

MISCELLANEA.

TOMB OF KING HENRY IV. IN CANTERBURY,
CATHEDRAL.

It is very generally known that in the year 1832, to set at rest certain historical doubts, the Dean and Resident Canons of Canterbury caused this tomb to be opened. An account of the facts and discoveries was drawn up at the time by the Rev. Dr. Spry, one of the Canons present, but was privately circulated only; nor has any full statement of the proceedings, so far as I am aware, ever been published. It cannot but be desirable that the facts should be placed on more permanent record, and preserved from loss; and the kindness of Archdeacon Harrison enables me to print Dr. Spry's narrative here *in extenso*.

T. G. G. F.

"A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE EXAMINATION OF THE TOMB OF KING HENRY IV. IN THE CATHEDRAL OF CANTERBURY, AUGUST 21, 1832.

"One of the most remarkable of the monuments preserved in the Cathedral of Canterbury, is a very costly altar-tomb, erected in honour of King Henry IV. and Joan of Navarre, his Queen. All our historians have stated that King Henry was buried in this Cathedral; and no doubt was entertained that his body was really deposited in the tomb thus raised to preserve it, until the learned and inquisitive Henry Wharton discovered in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, a manuscript, which he published in the second volume of his *Anglia Sacra*, (folio, London, 1691,) wherein it is asserted that the body of the King was taken out of the coffin and thrown into the Thames, by those who were conveying it by water from London to Canterbury. As this was written by a contemporary, and purports to give an account received by

him from one who was himself an agent in the outrage, it has been admitted as evidence by all the writers who have undertaken to describe the Cathedral of Canterbury, and its monuments, from Batteley downwards.

"The manuscript is entitled 'A History of the Martyrdom of Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York;' and it is written by one Clement Maydestone,* an ecclesiastic, and a retainer of the deceased prelate.

"The passage is as follows:—

† "After the death of this King, a wonderful event occurred declaratory of the glory of the above-named Lord Archbishop Richard, and commending it to memory for ever. For in less than thirty days after the death of the said King Henry IV., one of his household came to dine at the house of the Holy Trinity, at Hounslow; and during dinner, while the company present were talking of the excellent conduct of that King, this person observed to a certain esquire, named Thomas Maydestone, who was sitting with him at the table, 'God knows whether he was a good man; but this I know for certain, that while his body was conveying in a small vessel from Westminster towards Canterbury, to be buried there, I was one of three persons who threw the corpse into the sea, between Berking and Gravesend.'

"And he added, with an oath, 'Such a storm of wind fell upon us, and the waves ran so high, that many nobles, who followed us in eight small ships, were scarcely saved from death, their vessels having been dispersed by the tempest.

* "Clemens Maydestone, filius Thomæ Maydestone Armigeri, fuit ordinis S. Brigittæ Confrater domus de Howndeslow.—*Tanneri Bibliotheca*, p. 500."

† "Post mortem ejusdem Regis accidit quoddam mirabile ad prædicti Domini Richardi Archipræsulis gloriam declarandam et æternæ memoriæ commendandam. Nam infra triginta dies post mortem dicti Regis Henrici quarti venit quidam vir de familiâ ejusdem ad domum sanctæ Trinitatis de Howndeslow vescendi causâ; et cum in prandio sermocinarentur circumstantes de probitate morum ipsius Regis; respondit prædictus vir cuidam Armigero vocato Thomæ Maydestone, in eâdem mensâ tunc sedenti: si fuerit vir bonus, novit Deus; sed hoc verissime scio, quod cum a Westmonasteriâ corpus ejus versus Cantuariam in parvâ naviculâ portaretur ibidem sepeliendum, ego fui unus de tribus personis qui projecerunt corpus ipsius in mare inter Berkingum et Gravesend. Et addidit cum juramento; tanta tempestas ventorum et fluctuum irruit super nos, quod multi nobiles sequentes nos in naviculis octo in numero

But we who were with the body, being in peril of our lives, by common consent threw it into the sea, and immediately there was a great calm.

“ ‘But the chest, covered with cloth of gold, in which the body had lain, we carried with great honour unto Canterbury, and buried it. Therefore the monks of Canterbury may say, that the sepulchre of King Henry IV. is with us, not his body; as also said Peter of the holy David, in the second chapter of the Acts of the ‘Apostles.’ God Almighty is witness and judge, that I, Clement Maydestone, saw that man and heard him swear to my father, Thomas Maydestone, that all which he had said was true.’—See Wharton’s *Anglia Sacra*, Vol. ii., p. 372.

“It is clear that this narrative is open to great suspicion; for, admitting that the known superstition of the sailors might have tempted them, in a moment of peril, to throw the corpse into the sea, it is scarcely probable that one of the King’s household, if he had been engaged in so culpable a transaction, would have spoken openly on the subject, and so shortly after the funeral, knowing, as he must have known, that King Henry V. would have visited such an offence with great severity. It should also be observed that Clement Maydestone is an interested witness. He was as ready to depreciate the character of the deceased monarch, as to extol the honour of his master, whom he conceived to have been wrongfully executed. And a writer who was so far under the influence of prejudice as to represent the punishment of high-treason as a martyrdom, and the death of the King as a judgment from Heaven upon a persecutor of the Church, would not hesitate in propagating, if not inventing, a story which he could construe into a proof of a Divine interposition, in honour of his patron’s memory.

dispersi sunt, ut vix mortis periculum evaserunt. Nos vero qui eramus cum corpore, in desperatione vitæ nostræ positi, cum assensu projecimus illud in mare; et facta est tranquillitas magna. Cistam vero, in quâ jacebat, panno deaurato coopertam, cum maximo honore Cantuariam deportavimus, et sepelivimus eam.

“ ‘Dicant ergo Monachi Cantuariæ, quod sepulchrum Regis Henrici quarti est apud nos, non corpus; sicut dixit Petrus de Sancto David, Act. 2^o. Deus Omnipotens est testis et judex; quod ego Clemens Maydestone vidi virum illum, et audiivi ipsum jurantem patri meo, Thomæ Maydestone, omnia prædicta fore vera.’ ”

"Still, it has long been one of the *desiderata curiosa* of antiquaries to ascertain the truth or falsehood of Clement Maydestone's narrative, by an actual examination of the coffin; and for this purpose the royal vault was opened on the 21st of August last, in the presence of a few individuals,* under the sanction of the Dean of Canterbury; and the following account has been drawn up from notes taken on the spot at the time, by one of those individuals.

"On removing a portion of the marble pavement at the western end of the monument, it was found to have been laid on rubbish composed of lime dust, small pieces of Caen stone, and a few flints, among which were found two or three pieces of decayed stuff, or silk, (perhaps portions of the cloth of gold† which covered the coffin,) and also a piece of leather.

"When the rubbish was cleared away, we came to what appeared to be the lid of a wooden case, of very rude form and construction, which the surveyor at once pronounced to be a coffin. It lay east and west, projecting beyond the monument towards the west, for about one-third of its length. Upon it, to the east, and entirely within the monument, lay a leaden coffin without any wooden case, of much smaller size, and very singular shape, being formed by bending one sheet of lead over another, and soldering them at the junctions.

"This coffin was supposed to contain the remains of Queen Joan, and was not disturbed.

"Not being able to take off the lid of the large coffin, as a great portion of its length was under the tomb, and being unwilling to move the alabaster monument for the purpose of getting at it, it was decided to saw through the lid, about three feet from what was supposed to be the head of the coffin.

"And this being done, the piece of wood was carefully

* "Present,—

The Hon. and Right Rev. The Lord Bishop of Oxford, Dean of Canterbury.

The Lady Harriet Bagot.

Hon. Sir Charles Bagot.

Rev. W. F. Baylay. } Prebendaries.

Rev. Dr. Spry. }

Mr. George Austin, Surveyor of the Cathedral.

John Pedder. }

Thomas Laming. } Workmen."

† "See Maydestone, above."

removed, and found to be elm, very coarsely worked, about one inch and a half thick, and perfectly sound.

“Immediately under this elm board was a quantity of haybands filling the coffin, and upon the surface of them lay a very rude small cross, formed by merely tying two twigs together, thus +. This fell to pieces on being moved.

“When the haybands, which were very sound and perfect, were removed, we found a leaden case or coffin, moulded in some degree to the shape of a human figure; and it was at once evident that this had never been disturbed, but lay as it was originally deposited,—though it may be difficult to conjecture why it was placed in a case so rude and unsightly, and so much too large for it that the haybands appeared to have been used to keep it steady.

“In order to ascertain what was contained in this leaden case, it became necessary to saw through a portion of it, and in this manner an oval piece of the lead, about seven inches long, and four inches over at the widest part of it, was carefully removed. Under this we found wrappers, which seemed to be of leather, and afterwards proved to have been folded five times round the body. The material was firm in its texture, very moist, of a deep brown colour, and earthy smell. These wrappers were cut through and lifted off, when, to the astonishment of all present, the face of the deceased King was seen in complete preservation. The nose elevated, the cartilage even remaining, though, on the admission of the air, it sunk rapidly away, and had entirely disappeared before the examination was finished. The skin of the chin was entire, of the consistence and thickness of the upper leather of a shoe, brown and moist; the beard thick and matted, and of a deep russet colour.

“The jaws were perfect, and all the teeth in them, except one fore-tooth, which had probably been lost during the King’s life. The opening of the lead was not large enough to expose the whole of the features, and we did not examine the eyes or forehead. But the surveyor stated that when he introduced his fingers under the wrappers to remove them, he distinctly felt the orbits of the eyes prominent in their sockets. The flesh upon the nose was moist, clammy, and of the same brown colour as every other part of the face.

“Having thus ascertained that the body of the King was

actually deposited in the tomb, and that it had never been disturbed, the wrappers were laid again upon the face, the lead drawn back over them, the lid of the coffin put on, the rubbish filled in, and the marble pavement replaced immediately.

"It should be observed that about three feet from the head of the figure was a remarkable projection in the lead, as if to make room for the hands that they might be elevated as in prayer.

"J. H. S."

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO A DISPUTE BETWEEN THE
SEVEN HUNDREDS AND LYDD CONCERNING THE
WATCH AT DENG MARSH.

COMMUNICATED BY W. J. LIGHTFOOT, ESQ., FROM A MS. BELONGING
TO HAWKHURST CHURCH.

A shorte rehearseall howe y^e 7 hundreds were comanded to watche at Dengmarshe Ano 1585 by y^e Lorde Lievtennante comandement wth a shorte discorse of their sute in y^t behalf and how often they did deny y^t service afterward wth a breefe of o^r answers against y^e men of Lydde proofes and allegations.

Ffirst after y^t y^e Pope had procured y^t Holy League as he called it to y^t end to overthrow y^e Gospell and to establish their Popery. The Spanishe Kinge, who was the greatest prince in y^t league, began nowe to turne all his force and power against o^r Queene and countrey, and prepared a mighty navy for y^t purpose; and uppon this newes her ma^{tie} appoynted choyse persons to be her levtennantes in every sheir for to appoynte captaines and their souldiers to be trained, and so this newes beinge still encreased. Beacons wer comanded to be set up, and watches to be kept, and in y^e year afforsaide we of the 7 hundreds were comanded by o^r L. L. to send 12 men to watche at Dengemarshe, y^e w^{ch} wee did most willingly undertake as well in regarde of y^e present danger then thought to be at hand as also to testify o^r obedience to o^r L. L., thinking y^t change to have exceeded only by virtue of y^t his absolute