

ST. HUGH, BISHOP OF LINCOLN, C.

THE foundations of an interior life are most safely laid in holy solitude, which is the best preparation for the functions of the active life, and the support of a spirit of piety amidst its distractions. In the desert of Chartreuse, St Hugh learned first to govern himself, and treasured up in his heart the most lively sentiments of pure and perfect virtue, the most essential qualification of a minister of Christ. He was born of a good family in Burgundy in 1140: lost his mother before he was eight years old, and was educated from that age in a convent of regular canons, situate near his father's seat, who, after having served as an officer in the army, with great reputation for honour and piety, retired himself to the same place, and there ended his days in the exercises of a devout and penitential religious life. Hugh, being blessed with a happy genius and good natural parts, made great progress in every branch of learning to which he applied himself. A venerable ancient priest was appointed by the abbot to instruct him in his studies and in religious discipline, whose serious admonitions made a deep impression on his soul. When he was nineteen years old the abbot took the saint with him to the Chartreuse near Grenoble, on an annual visit which he was accustomed to make to that holy company. The retirement and silence of the desert, and the assiduous contemplation and saintly deportment of the monks who inhabited it, kindled in Hugh's breast a strong desire of embracing that institute. Nor were the canons, his brethren, able to dissuade him from this resolution after his return; so that being persuaded that God called him to this state, he secretly went back to the Chartreuse, and was admitted to the habit. The interior conflicts which

he sustained, served to purify his soul, and make him more fervent and watchful. Under these trials he was often refreshed with consolations and great heavenly sweetness; and, by mortification and humble continual prayer, the fiery darts of the enemy were at length extinguished. The time approaching when he was to be promoted to priest's orders, an old father whom he served according to the custom of the Order, asked him if he was willing to be ordained priest. Hugh answered him with simplicity, out of the vehement desire he had of offering daily to God the holy victim of the altar, that there was nothing in the world he more earnestly desired. The old man, fearing the danger of presumption, and a want of the great apprehension which every one is bound to have of that tremendous function, said to him with a severe countenance: "How dare you aspire to a degree, to which no one, how holy soever, is advanced, but with trembling, and by constraint!" At this rebuke, St. Hugh, struck with holy fear, fell on the ground, and begged pardon with many tears. The other moved at his humility, told him he knew the purity of his desires; and said he would be advanced not only to the priesthood, but also to the episcopal dignity. The saint had passed ten years in his private cell when the general procuratorship of the monastery was committed to him: in which weighty charge the reputation of his prudence and sanctity was spread over all France.

King Henry II. of England founded the first house of Carthusian monks in England, at Witham in Somersetshire; but so great difficulties occurred in the undertaking, under the two first priors, that the monastery could not be settled. The king, therefore, sent Reginald, bishop of Bath, with other honourable persons, to the great Chartreuse, to desire that the holy monk

Hugh, might be sent over to take upon him the government of this monastery. After much debating in the house it was determined that it became not Christian charity so to confine their views to one family as to refuse what was required for the benefit of many others; and though the saint protested that of all others he was most unfit for the charge, he was ordered by the chapter to accompany the deputies to England. As soon as he landed, without going to court, he went directly to Witham, and wonderfully comforted and encouraged the few monks he found there. Being sent for by the king, he received from his royal bounty many presents, and a large provision of all things necessary for his monastery, and set himself to finish the buildings; at which he worked with his own hands, and carried stones and mortar on his shoulders. By the humility and meekness of his deportment, and the sanctity of his manners, he gained the hearts of the most savage and inveterate enemies of that holy foundation, and several persons, charmed with the piety of the good prior and his little colony, began to relish their close solitude, and, abandoning the cares of the world, consecrated themselves to God under the discipline of the saint, who became in a short time the father of a numerous and flourishing family. The king, as he returned with his army from Normandy to England, was in great danger at sea, in a furious storm which defeated all the art of the sailors. All fell to their prayers: but their safety seemed despaired of, when the king made aloud the following address to heaven: "O blessed God, whom the prior of Witham truly serves, vouchsafe through the merits and intercession of thy faithful servant, with an eye of pity to regard our distress and affliction." This invocation was scarce finished but a calm ensued, and the whole company, who never ceased to give thanks to the

divine clemency, continued their voyage safe to England.

The confidence which king Henry reposed in St. Hugh, above all other persons in his dominions, was from that time much increased. The see of Lincoln having been kept by his majesty some years vacant, he was pleased to give leave to the dean and chapter to choose a pastor, and the election fell upon St. Hugh. His excuses were not admitted, and he was obliged by the authority of Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, to drop the strong opposition which he had made, and to receive the episcopal consecration in 1186, on the 21st of September. As soon as he was raised to the episcopal chair, he engaged several clergymen of the greatest learning and piety to be his assistants; and he employed all the authority which his station gave him, in restoring ecclesiastical discipline, especially amongst his clergy. By sermons and private exhortations he laboured to quicken in all men the spirit of faith, and in ordinary conversation incited others to divine love by instructions adapted to their particular condition and circumstances; but was always cheerful and affable, with decent gravity. In administering the sacraments, or consecrating churches, he sometimes spent whole days, beginning before break of day, and persevering some hours in the night, without allowing himself any corporal refection. Good part of his time he always bestowed in inquiring into, and relieving the necessities of the poor, whom he frequently visited, and affectionately comforted. The hospitals of lepers he attended above others, and with singular tenderness kissed the most loathsome ulcers of the infected. To one who jeeringly said to him, that St. Martin did so to heal their ulcers, which he did not do, the good bishop answered: "St. Martin's kiss healed the leper's flesh: but their kiss heals my soul." In travel-

ling he was so recollected that he usually never cast his eyes about him, or saw anything but the mane of the horse on which he rode. Devotion seemed always to give him vigour and strength, and the sentiments with which he nourished his soul in reciting the psalms, seemed more than human. He was so punctual in observing the canonical hours of the divine office, that once he would not stir out of the inn till he had said his morning office, though his attendants brought him word trembling, that if he did not get away as fast as he could, his life would be in danger from a troop of madmen who were coming into the road where he was to pass, and who spared nothing that came in their way. It was the holy bishop's custom to retire at least once a year to his beloved cloister at Witham, and there pass some time observing the common rule, without any difference but that of wearing the episcopal ring on his finger. In this retirement, as from a high tower, he surveyed the vanity of human things, the shortness of life, and the immense greatness of eternity. Also turning his eyes inward upon himself, he took an impartial review of the affections of his own heart, and of all his actions; he also considered the obligations and infinite difficulties of spiritual government, and the dreadful precipice upon which all prelacies stand. By letters and agents which he sent to the holy see, he besought with importunity to be disburdened of the episcopal administration, and restored to his cell. But his supplications were never heard, and he was sometimes commanded silence with rebukes. Though mild and obliging to all the world, he seemed by his sovereign contempt of earthly things, to be above the reach of temptations of human respect.

Henry II., a prince most impatient of advice, and uncontrollable in his resolutions, stood in awe of this holy prelate, and received his admo-

nitions with seeming deference, though it was only by afflictions in the decline of life that he learned effectually to reform his passions. The king's foresters, or overseers of the royal forests and chases, exercised an inhuman tyranny in the country, putting to death, or maiming upon the spot, any one who had killed or maimed a wild beast, or any game, whatever loss the farmers sustained by the deer in their harvest or gardens; and these foresters upon the slightest suspicion, put whomever they pleased to the water-ordeal trial, which, notwithstanding the prohibitions of the Church, remained still in frequent use among these officers of the crown,¹ who immediately put to death whoever was cast by that trial. And by customs usurped a good while, or by unjust and tyrannical forest laws, as the learned and pious Peter of Blois (who lived some time at the court of Henry II.) sticks not to call them, it was in the power of these foresters to require limb for limb, or life for life of that of a beast. A company of these rangers had, upon a slight occasion, laid hands on a clerk, and condemned him in a considerable sum of money. St. Hugh, after due summons, and a triple citation, excommunicated the head of them. This action king Henry took very ill. However, he dissembled his resentment, and soon after by a messenger and letters requested of him a prebend, then vacant in the diocese of Lincoln, in favour of one of his courtiers. St. Hugh, having read the petition, returned this answer by the messenger: "These places are to be conferred upon clerks, not upon courtiers: nor does the king want means to reward his servants." Neither could the bishop be prevailed upon, at the king's request, to absolve the ranger till he acknowledged his crime, with signs of repentance. Hereupon his

¹ See the manuscript relation of the miracles of St. Thomas of Cant. in Bibl. D. Constable de Burton.

majesty sent for the bishop, and summing up the favours he had done him, upbraided him with ingratitude, and complained bitterly of the treatment he had received. The bishop no ways troubled or daunted, with a grave and sweet countenance, demonstrated to him how, in the whole affair, he had had a regard purely to the service of God, and to the salvation of his majesty's soul, which incurred manifest danger if oppressors of the Church were protected, or ecclesiastical benefices rashly conferred on unworthy persons. The king was so moved by his discourse as to remain perfectly satisfied. The ranger showed himself penitent, and was absolved by the bishop in the usual form, in a public manner, and by his exhortation appeared truly reformed, and from that time became the saint's most steady friend. It was a custom for the clergy to present yearly a precious mantle to the king at the charge of the people, for which they made a large collection, and retained the overplus for their own use. This St. Hugh abolished, and obtained of the king a renunciation of the present. Punishments in the ecclesiastical court, consisting chiefly in pecuniary mulcts which the rich little regarded, St. Hugh changed into other chastisements which carried with them marks of infamy. St. Hugh finished the building of his cathedral.¹ Henry II. died in 1189, after a reign of thirty-four years.

¹ The cathedral of Lincoln was begun in 1086, by Remigius, who transferred the see from Dorchester hither in 1072. It was burnt thirty-eight years after, and begun to be rebuilt by bishop Alexander with an arched roof of stone. The beautiful part from the upper transept to the east end was added by St. Hugh the Burgundian, who also built the chapter-house. The length of this church from east to west, within the walls, is four hundred and eighty-three feet. The great transept from north to south two hundred and twenty-three feet. This seems the best old Gothic church in England except York-Minster, which is in length five hundred twenty-four feet and a half, and in breadth in the cross, from north to south, two hundred and twenty-two feet. Lincoln in former times abounded with religious houses; the ruins of which are still seen in many barns, stables, out-houses, and even some hog-styes.

Hugh with the same liberty, exhorted king Richard I. to shun incontinence and all oppression of his subjects, and defended the immunities of the Church in his reign, and in that of king John, who came to the crown in 1199. St. Hugh was sent ambassador by this latter into France, to king Philip Augustus, to conclude a peace between the two crowns; in which negotiation the reputation of his sanctity contributed greatly to the success.¹ This important affair being finished he paid a visit to his brethren at the grand Chartreuse. In his return, whilst he lodged at a Chartreuse called Arneria, some of the monks asked him what news? At which question he was startled, and answered; that a bishop who is engaged in the commerce of the world, may sometimes hear and tell news; but that such inquiries in religious men are an idle curiosity, and a dissipation repugnant to their state. The saint arrived at London just as a national council was ready to be opened at Lincoln: it was his intention to assist at it, but he was seized with a fever which followed a loss of appetite he had been afflicted with some time, and which the author of his life attributes to his excessive abstemiousness. He distinctly foretold his death; spent almost his whole time in fervent addresses to God, or to the Blessed Virgin, or in devout colloquies with his angel-guardian, or the saints. He received the viaticum and extreme unction on St. Matthew's day, but survived till the 17th of November. On that day he caused many monks and priests, besides his chaplains, to recite the divine office in his chamber. Seeing them weep he said many tender things to comfort them, and laying his hand upon them, one by one, recommended them to the divine custody. His voice beginning to fail, he ordered the floor to be

¹ See the articles of this treaty in Rymer's *Fœdera*, t. 1. p. 118,

swept, and a cross of blessed ashes to be strewed upon it; and whilst the ninetieth psalm at Compline was said, would be lifted out of bed, and laid upon that cross; in which posture, as he was repeating the canticle, *Nunc dimittis*, &c., he calmly expired, in the year of our Lord 1200, of his age sixty, of his episcopal charge fifteen.

His body was embalmed and with great pomp conveyed from London to Lincoln, where two kings, John of England, and William of Scotland, (the latter, who had dearly loved the saint, bathed in tears,) three archbishops, fourteen bishops, above a hundred abbots, and a great number of earls and barons came out to meet the corpse, and the two kings put their shoulders under the bier as it was carried into the church. Three paralytic persons, and some others, recovered their health at his tomb. St. Hugh was canonized by Honorius III. or IV. and is named in the Roman Martyrology. See his life wrote by Adam, D.D. a Carthusian at London, in 1340. (This learned theologian, conversing little with men, devoted himself entirely to contemplation to a decrepit old age, and left several very spiritual tracts, as, *On Twelve Profits of Tribulation*: and, a conference *Of Six Masters*, showing that tribulation is that by which we may best please God, and which is most profitable; both printed at London in 1530. Likewise a *Ladder to Olymber to Hevyn*: and the same in Latin, *Scala, cœli attingendi*: also in Latin, *De Sumptione Eucharistiæ*, l. 1. and *Speculum Spiritualium*, l. 7. in manuscripts. See Tanner, p. 7. v. Adam.

ST. ANIAN, BISHOP OF ORLEANS, C.

(IN FRENCH AGNAN.)

THE name of St. Anian is famous in the Gallican church. He was a native of Vienne, and consecrated his youth to the exercises of prayer and penance, in a cell which he built for himself near that city. Hearing of the great reputation of St. Evurtius, bishop of Orleans, for sanctity, he repaired to that city, and, becoming his disciple, distinguished himself by his fervour and virtue. St. Evurtius died in 390, and was buried in St. Mary's, now an abbey of regular canons, called from him St. Evuerte. St. Anian was his coadjutor, and succeeded him, and is reckoned the seventh bishop of Orleans. The governor of the city refused to release the prisoners at his request, on account of his installation, according