**THIRLBY** (or Thirleby), **THOMAS** (c. 1506-1570), English prelate, was bom at Cambridge and was educated at Trinity Hall in the university there, becoming a fellow of his college. Through the good offices of his friend, Thomas Cranmer, he was introduced to the court of Henry VIII., and he served this king, one of whose chaplains he had become, in several ways. Among his numerous public appointments were those of dean of the chapel royal and member of the council of the north. In 1540 he was made bishop of Westminster, being the first and only occupant of that see; in 1550, three years after Henry VIII.’s death, he resigned the bishopric, which was dissolved, and became bishop of Norwich. As a diplomatist Thirlby had a long and varied experience; on several occasions he was sent on embassies to the emperor Charles V., and he helped to arrange the peace between Englan<l and France in 1559. He appears to have served Edward VI. loyally through­out his short reign, both at home and abroad, although it is certain that he disliked the religious changes and he voted against the act of uniformity in 1549. He was thus more at ease when Mary ascended the throne. Translated in 1554 to the bishopric of Ely, he took part in the trial of Cranmer at Oxford and in the consecration of Reginald Pole as archbishop of Canterbury, but he himself did not take severe measures against heretics. When Elizabeth became queen the bishop refused to take the oath of supremacy; in other ways he showed himself hostile to the proposed religious changes, and in 1559 he was deprived of his bishopric. For preaching against the innovations he w,as arrested in 1560, and he was in honourable confinement at Lambeth Palace when he died on the 26th of August 1570.

**THIRLWALL, CONNOP** (1797-1875), English bishop and historian, was born at Stepney, London, on the 11th of January 1797. His family was of Northumbrian extraction. He was a precocious boy, learning Latin at three, reading Greek at four, and writing sermons at seven. He went to the Charterhouse school, where George Grote and Julius Hare were among his schoolfellows. He went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in October 1814, and gained the Craven university scholarship and the chancellor’s classical medal. In October 1818 he was elected to a fellowship, and went for a year’s travel on the Continent. At Rome he gained the friendship of Baron (Christian C. J.) von Bunsen, which had a most important in­fluence on his life. On his return, “ distrust of his own re­solutions and convictions ” led him to abandon for the time his intention of being a clergyman, and he settled down to the study of the law, “ with a firm determination not to suffer it to engross my time so as to prevent me from pursuing other branches of knowledge.” How little his heart was with it was shown by the labour he soon undertook of translating and prefacing Schleiermacher’s essay on the Gospel of St Luke. He further rendered two of Tieck’s most recent *Novellen* into English. In 1827 he at length made up his mind to quit the law, and was ordained deacon the same year.

Thirlwall now joined with Hare in translating Niebuhr’s *History of Rome·,* the first volume appeared in 1828. The translation was attacked in the *Quarterly* as favourable to scepticism, and the translators jointly replied. In 1831 the friends established the *Philological Museum,* which lived through only six numbers, though among Thirlwall’s contributions was his masterly paper on the irony of Sophocles—“ the most ex­quisite criticism I ever read,” says Sterling. Oh Hare’s de­parture from Cambridge in 1832, Thirlwall became assistant college tutor, which led him to take a memorable share in the great controversy upon the admission of Dissenters which arose in 1834. Thomas Turton, the regius professor of divinity (afterwards dean of Westminster and bishop of Ely), had written a pamphlet objecting to the admission, on the ground of the apprehended unsettlement of the religious opinions of young churchmen. Thirlwall replied by pointing out that no pro­vision for theological instruction was in fact made by the colleges except compulsory attendance at chapel, and that this was mischievous. This attack upon a time-hallowed piece of college discipline brought upon him a demand for the resignation of his office as assistant tutor. He complied at once; his friends generally thought that he ought to have tested the master’s power. The occurrence marked him out for promotion by a Liberal Government, and in the autumn he received from Lord Brougham as chancellor the living of Kirby-under- Dale in Yorkshire. Though devoted to his parochial duties, he found time to begin his principal work, the *History of Greece.* This work was a commission from Lardner’s *Cabinet Cyclopaedia,* and was originally intended to have been condensed into two or three duodecimo volumes. The scale was enlarged, but Thirlwall always felt cramped. He seems a little below his subject, and a little below himself. As compared with Grote’s history it lacks enthusiasm for a definite political ideal and is written entirely from the standpoint of a scholar. It is in this respect superior, and further shows in places a more impartial treatment of the evidence, especially in respect of the aristo­cratic and absolute governments of Greece. For these reasons its popularity was not so immediate as that of Grote’s work, but within recent years its substantial merits have been more adequately recognized. A noble letter from Thirlwall to Grote, and Grote’s generous reply, are published in the life of the latter. John Sterling pronounced Thirlwall “ a writer as great as Thu­cydides and Tacitus, and with far more knowledge than they.” The first volume was published in 1835, the last in 1847.

In 1840 Thirlwall was raised to the see of St David’s. The promotion was entirely the act of Lord Melbourne, an amateur in theology, who had read Thirlwall’s introduction to Schleier­macher, and satisfied himself of the propriety of the appoint­ment. “ I don’t intend to make a heterodox bishop if I know it,” he said. In most essential points he was a model bishop, and he acquainted himself with Welsh, so as to preach and con­duct service in that language. He was not greatly beloved by his clergy, who felt their intellectual distance too great, and were alternately frozen by his taciturnity and appalled by his sarcasm. The great monument of his episcopate is the eleven famous charges in which he from time to time reviewed the position of the English Church with reference to whatever might be the most pressing question of the day—addresses at once judicial and statesmanlike, full of charitable wisdom and massive sense. His endeavours to allay ecclesiastical panic, and to promote liberality of spirit, frequently required no ordinary moral courage. He was one of the four prelates who refused to inhibit Bishop Colenso from preaching in their dioceses, and the only one who withheld his signature from the addresses calling upon Colenso to resign his see. He took the liberal side in the questions of Maynooth, of the admission of Jews to parliament, of the Gorham case, and of the educational conscience clause. He was the only bishop who voted for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, though a scheme of con­current endowment would have been much more agreeable to him. He would have made an admirable successor to Howley in the primacy, but such was the complexion of ecclesiastical politics that the elevation of the most impartial prelate of his day would have been resented as a piece of party spirit.

Thirlwall’s private life was happy and busy. Though never married, he was fond of children and of all weak things except weak-minded clergymen. He had a very judicial mind, and J. S. Mill said he was the best orator he had ever heard. During his latter years he took great interest in the revision of the authorized version of the Bible, and was chairman of the re­visers of the Old Testament. He resigned his see in May 1874, and retired to Bath, where he died on the 27th of July 1875. He lies in Westminster Abbey in the same grave as Grote.

As scholar, critic and ecclesiastical statesman Thirlwall stands very high. He was not a great original thinker; he lacked the creative faculty and the creative impulse. His character, with its mixture of greatness and gentleness, was thus read by Carlyle: “ A right solid, honest-hearted man, full of knowledge and sense, and, in spite of his positive temper, almost timid.”

Thirlwall’s *History of Greece* remains a standard book. His *Remains, Literary and Theological,* were edited by J. J. S. Perowne