

## RICHARD CŒUR DE LION AND THE CHURCH OF ALL HALLOWS, BARKING.

BY

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STATEMENTS which have recently been made concerning the connection of King Richard I with the very interesting Church of All Hallows, Barking, appear to be somewhat apocryphal. To give an instance of such a statement, a banner used at "Toc H" services has on it:—

*This old grey Church by Tower Hill  
Claims Richard's heart and your goodwill.*

By newspaper paragraphs also, and in other ways, the belief is fostered that the "lion heart" was buried in the north aisle of All Hallows, or beneath the high altar.

I am tempted to consider the historical evidence. The chapel of St. Mary, which owed its foundation to King Richard I, became famous for a statue of the Virgin Mary placed in it by Edward I. According to the instrument setting this forth, he obtained an indulgence for all true penitents worshipping there, who should contribute to its repair and ornaments, prayer being specially enjoined on behalf of the soul of Richard, "*cujus Cor in eadem Capella sub summo altari requiescit humatum.*" But this claim, which gave rise to the present tradition, was made generations after the death of the founder, and there is overwhelming proof that it is an erroneous one.

The facts with regard to the death and burial of Richard Cœur de Lion are well described by the antiquary, Albert Way, after a visit to Rouen, in the 29th volume of *Archæologia* (1842), from which it seems advisable to quote the following passage:—"Richard having received his death

wound under the walls of the castle of Chaluz in Limousin, directed that his body should be interred at Fontevault, at the foot of his father's tomb; his effigy is still preserved there.—His heart he bequeathed to the Canons of Rouen, to whom in his lifetime he had been a benefactor, and who gratefully enshrined the relic in a sumptuous receptacle, as we learn from a contemporary writer, Guillaume le Breton." Then follows a quotation from his poem entitled *Philippidos*, beginning,

Cujus cor Rotomagensis,  
Ecclesiæ clerus argento clausit et auro.

The heart was buried on the south side of the choir of Rouen Cathedral, and over it was placed an altar tomb with an effigy of the monarch (*see* illustration in *Archæologia*). It remained intact until about the year 1734, when the canons "thought to add to the embellishment of the sanctuary" by raising its level, and the tombs of several famous personages then disappeared, among them that of Richard. In 1838 an excavation on the site was made by M. Deville, who discovered the effigy two feet below the surface in a tolerable state of preservation; it has since been replaced on or near its original site. After further digging, until the undisturbed soil had been reached (again to quote from Way's paper), the heart "was at length found concealed in a closed cavity which had been formed on purpose in the adjoining lateral wall, built at the time the sanctuary had been raised, between the piers by which it is surrounded, and enclosing the newly elevated area. On July 31st (1838) this remarkable relic was brought to light: the heart was found enclosed within two boxes of lead, the external one measuring 17 inches by 11, and about six inches in height; within this was a second interior case, lined with a thin leaf of silver, that time had in great part decayed, and thus inscribed within in rude graven characters:—HIC : IACET : | COR : RICAR | DI : REGIS : | ANGLORVM."

The inscription, of which Way gives a fac-simile, has lettering that belongs to about the end of the 13th century.

This surely proves that Richard's will was obeyed, and disposes of the idea that a casket containing the "lion heart" will be found in the church of All Hallows.

Another claim is that the Chapel of St. Mary, which was described by Stow (1598), if I read him aright, as on the north side of the "cemetery or churchyearde" of All Hallows, and also elsewhere, for example in the Calendar of State Papers (Domestic), 10 July, 1514, as in this cemetery, formed part of the church, having been either the north chancel aisle or a previous building on the same site. The Rev. Joseph Maskell, a careful writer, in his *History of Allhallows* (1864) expressed this belief, and he then thought that when Richard III rebuilt the chapel and added a college of priests the chapel continued to be part of the church, the college only being a detached building on ground to the north. His opinion would carry much weight, but it is almost forgotten that after 1890, when he was Master of Emanuel Hospital Westminster, he wrote a pamphlet now before me, entitled *All Hallows Barking Church, London*, supplementary to his larger work, and containing various corrections. Therein he expressed himself as follows:—"The Chantry, or Royal Free Chapel, of St. Mary de Berking was a *separate building from the church* and was situated within its precincts about a hundred yards to the north of the chancel. I once thought that it was attached to the main building; I know now that it stood in the cemetery occupying a site pierced through by the underground railway." I do not say that this is conclusive but it is the matured opinion of a man who had devoted years to the study of the subject, and it has been generally adopted.

A connection between the existing church and the former chapel is kept up to a slight extent, owing to the fact that when Edward IV enriched the chapel and founded there a brotherhood, the forerunner of Richard III's college, he appointed Alderman John Croke a trustee of the property then settled on it. Croke, who had lived in Mark Lane,

was buried in the north chancel aisle of All Hallows and here is the beautiful altar tomb to his memory and that of his wife, their children kneeling behind them. The Purbeck marble of the tomb has lately undergone treatment of some kind, and it now contains the "lamp of maintenance." The tomb has been darkened, the details are obscured, it is bound to suffer from wear and tear, and it now appears to be rather a receptacle for the lamp than a monument to a noteworthy medieval citizen.