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HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

NO. 91. — THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY.

WHEN Gregory, a simple monk of St. Andrew in Rome, saw in that city a few Saxon slaves exposed for sale in the public market place, he determined to go forth as a missionary to England to teach the people about Christ. He was a great punster, and said, among other things of the same kind, that these Angli (English) should be Angeli (angels), and fully meant to go forth and preach to them; but circumstances prevented him. He was called at length to be bishop of Rome, the first pope that bore the name of Gregory. He is known in history as Gregory the Great.

Finding himself in this exalted position, he thought again of his Angli (English), and sent forth a mission to Britain to convert them. At the head of the monks and clergy composing this mission was Augustine, but he was not a man who, at any time, showed very much decision of character. More than once he had to write to Gregory for advice, — and the advice always showed which was the superior mind.

These missionaries landed in England, at the Isle of Thanet, in the year 596. The Saxons were known as a fierce and barbarous people, and therefore the missionaries experi-

enced much fear at their undertaking. But Ethelbert, king of Kent, who had married Bertha, a Frankish princess and a Christian, invited them in a kindly way to state their case before him. From feelings of caution he received them in the open air, seated under an oak. His queen was present, and in her the missionaries knew they had a friend. With their large silver cross, and banners of Christian

device, they marched in procession before the king, who listened patiently to St. Augustine as he preached before him the message of the Crucified One. Though not at once convinced, the king placed his palace at the disposal of the missionaries, and allowed them to use St. Martin's Church, which had been built when the Romans were still in the island. The king's capital, where the palace and St. Martin's Church were situated, was called Cantwara-byrig, since known as Canterbury.

Thus when the missionaries of Christ came to convert the Saxons they found a

Christian church ready to hand in which themselves to worship God.

The people of Canterbury received the new doctrines gladly, and multitudes of them, including, in the end, the king himself, were baptized. The Witan, or Saxon parliament, assembled and adopted the Christian religion, although idols and temples were not destroyed. It is said that ten thousand of the people rushed forward



THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.