

II.—ON MARRIED AND HEREDITARY PRIESTS.

By W. H. D. LONGSTAFFE, VICE-PRESIDENT.

[Read on the 30th October, 1889.]

MANY years ago I ventured to place in the *Archaeologia Aeliana* (vol. iv. [N.S.] p. 11) a paper entitled 'The Hereditary Sacerdotage of Hexham.' It was confessedly of a very local nature, and may well be supplemented.

So far as the north is concerned, I may draw more prominent attention than I did at the time to chapter 45 of Symeon's *History of the Church of Durham*. The subject is a married priest with a church not far from Durham, to which a large assembly came early in the morning to hold some law pleadings, prior to which they wished mass to be said. According to custom the priest put a portion of the Lord's Body into the chalice, and it and the wine were sorely changed. I need not enter into details. The story is pre-Conquestal, and was vouched by the presbyter and his son.

What has brought the subject again before me is the fifty-sixth volume of the publications of the Surtees Society, *Archbishop Gray's Register*, edited by canon Raine, in which is seen how hardly clerical matrimony expired in Yorkshire. I shall pick out the items presently, but before doing so would, as to this subject generally, refer to the Church History of Lamb's 'dear, fine, silly old angel' Fuller. His book III. cent. xii. gives a most graphic account of the opposition both in the north and the south to Anselm's Constitutions. It is with the north that we have to do at present. Plain it is, however, St. Peter's example, rather than that of St. Paul, was rife over the kingdom, and was not confined to the lands connected with Iona.

In reverting to the subject of hereditary sacerdotage, I may quote from Raine *secundus* in his preface to *Archbishop Gray's Register*:— 'Clerical celibacy in the North seems to have been the exception for a long while after the Norman Conquest. This may be traced in many ways. Aldune, bishop of Durham, had a daughter, Ecgfrida, who actually received as a dowry three of the manors belonging to the see. Ranulf Flambard, another bishop of the same diocese, had a son bearing his name who became archdeacon of Durham. Geoffrey

Rufus, his successor, had a daughter. A fourth, Hugh de Puiset, had a wife, Adeliza de Percy. And so it was at York. Thomas, the second Norman archbishop, nephew of Thomas the first, was a son of Sampson, who became bishop of Worcester. Thurstan was a son of a prebendary of St. Paul's; and there is a person towards the end of the 12th century who witnesses several charters as *Willelmus filius Archiepiscopi*, who probably had archbishop Roger for his sire. With such examples among the rulers of the church, we may expect to find a similar laxity, to say the least, among the clergy beneath them. The old canons of Durham, who were displaced by William of St. Carleph, were all married men, as Symeon affirms. So were the reformed canons of York. In a remarkable letter which Gerard of York wrote to his brother archbishop, Anselm of Canterbury, he complains bitterly of the officers of this cathedral because they would not give up their wives. This is printed in a very rare volume of letters on clerical celibacy, published at London in 1569.'

Now the York evidence is this. As late as 1221, more than a century after the time of Anselm, pope Honorius III. wrote to archbishop Gray desiring him to remove far from their livings the married clergy and all who had succeeded their fathers in their churches. Similar letters were sent in 1222 to the bishops of Lincoln and Worcester. Gray's Register for the exact period is lost. We find, in 1225, one rector escaping by stating that his father was farmer of the church and not rector. In 1227 we have a son deposed, but the tithes of a chapelry in the parish given to him for his support during his life, to which in 1229 the tithes of two places seem to have been added, unless they were covered by the former grant. The successor himself was a removed rector. In 1226, on the representation of a clergyman that his father's marriage was a lawful one, the pope suspended his ejection until another suitable living was provided for him. This was accomplished in 1228, but it was not until 1229 that his old living was filled up, and then the words 'salva pensione' are added. Raine remarks that there seems to have been a doubt as to the validity of title of the new incumbents of such livings. The inheritance, be it remarked, rather than the validity of marriages, seems to have been principally aimed at. With regard to validity, the marriage of Hugh Puiset, better known as bishop Pudsey, with Adelidis de Perci, con-

ferred on their son Henry the *caput baroniae* in Normandy, *Perci* itself. It may be that Hugh, as treasurer of York, was not necessarily a priest in his earlier days. Called nephew and cousin by kings of England, his marriage with even a Percy was not uncomplimentary to the lady. Another instance of a stranger being admitted and the son opposing occurs, and here again certain tithes were settled as provision.

Upon the whole it would appear that, while the system of inheritance was doomed, the change was carried out with some tenderness on the part of both pope and archbishop. The entries are certainly of an extraordinarily late date. Fuller brings the stiffness of the Norfolk priests down to the time of bishop Herbert Losinga, who died in 1119, observing that he 'needed not to be so fierce and furious against them, if remembering his own extraction, being the son of an abbot. These married priests traversed their cause with Scripture and Reason, and desired but justice to be done unto them. But Justice made more use of her sword than of her ballance in this case, not weighing their arguments, but peremptorily and powerfully enjoying them to forgo their wives, notwithstanding that there were in England, at this time, many married priests, signal for sanctity and abilities. Amongst the many eminent married priests, flourishing for learning and piety, one Ealphegus was now living, or but newly dead. His residence was at Plymouth in Devonshire. Mr. Cambden saith he was *eruditus et conjugatus*, but the word *conjugatus* is by the Index Expurgatorius commanded to be deleted.—Bishops, archbishops, and cardinal, all of them almost tired out with the stubbornness of the recusant clergie; the King at last took his turn to reduce them. William Corbel, Archbishop of Canterbury, [who died in 1136] willingly resigned the work into the King's hand, hoping he would use some exemplary severity against them; but all ended in a money matter; the King taking a fine of married priests . . . who bought that which was their own before.' Fuller's marginal date, 1126, seems to be probable, and thus between this turmoil in the time of Henry I. and that during Gray's prelacy in the reign of Henry III. a full century elapsed, a troublous one, during which it would seem that the old parsons had peace.

Not being at all versed in patristic lore, I am unable to opine when the non-matrimonial notion obtruded itself into church discip-

line. Doctrine it could not affect. In Sir Harris Nicolas's very useful *Chronological List of Councils*, we gather that in A.D. 389 the children of Marcellus, bishop of Apamea, were forbidden to revenge his death. This was at a council at Antioch, where the disciples had first been called Christians. Three councils, held in 485, 495, and 499 were in favour of the marriage of priests and monks. It must, however, be observed that the first of these councils was held at Seleucia, in Persia, and that a second council was held there in the same year 485, wherein the decision of the previous council was condemned. But Seleucia was represented in the confirming council of 495, and that of 499 was of Persia. Of the doings in a great number of other councils I am ignorant. They dealt with discipline and marriages generally. Of the real Christianization of England we know little. Colman from Iona, as to the Easter question, quoted St. John the Evangelist in vain against St. Peter, whose keys the Northumbrian king was afraid to face.