

real penance, and no one who had not a very strong, ardent faith and a very earnest desire to kneel at the feet of Christ's Vicar, would dream of undertaking such a journey.

St. Edward, however, was filled with such filial devotion to the Sovereign Pontiff that he registered an oath to undertake this tremendous journey. He summoned his courtiers and attendants around him and informed them of his resolution, and he prepared a sum sufficient for the journey, and was about to set out when unfortunately enemies and hostile forces began to menace the peace and security of the kingdom. Some of the most influential of his advisers and members of his household thereupon began to think the King was ill-advised to start on so distant and so perilous a journey at such a critical moment. They implored him as earnestly as they could, and with tears in their eyes, not to leave the country when his counsel and advice and the encouragement of his presence were most essential and indispensable, and so convinced him that his duty was to stay at home that he resolved to hearken to their voice. But he had taken an oath. The oath must not be broken. But perhaps it might be commuted? To whom did the King apply in his spiritual difficulty? His thoughts naturally and with true Catholic instinct turned to Rome, to the Keeper of the Keys, to Pope Leo IX. Since there was no telegraph or regular postal service, he arranged for Aelfred, Archbishop of York, and Herman, Bishop of Winchester, with two abbots, to set out to Rome and to put the whole matter before the Pontiff.

The letter he wrote (a copy of which any one may read for himself in the original Latin) is couched in the most loyal and submissive terms. After speaking of the troubles and dangers through which he had, by God's mercy, passed unscathed, he refers to the oath he took to journey to Rome to the tomb of the Apostles Peter and Paul, there to return thanks for such innumerable benefits, and to pray to God for the stable peace and welfare of his kingdom. This, he goes on to say, was not merely his wish and intention, but he had already put together sufficient money for the journey, and had prepared honorable gifts to be offered to the tomb of the Apostles. Now, however,