

which struck at the root of a growing evil. The clergy were becoming foppish in their dress. Their hair and beard were allowed to grow long, and many of them "dressed more like soldiers than clerics." And this indicated that worldly pride was springing up among them, and the simple face of the monk, with the face and head (as to the tonsure) shaven, was considered a useful safeguard for them. So through the archbishop and few, considering the days in which he lived, will say that he was wrong — this as well as many other abuses of a more serious nature, both among clergy and laity, were, by wise legislation, corrected.

The king was glad to have so good a man once more his friend. He was glad to lean on him so long as he was allowed to remain with him, but death at length stepped in to claim him. He lived to see the glorious success of English arms at Neville's Cross and Cressy, and then in his old age sank to rest among his predecessors at Canterbury, where his recumbent statue, carved in marble, is still to be seen.

The times of Edward III. were rude and rough, and but little attention was given to learning. Some of the finest books lay worm-eaten and mice-nibbled on old, dusty shelves, to the grief of an occasional scholar, who, at times, would take them down to con their pages. Such a scholar was Thomas Bradwardine, the friend alike of Archbishop Stratford and the king. He spent his time in study and in writing treatises on the doctrines of Christianity. He was among the first to point out doctrinal error in papal Rome, as evidenced in its practice and teaching.

But Bradwardine was more than a scholar. He was a saint. The immorality of the king received some check, at least some mild rebuke, by his holy life when he became a member of the royal household, and it is thought that it was largely his quiet and peaceful influence which brought about the reconciliation between Edward and the archbishop.

On the death of the latter the eyes of all were fixed upon Bradwardine as a suitable one to succeed him. Without consulting the king, but anxious to please him, the monks of Canterbury elected Bradwardine. Edward, however, resented this as an insult, and nominated an old paralytic man named John de Ufford to be archbishop. But he died before consecration. Then all agreed to elect Bradwardine. This was in 1339. The pope consented, and he was consecrated abroad. In his absence the Black Death had broken out in England. It was a terrible scourge. Archbishop Bradwardine hastened home to minister to his dying flock: but the malignant malady without delay seized himself as a victim, and the sorrowing monks, defying the danger of contagion, laid him at rest at Canterbury.

The king lost no time in filling the vacancy.

He nominated to the position Simon Islip, a canon of Lincoln. The chapter at Canterbury and the pope conformed to his wish. Islip was a man of giant build and active mind. There is a curious play upon his name in one of the windows in the parish church of Islip. It is the picture of a boy sliding down a tree, and on a scroll coming from his mouth are the words "I slip."

The ravages of the Black Death during his time were terrible. In London alone, the deaths were said to have amounted to one hundred thousand. In one burying ground fifty thousand corpses were huddled together in large pits. Everything in England was dull and quiet. The only thing that was busy was death. The lawless became all the more wicked, and gave way to the indulgence of every passion: while the good were all the more reverent and saintlike. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," was put side by side with "Prepare to meet thy God."

In the face of this heavy visitation all public ceremonies were largely dispensed with. The new archbishop was enthroned without display of any kind, and quietly proceeded with the duties of his office. He was a man of upright mind, and possessed of such a high sense of duty as to make him stern in manner. He was a lawyer, and therefore did much in the way of ecclesiastical legislation. In fact, from his position, he could sometimes make laws himself. His regulations for the comfort of prisoners are striking. On the Lord's day they might have bread, beer, and pulse, in honor of the day: on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, bread and small beer; and on Wednesdays, Fridays, and "Sabbath Day" (Saturday), once a day, the bread and water of affliction. The "comfort" of this, in the present age, does not appear conspicuous!

He tried also to restrain professional money making among the clergy. "Priests," he stated, "nowadays, through covetousness or love of ease, not content with reasonable salaries, demand and receive excessive pay for their labor." Time and circumstances have, to some extent, mitigated that evil among us. However great the demand for excessive pay among the clergy may be, the response thereto is not frequent.

While trying to correct irregularities among those beneath him, the archbishop did not shrink from rebuking the king and royal family when need so required. During all the seventeen years of his rule, however, he did not come into any unpleasant relationship with the king. He also gave even the pope to understand that the Church of England was an independent church, and not subject in any way to Rome. In fact, the feeling against the papacy was rather strong at this time in England. The terrible plague was followed by the