

"Well spoken, Ely." Rahere falls into the pure fool again. "I'll pray for thee when I turn monk. Thou hast given thy blessing on a war between two most Christian brothers." He meant the war forward 'twixt Henry and Robert of Normandy. "I charge you, Brother," he says, wheeling on the King, "dost thou mock my fool?"

'The King shook his head, and so then did smooth William of Exeter.

"De Aquila, dost thou mock him?" Rahere jingled from one to another, and the old man smiled.

"By the Bones of the Saints, not I," said our Lord of Pevensey. "I know how dooms near he broke us at Santlache."

"Sir Hugh, you are excused the question. But you, valiant, loyal, honourable, and devout barons, Lords of Man's Justice in your own bounds, do *you* mock my fool?"

'He shook his bauble in the very faces of those two barons whose names I have forgotten. "Na—Na!" they said, and waved him back foolishly enough.

'He hies him across to staring, nodding Harold, and speaks from behind his chair.

"No man mocks thee. Who here judges this man? Henry of England—Nigel—De Aquila! On your souls, swift with the answer!" he cried.

'None answered. We were all—the King not least—overborne by that terrible scarlet and black wizard-jester.

"Well for your souls," he said, wiping his brow. Next, shrill like a woman: "Oh, come