

ON AN INSCRIBED STONE COFFIN-LID IN THE ANCIENT
CEMETERY OF THE TEMPLE CHURCH, LONDON.

LAST year (1862), when the ground on the north side of the Temple Church was cleared of buildings, and the surface of it lowered, six stone coffins were discovered, all more or less imperfect. They have been repaired, and are to be seen, looking like raised tombs, on the same spots, I believe, on which they were found. Only one has any inscription. This coffin was very much broken : the lid, which tapers from head to foot, is six feet nine inches long, and has a segmental moulding down the middle. Across the sinister side of the lid (heraldically speaking), very near the top, are incised the words—

PHILIPPVS
HILARIO

in rather rude and irregular characters, forming two lines ; and on the moulding, just opposite the former word, is the letter T. (See woodcut.) The other side of the lid, for



about half the length from the top, has been repaired with plain stone. A cast of the inscription is preserved in the Treasury-office of the Middle Temple. When this was shown me, in a bad light, before I had seen the original, I thought

the T, which is not quite perfect, might have been an F for *Frater*; but as it was on the moulding, I could not account for its singular position. On examining the stone itself some days after, I saw clearly that it was a T, and recollecting that there was, at the probable date of the coffin, a family of the name of Saint Hilaire, or St. Hilary, connected with the Earls of Hertford and Arundel, it has occurred to me, that the T is the final letter of the word IACET, and that the inscription when entire was—

+ HIC IACET PHILIPPVS
DE SANCTO HILARIO.

Such a formula was not uncommon about the year 1200; and when this completion of the inscription is once suggested, it appears so probable, that I think most of those who are conversant with sepulchral memorials of the period will be likely to acquiesce in it. However that may be, what remains of the inscription hardly leaves us in doubt as to the name of the person commemorated having been, when written in Latin, Philippus de Sancto Hilario.

I will therefore add a few words as to who he was. Roger de Clare, Earl of Hertford, who died in 1173, married Matilda, daughter and heiress of James de S. Hilaire. She survived him, and married William de Albini, Earl of Arundel, who died in 1222 according to Dugdale, or according to others in 1196, having, it is probable, survived her. James de S. Hilaire was a Norman, and derived his surname from the *commune* of S. Hilaire du Harcouet, near Mortain. I learn from Mr. Stapleton's Preface to vol. i. of the *Rotuli Normanniæ*, p. lxvi, that this James had a brother Peter, who had four sons, the youngest of whom was Philip. Some of the family held lands in this country. The daughter and heiress of an elder, if not the eldest, brother of Philip, was a ward in 1180, in respect of lands in Normandy. Philip and his brothers were thus first cousins of the Countess of Hertford and Arundel; and it is not improbable that he may have lived till about 1200. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any further mention of him. But since, so far as I can discover, there was no other family named S. Hilaire, or St. Hilary, resident in or connected with this country in the twelfth or thirteenth century, it is highly probable that this Philip was the Philippus de Sancto Hilario whose coffin has been recently

brought to light.¹ As a younger son, he may have had a small share of the family estate, according to the Norman custom of partition, and depended on his sword for the increase of his means. The Temple Church, in its original form, was consecrated in 1185 ; which will agree with the supposed date of the interment. It by no means follows from his having had sepulture in the Templars' cemetery, that Philip de S. Hilaire was a Knight Templar, or even an Associate of the order, though he may have been either one or the other. Several persons were buried in their church, who do not appear to have been in any way connected with them.

I have been induced to bring this inscribed coffin-lid to the notice of the Institute, because it is exposed to the weather, and the letters, some of which are rather obscure, may in a few years become wholly illegible ; add to which, I am not aware of the inscription having been before explained, or in any way noticed in any publication. It is on the third coffin from the church porch, and is easy of access for those to inspect it who are curious in such matters.

WESTON S. WALFORD.

¹ Other members of the family are mentioned in the records of this country, viz., Hascuyl, or Hasculf, Rot. Chart. I. p. 181 ; Peter, Rot. Norm. in Turri, pp. 29, 126, Rot. Lit. Claus. I. p. 12, Cal. Rot. Pat. pp. 152 b, 153 ; Stephen, Madox'

Exch. 304 n. b. ; Bartholomew, Rot. Lit. Pat. p. 162 ; Henry, Rymer I. p. 211, Rot. Hund. II. p. 133. Hasculf was probably a brother, and the others may have been nephews, of Philip.