

PORTRAIT OF SIR THOMAS MORE

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coterie as often as possible at Antwerp. At such time it would be most natural that he should meet Albert Dürer, the friend of Aegidius and Erasmus. Dürer makes particular mention of several portraits of friends and celebrities which he made at this time without giving definite names, and nothing could be more natural than that so leading a character as Sir Thomas More should be portrayed by the great artist. This, undoubtedly, is the painting which has lately been discovered in Ontario, Canada.

Besides, Sir Thomas More accompanied Cardinal Wolsey on a mission to Bruges in the spring of 1521, at the time when Dürer himself visited that city. It is evident that the portrait was painted by Dürer either then or during one of More's visits to Antwerp, which he made different times in his frequent journeys to France and the Netherlands in the years 1520-1521.

The portrait is painted in oil colours on an oak panel and measures twelve and a half by ten and a half inches in size. It is wonderfully preserved, and was brought from England to Canada by a descendant of Colonel Clark, in whose family it had been treasured at the Manor House in Surrey for centuries. In a document of undoubted authenticity, on the back of the painting, the writer states that his grandfather showed it to Sir Benjamin West, President of the Royal Academy after Sir Joshua Reynolds' death in 1792, and that he confirmed it as being the portrait of Sir Thomas More by Albert Dürer and of great value. Having been brought to Canada it was, according to the account of the owners, for a time consigned in a box to the garret. This, without doubt, contributed to its remarkable preservation; for, being painted on a preparation of white lead over the dry oak panel, the modern heaters would have wrought havoc with it. Even the coat of old and discoloured varnish, with which it was covered when brought to light and purchased by the present owners, had acted as a protection, until such time as it could be carefully cleaned and restored by competent skill. It must have been in the possession of Sir Thomas More and his family after it was painted, but how it passed into the hands of the Surrey family before mentioned, has not yet been traced. It was surely seen by Holbein at Sir Thomas More's house at Chelsea; for, in the "Windsor drawings," now in