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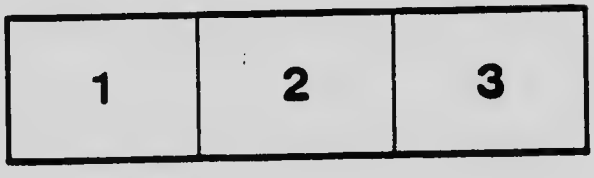

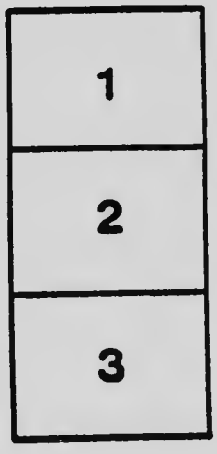

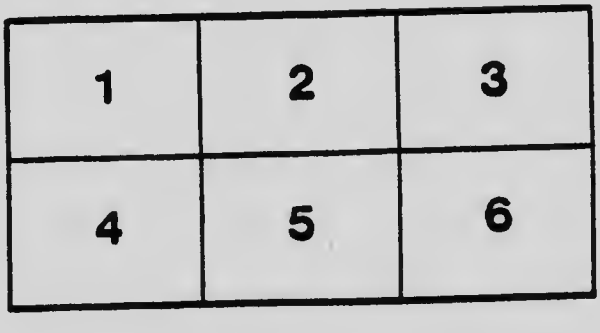

MEMORANDA

ON THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED PORTRAIT OF

SIR THOMAS MORE

(BLESSED THOMAS MORE)

Lord High Chancellor of England under Henry VIII

PAINTED BY ALBERT DÜRER

WITH APPRECIATION BY

THE MOST REVEREND TIMOTHY CASEY, D.D.

Bishop of St. John, N.B.

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INTRODUCTORY.

The wide publicity obtained through the recent discovery of ...re and historical masterpieces at Quebec, both city and ... vince, and of others, subsequently, in the Lower Provinces by the well-known English artist-expert, Mr. J. Purves Carter, the existence and whereabouts of what purported to be the original portrait of Sir Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor of England under Henry VIII, were brought to his knowledge. Mr. Carter has been for some years past systematically investigating this vast property in art, which was brought to Canada soon after the French Revolution; and he was retained as an expert by the authorities of Laval University, Quebec, to restore their paintings and arrange an exhibition of those many treasures lately brought to light and not hitherto known to the public.

Whilst professionally engaged in like work last year at the Archbishop's palace in Halifax, N. S., Mr. Carter learned that such a portrait, painted on panel, had been in an English family for upwards of three hundred years, and that it was still carefully preserved by their descendants, settled in Ontario for over a hundred years.

After due consideration of the facts reported and a careful examination of the painting itself, which was for sale, Mr. Carter acting as agent for the present owner, negotiated its purchase from the family in whose possession it had remained so long, with the result that the picture for the first time during three centuries changed hands. So obscure, however, was the work with the dirt and discolourations of age that it could be seen only with difficulty. After the transfer by sale was completed, the painting was, at the request of the new owner, cleaned before witnesses by Mr. Carter at the palace of the Archbishop of Halifax.

The great qualities of this original work then became evident in their pristine beauty of line and colour, every touch manifesting the power of mind and hand of the immortal Dürer; and that great master's signature, and his inscription "Sr Tho. More" at the bottom of the panel, and again in Roman capitals

"MORE" on the upper part of the background, came to light as conclusive evidence of the genuineness of the long-lost treasure, whose very existence the present day world never even suspected.

There is no possible question that this portrait has remained in the same family for some three centuries quite unknown to the outside world. It is the true original portrait, painted from the living person of Blessed Thomas More about fourteen years before his martyrdom, when in the zenith of his wonderful career, and some seven years before the portrait painted by Holbein. This was made evident by the subsequent severe tests to which the painting was submitted, and as to which an exhaustive and learned disquisition by Mr. Robert J. Wickenden accompanies the present memoranda.

As the great Eucharistic Congress which took place in Montreal was then approaching, it was decided that the rare and beautiful treasure should be exhibited to the many prelates and authorities who would gather there. Through the kindness of His Lordship Bishop Casey, and Monsignor Mathieu, His Grace the Archbishop of Westminster (Dr. Bourne) was specially requested to examine the venerable work. It was the opinion of that eminent prelate that not only was it the authentic portrait of Blessed Thomas More, but His Grace exclaimed "it is the most important discovery of the age," and, "unless I had seen it, I could never have believed it possible that such a priceless treasure could have been found in Canada." The Archbishop also expressed the wish that the portrait should be taken to England to be shown to other authorities.

His Eminence Cardinal Vannutelli, the Papal legate at the Congress, was also kind enough graciously to give a special audience to Mr. Carter in the presence of the Archbishop of Montreal and his entourage, and His Eminence expressed himself as being exceedingly interested. It was also intimated that the painting would be welcomed at Rome—where it is intended it shall be taken for the purpose of exhibition.

Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Countess Grey received Mr. Carter at their residence at the Citadel, Quebec, and carefully examined both the painting and the

documents bearing upon its origin and history; and both their Excellencies expressed their appreciation of the great beauty of the precious work, and their firm conviction of its immense value and importance as a discovery.

Since then, many other distinguished personages have expressed their delight at the finding of so important an historical treasure, and it may be further stated in this connection that through the suggestion and mediation of Bishop Casey, Monsignor Shahan, Rector of the Catholic University of Washington, D. C., has requested that this newly discovered portrait of Sir Thomas More (Blessed Thomas) be reproduced in colours to embellish the article upon the saintly Chancellor in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, now being published by the Appleton Company in New York.

It will be of interest to note the words of appreciation of such a connoisseur as Monsignor Shahan, which he wrote to Mr. Carter in regard to its reproduction for the Catholic Encyclopedia: "Your discovery is truly a very important one, and the whole world will rejoice to see again the features, after life, of one of its greatest men."

The historical value and sacred nature that attaches to this precious painting prompted the owner and those interested in its ultimate disposition to decide, that it would be most desirable to have it faithfully reproduced in the best possible etching, so as to preserve for all time the true and sublime features of this saintly character; and, to attain this object, they were fortunate in obtaining the services of the distinguished English artist and authority on art, Mr. Robert J. Wickenden, to carry out the important and difficult task. That the artist has succeeded in the highest degree, his work clearly attests, as well as the general admiration manifested by all who have seen the etching.

The interest taken throughout by His Lordship Bishop Casey has already done much to establish the unique position to which this portrait is entitled; and it would be difficult to find suitable words to express the deep gratitude the owner and those interested in the ultimate disposition of the sacred relic feel for the generous way in which the Bishop listened to the general request that he write an appreciation of character of Blessed Thomas More, which herewith follows.

APPRECIATION

BY THE

MOST REVEREND TIMOTHY CASEY, D.D.

Bishop of St. John, N.B.

BLESSED THOMAS MORE.

"One of the choice specimens
of wisdom and virtue:"—MACAULAY.

On the discovery of that sacred treasure of art and history—the true portrait of Blessed Thomas More by one of the greatest artists, Albert Dürer— you ask me, Kalophile, to make, for friends and patrons, a pen-picture of our hero, a complement, as it were, to the triumph of the master's brush. You intend, I take it, that I shall so present his character, unique and fascinating as it is, that those familiar with it may be pleasantly entertained, while those to whom Sir Thomas is a stranger may be profitably enlightened, and withal that I be brief. Thus to mention your object is to manifest how difficult, if not how impossible, is its attainment. To present a delineation of Blessed More's character even remotely approaching the adequate and to be brief, seems as contradictory as that character was itself filled with variety.

Our approaches to its study seem to show it transparent, our progress shows how difficult it is to be understood; and as we advance its charm is ever on the increase. The abundance of material at our disposal renders the difficulty greater and increases our fascination. There are his own many writings, in which his pure, brilliant, logical, self-sacrificing, humorous soul is seen shining to splendid advantage. Then, Erasmus wrote so much of him during his life, that he may almost be considered his first biographer. And

who could have known more about More than Erasmus, and who even to our own day could have written better what he knew? So warm was their affection and so strong their friendship, that they were taken for twin brothers,—one of the few pure historic friendships, whose precious records have come down to us. William Roper, husband of that charming character, More's daughter Margaret, after sixteen years spent under the same roof with his immortal father-in-law, wrote notes and memoirs of him that are now of priceless value to his countless admirers. Several others of note and erudition have written along similar lines; and all have been studied, rearranged and written again by the learned English Redemptorist, Father Bridgett. If I may recommend a work to any of your friends, Kalophile, who may desire to become intimate with one of the most fascinating characters in the world's history, I should say instantly: "Get Father Bridgett's 'Blessed Thomas More.'"

After reading that, or indeed any of his many published lives, one can look intently and critically at his great Dürer portrait recently brought to light, or at its great etching by the renowned English artist, Robert J. Wickenden, and see living, with striking reality, in art the spirit with which he has been communing in letters. In the one case as in the other, we are held in suspense as to whether he is serious or about to indulge in a jest. Look at the picture:—there is an air of sadness. Look again: sadness is not the key-note of the character before us. There is nothing of melancholy in that countenance. We see spirit in the face, humour too, and Christian peace. A further study is invited; there is goodness, gaiety, and a jovial malice is not wanting. The little gray-blue eyes, though challenging, are mild. You can't look at those lips without feeling that some play on words is lurking behind them; though he scarcely ever laughs. In the portrait, as in his writings, one can scarcely tell whether he is about to act as judge, or to jest with his children. He is always serious, yet humour is as the very breath of his life. His very transparency makes him the more mysterious, and the wonderful variety of his gifts and accomplishments puzzles us. "He is amiable," says Erasmus, "always in splendid

humour, and makes every one glad that approaches him." Another intimate friend, Richard Pace, said: "More is so delicately pleasant, that you would be inclined to call humour his father, and wit his mother."

As we advance in its knowledge, we find our hero's character grow in charm, and yet the mysteriousness is not dissipated. Erasmus again tells us there is nothing in the world, even of the most serious nature, that does not cause him pleasure. If he is with the learned, their intelligence ravishes him; with the silly, their folly amuses him. Withal, he is the most austere of men. That wit always ready to turn a jest against you, is the sweetest of men; that apparent worldling never loses sight of death; that jovial spirit flashes from the soul of a hermit. "He so speaks with his friends," still Erasmus, "about the future life, that you are sure his words come from his heart, and not without unwavering confidence."

Thomas More was born in London February 7, 1478, Edward IV reigning in his seventeenth year, the wars of the Roses still raging. He found an excellent teacher in his first master, Nicholas Holt, from whom he was transferred at the age of twelve to the household of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury. It was the custom of the times for the sons of the gentry and nobility to pass a couple of years for learning and good breeding in the homes of great dignitaries; and it was happy for More that his lot was so cast that he might receive his early impressions of Church and State from so superior a Prelate as the distinguished Cardinal. Roper tells us of his good fortune in this matter: "Though More were young of years, yet would he at Christmas suddenly sometimes step in among the players, and never studying for the matter, make a part of his own there presently among them which made the lookers-on more sport than all the players beside. In whose wit and towardness the Cardinal much delighting, would often say of him to the nobles that divers times dine with him: 'This child here waiting at the table, whoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man.' Whereupon, for his better furtherance in learning, he placed him at Oxford."

At Oxford his abilities began properly to be developed and his mind to store the treasures of knowledge. Though he

preferred Greek to Latin, he became as fluent and eloquent in the latter as in English. He learned French, too, and music, arithmetic and geometry, and read every book of history he could procure.

Returning to London at the call of his father in 1496, he began the study of law at Lincoln's Inn and continued therein for five years. So great was the reputation that he had now acquired that he was chosen lecturer at one of the Inns of Chancery, Furnival's, and so highly were these lectures esteemed that his appointment was renewed three successive years. His biographers mention another course of lectures about this time, which were delivered on St. Augustine's great work, "The City of God," and were attended by the most learned men of the day as auditors and admirers. Among these is mentioned especially his former Greek professor, Grocyn.

About this time More's studies of the fathers and ecclesiastical writers impressed him so profoundly that he debated with himself, long and seriously in prayer and exercises of piety, as to whether he would become a religious priest or continue his profession as a lawyer. Dean Colet, his confessor and adviser, judged his vocation to be the profession he was practicing. More's subsequent edifying life and martyr's death proved the wisdom of this decision, though his own words to his daughter during his final imprisonment show that he never lost his taste and longing for the religious life.

While any feature of More's life would require larger space than I can give to this whole essay, the unique Christian beauty of his family life at Chelsea cannot be passed over in silence. The little picture Erasmus left of it is worthy of Erasmus, and with the simple presentation of it we must be content. "With what gentleness," he says, "does my friend regulate his household, where misunderstandings and quarrels are altogether unknown! Indeed he is looked up to as a general healer of all differences, and was never known to part from any on terms of unkindness. His house seems to enjoy the peculiar happiness that all who dwell under its roof go forth into the world bettered in their morals as well as improved in their condition; and no spot was ever known to fall on the reputation of any of its fortunate inhabitants. Here you might

imagine yourself in the academy of Plato. But indeed, I should do injustice to his house by comparing it with the school of that philosopher where nothing but abstract questions, and occasional moral virtues, were the subjects of discussion; it would be truer to call it a school of religion, and an arena for the exercise of all Christian virtues. All its inmates apply themselves to liberal studies, though piety is their first care. No wrangling or angry word is ever heard within the walls. No one is idle; every one does his duty with alacrity, and regularity and good order are prescribed by the mere force of kindness and courtesy. Every one performs his allotted task, and yet all are as cheerful as if mirth were their only employment. Surely such a household deserves to be called a school of the Christian religion."

Any sketch of the great Chancellor would be utterly incomplete without a reference to his charming daughter, Margaret Roper, whom Erasmus called the "Ornament of Britain." Father Bridgett remarks prettily of their relationship: "Certainly whatever little romance is wanting in the courtships of this singular man is made up in the intensity of affection poured out from the father's heart on this gracious child from her cradle to his scaffold." Their correspondence is considerable, and, happily, is to a large extent preserved to us. It will be read with touching interest as long as language shall remain a vehicle of thought. A slight idea of it may be had from a letter he sent her in reply to a request for money: "You ask me, my dear Margaret, for money with too much bashfulness and timidity, since you are asking from a father who is eager to give, and since you have written to me a letter such that I would not only repay each line of it with a golden phillipine, as Alexander did the verses of Cherilos, but, if my means were as great as my desire, I would reward each syllable with two gold ounces. As it is, I send you only what you have asked, but would have added more, only that as I am eager to give, so am I desirous to be asked and coaxed by my daughter, especially by you, whom virtue and learning have made so dear to my soul. So the sooner you spend this money well, as you are wont to do, and the sooner you ask for more, the more you will be sure of pleasing your father."

Quite early in life More became the most popular barrist of the day, according to both Roper and Erasmus, and easi enjoyed a very lucrative practice. His talent and learni soon attracted the attention of Henry VIII, for the King, brilliant scholar himself, took pride in having such men abo him. Preferring independence to a courtier's life, he lo resisted the efforts of the Primate, Wolsey, lately created Cardinal by Leo X, "alleging how dear his service would b to his Majesty." He must, however, in the end after a successf embassy to Flanders, yield to the solicitations of Cardin Wolsey, now become Lord Chancellor, and to the desire of th King to have him enter the royal court. Of this event Erasmu says, "the King really dragged him to his court. No one eve strove more eagerly to gain admission there, than More di to avoid it." To show his friend's fitness for his new position he says: "His elevation has brought with it no pride. Amids all the weight of State affairs he remembers the humble friend of old, and from time to time returns to his beloved literature Whatever influence he has acquired by his dignity, whatever favour he enjoys with his opulent King, he used for the good of the State, and the assistance of his friends. He was ever desirous of conferring benefits, and wonderfully prone to compassion. This disposition has grown with his power of indulging it. Some he assists with money, others he protects by his authority, others he advances by his recommendations. If he can help in no other way, he does it by his counsels; he sends no one away dejected. You would say that he had been appointed the public guardian of all those in need."

On the refusal of Clement VII to cancel the King's marriage with Queen Catherine, Wolsey's downfall quickly followed. Anne Boleyn became his enemy; and Henry, treating him with open contempt, demanded his resignation of the great seal, and forced his retirement to his diocese of York.

Looking for one to succeed him, the King quickly fixed his choice on Sir Thomas More, and within the week made him Lord Chancellor, an unusual dignity at that time for a layman in England. His installation took place with joy and applause on the part of the King and the nation, Wolsey even declaring that no other was so fit for the office. Erasmus is worthy

of himself on the occasion: "I do not at all congratulate More or literature, but I do indeed congratulate England, for a better or holier judge could not be appointed."

Many touching and beautiful stories are told of his career as Lord High Chancellor, of his wit, justice and charity, and of his quickness in deciding tedious cases, some of even twenty years' standing. When these were all disposed of, this punning verse was written:

When More some years had Chancellor been,
No more suits did remain:
The like shall never more be seen
Till More be there again.

Ever since Sir Thomas had become Chancellor, the King strove to bring him to his own mind concerning his proposed marriage with Anne Boleyn. Now, he goes so far as to order the clergy to acknowledge him "Supreme Head of the Anglican Church," allowing through the intervention of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, the saving clause, "as far as the law of Christ allows." With the submission of the clergy, More saw the parting of the ways—he had to choose between his conscience as a Catholic and the things of this world. He delivered the great seal into the King's hands on May 16, 1532 in presence of the Duke of Norfolk. On that occasion, Chapuys, the ambassador of Charles V, wrote; "The Chancellor has resigned, seeing that affairs were going on badly and likely to be worse, and that if he retained his office he would be obliged to act against his conscience, or incur the King's displeasure, as he had already begun to do, for refusing to take his part against the clergy. His excuse was that his salary was too small, and that he was not equal to the work. Every one is concerned, for there never was a better man in the office."

On his retirement he thus writes his faithful friend, Erasmus: "That which I have from a child unto this day almost continually wished (my most dear Desiderius), that being freed from the troublesome business of public affairs, I might live some while only to God and myself, I have now by the especial grace of Almighty God, and the favour of my most indulgent prince, obtained." He now devoted his time entirely to his

books and his writings, though he carefully observed the progr
of events; and, reflecting on his own course, he was prepari
for the worst. When Cranmer pronounced the divorce, S
Thomas said to his son-in-law: "God grant, son, that the
matters within a while be not confirmed with oaths." Ev
before this Anne Boleyn had been secretly married to Henr
and afterward publicly acknowledged as queen. From h
coronation, June 1, 1533, it was apparently supposed th
More dare not absent himself. This, however, he did, no
withstanding the pressing invitation and the present of twen
pounds to buy him a gown; and thenceforward he was pursue
with the implacable hatred of both Henry and Anne.

Strenuous efforts were made to implicate him in the treaso
of the Holy Maid of Kent, but they completely failed. Mo
triumphantly vindicated himself before the Council name
by the King: Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury; Audley
the Lord Chancellor; the Duke of Norfolk and Thoma
Cromwell; proving his innocence on every point. His rui
was to be accomplished by the course of public events in whic
he could have no part.

A Bill, known as the Act of Succession, limiting the succes
sion, making it high treason to oppose it, and misprision o
treason to speak against it, was passed in Parliament, an
received the royal assent on March 30, 1534. All were com
manded to take an oath to maintain the whole contents o
the Act, though Parliament had prescribed no formula. Mor
could take an oath to this effect in good conscience; but the
formula prescribed by the Commissioners was wider than the
Act, and included an affirmation of the truth of its preamble
declaring the invalidity of Henry's first marriage and the
validity of the second. As the final decision of Clement VII
had been given just a week before in favour of the marriage
with Catherine of Aragon, the formula implied a rejection
of the Pontiff's authority. Here Sir Thomas More halted;
he could take the oath of Succession; but not in the formula
of the Commissioners:—this was the cause of his imprisonment,
and led finally to his martyrdom; for this he lay seven months
in the Tower, before the Act of Supremacy was passed at all.
In a letter, very happily for history still preserved, to his

daughter, Margaret, Sir Thomas tells us about the tendering of the oath to him, the only layman among a few bishops, several doctors and a large number of priests. It contains an accurate record of what passed, written in More's inimitable style, and gives his reasons for refusing the oath. That day's proceedings at Lambeth mark a great crisis in English history. Father Bridgett calls it "the first overt and total renunciation of the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff and separation from the rest of Christendom; for such in reality and effect it was, though few realized at the time the full significance of their act."

On his way to the Tower to which Sir Thomas was committed after his third refusal of the oath, he was advised by his conductor to remove his chain of gold from his neck and send it home. He replied, "Nay, sir, that I will not; for if I were taken in the field by my enemies, I would that they should fare somewhat the better for me."

On reaching the Tower Gate, the porter demanded his upper garment. "Mr. Porter," said he, taking off his cap and offering it to him, "here it is: I am sorry it is no better." "No, sir," quoth the porter, "I must have your gown."

The Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir Edmund Walsingham, an old friend of More's, one day apologized for the poor cheer he was giving him, alleging the fear of the King's displeasure, as the reason for not affording him better. This brought forth another of his sweet, merry sayings, that make his character quite unique in the world's history or in the Saints' Calendar: "I verily believe you, good Mr. Lieutenant, and I thank you most heartily for it, and assure yourself I do not dislike my fare; but whensoever I do, then spare not to thrust me out of your doors."

During the fifteen months of his imprisonment, there were scenes in the Beauchamp Tower between More and his affectionate daughter, that are not surpassed for nobility and heroism of virtue in any Acts of the Martyrs. After answering her arguments, pressed one day with unusual earnestness to make him take the oath, he playfully compared her to Mother Eve, tempting Father Adam once and again to eat the apple. He thus concludes: "And, therefore, mine own good daughter,

never trouble thy mind for anything that shall happen to m
in this world. If anything happen me that you would be lot
pray to God for me, but trouble not yourselves, as I shall fu
heartily pray for us all that we may meet together once
heaven, where we shall make merry forever, and never hav
trouble after."

A special commission under the great seal was issued fo
his trial, consisting of Lord Chancellor Audley, and severa
of the nobility and judges. His arraignment took place i
May, 1535, but in the hope of better evidence the trial wa
put off till the first of July. Hereupon Lord Campbell, hi
successor in office after three hundred years, speaks so aptl
to our purpose that his words are most worthy of our attention
"When, sordidly dressed, he held up his hand as a crimina
in that place where, arrayed in his magisterial robes and sur
rounded by crowds who watched his smile, he had been accus
tomed on his knees to ask his Father's blessing before mounting
his own tribunal as sole judge on the most important rights
on the highest subjects in the realm, a general feeling of horror
and commiseration ran through the spectators; and after the
lapse of three centuries, during which statesmen, prelates and
kings have been unjustly brought to trial under the same roof,
considering the splendour of his talents, the greatness of his
acquirements, and the innocence of his life, we must still regard
his murder as the blackest crime ever perpetrated in England
under the form of law." Lord Macaulay, speaking of the
state trials of those days, has called them "murder preceded
by mummery."

It is all important in forming our estimate of More's char-
acter to know precisely for what he died. Though imprisoned
for refusal of the oath of Succession, it was directly for rejecting
the royal supremacy that he suffered death. This is the only
matter mentioned in the indictment. While no mention is made
of the papal supremacy, this was to him a matter of clearly
defined faith. "'Tis for this, indirectly," says Father Bridgett,
" that he laid down his life." Upon this, Mr. James Gairdner,
of the Record Office, wrote: "But if we take cognizance of
a cause for which he 'indirectly' suffered, he also died to uphold
the sanctity of marriage, of which at that time there seemed

apparently no other guarantee than papal jurisdiction. Nor did he and others die in vain, who protested against moral laws being twisted and turned upside down by royal authority to satisfy lust and self-will." His conviction was a foregone conclusion, and the jury, fifteen minutes after retiring, returned a verdict of guilty; and sentence was pronounced by the chancellor, "according to the tenour of the new law."

As if his mind were disburdened, he then spoke freely what he thought of the law: "For the seven years that I have studied the matter, I have not read in any approved doctor of the Church that a temporal lord could or ought to be head of the spirituality." The chancellor, interrupting him, said: "What, More, you wish to be considered wiser and of better conscience than all the bishops and nobles of the realm?" To this More replied: "My lord, for one bishop of your opinion I have a hundred saints of mine; and for one parliament of yours, and God knows of what kind, I have all the General Councils for a thousand years, and for one kingdom, I have France and all the kingdoms of Christendom." He concluded his speech with these characteristically touching words: "More have I not to say, my lords, but that like the Blessed Apostle St. Paul, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, who was present and consenting to the death of the proto-martyr, St. Stephen, holding their clothes that stoned him to death, and yet they be now both twain holy saints in Heaven and there shall continue friends forever; so I verily trust and shall heartily pray that, though your lordships have been on earth my judges to condemnation, yet we may hereafter meet in Heaven merrily together to our everlasting salvation."

As was usual in the case of those condemned for treason, the edge of the axe was turned towards him as he was led from Westminster Hall, and the most touching scene awaited him on reaching the Tower wharf. His tenderly-loved daughter, Margaret Roper, was waiting where she knew he should pass before entering the Tower. As soon as she saw him, she reverently knelt to receive his blessing, and without thought for herself, passing through the midst of the throng of men, who with bills and halberts surrounded him, in the sight of all she clasped him round the neck, kissing him lovingly and repeatedly

unable to speak other words than "Oh, my father! Oh, father!" He blessed her, and exhorted her to patience submission to the will of God. The night before his execut he wrote with a coal, the only material he had, a very touch letter to Margaret, which she afterwards traced with ink treasured as sacred the rest of her life.

On the morning of July 6, his old friend, Sir Thomas Po came to tell him that it was the K 's pleasure that he sho die that day before nine o'clock. Answering Sir Thomas Po who could not restrain his tears, More spoke gratefully of King: "And so, God help me, am I bounden to His Highn most of all, that it pleaseth him so shortly to rid me from miseries of this wretched world; and therefore will I not earne to pray for his Grace both here and also in the wo to come. I beseech you, good Mr. Pope, to be a mean to H Highness that my daughter may be at my burial." "T king is content already," replied Pope, "that your wife a children and other friends shall have liberty to be prese thereat." "Oh how much beholding, then, am I unto H Grace, that unto my poor burial vouchsafeth to have so gr cious consideration."

Roper tells us that the scaffold was very unsteady, and th gave him occasion for another exercise of his merry wit, test fying to his pure heart: the just man "shall laugh on the la day." "I pray thee see me safe up," said he to the lieutena of the Tower, "and for my coming down, let me shift for myself. Then desired he all the people to pray for him and to be witness with him, that he should there suffer death in and fo the faith of the Catholic Church:" So says Roper.

Kneeling down, he said his favourite prayer, the psalm *Miserere*. The executioner asked his pardon as usual, an More kissed him, saying cheerfully: "Pluck up thy spirits man, and be not afraid to do thy office. My neck is very short take heed, therefore, thou strike not awry for saving of thine honesty." More had brought with him a handkerchief; he blindfolded himself, and putting his head upon the block received the fatal blow that will forever encircle his brow with the martyr's halo.

As I finish my labour of love, and gladly give my tribute of veneration to one of the very greatest of England's sons, I joyfully advert to a happy coincidence. It is just twenty-five years since the honours of beatification by Pope Leo XIII were accorded to Sir Thomas More and his companions; and "Punch" wittily remarked at that time, that "though there are many Saints in the Calendar, no Englishman will object to More!" And now, Kalophile, that you are exhibiting to the world his magnificent Dürer portrait, you will, doubtless, revive the study of the life and letters of that marvellous man; and, with a wider field than ever before you, you will, in this Jubilee year of his beatification, undoubtedly make the Blessed Thomas More better known than ever.

✝ TIMOTHY,
Bishop of St. John.

Saint John, July 6th, 1911.

NOTES ON THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED PORTRAI OF SIR THOMAS MORE, LORD CHANCELLOR T HENRY VIII, PAINTED BY ALBERT DURER.

By Mr. Robert J. Wickenden.

An intimacy was early in life established between Sir Thoma now Blessed Thomas More, and Erasmus, and many a pro tracted visit did that renowned scholar of Rotterdam pay t More's riverside home at Chelsea. From one of these visits followed an important result—the production by Erasmu of his witty satire, "Encomium Moriae or the Praise of Folly. The closest friendship through life was maintained by them two, perhaps, of the most cultivated men the revival of classica study had produced in Northern Europe.

There was a delightful interchange of acquaintances and friendships, as well as of ideas, in the years that followed; and we find many of the leaders of the period in art, letters and science appearing in anecdotes, and in the records of their meetings and experiences. Now Erasmus had among his many friends and correspondents the philosopher Willibald Pirkheimer, of Nuremberg, of whom he has told some interesting stories, and who was also the intimate friend of the greatest of German artists, Albert Dürer. When Dürer left Nuremberg in 1520 on his visit to the Netherlands, it was only natural that he should meet Erasmus who was then residing at Antwerp. He also met Peter Giles or Aegidius, the town recorder, a man of no mean literary parts, who was the common friend of Erasmus and Sir Thomas More; and in his house the dialogue of More's *Utopia* is supposed to have taken place, as to him that classical work was dedicated.

In the meantime, during the years 1520-1521, Sir Thomas More, who had advanced greatly in the favour of King Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey, was often on the continent engaged in diplomatic embassies. He was present at the meeting of the Kings, Francis I and Henry VIII with the Emperor Charles V, on the celebrated "Field of the Cloth of Gold" in June, 1520; and he remained some time at Calais, visiting Erasmus and his

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

possession of the King of England, done some years later, and representing the Chancellor with a more severe expression he chose almost the same position; the fact that the great Dürer took this view of the face would be respectfully considered by the younger artist Holbein. Sir Thomas is shown in a three-quarters view of the face, looking to his left, wearing the usual scholar's black cap with lapels, and a broad collar of brown sable fur about his shoulders. The background is of the soft green tone often employed by the artist, on which, to the right above the head is painted in black the name MORE in the capitals used by Dürer in his paintings and engravings. This inscription, not visible under the discoloured varnish when purchased, was brought fully to light when Mr. Carter cleaned it carefully in the presence of witnesses. On the lower corner of the picture to the left, was seen, in small letters, the name "Sr. Tho. More" and on the opposite side the remains of the name of the painter Albert Dürer, of which the initials and several letters still remain visible. It is well known how Dürer loved to label his pictures with all sorts of written, engraved, or painted inscriptions, as the case might be, though the principal value of most of these is as a means of identification, in this instance well supported by the quality of the work itself.

In it we find the well-known "ear-marks" of Dürer:—the keen sense of precise form, rendered in the largest manner, the fresh clear colouring and frank contrasting tones, and the minute treatment of the hair and fur, so personal to him. But above all a sense of life and the presence of a great intellectual perception, pierce the surface of the work.

In one point it differs favourably from the other known portraits of Sir Thomas More, and that is, in the keen and almost merry alertness of expression which his writings and sayings would suggest, but which the somewhat glum Holbein portraits some years later, lack. We must remember that More was the first lawyer of his time in England, as well as a learned philosopher and deeply religious man. But he knew how to unite cheerfulness with goodness, and we constantly find in his writings and sayings the words "merry" and "merrily" even to his last moments on the scaffold. This portrait thus gives us the true More, some years after he had written the *Utopia*

and before the growing cares of state and the attempt to unite loyalty to his king with fidelity to his conscience had weighed heavily upon his naturally blithe spirit. It seems to have been almost miraculously preserved through the centuries in some quiet corner to become the heritage of our time, when the study of the life of this remarkable man, now beatified, has received fresh impetus and resulted in a deeper admiration for his heroic and saintly character, as well as for his value to the modern world as a great philosopher and humanist.

The present owners, by the approval and advice of many eminent personages who have seen it and who have united in admiring its qualities, decided to have the portrait etched for publication; and, having honoured me with the commission, requested me to write my impressions in regard to it, deeming that while engaged so closely in studying the minutest details necessary for the production of an etching, I should be able more closely and accurately to analyse its characteristics than one who had studied it less intimately. Weeks, and I may say, months, of study have only increased my admiration for the portrait and the marvellous art that produced it. I feel I have been privileged to approach very near to the personalities both of Dürer and his great subject. My interest increased as the work advanced, and a proof to myself of its transcendant qualities is, that I have worked with even more zest in ending than in beginning the task, while attempting more fully to fathom the subtle, mystical, and baffling qualities that lie beneath the apparent simplicity of treatment. It is probable that Dürer painted it in a relatively short time, as he was travelling abroad at that period, like his distinguished subject, and away from his home studio. He therefore would do it more directly, with less building up and polishing of surfaces, but with much freshness of manner and insight into character and expression.

There is a Gothic quaintness in its form of presentation, and a certain caligraphic quality and strength of line that betrays his frequent use of the graver; yet, when this archaic quality is fully understood, what a wealth of perception is indicated and how intellectually expressive the face becomes!

The splendid impression that More's character made in

history, is eloquently maintained in this production of th
great Nuremberg artist; and when we know how bravely an
cheerfully he bore his trouble, approaching the scaffold withou
fear, and even happy in his sacrifice for conscience's sake, th
martyr's crown adds its halo to the reality. This portrait don
by the immortal Dürer in the Blessed Thomas' happiest years
must have been treasured by his family and especially by hi
favourite daughter, Margaret. Its recovery and recognition
must interest equally those who can appreciate its remarkable
qualities as a work of art, and the many who find in the life
and deeds of its saintly subject a model of heroic perfection.

ROBT. J. WICKENDEN.

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