



HOUSE AND STOREROOM OF BISHOP BOMPAS.

THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY.

BY THE EDITOR.

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UNDER CHARLES II.

GILBERT SHELDON was born in the year 1598, at Stanton, Staffordshire, and was the youngest son of Roger Sheldon, a servant in Earl Shrewsbury's household. He was entered as a commoner in Trinity College, Oxford, in 1613, and in 1622 was elected a fellow of All Saints' College. He was ordained about the same time. He became domestic chaplain to Sir Thomas Coventry, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, who gave him a prebend in Gloucester Cathedral.

It soon became evident that Sheldon was a rising man, owing to the esteem in which he was regarded by the Lord Keeper, who employed him in several important affairs. He was fortunate also in securing the friendship of Laud, at a time when that rising ecclesiastic was able to help him. Through him he became rector of Newington, and it was also, no doubt, through Laud's influence that the king (Charles I.) presented Sheldon with the vicarage of Ickford in Bucks, for it was in the year 1632, the year when Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1635, Sheldon was elected warden of All Souls' College, and about that time came in contact with William Chillingworth, who for some time was much unsettled in his mind on the subject of religion. A natural controversialist, he attacked Romanism, but was so assiduously plied by a Jesuit father that he was

convinced he was wrong, and himself became a Romanist. Laud and Sheldon, however, helped him back to his former faith, and the latter had much difficulty with him, to keep him within proper bounds. Chillingworth's work on "Protestantism, a Safe Guide to Salvation," has made him famous, and Sheldon's dealings with him, at a time when Chillingworth was unsettled in faith, won for the future Archbishop much attention in high quarters. The king (Charles I.) appointed him Clerk of the Closet and one of his Chaplains in Ordinary.

During the unhappy war which King Charles waged with his parliament,

Sheldon was true to his royal master, and when the unhappy monarch fell he, too, with many others, descended from his high position to obscurity and degradation. For a time he was held as a prisoner in Oxford, and when released he retired to Snelston, Derbyshire. But in his obscurity he did not forget his loyalty. His old master, King Charles, was gone, but his new and rightful master, Prince Charles, was across the water, and to him Gilbert Sheldon frequently sent money and words of dutiful encouragement.

When "the tyranny was overpast," and the king came back, Sheldon, with many others, resumed his place of dignity and power. He was made Dean of the Chapel Royal, and subsequently Bishop of London. He was the real leader of the Churchmanship of the day. Juxon, of course, old and feeble as he was, was made Archbishop of Canterbury. The good, gentle old man sanctified everything by being placed at the head of the long persecuted, but at length restored, Church; but the younger, stronger man, who had about him more of the "earth earthy" than Juxon, was the active leader and the real holder of the helm. Sheldon had no love for Puritans or dissenters of any kind. Let us not be too hard with him for this. Let us remember what he had suffered, what he had seen done to the king whom he loved, and to the Church which he had been appointed to serve. Let us remember that cathedrals had been desecrated and defaced, in some cases turned into cow-stables and stalls for cattle, nay, in some cases, as in Lichfield, absolutely laid even with the dust, that clergymen and their families had been driven from house and home, and had died but