

ON THE
RETIREMENT OF BISHOP EBORARD

From the See of Norwich.

BY
JOHN HENRY DRUERY, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN March last a French Antiquary, Monsieur Auguste Dupont, wrote to the President of the Public Library of this city for information, and the pedigree of Bishop Eborard, for the purpose of completing his History of the Abbey Church of Fontenay, Le Mont-Bard, Côte d'Or. The letter of this gentleman was obligingly handed to me by Mr. Fitch. I replied to Monsieur Dupont, and a correspondence ensued, the result of which enables me to place before you the following particulars, intended to correct a passage in Blomefield's *Norfolk*, relative to this prelate, who was the second Bishop of the Diocese after the translation of the See to Norwich.

Eborard, Ebrard, or Everhard, Archdeacon of Salisbury, succeeded Herbert de Lozinga, after a vacancy of three years in the bishoprick, on the 12th June, 1121. Henry of Huntingdon says he was deposed for his cruelty to the Jews, and other writers acknowledge they know not for what reason he disappeared from his diocese; the *Norwich Annals* merely say that he retired in 1145, not being reconciled to the King (Stephen) for his opposition to him in espousing the cause of the Empress Maud or Mathilde. Blomefield says



TOMB OF BISHOP EBORARD, ABBEY OF FONTENAY.

he retired to the Abbey of Fountains, in Yorkshire, or, as some imagine, to the Abbey of Fontenoy, in Normandy. According to Cotton he was interred in the Cathedral Church of Norwich, but in what part of the building is not known, there being no memorial of him remaining. To correct these errors and determine satisfactorily the place of his interment, I place before you a copy of the inscription on his tomb, a drawing of it by Monsieur Dupont, and some other particulars which will, I think, fully account for his retirement from Norwich, as suggested by Blomefield.

The father of Bishop Eborard (according to Collins and the other authorities which I have consulted to deduce his pedigree) was the celebrated Roger de Montgomery, first Earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury, son of Hugh, Earl of Montgomery, and Joceline his wife, who was daughter of Turulf of Pont-au-Mer, by Wiva, sister to Gunnora, wife of the first Duke of Normandy, and great-grandfather to the Conqueror. Roger de Montgomery was of the council which formed the invasion of this realm, and on the 14th of October, 1066, he led the centre of the Norman army at the battle of Hastings. After the coronation of Duke William he went with him into Normandy, being intended to govern that kingdom in the duke's absence; but on account of some disturbances in England he returned with that prince, and was advanced to the Earldoms of Arundel and Chichester (a title, as well as that of Sussex, given in old charters to the Earls of Arundel) and soon afterwards to that of Shrewsbury, with a grant of the honour of Eye in Suffolk. He was liberally rewarded by the Conqueror, and possessed no less than 157 lordships. Besides the city of Chichester and the castle of Arundel, he had large possessions in Wales, and entering that principality with the king's leave, besieged and won the castle of Baldwin, which he fortified and called after his own name of Montgomery; he also conquered the town of Cardigan, and built a strong

castle at Shrewsbury. Earl Roger's marriages and issue are set forth in *Ordericus Vitalis*. His first wife was Mabel, daughter and heir of William Talvace, son of William de Bellesme. They had issue five sons and four daughters. His second wife was Adeliza, daughter of Ebrard or Everhard de Pusaic, by whom he had issue an only son, who was Eborard, our Norwich Bishop. All the lordships granted by the Conqueror to Roger de Montgomery were forfeited by his son Robert, Earl of Shrewsbury, the half-brother of the bishop, in the rebellion against Henry I., for which he was outlawed and banished this realm in 1112.

Eborard was, first, chaplain to Henry I., to whom, notwithstanding the defection of his brothers, he remained faithful; and in 1115 was promoted by the king to the Archdeaconry of Norwich, and was finally consecrated bishop, as successor to Herbert de Lozinga, June 12th, 1121, by Ralf, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for some cause, not hitherto fully explained, this prelate retired, as has been stated, in 1145.

A reference to the first volume of Hume's *History of England* will shew the origin of the disputes with the bishop's brothers and the family of the Conqueror, the rightful heir to whose crown was certainly his eldest son, Robert, Duke of Normandy. Notwithstanding the defection of his brothers, Bishop Eborard remained faithful to the two monarchs, Rufus and Henry I.: by both he was promoted and rewarded. The cause of his retirement from the See was evidently, as Blomefield hints, his rupture with Stephen. After the death of Henry I. the banished barons who had espoused the cause of Robert of Normandy, at his death transferred their allegiance to the Empress Maud, the daughter of King Henry I., and in this enterprise they were opposed by Stephen, who had taken possession of the crown. During the progress of this dispute, Stephen's party was entirely broken, and the nobility and nearly all the clergy, among whom was Eborard, swore allegiance to the empress, a conduct natural and

proper to the bishop, who may be supposed to have been attached to her interests, as the daughter of his most munificent patron. After Stephen recovered the throne, the bishop retired from Norwich. His brothers, the Earls of Pembroke and Arundel, were then in banishment, himself in disgrace with the reigning monarch, he preferred or found it safer to retire to France rather than remain in the possession of his See, and subject himself to the fluctuations of the domestic broils of this the most troublesome and unquiet period of the history of England. Stephen never forgave the opposition of Eborard's family to his claim to the crown, they having uniformly, with the exception of the bishop, espoused the interests of Robert of Normandy. The most extraordinary person who figured in this quarrel was Hugh Bigot, the powerful Earl of Norfolk, whose perjury it is suspected gave rise to the claims of Stephen, in declaring that the late King, Henry I., bequeathed in his presence the crown to Stephen, to the prejudice of his only daughter, Maud the Empress. This turbulent baron changed sides no less than six or seven times during the quarrels of the period; alternately supporting or defying the Crown, according as the dictates of avarice or ambition prompted. His memorable defiance of Stephen has reached our own time, in the well-known couplet which he is said to have uttered in the Tower:

"Were I in my castle of Bungay,
I would ne care for the King of Cockney."

In the stronghold of Bungay, the proud baron could well afford this boast at the expense of the monarch. The estimation in which Hugh Bigot was held by his contemporaries appears in a curious speech of Ralph, Earl of Chester, to his soldiers, made before the battle of 1141, and reported in Speed's *Chronicle*, and quoted by Blomefield. "Next comes Hugh *By God*, his name merely sounding his perjurie, who thought it not sufficient to break his oath with the Empress,

but that he must be once again forsworn, as all the world doth knowe, that Henry at his death bequeathed the crown to Stephen, to the prejudice of his own daughter; a man, in a word, who accounts treacherie a virtue, and perjury a courtlie qualitie."

Hugh Bigot, however, made his peace with Stephen; an easier task for the powerful and turbulent baron, who could at any time almost overawe his king, than for the modest and retiring prelate; and the latter, accordingly, chose to abandon his bishoprick, preserve his allegiance to the daughter of his patron, and retire to the country of his fathers, in preference to upholding the usurper's interest.

Presuming that the historical facts just noticed are sufficient to account for the retirement of Bishop Eborard, hitherto involved in so much mystery, I will now introduce a few extracts translated from the letters of Mons. Dupont, as to the foundation of the Abbey Church of Fontenay, in the Côte d'Or; the correction of the date 1145, assigned to the bishop's retirement by Blomefield, and his identity with the French monastery. Mons. Dupont's first passage says, that "A rich English prelate, named Everhard, Bishop of Norwich, who had been forced by the revolutions of his country to abandon his diocese, caused to be built, at his own expense, the beautiful Church and Abbey of Fontenay, near Mont-Bard, Côte d'Or, the foundations of which were laid in 1139, and consecrated in 1147. The Bishop fixed his retreat upon a mountain in the neighbourhood of the newly-erected abbey, on the southern side of which he caused a modest palace to be built, of which numerous ruins still remain in a wood, occupying a considerable extent of ground, with a walled-in park, and roadways fenced by thick thorns."

The ruins of the abbey and palace extend over part of the valley of Fontenay. In this palace he died, much beloved by the monks. The consecration ceremony of the building appears to have been extremely grand, as I infer from another

extract from one of Mons. Dupont's subsequent letters. The consecration was performed by Pope Eugenius III., at the head of ten cardinals, eight bishops, and a multitude of abbots and inferior clergy, among whom shone no less a personage than Saint Bernard.

These curious particulars were taken from a foundation stone upon which the account was chiselled, and which was lately discovered by Mons. Rossignol, keeper of the records in the department of the Côte d'Or, and presented by him to Mons. Dupont. I am to receive a drawing of this stone, which I shall have the pleasure to present to you on a future occasion. The Inscription is as follows:—

EPIGRAPHE DU TEMPLE D'EBRARD.

Eugenius Papa Tertius dedicavit Templum istud.

Anno ab incarnatione Domini millesimo centesimo xlvij, indictione x^a, epacta xvij, concurrente ii^a, xj^a Kal. Octob., dedicata est hæc ecclesia et altare majus ejusdem consecratum a S.S. Papa Eugenio iii^o, decem cardinalibus associato coram octo episcopis astantibus, videlicet: Alberico Ostiensi, Hymaro Tusculanensi, Humberto Eduensi, Petro Papiensi, Lamberto Engolismensi, Hugone Autissiodorensi, Henrico Trecensi, Arduino Commensi, et copiosa abbatum, clericorumque multitudine. Et, ut fideles ad dedicationis et consecrationis celebritatem avidius convenirent, præfatus Summus Pontifex omnibus vere pœnitentibus et confessis, qui hoc Templum a primis vespere ipsius dedicationis usque ad finem secundarum visitarent, et secundum facultates proprias eleemosinas impertirent plenariam facultatem apostolicâ auctoritate concessit perpetuis temporibus daturam.

Ne silentio prætereundum est, tam celebri prænominatorum præsulum consortio intererat beatissimus Bernardus Doctor Mellifluus famatissimi cenobii Clarevallentis primus abbas.

It is said that the bishop did not live to witness this gorgeous and solemn ceremony: according to other authors, says Mons. Dupont, "he was present." At all events he was buried under the great altar of his church at Fontenay, and a monument erected to his memory. The original stone and inscription disappeared at a very early period, and is believed soon after to have been replaced by another stone, from which

the engraved drawing was copied, with an inscription which places the bishop's identity beyond question.

HIC · JACET · DOMINVS · EBRARDVS · NORVICENSIS ·
EPISCOPVS · QVI · EDIFICAVIT · TEMPLVM · ISTVD.

The tombstone of the bishop is broken in two, and it will be seen that he is attired in his episcopal habit with the mitre on his head.

Mons. Dupont, who is a well-known and most accomplished antiquary, gives me also the Plan of his Abbey at Fontenay, and says that the name of this pious bishop is often found in the French historians who have spoken of Fontenay. It occurs in the *Gallia Christiana*, Blancher's *History of Burgundy*, De Martene's *Literary Voyage*, and some others, in which he is made to appear, not only a learned and accomplished prelate, but a pious and good man, much esteemed for his charities, and greatly beloved by the clergy.

Our bishop was active in his Norwich diocese: he made some beneficial changes in the archdeaconries, among others he consolidated the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, and procured his relation, Richard de Bella Fago or Beaufoe, to be made archdeacon of the whole county of Suffolk, including that of Sudbury; afterwards he divided it into two, and gave one to his nephew, Walkeline, who was witness to a deed of gift in 1136. According to the *Monasticon*, Eborard completed the foundation of the Church and Hospital of St. Paul, now a parish church in this city, which was consecrated by Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and dedicated to St. Paul the Apostle and Paul the first Hermit. They were both begun and endowed by Bishop Herbert, between the years 1118 and 1145, for the souls of Herbert and the founders; and the Charters of Confirmation are to be found in the third volume of the *Monasticon*.

The bishop granted an indulgence and forty days' pardon

to all who offered there. Blomefield says his arms were gules, in a bordure argent, a lion rampant or. But there are none on his seal, although Mr. Martin, the well-known antiquary, is said to have possessed a seal with the arms of this bishop upon it.

From the particular and valuable information afforded by Mons. Dupont, there can be no doubt that our "lost bishop" (for so he has been called) and the founder of the abbey at Fontenay are identical.

After a reperusal of the Norwich Annals, and a long search into other authorities, I see no reason for countenancing Henry of Huntingdon's accusation against Eborard of cruelty to the Jews: mercy and Christian forbearance to that unhappy people were certainly not the characteristics of the period referred to; but I find no direct testimony connecting the bishop with any of the cruelties practised on the Jews in those days.

I cannot conclude my letter without thanking Mons. Dupont for his valuable communication. By the research and assistance of this most accomplished antiquary, an obscure passage of Norfolk History has been corrected and explained and the uncertainty as to the burial place of the bishop completely set at rest.

I am, my dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN HENRY DRUERY.

To Henry Harrod, Esq., F.S.A.

Hon. Sec.