bolting bishop was the newly elect of London, who was William de Santa Maria, an ex-Canon of Lincoln, Richard's secretary, Giraldus' opponent, better known than loved in his late Chapter.

Matters being settled at Lincoln, he set out again for London and paused to ask the Barons of the Exchequer most kindly to see to the indemnities of his church while he was away. They rose to greet him and readily gave their promises. They prayed him to take a seat among them even for a moment. So pleased were they to have the archfoe of clerical secularism in this trap, that they called it a triumph indeed, to see the day when he sat on the Treasury bench. He jumped up, a little ashamed, kissed them all, and said, "Now I, too, can triumph over you if after taking the kiss you allow in anything less than friendly to my church." They laughingly said, "How wonderfully wise this man is! Why, he has easily laid it upon us, that whatever the king orders, we cannot without great disgrace trouble him at all." He blessed them all and was soon in Normandy. But Richard was following hot-foot the two half-brother Ademars, lords of Limoges and Angoulême, who had been playing into the hands of the French enemy. There was nothing to do but wait patiently, which he did at St. Nicholas' Monastery, Angers, from February to the beginning of [Pg 96] March, 1199. Pope Innocent III.'s legates were also there, and they passed three weeks together. He conferred ordinations near here in the Abbey of Grandmont; refusing to ordain one of Walter Map's young friends, who afterwards became a leper. The king, it was reported, was full of huge

threats and savage designs against his despisers, and if the clergy trembled before, they now shook like aspen leaves. The story of Hugh's predicament had got wind. The Hereford Canons wanted to choose the witty Walter Map to be bishop. He was already Archdeacon of Oxford, Canon of Lincoln, and Prebend of Hereford, but alas! he was also a friend of the disfavoured bishop. This fact is worth some emphasis, as it illustrates the large-mindedness of the saint. Walter was not only a vigorous pluralist, much stained by non-residence, but he was a whipster, whose lash was constantly flicking the monks, then in their decline. If any one considers his description of the Cistercians; of the desert life wherein they love their neighbour by expelling him; of their oppression whereby they glory not in Christ's Cross but in crucifying others; of their narrowness who call themselves Hebrews and all others Egyptians; of their sheep's clothing and inward ravening; of their reversals of Gospel maxims and their novelties; he will see that the lash for Cistercians must have fallen a good deal also upon Carthusian shoulders. Then Master Walter was towards being a favourer of Abelard and of his disciple Arnald of Brescia, whose ascetic mind was shocked at the fatal opulence of cardinals. Altogether Walter was a man who feared God, no doubt, but hardly showed it in the large jests which he made, which to our ears often sound rather too large. But Hugh recognised in the satirist a power for righteousness, and certainly loved and favoured him. Consequently the Hereford Canons with those of Angers and of the Lincoln Chapter laid their heads together to compose the strife between king and bishop: and the readiest way was of course for the latter to compound with a round sum and get off home.

The wars made the whole country dangerous for travelling, and it was neither safe to stay at home nor to move afield. But Job was not more persistent against his three friends than Hugh against the three unanimous Chapters, and his main argument was that the peace of the church must never be bought with money or this would endow its disturbers. His wisdom was well evidenced by events in the next reign. With this advice he urged them to sleep over the matter and discuss it next day. But the struggle to avoid compromising principles in order not only to serve the hour, but to save the love and, perhaps, the lives of friends was a very severe strain to him. When they had gone out he was dismally cast down and acknowledged that he had rarely compressed so much grief into so little space. Then he sat in silence, thought, and prayer that the tangle might be so unknotted, that God not be offended nor his own friends and sons slighted and alienated. Upon this he slept and dreamed sweet dreams of lovely sights and heard the roll of the Psalm of Divine Battle chaunted by heavenly voices, "O God, wonderful art Thou in Thy holy places, even the God of Israel; He will give strength and power unto His people; blessed be God."[15] He woke up refreshed, and at his weekly Saturday Confession deeply blamed himself for some hesitation he had felt, when baleful advice was given him.

A little after this the Abbess of Fontevrault came to see him. The King's mother Eleanor, her guest, had been sent for in a hurry. The king had been hurt. A serf of Achard of Châlus had ploughed up a golden relic, an emperor with his family seated round a golden table. Ademar of Limoges had seized it. Richard demanded the whole and was after it sword in hand. The holders were in Castle Châlus, short of weapons but not of valour, and held out gallantly armed with frying-pans and whatnot. The place was undermined. Richard, without his hauberk, was directing the crash, when a man pulled an arrow from the mortar; aimed it and hit him on the neck and side. He went to his tent, and plucked at it, broke it off; was operated upon; would not keep quiet. The wound turned angry and then black, and the Lion lay dying. He made his will, a generous and charitable one, confessed his sins, was houselled and anhealed, and died on Passion Tuesday, April 6th. His brain and bowels were buried at Charroux, his heart at Rouen, and his body at his father's feet, in penitence, in the nunnery of Fontevrault. Hugh was on his way to the Cathedral at Angers to take duty the next day, Palm Sunday, when Gilbert de Lacy, a clerk, rode up to him and told him of the king's death and of the funeral next day in Fontevrault. Hugh groaned deeply and announced at Angers that he should set out at once for that place. Every one begged and prayed that he would do no such thing. The mere rumour of the king's death had as usual let loose all the forces of disorder. Robbery, violence, and general anarchy were up. His own servants had been held up and robbed of forty silver marks, and the interregnum was more dreadful than any tyranny. What is the use of such charitable designs if you merely get left in the wilds by robbers, bare of carriage and clothes? they asked. His answer was worthy of a man who lived in holy fear and no other. "*We* are all well aware what things can happen—fearful to the fearful—on this journey. But I think it a thing much more fearful that I should be coward enough to fail my late lord and king, by being away at such a crisis, by witholding my faith and grace from him in death, which I always showed him warmly in his life. What of the trouble he gave us,

by giving in too much to the evil advice of those who flattered him? Certainly when I was with him, he never treated me but most honourably, never dismissed me unheard, when I made him some remarks face to face upon my business. If he wronged me when I was away, I have put it down to the spite of my detractors, not to his wickedness or malice. I will, therefore, pay him back to my power the honours he so often bestowed upon me. It will not be my fault if I do not help warmly at his obsequies. Say robbers do meet me on the road, say they do take the horses [Pg 100] and carry off the robes, my feet will travel all the fleeter, because they are lightened from the vestment baggage. If they really tie my feet and rob me of the power of moving, then and then only will be a real excuse for being absent in the body, for it will be caused not by vice but by outside obstacles." He left his friends in the city and almost all his stuff, took one minor clerk, one monk, and a tiny train and set out. On the way he heard that the poor Queen Berengaria was at Castle Beaufort, so he left the doubtful highway for a dangerous forest track to visit her. He soothed her almost crazy grief, bid her bear grief bravely and face better days cautiously, said Mass for her, blessed her and her train, and went back at once. He got to Saumur the same day, where he was greeted with a sort of ovation by the townsfolk and was entertained by Gilbert de Lacy, who was studying there. Next day, Palm Sunday, he sped on to Fontevrault and met the bearers just at the doors. He paid all the royal honours he could to his late Master and was entertained at the Monastery. For three days he ceased not to say Mass and the Psalms for the kings lying there, as for all the faithful who lay quiet in Christ, prayed for their pardon and the bliss of everlasting light. A beautiful picture this of the brave old bishop in the Norman Abbey Church, where two kings, his friend and his forgiven foe, lay "shrouded among the shrouded women" in that Holy Week of long ago!

This compassion was not only a matter of honour, but of faith. It was one of the principles of his life and conduct that hereby was set forth the love of God, and applied to the needs of man. He [Pg 101] used often to say that countless other things manifested the boundless love of God to men, but of those we know, these surpass the greatness of all the rest, which He ceases not to bestow before man's rise and after his setting. "To touch lightly a few of these in the case of men who rise and set: God the Son of God gave for each man before he was born the ransom of His own death. God the Father sent His own same Son into the world to die for the man: God the Holy Ghost poured Himself out an earnest for him. So together the whole Trinity, one God, together set up the Sacraments by which he is born, cleansed, defended, and strengthened, gave the props of His own law to rule and teach him, and generously made provision for his good by other mysterious means. When man's fitful life is past and its course cut off by death, when his once dearest look on him now with aversion, when parents and children cast him forth with anxious haste from the halls once his, God's most gracious kindness scorns not what all others despise. Then straightway He ordains not only angelic spirits to the ward of the soul at its return to its Maker, but He sends for the burial service those who are first and foremost of His earthly servants, to wit the priests and others in the sacred orders. And this is His command to them: 'Behold,' He says, 'My priests and caretakers of My palaces in the world, behold My handiwork. I have always loved it. I spared not My only Son for it but made Him share in its mortality and its death. Behold, I say, that is now become a burden to its former lovers and friends. They crowd to cast it out and drive it [Pg 102] forth. Away, then, speed and help My refugee: take up the Image of My Son, crucified for it: take instruments for incense and wax. Ring out the signals of My Church for a solemn assembly; raise high your hymnal voices, open the doors of My house and its inner shrines: place near to the altar, which holds the Body of My Son, what is left of that brother or sister; finally, cover him a bier with costly palls, for at last he triumphs: crowd it with lamps and candles, circle round him, overthrown as he is, with helping crowds of servants. Do more. Repeat the votive offering of My Son. Make the richest feast, and thus the panting spirit, restless and weary with the jars of the wonted mortality it has just laid by, may breathe to strength: and the flesh, empty for the while of its old tenant, and now to be nursed in the lap of the Mother Earth, may be bedewed with a most gracious holiness, so that at the last day when it is sweetly reunited to its well-known companion, it may gladly flower anew and put on with joy the everlasting freshness." This was no sudden seizure and passing emotion at the romance of funerals. He issued a general order in his diocese forbidding parish priests to bury the bodies of grown persons, if he were by to do it. If it were a case of good life, the more need to honour; if of an evil life, such would all the more yearn for greater succour. So he went to all, and if they were poor he ordered his almoner to find the lights and other requirements. Any funeral would bring him straight from his horse to pray at the bier. If he had no proper book wherein he might read without halting (and his eyes waxed dim at the

last) he would stand near the officiant, chaunt the psalms with him, say the amens, and be clerk, almost a laic. If he had the right book, he would be priest, say the prayers, use the holy water, swing the censer, cast on the mould, then give shrift and benison and go on his way. If the place were a large city and many bodies came for burial he did just the same until all were finished. Potentates expecting to eat bread with him were often vexed and complained at these delays; but, host or guest, he had more appetite for holy than for social functions. King Richard at Rouen, like his father before him, with all the Court and the Royal Family, when they invited Hugh to table, had to keep fasting while Hugh performed these higher duties without clipping or diminishing the office. When the king's servants chafed, and would have spurred him on, he would say, "No need to wait for us. Let him eat in the Lord's name;" and to his friends, "It is better for the king to eat without us, than for our humility to pass the Eternal King's order unfulfilled." Near Argentan, in Normandy, he once found a new grave by the roadside and learnt that a beggar-boy lay there. The priest had let him lie there, because there was no fee and no one would carry him to the church-yard. Hugh was deeply grieved, said the office himself, and rattled that priest pretty smartly to his bishop for denying Christian burial to the penniless and needy.

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Once while the cathedral works were being carried on, a mason engaged on the fabric asked him for pontifical shrift for a brother who had just died. It was winter, and the feast of St. Stephen. Hugh promptly gave the absolution, and then asked if the body were yet buried. When he learnt that it was only being watched in a somewhat distant church, he ordered three horses instantly, one for himself, one for his outrider, and one for his chaplain; but as only two were to be had he sent the chaplain on ahead, himself followed with a monk and a couple of servers, and devoutly buried not only the mason's brother, but five other bodies. Another time, when the Archdeacon of Bedford gave a large and solemn feast to the dignified clergy—who, by the way, seldom shine in these narratives—the bishop so wearied them by his funereal delays that they explained their impatience to him not without some tartness of reproof. His only reply was, "Why do you not recall the voice of the Lord, who said with His holy lips, My meat is to do the will of My Father in heaven?" Another time, again, one hot spring when there was a general meeting of magnates, he heard that one of the prelates was dead.[16] The man was an outrageous guzzler and toper, but Hugh prayed earnestly for him, and then asked where he was to be buried. The now unromantic spot of Bermondsey was to be the burying ground, and the funeral was on the very day and hour of the Westminster gathering, in which matters deeply interesting to Lincoln were to be handled. No one of the bishops or abbots would stir out for their detected dead fellow, but "to desert him in his last need" was impossible to his saintlier brother. He must be off to bury the man, council or no council. The body had been clad in an alb and chasuble. Its face was bare and black, and the gross frame was bursting from its clothes. Every one else had a gum, an essence or incense; but Hugh, who was peculiarly sensitive to malodours, showed nothing but tenderness for the corrupt mortality, and seemed to cherish it as a mother a babe. The "sweet smelling sacrifice" shielded him in his work of mercy, they said.

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William of Newburgh, a writer much given to ghost stories, tells a Buckingham tale of a certain dead man who would walk. He fell violently upon his wife first, and then upon his brothers, and the neighbours had to watch to fend him off. At last he took to walking even in the day, "terrible to all, but visible only to a few." The clergy were called; the archdeacon took the chair. It was a clear case of Vampire. The man must be dug up, cut to bits, and burnt. But the bishop was very particular about the dead, and when they asked his leave he was indignant at the proposal. He wrote instead a letter with his own hand, which absolved the unquiet spirit. This was laid upon the dead man's breast, and thenceforward he rested in peace, as did his alarmed neighbours. Whatever we think of the tale, the tender reverent spirit of the bishop is still a wonder. Although greatly given to an enthusiasm for the saints, a puzzling enthusiasm for their teeth, nails, plaisters, and bandages, Hugh was looked upon as an enemy to superstition, and was an eager suppressor of the worship of wells and springs, which still show how hard the Pagan religion dies. He found and demolished this "culture" at Wycombe and Bercamstead.[17]

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The great theological question of Hugh's time was certainly the Eucharistic one. Eucharistic doctrine grew, as the power of the Church grew; as the one took a bolder tone so did the other. The word Transubstantiation (an ambiguous term to the disputants who do not define substance) had been invented by Peter of Blois, but not yet enjoined upon the Church by the Lateran Council of 1215. The language of the earlier fathers, of St. Bernard, did not suffice. Peter Lombard's tentative terms had given way to less reserved speech. Thomas Aquinas, not yet born, was to

unite the rival factions which forked now into Berengarius, who objected to the very terms Body of Christ, &c., always used for the Sacrament; and now into some crude cannibal theories, which found support in ugly miracles of clotted chalices and bleeding fingers in patens. Abelard had tried to hush the controversy by a little judicious scepticism, but the air was full of debate. If learned men ignored the disputes the unlearned would not. Fanatical monks on the one side and fanatical Albigenses on the other, decried or over-cried the greatest mysteries of the faith, and brawled over the hidden manna. Hugh's old Witham monk Ainard had once preached a crusade against the blasphemers of the Sacraments, and is mentioned with honour for this very thing by Hugh's intimate and biographer. The saint's conspicuous devotion at the Mass, the care with which he celebrated and received, of themselves would point to a peculiarly strong belief in the Invisible Presence. Christians are, and have always been, lineally bound to believe in the supreme [Pg 107] necessity of the Lord's Marriage Supper to the soul's health and obedience. They are bound to use the old language, "This is My Body." In earlier days, when Church thinkers were all Platonists, or at least Realists, the verity of the Sacrament was the Idea behind it. The concrete veils of that Idea were hallowed only by their use, association, and impact. But when after the crusades Aristotle was no longer the Bishop of Arians, but now the supreme philosopher, the language hitherto natural to piety had either to be changed or infused by violence with new senses, or both. The latter half of the twelfth century saw this unhappy deadlock between history and reason, and made strenuous efforts to compose the strife. So far as we may judge, upon a difficult question, where little must be written and much would be required to express an exact opinion, Hugh seems to have held that by mystic sanctification the host is turned into Christ's Body; that this conversion is not a sudden but a gradual one, until the Son offers Himself anew, and hence the Sacrifice may be said to be repeated. The story which illustrates this position best is that of the young clerk who came to him at Buckden. The bishop had just been dedicating a large and beautiful chalice and upbraiding the heavily-endowed dignitaries for doing nothing at all for the poorly served churches from which they drew their stipends. Then he said Mass, and the clerk saw Christ in his hands, first as a little child at the Oblation, when "the custom is to raise the host aloft and bless it"; and again when it is "raised to be broken and consumed in three pieces," "as the Son of the Highest offering Himself to the Father for man's salvation." The clerk [Pg 108] tells him of the double vision—the voucher of a message sent by his late crusading father, who warned him to tell the archbishop, through the Bishop of Lincoln, that the evil state of the church must be amended. The message and the messenger seem to answer exactly to the monk of Evesham, whose Dantesque revelations[18] are here almost quoted. The wrath of God was incurred by the unchaste living priests, who so behaved that the Sacraments were polluted, and by the manner in which archdeacons and others trafficked in bribes. Hugh heard the story at the altar, wept, dried the eyes of both, kissed the young man and brought him into the meal afterwards, and urged him to become a monk. This he did, and became the Monk of Evesham aforesaid. There is no necessary advance in Eucharistic doctrine in this story, for a similar vision was given to King Edward the Confessor, and Hugh was so reticent about such things that his chaplain Adam never dared to ask him, although he dreamed that he asked him and was snubbed for his pains. "Although then, when you say, and more often, the Lord deigned to reveal this and other things to me, what do you want in the matter?" In his last journey to Jouay,[19] an old, feeble and withered priest, who would not dine with him as the parish priest was wont, came to ask him to see a wonder and to beg for his prayers. His story was that he, being in mortal sin, blind and weak in faith and practices, was saying Mass, and doubting whether so dirty a sinner could really handle so white and stainless a glory. When the fraction took place, blood dripped from the host [Pg 109] and it grew into flesh. He dropped the new thing into the chalice, covered it up, dismissed the people, and got papal absolution, and now would fain show the wonder. The lesser men were agape for the sight, but Hugh answered, "In the Lord's name let them keep the signs of their infidelity to themselves. What are they to us? Are we to be astonished at the partial shows of the Divine gift, who daily behold this heavenly sacrifice whole and entire with most faithful gaze of mind? Let him, who beholds not with the inner sight of faith the whole, go and behold the man's little scraps with his carnal vision." He then blessed the priest and dismissed him, and rebuked his followers for curiosity, and gave them a clear Eucharistic lesson not repeated for us, upon what faith lays down in the matter. From his speech then and elsewhere the good Adam gathered that Hugh often saw what others only believed to be there, the "bared face of the inner Man."

These stories seem to dissociate Hugh from the grosser forms of Eucharistic teaching, and open the way for an explanation of his behaviour at Féchamp, which is otherwise almost inexplicable.

We may take it that he held a belief in a living Presence, which teeth could not bruise nor change decay. The language he uses is not consistent with later English teaching which shrinks from talking about a repeated sacrifice. It is also inconsistent with later Roman devotion, because he seems to dislike the notion of a conditioned or corporal Presence, and anyhow to shrink from the definite statements to which the Roman Church has since committed herself. He certainly did not fix the Coming of the Bridegroom at the Consecration Prayer, *a fortiori* to any one particular word of it.

[Pg 110] Far less conjectural is the splendid stand which he made for chastity of life, at a time when the standard in such matters was lax both in the world and also in the church. It came as a surprise to his contemporaries that he should disapprove of the romantic ties between King Henry and fair Rosamond. That lady was buried at Godstowe by her royal lover, who draped her tomb, near the high altar, with silk, lamps, and lighted candles, making her the new founder, and for her sake raising the house from poverty and meanness to wealth and nobleness of building. While Hugh was earnestly praying at the altar (in 1191) he espied this splendid sepulchre. He asked whose it was, and when he learned said sternly, “Take her hence, for she was a whore. The love between the king and her was unlawful and adulterous. Bury her with the other dead outside the church, lest the Christian religion grow contemptible. Thus other women by her example may be warned and keep themselves from lawless and adulterous beds.” So far from being harsh, this decision to allow of no royal exceptions to the ten commandments was probably the kindest, strongest, and most wide-reaching protest that could be made against an unhappy and probably growing evil. This is of a piece with many other passages in his life, but hardly worth dwelling upon because the lawless loves, which in that day were too lightly regarded, in this day have usurped the sole title of immorality to themselves, as if there were not six other deadly sins besides. The best justification of the sentence is just this surprise with which it was received.

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15 lxviii. 35. A psalm full of associations of battles long ago: sung against Julian the Apostate, used by Charlemagne, Anthony, Dunstan, and many more.

16 Simon of Pershore, if in 1198: and Robert of Caen, if in 1196, but less likely.

17 The Wycombe Well is probably the Round Basin, near the Roman Villa, but the other I am unable to hear news of.

18 Published by Arber. See chap. xxxvi.

19 Joi.

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CHAPTER VIII

HUGH THE BUILDER

The strong personality of the man, his boldness and sagacity combined, come out in his building as clearly as in his conduct; but since the learned are very litigious upon the questions of his architecture, the reader must have indulgence in his heart and a salt cellar in his hand, when he approaches this subject.

First of all we must remember that in his age it was part of the education of a gentleman to know something about building. Hugh’s grandfather must have built the old keep of Avalon Castle, which still stands above the modern château, and a family whose arms are, on a field or the eagle of the empire sable, were builders, both of necessity and of choice. When every baron, or at least every baron’s father, had built himself a castle, planned and executed under his own eye; when King Richard in person could plan and superintend the building of his great Castle Saucy, the Château Gaillard, it is not wonderful that Hugh also should be ready and willing to do much in [Pg 112] stone and mortar. Then, again, he must have had some architectural training at the Grande Chartreuse. The first buildings of wood were overthrown in 1126 by an avalanche, and Guigo, the fifth prior, had refounded the whole buildings after that date. The upper church, since then a chapter house, was built in Romanesque style, with round arches, two rose windows, and three sanctuary windows with wide splays. In 1150 Humbert, Count of Savoy, founded a beautiful

chapel and a guest house for visitors; and even later than this there is a good deal of building going on at the lower house, farm buildings, guest house, and possibly even a church during the very time that Hugh was monk and procurator. Even if he took no personal part in any of these last works, he must have known and heard much of the art from men, who had done or were doing it. But it would not be rash to conclude that he had an apprenticeship in building before he set foot on English soil, and as well by education as by inheritance knew something of this work.

Next we must bear in mind that every stone would, if possible, have a mystic signification. For some reason or other this notion makes the modern man impatient; but this impatience does not alter the facts, but only obscures their explanation. Everybody knows that the three eastern lights mean, as they did to St. Barbara, the blessed Trinity; but few people recognize that all numbers, whether in beams, pillars, sides, arches, or decoration had a well recognised symbolism, which had come down, hall-marked by St. Augustine and St. Bernard, to the building and worshipping generations of those and much later days.

[Pg 113] What was done at Witham we cannot now fully tell, for everything has perished of the upper house. The monks' church would be of stone, and probably was very like the present Friary Church. The cells certainly would be of wood in the second stage, for they were of "weeps," as we have seen, in the first. This part of the Charterhouse we have concluded stood in a field now called "Buildings," but now so-called without visible reason.

Round the present Friary Church there were the houses of the original inhabitants, a little removed from their foreign intruders; not quite a mile away, as at Hinton, where the two houses are thus divided, but yet something near three quarters of that distance.

When the inhabitants were removed to Knap in North Curry and elsewhere, they took their old rafters with them or sold these. Their walls seem to have been of mud and wattle, or of some unsaleable stuff, and these, no doubt, served for a time for the lay brethren, after a little trimming and thatching. But their church had to be looked to before it could serve for the worship of the *conversi*. The old inhabitants (near two hundred, Mr. Buckle thinks, rather generously), were still there up to Hugh's time, and if their church was like their houses the wooden roof was much decayed and the walls none of the best. Hugh resolved upon a stone vault of the Burgundian type, followed at the Grande Chartreuse, and he therefore had to thicken the walls by an extra case. The building was next divided into three parts, with doors from the north [Pg 114] and west, so that men might seek refuge in the Holy Trinity from the dark of the world and its setting suns. The stone roof is supported upon small semi-octagonal vaulting shafts, ending in truncated corbels. This fondness for the number eight, which reappears markedly at Lincoln, has to do with St. Augustine's explanations that eight (the number next to seven, the number of creation and rest) signifies the consummation of all things and Doomsday. Four is the number of the outer world, with its seasons and quarters; three of the soul of man, the reflection of God; and eight, therefore, which comes after the union of these, is judgment and eternal life. Hugh was, no doubt, his own architect (if such a word is not an anachronism here), but he employed Somerset builders, who left the mark of English custom upon this otherwise peculiar and continental looking building. The leper window has been noticed above. The only other building at Witham which pretends to bear traces of Hugh's hand is the guest house, and this, as we have seen, may be at bottom the very house where Hugh hob-a-nobbed with King Henry.

The same style, the same severity, the same sacramental feeling no doubt marked the Conventual Church, and it is sad to think what great and pathetic memories perished with its destruction. If only the pigstyes and barns built out of these old stones could have been the richer for what was lost in the transit, they would have been the richest of their kind. For Hugh turned to this his first great work in the house of Martha with a peculiar relish, which was that of a lover more than of a [Pg 115] man who had merely heaped up stones against the wind. If Lincoln was his Leah, Witham was his dear Rachael. Hither he was translated, like Enoch or Elijah, from a vexing world for a time every year. The two parts of the Charterhouse were the embodiments of "justice and innocence." Here was "the vine of the Lord of Hosts." His cell was kept for him, and while all the world was hotly harvesting he was laying up here his spiritual stores. Here his face seemed to burn with the horned light of Moses, when he appeared in public. His words were like fire and wine and honey, but poised with discretion. Yet he never became a fanatical monk, nor like Baldwin, whom the Pope addressed as "most fervent monk, clever abbot, lukewarm bishop, and slack archbishop." He warned his monastic brethren here that the great question at doom is not, Were you monk or

hermit? but Did you show yourself truly Christian? The name is useless, or positively baleful, unless a man has the threefold mark—*caritas in corde; veritas in ore; castitas in corpore*—of love in the heart, truth on the lips, pureness in the body. Here he told them that chaste wedlock was as pure as continence and virginity, and would be blessed as high. He lived as he taught always, but here he seemed beyond himself. His buildings at Witham, enumerated in the Great Life, and not even planned before his time, are the major and minor churches, the cells for monks, the cloisters, the brothers' little houses, and the guest chambers. The lay kitchen was a poor building of brushwood and thatch, six or seven paces from the guest house, the blaze of which, when it caught fire, could be seen from the glass windows of the west end of the lay church. The wooden cells of the brothers lay round this in a ring. The guest house roof was of shingles. This kitchen fire took place at the last visit of the bishop while he was at the "night lauds." He gave over the office when it broke out, signed the cross several times, and prayed before the altar, while the young men fought the flame. He had already often ordered a stone kitchen to be built in its place, and so no real harm was done, for the fire did not spread. The only question which arises is whether the present guest house is far enough west to square with this story. No mention is made of the fish ponds, but they are likely enough to have been prepared in his time, for the rule, which never allowed meat, did allow fish on festivals. Hugh had no notion of starving other people, but used to make them "eat well and drink well to serve God well." He condemned an asceticism run mad, and called it vanity and superstition for people to eschew flesh when they had no such commandment, and substitute for it foreign vegetables, condiments for fat, and expensive fishes. He liked dry bread himself, and the drier the tastier, but he did all he could to spare others. Consequently, we may credit him with the fish ponds.

His work at Lincoln was on a much larger scale and happily much of it is still there, a goodly material for wonder, praise and squabbling. It was imposed upon him, for he found the Norman building more or less in ruins. This building consisted of a long nave, with a west front, now standing; and a choir, which ended something east of the present faldstool in a bow. At the east end of the nave was a tower, and to the north and south of this tower were two short transepts, or porches. The tower was either not very high or else was shortened, and perhaps recapped to make it safe after the earthquake, for the comparatively small damage which it did when it fell upon the choir proves that it could not have been very massive. It fell in Grossetestes' time and its details with it.

The first requisite for building is money: and money, as we have seen, was very hard to obtain in England just at this juncture. Three means by which Hugh raised it are known to us. The austere ideals of the Carthusian bishop, his plain vestments, his cheap ring, his simple clothes set free a good deal of the money of the see for this purpose. Then he issued a pastoral summons to the multitude of her sons to appear at least once a year at the mother church of Lincoln with proper offerings according to their power; especially rural deans, parsons, and priests through the diocese were to gather together at Pentecost and give alms for the remission of their sins and in token of obedience and recollection of their Lincoln mother. This, combined with a notice of detention of prebend for all non-resident and non-represented canons, must have brought the faithful up in goodly numbers to their ecclesiastical centre. If they were once there, the cracked and shored-up building and the bishop's zeal and personal influence might be entrusted to loose their purse strings, especially as he led the way, both by donation and personal work, for he carried the hod and did not disdain to bring mortar and stones up the ladder like any mason's 'prentice. Then, thirdly, he established or used a Guild of St. Mary, a confraternity which paid for, and probably worked at, the glorious task. Its local habitation was possibly that now called John of Gaunt's stables,[20] but anyhow it stood good for a thousand marks a year. A mark is thirteen and fourpence; and six hundred and sixty six pounds odd, in days when an ox cost three shillings and a sheep fourpence was a handsome sum. It could not have been far short of £10,000 of our money.

It is evident from records and architecture alike that the building had to be begun from the very roots and foundations. In examining it we had better begin with the chroniclers. The Great Life is curiously silent about this work, and if we had no other records we should almost consider that the work was done under, rather than by, the bishop. He went to Lincoln "about to build on this mountain, like a magnificent and peaceful Solomon, a most glorious temple," says his laconic friend Adam. "Also fifteen days before he died Geoffrey de Noiers (or Nowers) the constructor or builder of the noble fabric, came to see him. The erection of this fabric was begun from the

foundations, in the renewal of the Lincoln church, by the magnificent love of Hugh to the beauty of God's house." The dying bishop thus spoke to him: "In that we have had word that the lord king with the bishops and leading men of this whole kingdom are shortly about to meet for a general assembly, hasten and finish all that is needful for the beauty and adornment about the [Pg 119] altar of my lord and patron saint, John Baptist, for we wish this to be dedicated by our brother, the Bishop of Rochester, when he arrives there with the other bishops. Yea, and we ourselves, at the time of the aforesaid assembly, shall be present there too. We used to desire greatly to consecrate that by our ministry; but since God has disposed otherwise, we wish that it be consecrated before we come thither on a future occasion." This is all that Adam has to tell us. Giraldus Cambrensis says, "Item, he restored the chevet of his own church with Parian stones and marble columns in wonderful workmanship, and reared the whole anew from the foundation with most costly work. Similarly, too, he began to construct the remarkable bishop's houses, and, by God's help, proposed, in certain hope, to finish them far larger and nobler than the former ones." Then again he says, "Item, he took pains to erect in choiceness, the Lincoln church of the blessed Virgin, which was built remarkably by a holy man, the first bishop of the same place, to wit the blessed Remigius, according to the style of that time. To make the fabric conformed to the far finer workmanship and very much daintier and cleverer polish of modern novelty, he erected it of Parian stones and marble columns, grouped alternately and harmoniously, and which set off one another with varying pictures of white and black, but yet with natural colour change. The work, now to be seen, is unique." The Legenda says that Hugh carried stones and cement in a box for the fabric of the mother Church, which he reared nobly from the foundations. Other [Pg 120] chroniclers say just the same, and one adds that he "began a remarkable episcopal hall" as well. But far the most important account we have is that of the metrical life—written between 1220 and 1235. This gives us some of the keys to the intense symbolism of all the designs. Since a proper translation would require verse, it may be baldly Englished in pedagogic *patois*, as follows: "The prudent religion and the religious prudence of the pontiff makes a bridge (*pons*) to Paradise, toiling to build Sion in guilelessness, not in bloods. And with wondrous art, he built the work of the cathedral church; in building which, he gives not only his wealth and the labour of his people, but the help of his own sweat; and often he carries in a pannier the carved stones and the sticky lime. The weakness of a cripple, propped on two sticks, obtains the use of that pannier, believing an omen to be in it: and in turn disdains the help of the two sticks. The diet, which is wont to bow the straight, makes straight the bowed. O remarkable shepherd of the flock, and assuredly no hireling! as the novel construction of the Church explains. For Mother Sion lay cast down, and straitened, wandering, ignorant, sick, old, bitter, poor, homely and base: Hugh raises her when cast down, enlarges her straitened, guides her wandering, teaches her ignorant, heals her sick, renews her old, sweetens her bitter, fills her when empty, adorns her homely, honours her when base. The old mass falls to the foundation and the new rises; and the state of it as it rises, sets forth the fitting form of the cross. The difficult toil unites three whole parts; for the [Pg 121] most solid mass of the foundation rises from the centre,[21] the wall carries the roof into the air. [So the foundation is buried in the lap of earth, but the wall and roof shew themselves, and with proud daring the wall flies to the clouds, the roof to the stars.] With the value of the material the design of the art well agrees, for the stone roof talks as it were with winged birds, spreading its wide wings, and like to a flying thing strikes the clouds, stayed upon the solid columns. And a sticky liquid glues together the white stones, all which the workman's hand cuts out to a nicety. And the wall, built out of a hoard of these, as it were disdaining this thing, counterfeits to unify the adjacent parts; it seems not to exist by art but rather by nature; not a thing united, but one. Another costly material of black stones props the work, not like this content with one colour, not open with so many pores, but shining much with glory and settled with firm position; and it deigns to be tamed by no iron, save when it is tamed by cunning, when the surface is opened by frequent blows of the grit, and its hard substance eaten in with strong acid. That stone, beheld, can balance minds in doubt whether it be jasper or marble; but if jasper, dull jasper; if marble, noble marble. Of it are the columns, which so surround the pillars that they seem there to represent a kind of dance. Their outer surface more polished than new horn, with reflected visions, fronts the clear stars. So many figures has nature painted there that if art, after long endeavour, toils to simulate a like picture, scarce may she imitate nature. Likewise has the beauteous joining placed a thousand columns there in graceful order; which stable, precious, [Pg 122] shining, with their stability carry on the whole work of the church, with their preciousness enrich it, with their shine make it clear. Their state indeed is lofty and high, their polish true and splendid, their order handsome and geometric, their beauty fit and useful, their use gracious and

remarkable, their stability unhurt and sharp. A splendid double pomp of windows displays riddles to the eyes, inscribing the citizens of the Heavenly City and the arms whereby they tame the Stygian tyrant.[22] And two are greater, like two lights; of these the rounded blaze, looking upon the quarters of north and south, with its double light, lords it over all windows. They can be compared to the common stars, but these two are one like the sun, the other like the moon. So do these two candles lighten the head of the Church. With living and various colours they mimic the rainbow, not mimic indeed, but rather excel, for the sun when it is reflected in the clouds makes a rainbow: these two shine without sun, glitter without cloud.

These things, described but puerilely, have the weight of an allegory. Without it seems but as a shell, but within lies the kernel. Without it is as wax, but within is combed honey; and fire lightens more pleasantly in the shade. For foundation, wall roof, white carved stone, marble smooth, conspicuous and black, the double order of windows, and the twin windows, which, as it were, look upon the regions of north and south, are great indeed, in themselves, but figure greater things.

The foundation is the body, the wall man, the roof the spirit, the division of the Church threefold. [Pg 123] The body possesses the earth, man the clouds, the spirit the stars. The white and carved stone means the chaste and wise; the whiteness is modesty, the carving dogma. By the effigy of marble, smooth, shining, dark, the bride is figured, guileless, well conducted, working. The smoothness very rightly means guilelessness, the splendour good conduct, the blackness work. The noble cohort of the clergy lightening the world with light divine is expressed by the clear windows. The corresponding order can everywhere be observed. The Canonic is set forth by the higher order; the Vicarious by the lower; and because the canonic handles the business of the world, and the busy vicarious fulfils, by its obligations, divine matters, the top line of windows shines bright with a ring of flowers around it, which signifies the varying beauty of the world, the lower contains the names of the holy fathers. The twin windows, which afford the rounded blaze, are the two eyes of the Church, and rightly in these respects seem to be, the greater the bishop, and the lesser the dean. The North is Satan, and the South the Holy Ghost, which the two eyes look upon. For the bishop looks upon the South to invite, but the dean upon the North to avoid it. The one sees to be saved, the other not to be lost. The brow of the church beholds with these eyes the candles of Heaven and the darkness of Lethe. Thus the senseless stones enwrap the mysteries of the living stones, the work made with hands sets forth the spiritual work; and the double aspect of the Church is clear, adorned with double equipage. A golden majesty paints the entry of the choir: [Pg 124] and properly in his proper image Christ crucified is shewn, and there to a nicety the progress of His life is suggested. Not only the cross or image, but the ample surface of the six columns and two woods, flash with tested gold. The capitols[23] cleave to the Church, such as the Roman summit never possessed, the wonderful work of which scarce the monied wealth of Crœsus could begin. In truth their entrances are like squares. Within a rounded space lies open, putting to the proof, both in material and art, Solomon’s temple. If of these the perfection really stays, the first Hugh’s work will be perfected under a second Hugh. Thus then Lincoln boasts of so great a sire, who blessed her with so many titles on all sides.”

The church itself is the best comment upon this somewhat obscure account, and it may be briefly divided into Pre-Hugonian, Hugonian, and Post-Hugonian parts. The first, the Norman centre of the west façade, does not concern us, except that its lovely face often looked down upon the great bishop in his dark or tawny cloak trimmed with white lambs’ wool, which hid his hair shirt. Except for this Norman work and the Norman font, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the whole is by or for Hugh, for his shrine, his influence, and his example, completed what his work, and his plans, never dreamed about. Yet these last are responsible for much. He built a cruciform church, beginning with the entrance to the choir, with the aisles on either side. The chapels of St. Edward Martyr and St. James[24] form the base or step of the cross. The east [Pg 125] transept, with all chapels adjoining, the choristers’ vestry, antevestry, dean’s or medicine chapel, with its lovely door and the cupboards in the now floorless room above it, the vaulted passage and chamber adjoining, are all his. So are, possibly, the matchless iron screens between the two choirs (topped with modern trumpery). South-east of the Medicine Chapel is one of St. Hugh’s great mystic columns, and there are a pair of them. Where the Angel Choir now lifts its most graceful form and just behind the high altar, rose the semi-hexagonal east end, the opened honeycomb, where most fitly was placed the altar of St. John Baptist. It was somewhere in the walls of this forehead that the original bishop’s eye and dean’s eye were once fixed, possibly in

the rounded eye sockets which once stood where Bishop Wordsworth and Dean Butler are now buried.[25]

When we look closely at this work, we are astonished at the bold freedom, and yet the tentative and amateur character of it. The builders felt their way as they went along, and well they might, for it was not only a new church but a new and finer style altogether. They built a wall. It was not strong enough, so they buttressed it over the mouldings. The almost wayward double arcade inside was there apparently, before the imposed vaulting shafts were thought about. The stones were fully shaped and carved on the floor, and then put in their positions. Hardly anything is like the next thing. Sometimes the pointed arch is outside, as in "St. James'" Chapel, sometimes inside as in "St. Edward's." Look up at the strange vaulting above the choir, about the irregularity of which so much feigned weeping has taken place. It represents, maybe, the Spirit blowing where it listeth and not given by measure. So, too, mystic banded shafts are octagonal for blessedness, and they blossom in hidden crockets for the inner flowers of the Spirit, and there are honeycombs and dark columns banded together in joyful unity, all copied from nowhere, but designed by this holy stone poet to the glory of God. The pierced tympanum has a quatrefoil for the four cardinal virtues, or a trefoil for faith, hope, and charity. Compared with the lovely Angel Choir which flowered seventy years later, under our great King Edward, it may look all unpractised, austere; but Hugh built with sweet care, and sense, and honesty, never rioting in the disordered emotion of lovely form which owed no obedience to the spirit, and which expressed with great elaboration—almost nothing. He may have valued the work of the intellect too exclusively, but surely it cannot be valued too highly? The work is done as well where it does not as where it does show.

The bishop's hall, which he began, could not have been much more than sketched and founded. It was carried on by one of his successors, Hugh de Wells (1209-1235), though one would like to believe that it was in this great hall that he entertained women, godly matrons, and widows, who sat by his side at dinner, to the wonder of monkish brethren. He would lay his clean hands upon their heads and bless them, sometimes even gently embrace them, and bid them follow the steps of holy women of old. Indeed he had quite got over the morbid terror he once felt for these guardians of the Divine humanity, for he used often to say to them, "Almighty God has deserved indeed to be loved by the feminine sex. He was not squeamish of being born of a woman. Yea, and he has granted hereby a magnificent and right worthy privilege to all women folk. For when it is not allowed to man to be or to be named the Father of God, yet this has been bestowed upon the woman to be the parent of God." The traces of his work at the other manor houses are wiped out by time. There is nothing at Stow; Buckden was built later; and the other footprints of this building saint are lost upon the sands of time.

[20] This building itself is of an earlier date.

[21] Of the earth.

[22] *I.e.*, Saints and Lances.

[23] Side chapels.

[24] Or of SS. Dennys and Guthlac it may be.

[25] It is a pity in that case that the bishop lies under the old "dean's eye," and *vice versâ*.

CHAPTER IX

UNDER KING JOHN

When King Richard died, John, with a handful of followers, gave his host, Arthur of Brittany, the slip, and hurried off to Chinon, in Touraine. Hence he sent a humble message that the Bishop of Lincoln would deign to visit him. The reason was obvious. His fate hung in the balance, and the best loved and most venerated of English bishops would, if he would but recognise him, turn that scale against Arthur of Brittany. On the Wednesday in Holy Week, April 19th, 1199, Hugh left

Fontevrault, and the anxious prince rode to meet him and to pay him every court. John would fain have kept him by his side, but the bishop excused himself, and the two travelled back to Fontevrault together, and finally parted at Samur. They visited the royal tombs at the former place, but the prudent nuns would not allow the dubious prince inside their walls “because the abbess was not at home.” John affected to be charmed at their scruples, and sent them a pious message, promising the bishop that he would shew them great favours. The answer was, “You [Pg 129] know that I greatly dislike every lie. I shall therefore take care not to tell them your lip promises, unless I have proof that you certainly mean to fulfil them.” John at once swore that he would fulfil all as soon as might be, and the bishop in his presence told the holy women, commended the prince to them, gave the blessing and carried off the royal humbug. He then had a long tale of John’s good resolutions: he would be pious to God, kind to his subjects, and just to all; he would take Hugh for his father and guide, and wait upon him. He then shewed him a stone, cased in gold, which he wore round his neck, and told him that its fortunate owner would lack nothing of his ancestral possessions. “Put not your faith in a senseless stone,” he was told, “but only in the living and true heavenly stone, the Lord Jesus Christ. Lay him most surely as your heart’s foundation and your hope’s anchor. He truly is so firm and living a stone that He crushes all who oppose Him. He suffers not those who rest on him to fall, but ever raises them to higher things and enlarges them to ampler deservings.” They reached then the church porch, where was a lively sculpture of Doomsday, and on the judge’s left a company of kings and nobles led to eternal fire. The bishop said, “Let your mind set ceaselessly before you the screams and endless agonies of these. Let these ceaseless tortures be ever in front of your heart’s eyes. Let the careful remembrance of these evils teach you how great is the self loss which is laid upon those who rule other men for a little time, and, ruling themselves ill, are subjects to demon spirits in endless [Pg 130] agony. These things, while one can avoid them, one is wise to fear ever, lest when one cannot avoid them, one should afterwards happen ceaselessly to endure them.” He then pointed out that this Day of the Lord was put in the porch, so that those who entered to ask for their needs should not forget “the highest and greatest need of all, pardon for sins,” which they might ask and have and be free from pains and glad with eternal joys. John seized the bishop’s hand and shewed the kings on the right. “Nay, lord bishop, you should rather shew us these,” he said “whose example and society we pray to follow and attain.” For a few days he seemed exceedingly submissive in deed and speech. The beggars who wished him well he thanked with bows. The ragged old women who saluted him he replied to most gently. But after three days he changed his tune and dashed the hopes which had begun to spring. Easter Sunday came, and the bishop was at Mass and John’s chamberlain slipped twelve gold pieces into his hand, the usual royal offering. He was standing (they always stand at Mass) surrounded by a throng of barons before the bishop and gloated upon the gold, tossed it in his hand and delayed so long to offer it, that everybody stared. At last the bishop, angry at such behaviour, then and there said, “Why gaze like that?” John replied, “Truly I am having a look at those gold coins of yours and thinking that if I had held them a few days ago, I should not offer them to you but pop them in my own purse. Still, all the same, take them.” The angry bishop blushed for the king, drew back his arm, would not touch such money nor suffer his hand to be kissed; shook his head at him in fury. “Put down there what you [Pg 131] hold,” he said, “and go.” The king cast his money into the silver basin and slunk away. John’s insult was all the greater because out of Lincoln none of the bishop’s people was ever allowed to nibble one crumb of the alms. That day the bishop had preached upon the conduct and future prospects of princes. John neither liked the duration nor the direction of the sermon, and sent thrice to the preacher to stop his talk and get on with the Mass so that he might go to his victuals. But not a bit of it. The preacher talked louder and longer until all applauded and some wept, and he told them how worthily they ought to partake of the true Sacramental Bread, who came from heaven and gives life to the world. John shared neither in the word nor the Sacrament. Neither then nor on Ascension Day, when he was made king, did he communicate. Indeed it was said he had never done so since he was grown up.

Next Sunday the court was at Rouen and Archbishop Walter was investing John with the sacred emblems of the Duchy of Normandy during the High Mass. A banner on a lance was handed to the new duke. John advanced, amid cheers, and the foolish cackle of laughter of his former boon companions. He looked over his shoulder to grin back at the fools, his friends, and from his feeble grasp the old banner fell upon the pavement! But Hugh had left him for England before this evil omen. When the bishop reached Flêche on Easter Monday, he went to church to vest for Mass. His servants rushed in to say that the guards had seized his horses and carts, and robbers had

[Pg 132]

taken some of his pack horses. The company, including Gilbert de Glanville of Rochester, his friend, begged him not to say Mass, but merely to read the gospel and hurry out of the trap. Neither chagrined at his loss, nor moved by their terrors, he went deaf and silent to the altar. He was not content either with a plain celebration. He must need have sandals, tunic, and all the rest of the robes, and add a pontifical blessing to the solemn celebration. As he was unrobing the magistrates came in a fine state of repentance, with restitution, safe conducts, and humble words. He jested with them and past on to St. Peter's, at Le Mans. Here another alarm met them. Arthur's troopers rushed the place in the night meaning to catch John. News of more robberies and violence came, but thanks to the Abbot he got safely on and Dame Constance of Brittany sent him many apologies and assurances. He reached Sées safely but insisted upon going aside for a little pious colloquy with a learned and devout Abbot of Persigne, although the country was in a very dangerous condition for travelling. He found the good man away; so he said Mass and went on, and at last got home to tell them at Lincoln that all was peace. His progress was a triumph of delighted crowds, for the hearts of his people had been with him in all the struggle thus safely ended, and the sea of people shouted, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," as their father rode towards his cathedral town. The commons evidently felt that the liberties of the church were the outworks of the liberties of the land.

But the god of victory is a maimed god, and the battles of the world irked Hugh's contemplative [Pg 133] soul. He wished to lay by his heavy burden of bishopric and to go back to his quiet cell, the white wool tunic, the silence, and the careful cleaning of trenchers. The office of a bishop in his day left little time for spiritual tillage either at home or abroad. Not only the bishops had to confirm, ordain to all orders, consecrate, anoint, impose penance, and excommunicate, but they had to decide land questions concerning lands in frank almoin, all probate and nullity of marriage cases, and to do all the legal work of a king's baron besides. The judicial duties lay heavily upon him. He used to say that a bishop's case was harder than a lord warden's or a mayor's, for he had to be always on the bench; they only sometimes. They might look after their family affairs, but he could hardly ever handle the cure of souls. For the second or third time he sent messengers to ask Papal leave to resign, but Innocent, knowing that "no one can safely be to the fore who would not sooner be behind," rejected the petition with indignation; and Pharaoh-like increased his tasks the more by making him legate in nearly every important case of appeal. People who had nothing to rely upon except the justice of their cause against powerful opponents, clamoured for the Lincoln judgments, which then neither fear nor hope could trim, and which were as skilful as they were upright, so that men, learned in the law, ascribed it to the easy explanation of miracles that a comparative layman should steer his course so finely.

In the various disputes between monks and bishops, which were a standing dish in most dioceses, he took an unbiassed line. In the long fight waged by Archbishop Baldwin first and then by [Pg 134] Hubert Walter with the monks of Canterbury, which began in 1186, and was not over until Hugh was dead, he rather favoured the side of the monastery. Yet we find him speaking *multa aspera*, many stinging things to their spokesman, and recommending, as the monk said, prostration before the archbishop. His words to the archbishop have been already quoted. With Carlyle's Abbot Sampson and the Bishop of Ely he was appointed by Innocent to hush the long brawl. The Pope, tired and angry, wrote (September, 1199) to the commissioners to compel the archbishop, even with ecclesiastical censures. They reply rather sharply to his holiness that he is hasty and obscure; and so the matter dragged on. Then in 1195 the inevitable Geoffrey Plantagenet, the bastard, Archbishop of York, before mentioned, has a lively dispute with his canons. Hugh is ordered by the Pope to suspend him, but would rather be suspended (by the neck) himself. Geoffrey certainly was a little extreme, even for those days—a Broad Churchman indeed. He despises the Sacraments, said the canons, he hunts, hawks, fights, does not ordain, dedicate, or hold synods, but chases the canons with armed men and robs them; but Hugh, though he cannot defend the man, seems to know better of him, and at any rate will not be a mere marionette of Rome. Geoffrey, indeed, came out nobly in the struggles with king John in later story, as a defender of the people. Then there is the dispute between the Bishop of Coventry, another striking bishop, who brought stout fellows against the saucy monks. He had bought their monastery for three hundred marks of the king, and when they would not budge, he chased them [Pg 135] away with beating and maiming, sacked their house, burnt their charters, and so on. Hugh was against this too vigorous gentleman, who was clearly indefensible; but it was by no means because he was blindly prejudiced in favour of monks, for he seems to have supported the Bishop of Rochester against his monks. These disputes of astonishing detail, are very important in the

history of the church, as by their means the Papal Empire grew to a great height of power; and however little the bishops' methods commend themselves, the monasteries, which became rebel castles in every diocese, were very subversive of discipline, and their warfare equally worldly.

In cases less ecclesiastical, we have a glimpse of Hugh defending two young orphans against Jordan of the Tower, the most mighty of Londoners. This powerful robber of the weak came to the court with an army of retainers, king's men and London citizens, to overawe all opposition. The "father of orphans" made a little speech on the occasion which has come down to us. "In truth, Jordan, although you may have been dear to us, yet against God we can yield nothing to you. But it is evident that against your so many and great abetters it is useless not only for these little ones to strive, but even for ourselves and our fellow judges. So what we shall do, we wish you to know. Yet I speak for my own self. I shall free my soul. I shall therefore write to my lord the Pope that you alone in these countries traverse his jurisdiction; you alone strive to nullify his authority." The vociferous and well-backed Jordan took the hint. He dismounted from his high [Pg 136] horse, and the orphans got their own again. But these and like duties were a heavy cross to Hugh. He hoped to be excused of God because he obeyed orders, rather than rewarded because he did well. Like Cowley, he looked upon business as "the frivolous pretence of human lusts to shake off innocence." He would not even look at his own household accounts, but delegated such work to trustworthy folk, while these behaved well. If they misbehaved he quickly detected it and sent them packing.

We have now reached the year A.D. 1200. King John has been crowned for a year. Hugh was not present at this ceremony, and the king, anxious still for his support, sends for him to be present at the great peace he was concluding with France. By this treaty the Dauphin was to marry Blanche of Castile and become Earl of Evreux, a dangerous earldom, and Philip was to drop the cause of young Arthur and give up debateable Vexin. Hugh also was tempted over seas by the hope of visiting his old haunts, which he felt must be done now or never, for health and eyesight were failing him, and he needed this refreshment for his vexed soul. It was in the Château Gaillard again that he met the king, left him in the sweet spring time at the end of May, for a pilgrim tour to shrines and haunts of holy men living and dead—a pilgrimage made possible by the new peace.

Here it must be confessed that modern sympathy is apt to falter, for though we can understand the zeal of American tourists for chips of palaces and the communal moral code peculiar to archæologists, coin collectors, and umbrella snatchers, we cannot understand the enthusiasm [Pg 137] which the manliest, holiest, and robustest minds then displayed for relics, for stray split straws and strained twigs from the fledged bird's nests whence holy souls had fled to other skies. To us these things mean but little; but to Hugh they meant very much. The facts must be given, and the reader can decide whether they are beauty spots or warts upon the strong, patient, brave face upon which they appear.

His first objective, when he left the Andelys, was Meulan, and there he "approached St. Nicasius." This saint, a very fine fellow, had been Bishop of Rheims, eight hundred years before. When the Vandals invaded the land he had advanced to meet them with a procession of singers and got an ugly sword cut, which lopt off a piece of his head. He went on still singing till he dropped dead. This brave fellow's skull Hugh took in his hands, worshipped the saint, gave gold; and then tried hard to tweak out one of his teeth: but such dentistry was unavailing. He then put his fingers into the nostrils which had so often drawn in the sweet odour of Christ and got with ease a lovely little bone, which had parted the eyes, kissed it and felt a richer hope of being directed into the way of peace and salvation; for so great a bishop would certainly fix his spiritual eyes upon him after this.

Next he went to St. Denis, where he prayed long at the tombs of the saints. The scholars of Paris, of all breeds, turned out in crowds to see a man, who, after St. Nicholas, had done so much good to clerks. Kisses, colloquies and invitations rained upon him, but he chose to lodge in the house of his relative Reimund. This man he had made Canon of Lincoln, and he afterwards refused to buy [Pg 138] off King John and became an exile for conscience and the patron of exiles, and thus was in life and character a true son of St. Hugh. Among the visitors here were the Dauphin Lewis and Arthur of Brittany. The latter turned up his nose when told to live in love and peace with Uncle John; but Lewis carried off the bishop to cheer his weeping political bride Blanche, lately bartered into the match. The good bishop walked to the palace, and Blanche bore a merry face

and a merry heart after he had talked with her.

The next place was Troyes, and here a wretch came with a doleful story. He had been bailiff to the Earl of Leicester, had torn a rogue from sanctuary at Brackley; had been excommunicated by Hugh, with all his mates. They had submitted and been made to dig up the putrid body and carry it a mile, clad only in their drawers, be whipped at every church door they passed, bury the body with their own hands, and then come to Lincoln for more flogging: and all this in the winter. This sentence frightened the bailiff, who bolted; but ill-luck dogged him. He lost his place, his money, and at last came to beg for shrift and punishment. Hugh gave him a seven years' penance and he went on his way rejoicing.

The next great place was Vienne on the Rhone. Here were the ashes of St. Anthony of the Desert, wrapped in the tunic of Paul, the first hermit. The Carthusian Bruno had caught the enthusiasm for solitude from these ambulatory ashes, which had travelled from Alexandria to Constantinople and so to Vienne in 1070. Of course they were working miracles, chiefly upon those afflicted by [Pg 139] St. Anthony's fire. The medical details are given at some length, and the cures described in the Great Life. For the general reader it is enough to say that Hugh said Mass near the precious but plain chest, and that he gave a good sum for the convalescent home where the poor sufferers were housed. Whether change of air, a hearty diet, and strong faith be enough to arrest this (now rare) disease is a scientific question rather than a theological one; but if, as we are told, St. Anthony sent thunder bolts upon castles and keeps where his pilgrims were maltreated, his spirit was somewhat of that Boanerges type which is flatly snubbed in the Gospel. From Vienne Hugh went to his own Grenoble among those mountains which have, as Ruskin says, "the high crest or wall of cliff on the top of their slopes, rising from the plain first in mounds of meadow-land and bosses of rock and studded softness of forest; the brown cottages peeping through grove above grove, until just where the deep shade of the pines becomes blue or purple in the haze of height, a red wall of upper precipice rises from the pasture land and frets the sky with glowing serration."[26] A splendid procession came out to welcome him, and the city was hung with festoons of flowers and gay silken banners. He was led with chaunting to the cathedral of St. John Baptist, his particular saint, and that of his Order, upon the very feast of the great herald. There he sang the High Mass with intense devoutness, and after the gospel preached to the people, "giving them tears to drink," but in moderation, for he begged all their prayers for his littleness [Pg 140] and unworthiness, whereas they knew quite well what a good and great fellow he was. Then he christened his own nephew, the heir of Avalon, whose uncle Peter was present, and the Bishop of Grenoble was godfather. The hitherto unbaptised boy was actually seven years old. Perhaps he had waited for Uncle Hugh to christen him, and when he had that honour he was not named Peter, as they proposed, but John, in honour of the place and day. Adam records that he taught the little fellow his alphabet and to spell from letters placed above the altar of St. John Baptist at Bellay.

Then he left for the Grande Chartreuse, having to foot it most of the way up the mountains, sweating not a little, for he was of some diameter, but he out-walked his companions. He took care to drop in while the brothers were having their midday *siesta*, and he was careful not to be of the least trouble. Indeed, for three weeks he put off the bishop, as he did at Witham, and his insignia all but the ring, and became a humble monk once more. The clergy and the laity hurried to see him from the district, and the poor jostled to behold their father; and each one had dear and gracious words, and many found his hand second his generous tongue. Some days he spent at the lower house. Here, too, he compounded an old and bitter feud between the bishop and the Count of Geneva whereby the one was exiled and the other excommunicate.

Near the end of his stay he made a public present to the House, a silver casket of relics, which he used to carry in his hand in procession at dedications. These were only a part of his collection, for he had a ring of gold and jewels, four fingers broad, with hollow spaces for relics. At his ardent [Pg 141] desire and special entreaty the monks of Fleury once gave him a tooth from the jaws of St. Benedict, the first founder and, as it were, grandfather of his and other Orders. This came with a good strip of shroud to boot, and the goldsmith appeared, tools and all, warned by a dream, from Banbury to Dorchester to enshrine the precious ivory. The shred of shroud was liberally divided up among abbots and religious men, but the tooth, after copious kissing, was sealed up in the ring. At Féchamp once (that home of relics!) they kept a bone of St. Mary Magdalen, as was rashly asserted, sewed up in silks and linen. He begged to see it, but none dared show it: but he was not to be denied. Whipping up a penknife from his notary, he had off the covers pretty

quickly, and gazed at and kissed it reverently. Then he tried to break off a bit with his fingers, but not a process would come away. He then tried to nibble a snippet, but in vain. Finally, he put the holy bone to his strong back teeth and gave a hearty scrunch. Two tit-bits came off, and he handed them to the trembling Adam, saying, “Excellent man, keep these for us.” The abbots and monks were first struck dumb, then quaked, and then boiled with indignation and wrath. “Oh! oh! Abominable!” they yelled. “We thought the bishop wanted to worship these sacred and holy things, and lo! he has, with doggish ritual, put them to his teeth for mutilation.” While they were raging he quieted them with words which may give us the key to such otherwise indecent behaviour. Suppose they had been having a great Sacramental dispute, and some, as is likely, [Pg 142] had maintained against the bishop that the grinding of the Host by the teeth of any communicant meant the grinding of Christ’s very body, then it becomes evident that Hugh put this their belief to rather a rough proof, or reproof. Anyhow, he posed them with this answer, “Since a short time back we handled together the most saintly body of the Saint of Saints with fingers granted unworthy; if we handled It with our teeth or lips, and passed It on to our inwards, why do we not also in faith so treat the members of his saints for our defence, their worship, and the deepening of our memory of them, and acquire, so far as opportunity allows, what we are to keep with due honour?”

At Peterborough they had the arm of St. Oswald, which had kept fresh for over five centuries. A supple nerve which protruded Hugh had sliced off and put in this wonderful ring. This, though he had offered it to the high altar at Lincoln, he would have left to the Charterhouse; but Adam reminded him of the fact, so instead thereof he ordered a golden box full of the relics he gave them to be sent after his death.

With mutual blessings he took his last leave of the Grande Chartreuse, and left it in the body, though his heart and mind could never be dislodged from its desert place. This place was his father and his mother, but Lincoln, he did not forget, was his wife.

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[26] “Modern Painters,” iv. 253.

[Pg 143]

CHAPTER X

HOMEWARD BOUND

After a brief visit to the Priory of St. Domninus Hugh made for Villarbenoit, his old school and college in one; but first he went to Avalon Castle, where his stout backers and brothers, William and Peter, ruled over their broad lands, who always had heartened and encouraged him in his battles for the liberties of the Church. Here “nobles, middle-class men, and the lowest people” received him with delight, and he spent two days at this his birthplace, and so on to Villarbenoit, and a fine dance his coming made for them all. He gave the Church a noble Bible worth ten silver marks, and passed to the cell of St. Maximin. Here aged hobblers and white-haired seniors, bowed mothers and women advanced in years, walled round him in happy throng. The bright-eyed lady of his unrest, possibly, was among these last, and they all bore witness to his early holiness, and prophesied his future niche in the calendar. After one more night at Avalon he set out for England.

At Bellay the incautious canons allowed him to undo a sacred little bundle which held three [Pg 144] fingers of St. John Baptist, which they trusted him to kiss, although for many years no one had even looked upon such awful articulations. After confession, absolution, and prayer the bones were bared, and he touched “the joints which had touched God’s holy head,” kissed them, and signed the prostrate worshippers with them with the holy sign. Then he cut off a good piece of the ancient red cloth which had covered them and handed it to Adam. Thence he visited three more Charterhouses. In one of these, Arvières, he met a man of his own age, Arthault by name, who had resigned his bishopric and was ending his days as a holy monk. In full chapter the bishop and the ex-bishop met. Arthault, knowing Hugh had been at the peace-making between

France and England, asked him to tell them the terms of the peace; but the latter smiled and said, “My lord father, to hear and carry tales is allowable to bishops, but not to monks. Tales must not come to cells or cloister. We must not leave towns and carry tales to solitude.” So he turned the talk to spiritual themes. Perhaps he saw that it is easier to resign a bishopric than to forsake the world altogether.

The next important place was Clugny, where they read him a chapter from St. Gregory’s “Pastoral Care,” and extorted the compliment from him that their well-ordained house would have made him a Clugniac if he had not been a Carthusian. Thence he went to Citeaux and said Mass for the Assumption (August 15th), and passed on to Clairvaux. Here he met John, the ex-Archbishop of Lyons, who was meditating away the last days of his life. Hugh asked him what [Pg 145] scriptures most helped his thoughts, and the reply must have struck an answering chord in the questioner, “To meditate entirely upon the Psalms has now usurped my whole inward being. Inexhaustible refreshment always comes new from these. Such is fresh daily, and always delicious to the taste of the inner man.” Hugh’s devotion to the Psalms is evidenced by many passages in his life, and not least by the fact that he divided the whole Psalter among the members of the Chapter so that it should be recited throughout every day. His own share included three Psalms, i., ii., and iii., and if the reader tries to look at these through the saint’s eyes he will see much in them that he has not hitherto suspected to be there.

He stopped a couple of days at Rheims, and was astonished at the good store of books the library owned. He “blamed the slothful carelessness of modern times, which not only failed to imitate the literary activity of the Fathers in making and writing books, but neither read nor reverently treated the sacred manuscripts the care of the Fathers had provided.” His own conduct in this respect, both at Witham and Lincoln, was far otherwise. He took pains about the library at each place. His gifts to Lincoln were—(1) Two great volumes of sermons by the Catholic doctors for the whole year. (2) A little book of the Father’s Life with a red covering. (3) A Psalter with a large gloss.[27] (4) A Homeliary in stag’s leather, beginning “*Erunt signa*.” And (5) A Martyrology with the text of the four Gospels. At Rheims, too, he also saw and worshipped the vessel of holy oil, [Pg 146] which was used for anointing the kings of France. Then he made his way to the northern coast to St. Omer’s Camp. He would not put to sea at once lest he should fail of his Mass on Our Lady’s birthday. He had been unwell for some days with quartan fever, and tried bleeding, but it did him no good. He could not eat, but was obliged to go and lie down upon his small bed. He broke into violent sweats, and for three days hardly tasted food. On the 7th of September he would travel ten miles to Clercmaretz Abbey to keep the feast. He slept in the infirmary, where two monks waited on him, but could get him to eat nothing. He said there his last Mass but one, and still fasting went back to St. Omers. He felt a good deal better after this, and went on to Wissant, where he made the usual invocations to Our Lady and St. Ann, and had a safe, swift passage, and immediately upon landing said his last Mass, probably at St. Margaret’s Church, in Dover. He never missed a chance of saying Mass if he could, though it was not said daily in his time. But he would not allow his chaplain to celebrate if he had been lately bled, reproved him for the practice, and when he did it again very sharply rebuked him.

From Dover he went to Canterbury, and prayed long and earnestly, first at the Saviour altar and then at the tombs of the holy dead,[28] and especially at the mausoleum of St. Thomas. The monastic flock (still *sub judice*) led him forth with deep respect. The news spread that he was ill, and the royal justiciaries and barons visited him and expressed their sympathy and affection in [Pg 147] crowds, which must have considerably heightened his temperature. He explained to them with placid face that the scourge of the Lord was sweet to His servants, and what he said he enacted. “But He, the head Father of the Family, who had put forth His hand to cut him down, withdrew not the sickle from reaping the stalk, which he had now seen white to the harvest.” One of the signs of this was the growing dimness of his eyes, much tried by the dust and heat of travel. But he would not have them doctored. “These eyes will be good enough for us as long as we are obliged to use them,” he said. He crawled painfully on to London, part of the way on horseback and part by water, and in a high fever took to his bed in his own house, praying to be allowed to reach his anxious family at Lincoln. “I shall never be able to keep away from spiritual presence with our dearest Sons in Christ, whether I be present or absent in the body. But concerning health or my bodily presence, yea, and concerning my whole self, may the will be done of the holy Father which is in Heaven.” He had ceased to wish to live, he told his chaplain, for he saw the lamentable things about to come upon the Church of England. “So it is better for us to die than to

live and see the evil things for this people and the saints which are ahead. For doubtless upon the family of King Henry the scripture must needs be fulfilled which says there shall not be 'deep rooting from bastard slips' and the 'seed of an unrighteous bed shall be rooted out.' So the modern King of the French will avenge his holy father Lewis upon the offspring of wickedness, to wit, of her who rejected a stainless bed with him and impudently was joined with his rival, the king of the English. For this, that French Philip will destroy the stock royal of the English, like as an ox is wont to lick up the grass to its roots. Already three of her sons have been cut off by the French, two kings that is, and one prince. The fourth, the survivor, will have short peace at their hands." The next day, St. Matthew's, was his episcopal birthday, and he kept it up by having, for the first time in his life, the anointing of the sick. He first made a most searching confession to his chaplain, and then to the Dean of Lincoln, the Precentor, and the Archdeacon of Northampton.[29] He hesitated not to confess sins often before confessed to many, and made so straight, keen, and full a story of what he had left undone and what he had done that they never heard the like; and he often repeated, "The evildoing is mine, truly, solely, and wholely. The good, if there is any, is not so. It is mixed with evil; it is everywhere gross with it. So it is neither truly nor purely good." The Sacrament was brought him at nine o'clock the next day, and he flung himself from his bed, clad in his hair shirt and cowl, with naked feet, knelt, worshipped, and prayed long before it, recalling the infinite benefits of the Saviour to the children of men, commending his sinfulness to Christ's mercy, asking for help to the end and imploring with tears never to be left. Then he was houselled and anointed. He said, "Now let our doctors and our diseases meet, as far as may be. In our heart there will be less trouble about them both. I have committed myself to Him, received Him, shall hold Him, stick to Him, to whom it is good to stick, Whom to hold is blessed. If a man receives Him and commits himself to Him he is strong and safe." He was then told to make his will, and said it was a tiresome new custom, for all he had was not his, but belonged to the church he ruled; but lest the civil officer should take all, he made his will. "If any temporal goods should remain after my death in the bishopric, now here all which I seem to possess I hand over to the Lord Jesus Christ, to be bestowed upon the poor." The executors were the dean and the two archdeacons. After this simple but not surprising will he called for his stole and anathematized all who should knavishly keep back, or violently carry off, any of his goods, or otherwise frustrate his executors.

He grew worse. He confessed daily the lightest thought or word of impatience against his nurses. He was much in prayer, and he had the offices said at the right times however ill he was. He sang with the psalm-singers while he could. If they read or sang carelessly or hurriedly, he chastened them with a terrible voice and insisted upon clear pronunciation and perfect time. He made every one stand and sit by turns, so that while one set were resting the other were reverencing the divine and angelic presences. He had always been punctilious about the times of prayer and used always to withdraw from the bench to say his offices when they were due.

King John came in one day, but the bishop, who could sit up for his food, neither rose nor sat to greet him. The king said that he and his friends would do all they could for him. Then he sent out the courtiers and sat long and talked much and blandly; but Hugh answered very little, but shortly asked him to see to his and other bishops' wills and commended Lincoln to his protection; but he despaired of John and would not waste his beautiful words upon him. After the king, the archbishop came several times, and promised also to do what he could for him. The last time he came he hinted that Hugh must not forget to ask pardon from any he had unjustly hurt or provoked by word or deed. No answer from the bed! Then he became a little more explicit and said that he, Hugh's spiritual father and primate, had often been most bitterly provoked, and that really his forgiveness was most indispensible. The reply he got was more bracing than grateful. Archbishops rarely hear such naked verities. "It is quite true, and I see it well when I ponder all the hidden things of our conscience, that I have often provoked you to angers. But I do not find a single reason for repenting of it; but I know this, that I must grieve that I did not do it oftener and harder. But if my life should have to be passed longer with you I most firmly determine, under the eyes of all-seeing God, to do it much oftener than before. I can remember how, to comply with you, I have often and often been coward enough to keep back things which I ought to have spoken out to you, and which you would not well have brooked to hear, and so by my own fault I have avoided offence to you rather than to the Father which is in Heaven. On this count, therefore, it is that I have not only transgressed against God heavily and unbishoply, but against your fatherhood or primacy. And I humbly ask pardon for this." Exit the archbishop!

Now his faithful Boswell gives elaborate details of Hugh's long dying, not knowing that his work would speak to a generation which measures a man's favour with God by the oily slipperiness with which he shuffles off his clay coil. It was a case of hard dying, redoubled paroxysms, fierce fever, and bloody flux, and dreadful details. He would wear his sackcloth, and rarely change it, though it caked into knots which chafed him fiercely. But, though the rule allowed, he would not go soft to his end, however much his friends might entreat him to put off the rasping hair. "No, no, God forbid that I should. This raiment does not scrape, but soothe; does not hurt, but help," he answered sternly. He gave exact details of how he was to be laid on ashes on the bare earth at the last with no extra sackcloth. No bishops or abbots being at hand to commend him at the end, the monks of Westminster were to send seven or eight of their number and the Dean of St. Paul's a good number of singing clerks. His body was to be washed with the greatest care, to fit it for being taken to the holy chapel of the Baptist at Lincoln, and laid out by three named persons and no others. When it reached Lincoln it was to be arrayed in the plain vestments of his consecration, which he had kept for this. One little light gold ring, with a cheap water sapphire in it, he selected from all that had been given him. He had worn it for functions, and would bear it in death, and have nothing about him else to tempt folk to sacrilege. The hearers understood, foolishly, from this that he knew his body would be translated after its first sepulture, and for this [Pg 152] reason he had it cased in lead and solid stone that no one should seize or even see his ornaments when he was moved. "You will place me," he said, "before the altar of my aforesaid patron, the Lord's forerunner, where there seems fitting room near some wall, in such wise that the tomb shall not inconveniently block the floor, as we see in many churches, and cause incomers to trip or fall." Then he had his beard and nails trimmed for death. Some of his ejaculations in his agonies are preserved. "O kind God, grant us rest. O good Lord and true God, give us rest at last." When they tried to cheer him by saying that the paroxysm was over he said, "How really blessed are those to whom even the last judgment day will bring unshaken rest." They told him his judgment day would be the day when he laid by the burden of the flesh. But he would not have it. "The day when I die will not be a judgment day, but a day of grace and mercy," he said. He astonished his physicians by the robust way in which he would move, and his manly voice bated nothing of its old power, though he spoke a little submissively. The last lection he heard was the story of Lazarus and Martha, and when they reached the words, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," he bade them stop there. The funeral took up the tale where the reader left off, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

They reminded him that he had not confessed any miscarriages of justice of which he had been guilty through private love or hate. He answered boldly, "I never remember that I knowingly [Pg 153] wrested the truth in a judicial sentence either from hate or love, no, nor from hope or fear of any person or thing whatsoever. If I have gone awry in judgments it was a fault either of my own ignorance or assuredly of my assistants."

The leeches hoped much from meat, and, though the Order forbade it, his obedience was transferred to Canterbury. His friends posted off and got not only a permit, but a straight order enjoining this diet upon him. He said that neither for taste nor for medicine could he be prevailed upon to eat flesh. "But to avoid offending so many reverend men, and, too, lest, even in the state of death, we should fail to follow in the footsteps of Him who became obedient even unto death, let flesh be given to us. Now at the last we will freely eat it, sauced with brotherly love." When he was asked what he would like he said that he had read that the sick fathers had been given pig's trotters. But he made small headway with these unseasonable viands or with the poor "little birds" they next gave him. On the 16th of November, at sunset, the monks and clerks arrived. Hugh had strength to lay his hand upon Adam's head and bless him and the rest. They said to him, "Pray the Lord to provide a profitable pastor for your church," but their voices were dim in his ears, and only when they had asked it thrice he said, "God grant it!" The third election brought in great Grosseteste.

The company then withdrew for compline, and as they ended the xci. Psalm, "I will deliver him and bring him to honour," he was laid upon the oratory floor on the ashes, for he had given the [Pg 154] sign; and while they chaunted *Nunc Dimittis* with a quiet face he breathed out his gallant soul, passing, as he had hoped, at Martinmas-tide "from God's camp to His palace, from His hope to His sight," in the time of that saint whom he greatly admired and closely resembled.

They washed his white, brave body, sang over it, watched it all night in St. Mary's Church, ringed it with candles, sang solemn Masses over it, embalmed it with odours, and buried the bowels

near the altar in a leaden vessel. All London flocked, priests with crosses and candles, people weeping silently and aloud, every man triumphant if he could even touch the bier. Then they carried him in the wind and the rain, with lads on horseback holding torches (which never all went out at once), back to his own children. They started on Saturday[30] for Hertford, and by twilight next day they had reached Biggleswade on the Ivell, where he had a house, wherein the company slept. The mourning crowds actually blocked the way to the church. The bier was left in the church that Sunday night.

By Monday they got to Buckden, and on the Tuesday they had got as far as Stamford, but the crowds were so great here that hardly could they fight their way through till the very dead of the night. The body, of course, was taken into the church; and a pious cobbler prayed to die, and lo! die he did, having only just time for confession, shrift, and his will; and way was made for him in death, though he could not get near the bier in life. The story recalled to Adam's mind a saying of [Pg 155] his late master when people mourned too immoderately for the dead—"What are you about? What are you about? By Saint Nut" (that was his innocent oath), "by Saint Nut, it would indeed be a great misfortune for us if we were never allowed to die." He would praise the miraculous raising of the dead, but he thought that sometimes a miraculous granting of death is still more to be admired. At Stamford they bought horn lanterns instead of wax torches, for these last guttered so in the weather that the riders got wax all over their hands and clothes. Then they made for Ancaster, and on Thursday they came to Lincoln. Here were assembled all the great men of the realm, who came out to meet the bier. The kings of England and Scotland, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and barons were all there. No man so great but he thought himself happy to help carry that bier up the hill. Shoulders were relieved by countless hands, these by other hands. The greatest men struggled for this honour. The rains had filled the streets with mud above the ankles, sometimes up to men's knees. All the bells of the town tolled and every church sang hymns and spiritual songs. Those who could not touch the bier tossed coins upon the hearse which held the body. Even the Jews came out and wept and did what service they could.

The body was taken to a bye place off the cathedral[31] and dressed as he had ordered—with ring, gloves, staff, and the plain robes. They wiped the balsam from his face, and found it first white, [Pg 156] but then the cheeks grew pink. The cathedral was blocked with crowds, each man bearing a candle. They came in streams to kiss his hands and feet and to offer gold and silver, and more than forty marks were given that day. John of Leicester laid a distich at his feet, much admired then, but "bald as his crown" to our ears:

> "Staff to the bishops, to the monks a measure true,
> Counsel for schools, kings' hammer—such behold was Hugh!"

The next day at the funeral his cheap vestments were torn in pieces by the relic-hunting, which it must be confessed he had done nothing to check; and he was buried near the wall not far from the altar of St. John Baptist, and, as seemed more suitable for the crowds who came there, on the northern side of the building itself.[32]

This tremendous funeral long lived in men's memory, and there is a far prettier verse about it than the old distich of John—

> "A' the bells o' merrie Lincoln
> Without men's hands were rung,
> And a' the books o' merrie Lincoln
> Were read without man's tongue;
> And ne'er was such a burial
> Sin' Adam's days begun."

Passing by the shower of gold rings, necklaces, and bezants which were given at his shrine, it is certain that the coals of enthusiasm were blown by the report of miracles, never for very long together kept at bay by mediæval writers. While wishing to avoid the *affirmatio falsi* and to give [Pg 157] no heed to lying fables, we must not risk being guilty of a *suppressio veri*. The miracles at the tomb come in such convenient numbers that their weight, though it possibly made the guardians of the shrine, yet breaks the tottering faith of the candid reader. But some are more robust, and for them there is a lively total which makes Giraldus's lament for the fewness of miracles in his day seem rather ungrateful. "Four quinsies"—well, strong emotion will do much for quinsies. "One slow oozing"—the disease being doubtful, we need not dispute the remedy. "Three paralytics"—in the name of Lourdes, let them pass. "Three withered, two dumb, two hunchbacks,

one boy dead"—here we falter. "One jaundice case" sounds likelier; "one barren woman" need not detain us. "Four dropsies, four blind, and nine lunatics"—and now we know the worst of it. It would have been a great deal easier to accept the whole in a venture (or forlorn hope) of faith if Hugh had witnessed and some one else performed these miracles, for he had a scrupulously veracious mind. He was so afraid of even the shadow of a lie that he used to attemper what he said with words of caution whenever he repeated what he had done or heard: "that is only as far as I recollect." He would not clap his seal to any letter which contained any questionable statement. "We remember to have cited you elsewhere," a common legal phrase, would damn a document if he did not remember, literally and personally, to have done so. His influence, too, can be discerned in the candid Adam, whose honest tale often furnishes us with an antidote to his impossible surmises. But veracity, unfortunately, is not highly infectious, and it is a little difficult not to believe that the high and serene virtues of the great man gone were promptly exploited for the small men left. One miracle there seems no reason to doubt. John, in an almost maudlin fit of emotional repentance, made peace at the funeral with his Cistercian enemies and founded them a home at Beaulieu in the New Forest. Indeed, these were the true miracles which recommended Hugh to the English people, so that they regarded him as a saint indeed, and clamoured for him to be called one formally—the miracles wrought upon character, the callous made charitable, liars truthful, and the lechers chaste; the miracles of justice, of weak right made strong against proud might, and poor honesty made proof against rich rascality; the miracle of England made the sweeter and the handsomer for this humble and heavenly stranger.

The later history need not detain us long. His body was moved, says Thomas Wykes in the *Annales Monastici*, in the year 1219. Perhaps—and this is a mere guess—the place where his body lay was injured at the time of the battle and capture of Lincoln two years before; and for better protection the coffin was simply placed unopened in that curious position two-thirds into the wall of the apse foundation, where it was found in our day. In 1220 he was canonized by Pope Honorius III., who was then at Viterbo organising a crusade, after a report vouching for the miracles drawn up by the great Archbishop Stephen Langton and John of Fountains, a just and learned man, afterwards Treasurer of England.

Sixty years later, that is to say, in 1280, John Peckham, the pious friar archbishop, Oliver Sutton, the cloister-building Bishop of Lincoln, and others, among them King Edward I. and his good wife Eleanor, opened the tomb and lifted out the body into a shrine adorned with gold and jewels and placed it upon a marble pedestal in the Angel Choir, either where the modern tomb of Queen Eleanor now stands or just opposite. The head came away and sweated wonder-working oils, and was casketted and placed at the end of the present Burghersh tombs, as a shrine of which the broken pedestal and the knee-worn pavement are still to be seen. The body was placed in a shrine cased with plates of gold and silver, crusted with gems, and at the last protected by a grille of curious wrought iron. A tooth, closed in beryl with silver and gilt, appears as a separate item in the Reformation riflings. The history of both shrines and of the bones they held is a tale by itself, like most true tales ending in mystery. Perhaps, as King Henry VIII. had not much veneration for holy bones, but, like our enlightened age, much preferred gold, silver, and jewels, his destroying angels may have left the relics of Hugh's forsaken mortality to the lovely cathedral, where his memory, after seven centuries, is still pathetically and tenderly dear.

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[27] Which alone still survives.

[28] Dunstan, Alphege, Lanfranc, Anselm, and others presumably.

[29] Roger de Roldeston, William de Blois, and Richard of Kent.

[30] November 18, 1200.

[31] Possibly on the site where St. Hugh's chapel now stands in desolation.

[32] *A boreali ipsius ædis regione*, not of the cathedral, but of the new honeycomb apse, please.

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Transcriber's note

A few obvious typographical errors have been corrected; they and other possible errors are listed below.

Inconsistent hyphenation: nowadays (now-a-days), brushwood (brush-wood), footprints (foot-prints).

Page 1: Page number corrected to 1 from 2.

Page 10: "Under the smoothe" corrected to "Under the smooth".

Page 14: "seiges of Milan" not changed; "beseiges their city" not changed.

Page 15: "lord of Normany" corrected to "lord of Normandy".

Page 17: "Manuel Commenus" probable error for "Manuel Comnenus". Not changed.

Page 24: "post-Hugonian" possible error for "Post-Hugonian". Not changed.

Page 32: "was thorougly understood" corrected to "was thoroughly understood"; "between Normany and England" corrected to "between Normandy and England"; "audibly says, ‘Oh," corrected to "audibly says, “Oh,".

Page 39: "They ought to chose" corrected to "They ought to choose".

Page 44: "præ-Edwardian" not changed.

Page 62: "beseiged in Lincoln" not changed.

Page 76: "to smoothe those English" corrected to "to smooth those English".

Page 89: "neural tremours" not changed.

Page 122: Opening double quotation marks (signifying continued quotation) are missing from the paragraphs starting "These things, described but puerilely" and "The foundation is the body", and have not been added.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HUGH, BISHOP OF LINCOLN ***

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