REMARKS UPON SOME CARVED HEADS ON A DOORWAY IN WOTTON CHURCH, SURREY:

(In Connection with the great Interdict of 1208, and the form of the Papal Tiara).

BY

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IN 1208–13 England lay under the Interdict imposed by Pope Innocent III on account of the defiance of King John and his arbitrary action in the matter of the election of Stephen Langton to the Primatial See of Canterbury. The Interdict was pronounced on March 24th, 1208. In 1209 the king was excommunicated. "The churches were closed, the celebration of Mass, the Communion of the faithful, the public recitation of the daily offices, the Christian burial of the dead, ceased; only baptism and private ministrations were permitted. Even the Cistercians, who had a special permission to be excluded from the operations of interdicts, were compelled in this case to forego their privilege."[1] John made his submission in the spring of 1213 and surrendered the kingdoms of England and Ireland on May 15th, 1213, to the Pope and his successors, receiving them back as his feudal vassal, swearing fealty, promising to pay tribute, and pledging himself to defend the temporal sovereignty of the Pope. The whole country is said to have murmured: "He has become the Pope's man; he has

[1] Wakeman's *Hist. of Church of England*, pp. 127, 128.

SOUTH DOORWAY, WOTTON CHURCH.

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forfeited the very name of king; from a free man he has degraded himself into a serf."[1]

The Interdict punished only the guiltless and the religious. John made it an occasion of profit, treating the clergy as outlaws, confiscating their property, attacking their persons, and treating their lives as of no account. Their uncanonical wives, with grim irony, were seized by the king's special direction and held to ransom. After sentence of excommunication had been pronounced (though no one dared to publish the bull in England) John's tyrannical cruelties multiplied; "the prisons were filled with victims, and torture and outrage were rife."[2] Innocent, in 1211, threatened to issue a bull of deposition, to absolve John's subjects from their allegiance, and to call in the aid of King Philip of France. For a while John held out. He strove to collect an army, and seized the castles of some of his disaffected barons; but at length, realising that he had not a friend left in the kingdom, he capitulated and by the very abjectness of his submission endeavoured to secure the friendship and support of the Pope against his enemies, foreign and domestic.

All classes loathed the brutal and unscrupulous tyrant, whose hands were red with his nephew Arthur's blood and that of many another; but it is a question whether the Pope, by reason of the imposition of the Interdict on an unoffending people and his encouragement of the French king's claim to the English crown, was not almost equally hateful to the people, rich and poor. On the other hand Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, who championed the cause of Church and people, became thereby the enemy of the king and the idol of the nation. (Plate I.)

The date of the south or principal doorway of Wotton Church, in which, as I hope to prove, we have an historical monument of the Great Interdict, can unquestionably be fixed, by architectural evidence alone, as

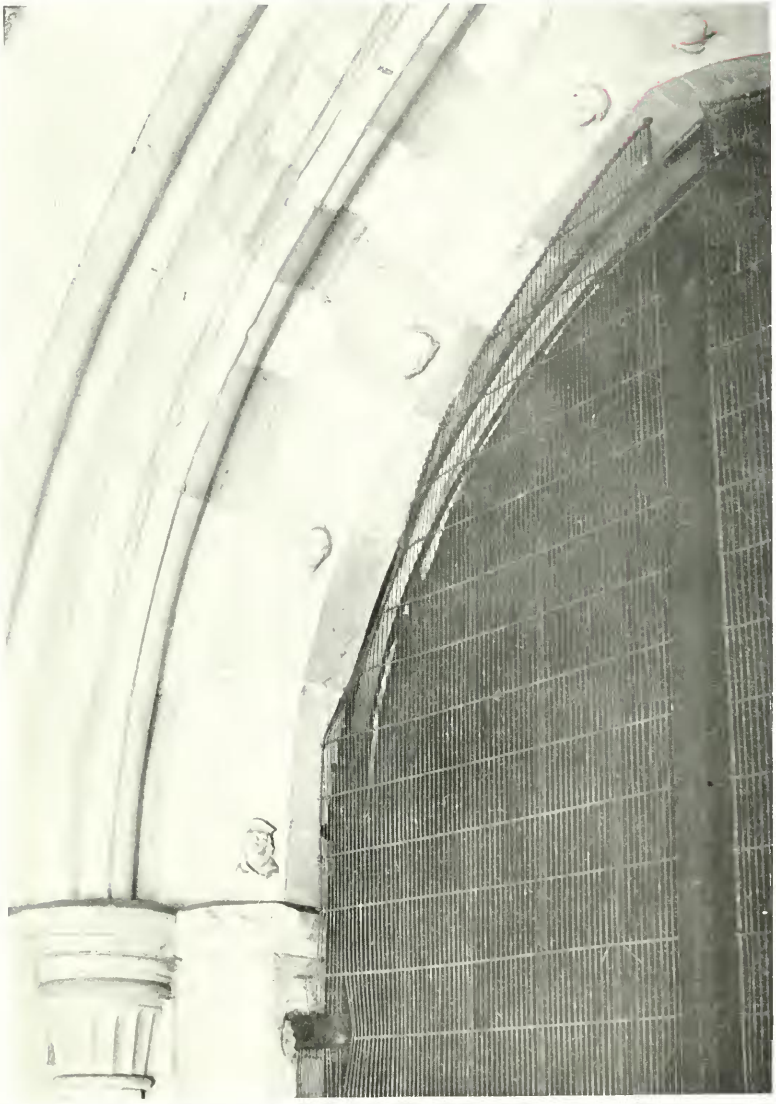
[1] Green's *Shorter History of the English People.*

[2] Wakeman, p. 128.

between 1200 and 1215.[1] The western tower is of pre-Conquest date, and probably the structure of the walls of the nave; while the chancel and its north chapel (which contains the famous monuments of the Evelyn family) are additions of *c.* 1220. There are no aisles, but an ante-chapel, having its own coeval doorway, opens by a wide arch from the eastern end of the nave north wall and communicates by another arch with the north or Evelyn chapel. This chapel has a mausoleum of brick against its northern wall, built by the famous John Evelyn, and to the south of the chancel is a modern vestry; while to the south side of the western tower—a very unusual position—is attached a modern porch, replacing one of older date, originally, perhaps, of the 13th century. The eastern arch of the tower and a blocked window in its south wall are the principal pre-Conquest features and there is a blocked arch in its western wall which may also, perhaps, belong to the same period. Ten or eleven of the 13th-century lancets and double lancets remain, the other windows in the nave and chancel being modern insertions or "restorations." The chancel arch, replacing a narrow one of early date, is also modern. The church was restored in 1856 by the late Sir Arthur Blomfield.

To return to the south doorway within the porch, the very unusual, if not unique, position of which has already been remarked; it will be noted that this is an insertion in the earlier (pre-Conquest) wall of the tower. It has a circular-segmental rear-arch, which rather suggests older work re-used; and to the exterior or porch side, it presents a lofty-pointed opening, 8 ft. 9 in. high, by 4 ft. 9 in. wide. The arch is of two orders, with a hood-moulding, resting upon chamfered jambs, in which is a banded nook-shaft, having capital and base, the abacus of the capital being carried round the inner order and hood-moulding. The capitals are circular in form and moulded, having a deep bell,

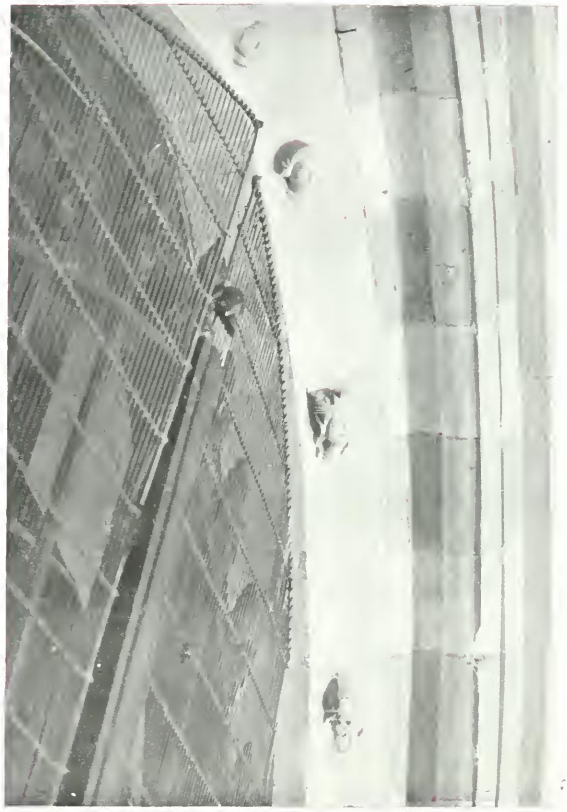
[1] My friend and fellow-member, Dr. F. R. Fairbank, F.S.A., has contributed to Vol. XVI of our *Collections* an excellent general account of Wotton Church, accompanied by a plan, to which reference should be made for the position of the south doorway.



WOTTON CHURCH: HEADS ON LEFT SIDE OF ARCH TO SOUTH DOORWAY.

See p. 72.

PLATE III.



SOUTH DOORWAY: HEADS ON RIGHT SIDE OF ARCH.

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(1)

? RALPH DE CAMOYS.

(2)

A PRIEST.

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ornamented with vertical fluting of concave section, reminiscent of the scallop capital in Late-Norman work; in which respect it recalls the arcade capitals of Aldingbourne Church, Sussex. The outer order of the arch displays the keel-shaped moulding, or pointed bowtell, set between chamfers and square recesses; the hood-moulding is a restoration, as are also the outer jambs and parts of the inner and outer orders of the arch, but these features are a reproduction of the old work. The voussoirs of the two arch orders, evidently of set purpose, are worked alternately in chalk and green firestone, giving a quaintly variegated effect; and it is noteworthy that the same peculiarity is found also in the south arcade at Aldingbourne. It is on the face of the chamfer of the inner arch-order that the remarkable little heads are carved to which I specially direct attention. They occur on the alternate voussoirs of green firestone, except the lowest on either side, immediately above the abacus, which are modern and carved in Bath stone.[1]

The total number of these small heads or busts has always been eight—four on each side—and they are evenly balanced as to position on both sides of the arch, but are closer together as they ascend to the top. Their small size and the delicacy of the carving are very noteworthy. They look like the work of an ivory carver, rather than that of a mason. The chamfer is about 3½ inches wide, and the tiny heads are only 2½ to 4 inches in length. By a happy chance they seem to have been cased in plaster for a long period down to the 19th-century restoration, so that they now appear in a singularly good state. Beginning with the pair facing each other at the apex of the arch, we have (left) a LAYMAN (Plate IV, 1)—probably Ralph de Camoys, the lord

[1] By an irony of fate one of these has been smashed. It is on a small piece of chalk or clunch, let into the face of the chamfer. The opposite head (west side) is unmistakeably modern. According to a statement made by the Rector who carried out the restoration of 1856, quoted to myself by Dr. Fairbank, all the heads *except one* are ancient. The one renewed, which I photographed before it was broken, was a Bishop or Archbishop.

of the manor in the early years of the 13th century—with clean-shaven face and bushy, flowing hair. Opposite to him (right) is an unmistakeable PRIEST (Plate IV, 2)—doubtless the rector of Wotton at the time the doorway was made: and either he or Ralph de Camoys, or both, may have caused these heads to be carved. He also is clean-shaven and his face is surrounded by an aureole of short curls. There is great expression in this small face, especially about the mouth. The neck rises from the collar of a cassock or gown. Next (left) is a beautifully modelled bust of a QUEEN (Plate V, 1), doubtless a contemporary portrait of the injured Isabel of Angoulême, John's Queen. It is remarkable that in feature and details of costume this strikingly resembles the effigy preserved at the Abbey of Fontevrault.[1] The face is bound with a chin-wimple, pleated over the neck, around which hangs a loose mantle. Her veil or head-covering falls in thick folds over the wimple, and on the head is a low crown, much like that in the effigy, with an irregular scalloped edge. The features are minutely carved and indicate something more than a conventional portrait of a "plain" woman.

Facing Queen Isabel is the head of a KING—undoubtedly that of King John (Plate V, 2). He wears a low crown, consisting of three ribs or hoops from which rise flat trefoils alternating with single lobes: it resembles the crown shown on the Great Seal of this monarch. The face bears a general likeness to that of the Worcester monument, except that it has no beard: but in this respect it coincides with the face on the Great Seal (*see* Plate IX, 2). The hair is somewhat long, falling on to the shoulders. The mouth is curiously rounded or puckered at the corners; and the general expression is calm and even smiling.

Returning to the left side of the doorway, we have below the Queen's head that of a PEASANT (Plate VI, 1) or wayfaring man wearing the *petasus*, or circular-brimmed hat, with a knob or button on the top—a head-covering

[1] *Vide* Stothard's *Monumental Effigies*, p. 33.

QUEEN ISABEL

KING JOHN.

A PEASANT.

POPE INNOCENT III.

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handed down from classical antiquity and familiar to us from representations in 12th- and 13th-century illuminations of peasants, travellers and pilgrims. Oddly enough, this identical form of hat figures many times over among Leech's sketches of Life and Character in *Punch*, as the fashionable head-gear of the tourist in the "'sixties"! The little face is clean-shaven, and the mouth has a wistful expression, evidently intentional on the part of the artist.

We now come to the sixth and last of the ancient heads, the bottom but one on the right, and, as I venture to think, the key to the whole group. It is that of a Pope (Plate VI, 2)—may we not say with certainty that of *the* Pope, Innocent the Third, the Pope who caused England to groan for five years beneath the cruel Interdict?

The face has long curling hair, and the neck emerges from the folds of a "fanon" or "orale," a hood-like vestment put on over the head and falling in folds about the neck. He wears the tiara, in its early shape of a pyramidal or steeple-shaped head-dress, rising from a circular band or crown and terminating in two rings. It is much like the dunce's cap of bygone days. I cannot help marvelling that this tiny head has never before been recognised for what it is; because, although the Papal tiara since the 14th century has grown into a head-dress of totally different form, yet we have plenty of authentic representations of 13th-century Popes, in which this comparatively simple steeple-shaped head-dress appears. Take, for instance, the well-known statues that adorn the great portals of Chartres Cathedral, dating from about 1240. In the south porch there are three Popes—St. Clement, St. Leo, and St. Gregory, each wearing a head-dress of precisely the same form as that in this tiny carving at Wotton.[1] My

[1] M. Viollet-le-Duc publishes an illustration (*Dict. du Mobilier Français*, IV, 899, article "Tiare") of one of these 13th-century Papal head-dresses—that of St. Gregory—which, although based upon a circular band of jewelled metal, has a conical superstructure, fashioned, as if in basket-work, of a series of angular facets and terminating

friend, Mr. G. C. Druce, has furnished me with a photograph of a late-13th-century painting of St. Peter as a Pope on the left splay of the east window in Idsworth Church, Hants (Plate VII, 1). This shows a figure beneath a pedimental foliated canopy resting upon shafts. He bears the Keys of Peter in his left hand, is vested in alb, amice, dalmatic, chasuble, and pallium, and has upon his head a steeple head-dress, of somewhat concave outline, rising from a low crown, and terminating in a ball or knob.[1]

This painting has many points of resemblance to one of approximately the same date in the fortress of the town of Pernes, in the county of Venaissin, S.E. France. This, which is believed to be a contemporary record of the event, represents Pope Clement IV giving by a bull the crown of the two Sicilies to Charles the First, Count of Anjou and of Provence, on February 26th, 1265.[2] Here also is the steeple-shaped head-dress, crossed with diagonal bands forming a chequer, rising from a metal fillet with studs at intervals, and having the *infulæ* behind (Plate VIII, 2).

To Miss E. K. Prideaux I am indebted for copies of photographs illustrating her admirable work, *The Bosses and Corbels of Exeter Cathedral*. One of these (Plate VII, 2) represents a corbel to a vaulting shaft in the easternmost bay, south side. Its date is about 1280 and the carving is of St. Peter (the patron of the Cathedral), above him being the Christ of the Resurrection, with cross-topped staff and pennon and upraised right hand in the attitude of benediction. St. Peter, whose head and shoulders only appear, is carved much larger: he wears the papal head-dress of steeple form with angular

in a knob, delicately moulded and embossed. The Papal tiara first appears as a circular cap of saucer shape, with a band at the brow and *infulæ* at the back. Then followed the conical form of the late 12th century. Boniface VIII (1300) added the second crown; Urban V (1362–70) the third; and the swelling out of the body of the head-dress took place about the 16th century. (Plates XII and XIII.)

[1] The painting on the opposite splay at Idsworth (right) is of S. Paul, bearing the emblematical Sword.

[2] *Vide* illustration in M. Viollet-le-Duc's article above quoted.

(1)

PAINTING AT IDSWORTH, HANTS.

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(2)

BOSS, EXETER CATHEDRAL.
St. Peter as a Pope.

(1)

(2)

(3)

EXAMPLES OF PAPAL TIARAS.

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concave sides and a low crown at the base. A later boss (*c.* 1330) in the nave-vaulting, being another head of St. Peter, has a similar steeple-shaped tiara.

Other examples of early forms might be cited (*cp.* Plates VIII and IX), but these will suffice. Now as to the face of the Pope in the carving at Wotton. There can be no mistaking the artist's intention to represent him with a most angry expression. The brows are knit and drawn down over the scowling eyes, and the heavy lines from the nose to the mouth, the corners of which are also drawn down, together with the square chin thrust forward—all these combine in presenting a face distorted by rage, and that not the righteous anger of a just judge, but the baffled rage of a thwarted tyrant. I am, of course, endeavouring to interpret the artist's evident intention, and not putting my own construction upon the right and wrong of the triangular duel between the Pope, the king, and the barons of England.

There can, it seems to me, be little doubt that the 13th-century carver (or the person who employed him), whatever his views as to the tyrant-king, was deliberately proclaiming that his sympathies in the matter of the cruel Interdict lay with the people of England as against the Pope, and that he therefore did his best to give the latter a forbiddingly ugly face.

It remains to consider the bottom head on either side; both, as above stated, are modern. That on the right, said to be an exact copy of the damaged original, and itself now, unfortunately, defaced by a wire-work gate which hangs in the opening, represented a Bishop or Archbishop. I photographed it when perfect. May we not take it as representing Archbishop Stephen Langton, one of the protagonists in this famous quarrel?

The bottom head on the left (*see* Plate II), also probably an authentic copy of the original, is that of a stern-faced man, moustached and wearing a low doctor's cap. This may well stand for Cardinal Pandulph, the Papal legate, another prominent figure in the dispute.

To sum up:—

We have a doorway unquestionably executed between 1200 and 1215.

Eight typical heads are carved round the arch, six of them undoubtedly coeval with the doorway. The King, the Queen, the priest, the lord and the serf, are unmistakeable—all cheerful-looking people with a marked individuality in their small faces. Two others are represented by modern copies, but the exactness of the reproduction in one case—that of the Archbishop or Bishop—is vouched for by the Rector who carried out the restoration. By analogy the other modern head, assumed to represent the legate, may be taken as an authentic copy.

The remaining head, with the steeple head-dress, is, beyond all doubt, that of a Pope—the earliest representation in stone in England, and perhaps in Europe, of a Pope wearing the tiara.

It has been suggested by some of those who admit the correctness of these propositions that this series of heads represents "All Sorts and Conditions of Men." Granted: but surely something definite and special besides. For the question arises, *why* among all these typical heads should one alone—and that one the Pope, the vicegerent of Christ Himself—be pourtrayed with an expression of concentrated anger, while the rest have calm, smiling faces? The only possible answer is that a sermon in stone is intended—a chapter in England's history fraught with momentous consequences to Church and nation.

If this argument be admitted, I venture to claim for the doorway of Wotton Church a foremost place among the historic monuments of the land—a place of which Wotton and Surrey may be justly proud.

Notes.—The following quotations as to the Papal tiara may be of interest in connection with this example on the Wotton doorway.

Tiara, a round wreathed ornament for the head (Latin, Greek and Persian), originally from a Persian

EXAMPLES OF TIARAS AND GREAT SEAL
OF KING JOHN.

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word *taj*, 'a crown, a diadem, a crest.' (Skeat, *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language.*)

At what date the Popes assumed the tiara cannot be precisely defined. Bruno of Segni mentions it in the 11th century, "and from what he, besides Pope Innocent III, says of this covering for the head, it would appear to have been looked upon in their days as the symbol of temporal and regal sway, not of spiritual and priestly power."[1]

"The papal tiara was at first a conical cap ending at the top in a small round ball, and wreathed about the forehead with a single crown of gold.[2] So it continued to be adorned until the pontificate of Boniface VIII, A. D. 1294–1303, who added to it a second crown; and but a few years afterwards, Urban V completed its decoration by bestowing on it another coronal. But the tiara with its triple crown always kept to its first and olden sharply-pointed form; and it was not until the beginning of the 16th century that it quite exchanged its straight for an oval shape, swelling out somewhat broad at top." (Rock, *The Church of Our Fathers*, Vol. II, 122, 123.)

The following are the exact words of the Rev. Edmund Evelyn, formerly Rector of Wotton, to Dr. Fairbank, F.S.A., in a letter of July 4th, 1901:

"The Doorway from the Porch into the Tower of the church is the original doorway. It was quite filled up, so far as the mouldings were concerned, with plaister and whitewash. On clearing off the whitewash, the mouldings and heads appeared as at present, excepting that one of the heads had been mutilated;

[1] In MS. Cott., *Claud.*, B. IV, Brit. Mus. (11th century), is a drawing of a King and his Minister doing justice, "sitting in the gate." The Minister, who bears a sword, to mark his temporal office, wears a steeple head-dress, and the same conical cap is worn by the members of the Witan in another illumination in the Cottonian MSS. These serve to emphasise the secular and judicial origin of the tiara.

[2] John XIII (A. D. 965) is said first to have encompassed this cap with a crown.

and this a mason working at the church restored by cleverly carving out of a chalk stone another head after the design of the mutilated head, which was removed and the new one inserted."

* * * *

The photographs of the heads illustrating this article are taken from plaster casts of squeezes made on the spot.