

# PUBLIC MEN AT WORK :

## I.—HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.\*

BY DAYRELL TRELAWNEY.



HERE are perhaps no great dignitaries in this advanced age of ours about whom the general public knows less than archbishops.

Our royal family, with a courtesy only equalled by the wisdom of such a course, are readily accessible to all their subjects, including even the journalist in search of "copy."

Politicians, artists, actors, authors, nearly all succumb sooner or later to the wiles of the interviewer. Even a chat with a bishop is not unknown in the pages of enterprising journals. But with archbishops the matter is different. To the public they ever remain veiled in a cloud of mystery. No enthralling details of the toys and pastimes of their childhood have been forthcoming; information about their favourite dogs and horses is sadly deficient, while illustrated interviews with our primates are as yet things of the future.

These facts have their advantages perhaps, especially for archbishops, but there is no doubt they have their drawbacks also, one of the most prominent being that the average layman knows very little about an archbishop. This in itself is regrettable, for I have no hesitation in saying that, with the exception of the life of her Majesty the Queen, there is no more forcible demonstration of responsibilities and trials bravely borne, overwhelming work methodically carried out, and unending rounds of social duties cheerfully performed, than in the routine of a day in the life of one of our archbishops.

In an article that gives a sketch of the work and leisure which falls to the lot of a primate it may be well to glance first at the duties which he has in common with all diocesan bishops. The most important of these may be briefly enumerated as follows:—The ordination of priests and deacons, the confirmation of candidates, the consecration of churches, the task of inaugurating and presiding over all important diocesan enterprises, and the responsibility of guiding,

encouraging, and sometimes rebuking, the clergy and laity under their care.

Until the passing of the Clergy Discipline Bill the bishops were in many cases legally powerless. The law as it at present stands provides comparatively few means for the enforcement of episcopal authority, and even these are so intensely contrary to the tendency of public opinion, so tedious in routine and so expensive in method, that they are only very rarely resorted to. Nor is the sharp discipline of the army and navy known in the ranks of the church militant. The curt and irrevocable decision of a superior officer at once closes a regimental difficulty; the fiat of a naval commander is brief and absolute. But such simple and decisive methods are an unknown boon to a bishop in dealing with his clergy. In their place we find moral suasion, tactful argument and patient discussion. On the most trivial point of ritual expediency or church order a clergyman has, and frequently avails himself of, the right to enter into a prolific and detailed correspondence with his diocesan. Should the answer prove unsatisfactory to his mind he is entitled to one or more interviews, if not with the bishop at all events with his lordship's suffragan or chaplain. What the ultimate result is depends a good deal on the clergyman and still more on the bishop. But the point I wish to bring forward is the enormous amount of additional work such proceedings entail, and the extraordinary success with which a vast body of men, representing every variety of thought, are thus ruled by wisdom, patience and tact.

Admirable however as are the methods and results, the responsibilities and difficulties of such a form of government are almost incredible. And here it is that some of the laity fail to realise the weight of a bishop's work.

If this is true of bishops, how much more so does it apply to our primates, on whom, in addition to their work as diocesans, rest responsibilities of such a much wider and deeper nature. The growth and increase of these duties has of recent years been enormous.

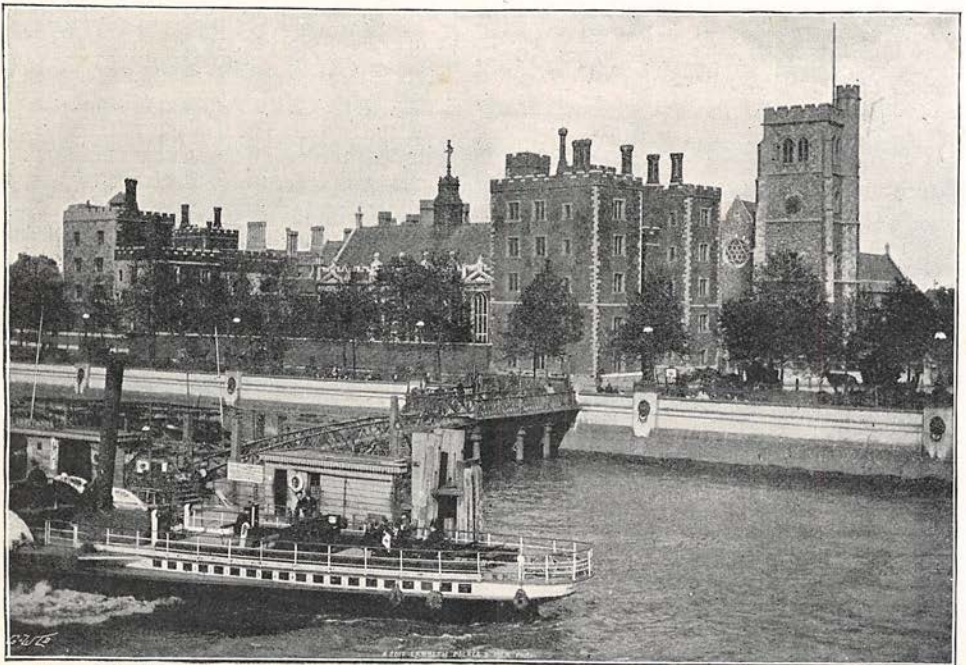
Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canter-

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bury, was little more than a missionary. As he and his handful of followers landed on the Kentish coast and walked in a slow procession, bearing a cross and singing chants, to where King Ethelbert sat under an oak tree, a very humble insignificant body they appeared, no doubt. And yet among them were two men, the one destined to occupy the see of Canterbury as the first Primate of England, the other, Paulinus, having subsequently been singled out by the Pope for the position of Archbishop of York, a title which, owing no doubt to his

obtained give an interesting idea of the scope of his ecclesiastical and personal authority.

Thus we learn that at the Priory of St. Sepulchre—a foundation of nuns—the prioress, who was eighty-four years old, was charged by two of the sisters (who were past eighty) with defaming their character to the great scandal of their house. The archbishop, with consummate tact, admonished both accusers and accused, telling the prioress not to use “contumelious words,” and ordering the sisters to be obedient to her



From a photo by]

[Poulton, Lee.

LAMBETH PALACE.

(The London home of the Archbishop of Canterbury.)

incessant labours in the northern province, has often been mistakenly accorded to him.

The duties attached to the archiepiscopal sees were, in the early days of the Church, arduous and difficult, and the responsibilities and dangers great. The issues of life and death lay in the hands of a successful primate, whereas, if he failed, his own life might pay the forfeit. To Archbishop Warham is due the most perfect view we possess of the diocese of Canterbury previous to the Reformation, for he not only made visitation of it in 1511, but he laid a debt on all posterity by recording what he saw and heard. The subjects upon which the archbishop's opinion was solicited and

rule, as required by their profession, thus no doubt preventing a serious breach, which the espousal of one-sided views might possibly have brought about.

A record is given of the heterogeneous array of complaints laid before the archbishop by the monks of St. Martin's, at Dover. These included the curious grievances that they had “linen instead of woollen sheets,” and no one to “teach them grammar.” We should imagine that these are the most remarkable requests of such a nature on record.

Many of the colleges and nunneries, notably those of Wye and Davington, pass excellent examinations, but at Faversham,

the list of complaints is so formidable that the mind of the reader quails before the picture of domestic discomfort it reveals. For example: "the food is not properly served," the sacristan is "contumelious," the butler "ill-mannered," the cellarer is accused of spoiling the food for the refectory, which was manifestly gratuitous interference, his own duties being the proper decanting of wine. Whether this was done by demoralising the cook is not stated, but it is certain that the meat came up "half-boiled," and that for some occult reason the cellarer and not the cook was held to be the culprit. The archbishop was severe; possibly he was offered "half-boiled" meat, but of this there is no record.

Unfortunately at the Priory of Leeds no better state of affairs awaited his grace. One of the monks lays a petition before the archiepiscopal visitor which is full of unspoken, yet evidently insulted, dignity. He begs that in future the prior may not be allowed "to lay hands *and feet*" (!) on his brethren. Granted.

The churchwardens too are allowed their say during this tour of inspection. One of these gentlemen solemnly complains to the archbishop that his churchyard is "haunted with hogs"—though it does not appear whether this statement implies grazing or ghosts. What could exceed the pathos of the following return by wardens asked to describe the condition of their parish—"Desperate"?

The parochial clergy too appeal to the archbishop. A vicar complains that a canon (who had apparently received his education at the monastery where no grammar was taught) came and addressed him as follows: "Howbeit thou beareth thee bold, and was instituted by my lord of Canterbury; he hath nought to do here, for we are exempt from him, so tell him." Another priest is interrupted by an irate parishioner during the solemnisation of the marriage service. It is evident that the tediousness of wedding festivities felt by those not directly concerned is not a thing of to-day, for we are told that this guest suddenly shouted to the officiating clergyman who was putting the necessary questions enjoined by the rubric, "If thou ax them any more here I will styk thee." A sidesman states that when attempting, during service time, to get a parishioner out of public-house to attend worship (was this one of their duties?), that person offensively, but somewhat enigmatically, told the officer to go and "shake

his ears." The peaceful residents of Kennington parish may be surprised to learn that a former parishioner, named Richard Ricards, threatened, in the year 1511, to slay his vicar.

These cases of insubordination are the more incomprehensible when it is remembered that humiliating penances, excommunication, confiscation, torture, and death by burning, were punishments dealt out by the authorisation of the prelates of the day.

A little light is thrown on the subject by the following instances. Archbishop Warham passed upon James Morris, of the parish of Sutton Valence, the following sentence for certain misdemeanours: "To go before the processions made in the church of Sutton on the three following Sundays bareheaded and barefooted, wearing only a shirt and holding in his hand a taper, value twopence." On the third Sunday, during mass, he was to "humbly and devoutly offer the said taper into the hands of the officiating minister."

The minuteness of the instructions left no loophole for an additional garment during this chilly undertaking, nor was it possible for the unfortunate penitent to vent his scorn by presenting a farthing rushlight or show his indignation by thrusting his two-penny taper into the hands of the officiating priest with unseemly haste. The question arises why did he not defy his episcopal judge or at least object actively to such indignities? But here the answer is simple enough. To defy the authority of the Church meant in those days certain excommunication, which in turn entailed that the culprit should be dealt with by the laws of the state. That my readers may realise what this course implied, I give the following significant extract which appears in the municipal records of Canterbury dated 1535:—

"For the expenses of bringing	
a heretic from London ...	14s. 8d.
For 1½ load of wood to	
burn him... ..	2s. 0d.
For gunpowder ... ..	1d.
A stake and staple ... ..	8d."

Such an entry throws a lurid light on the subject in question and may explain why any ecclesiastical penance was welcomed rather than the enforcement of the laws of the land.

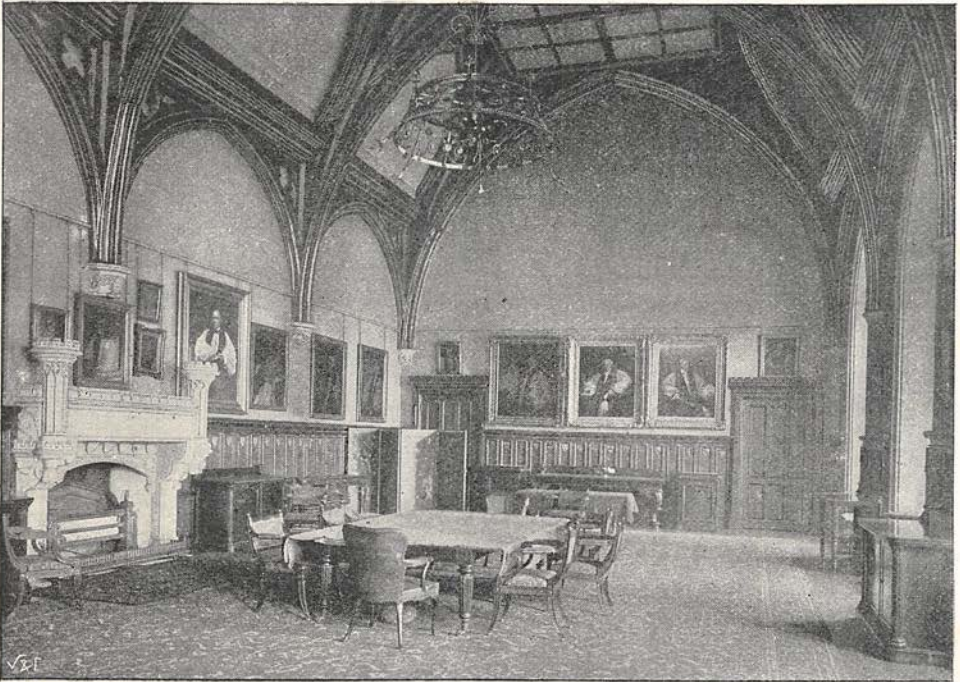
If these records of diocesan work and authority are interesting a still greater contrast may be found by a comparison of the princely state and lavish expenditure,

customary with many former archbishops and the simple mode of life which obtains with our present-day primates.

Dean Hook tells us how Parker received Queen Elizabeth at Canterbury with great magnificence, keeping open house the whole time of her Majesty's visit, so that when she left she told his grace that the display of his loyalty, munificence, and good taste, reflected much honour upon him. It was at this visit that the archbishop offered the Queen the curiously assorted gifts of a horse and a golden salt-cellar. When we read

of the kitchen, caterer, clerk of the spicery, yeomen of the eery, master and yeomen of the horse, bakers, pantlers, butlers, larderers, squillerys (?), carvers, servers, cup-bearers, marshals, ushers," and many others too numerous to mention.

None was more fond of that "lordly prelatung" which Latimer so sternly censures than Archbishop Whitgift. This primate, with his courteous and affable manners and unbounded liberality, was popular, not only with the clergy and laity of his diocese, but with Queen Elizabeth, who paid him no less



*From a photo by]*

THE GUARD-ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE.

*[Russell.*

that her Majesty's seat at the banquet was of marble "adorned with gilded trappings," while over her was "a canopy glittering with gold," we are somewhat prepared for the amount which this sumptuous entertainment cost her host. The total expenditure is stated to have been no less than two thousand pounds—a vast sum in those days.

Those who blame our primates for undue extravagance in the maintenance of their households will do well to study the following list (the original ms. is in the Lambeth library), which gives the titles of Archbishop Parker's household: "Chaplains, almoners, painters, writers, bookbinders, printers, engravers, steward, treasurer, controller, clerk

than fourteen visits, often prolonging them two and even three days.

No royal progress was marked by greater pomp than the archbishop's visitations to the larger towns of his province. Eight hundred to a thousand horse, provided and paid out of his privy purse, formed his escort, more than a hundred servants wore his liveries, while some forty gentlemen of his household, adorned with gold chains, completed his princely following. Little wonder that a papal legate, who happened to witness one of these state entries into Canterbury, stood astounded at a sight that Rome itself could not equal.

Every now and again an attempt was

made by one prelate or another to cut down the stately living customary with the high ecclesiastical dignitaries of the day. Thus we read that by common consent it was decided, during the primacy of Cramer, that in regulating their tables the archbishops should never exceed "six divers kinds of fleshe or six of fishe, . . . the bishops not to exceed five, the deane and archdeacon not above four." As the archbishops were however allowed four "second dishes," and the bishops and deans fared in similar proportions, our sympathies for these fasting prelates are not keenly awakened, even when we read that "of partriches the archbishop must only have three on a dish," and of "larks and that sort *but twelve*." But these drastic reforms obtained little favour with the public of the day, and once again the royal hospitality and liberality reigned supreme.

And here I shall venture to advance the opinion that these princely methods had their uses and advantages. When Queen Elizabeth sat at Archbishop Parker's banquet table, richly clad, surrounded by her lords and ladies, and with a canopy of gold above her, the humblest and poorest inhabitants of Canterbury were admitted to see the goodly sight and to receive the abundance that overflowed from the laden tables. To them the Queen and archbishop were ever afterwards a magnificent reality, for had they not stood in her Majesty's presence, and did not the archbishop pass among them bidding them welcome?

Then again what a right royal exit and entry did the southern primates make to and from Lambeth House on their way to Parliament, crossing the Thames in the magnificent state barge. And when the Archbishop of York drove from the palace at Bishopthorpe his grace's meanest neighbour might know the fact by the horn which was blown to herald his coming, and if they so wished, could wait to see him pass.

But these days are past and in their place reigns a simplicity in which (if I may say so in all respect) the bishops encourage each other. Fired by a desire to save the departing customs once in use in the episcopate, I suggested the resumption of the horn-blowing at the gates of Bishopthorpe to a former Archbishop of York. He gave me no encouragement. As a matter of fact he laughed and told another bishop of my suggestion; he in turn also laughed. And there my mission ended.

Personally, having known more than one

archbishop, I may add that, deplorable as it may seem, there is in the primates of to-day a growing tendency to extreme simplicity and unostentatious living that is, in my humble opinion, wholly ineradicable. The Archbishop of Canterbury has no state barge. I will go further than this and say that he has never even wished for one. I do not know if it is this extraordinary simplicity combined with so high a rank which mystifies the laity in their conception of an archbishop, but there is no doubt that, as I have said, with the exception of those who are connected with affairs ecclesiastical, the laity have a clearer conception of the duties, responsibilities and daily life of almost any of her Majesty's subjects than they have of the two primates in whose hands, to a very great extent, lies the guidance of the national Church.

Laymen are frequently disturbed in the presence of a bishop by the sense of their inadequate knowledge of matters likely, in their opinion, to form the sole topic of conversation. I remember an amusing instance of this, of which I was witness, not long ago at a large social gathering held to welcome the new suffragan of a diocese. "Let me introduce you to the bishop," said the hostess to a layman who was a prominent figure in the hunting field, and always ready to support his parish church and vicar. "I'd much rather not," was the honest reply. "The truth is I'm so rocky in my knowledge of cathedrals, and—er—churchwardens, and Sunday-school treats, you know." And so the acquaintanceship between two men equally indispensable to the church was prevented by a groundless belief—which is however a popular one—that a bishop is unable to adapt himself to the wants and requirements of a layman, which, as a matter of fact, formed the entire basis upon which the episcopate was wisely founded.

Another instance comes to my mind as I write. The late Archbishop Thomson, who was keenly appreciative in all matters which concerned the laity, and especially desirous in his social intercourse of removing any barrier which his episcopal rank might tend to create, had nevertheless a dignity of presence and solemnity of address which not infrequently defeated the object he had in view. It was customary for the officers of the garrison at York to drop in informally at tea-time at Bishopthorpe. The archbishop was often present. An officer who had lately joined the York garrison having expressed his intense awe of archbishops in the abstract,



[Russell.]

DR. BENSON'S STUDY IN LAMBETH PALACE.

From a photo by  
V&A

an opening was at once seen for a mild practical joke. He was assured that even his worst fears could not approach the reality. While it was obvious that he must in common civility pay the call, he was warned in a friendly way that the catechism would be a certain topic of conversation, and an immediate study of the collect for the day was suggested. Whatever portions of these warnings the new-comer chose to disregard, there is no doubt that, coupled with his intense natural shyness, they made his first afternoon call (in company with his brother officers) a source of the most intense misery which was evident to all present. The archbishop noticing this shy stranger, whom he had not met before, endeavoured to draw him into conversation. Under the circumstances nothing could have been more disastrous than his opening remark. Speaking in his full sonorous bass tones as he turned to regard the speaker, he uttered the words, "What is your name?" "It is the catechism," thought the unfortunate object of the inquiry, with a consternation nothing could hide, while the archbishop looked mildly round at his guest, wondering at the effect of his simple remark. Subsequent efforts at conversation were doomed to failure, and the party broke up. When, several days afterwards, the real story reached Bishopthorpe, no one enjoyed it more heartily than the archbishop himself.

Another equally amusing incident is the following, which has never yet reached the public, and which proves that this spirit of reverential awe is far from universal. One of our archbishops was visiting a country house, and so commended himself to his hostess's family of children that one of them, a bright little clever girl of about eight, threatened to monopolise the conversation almost entirely, but was brought to a sudden silence by her father's whispered remonstrance of "Shut up, Mabel!" For some time she remained quietly considering the rebuke. Profiting by her silence, her father and mother drew their guest on to assert his conversational powers, which he did with success, passing from one subject to another with the ease that comes of an appreciative audience. To the child who had been rebuked for talkativeness the manifest injustice of favouritism shown to this conversational visitor became totally intolerable. In the middle of a sentence a small but stern voice made itself heard. "Shut up, archbishop!" it said in grave

tones of rebuke, and it is needless to add that the remark had the desired effect.

We have at the present moment two primates of whom churchmen have every cause to be proud. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the first subject of the realm, and he fills his position of Primate of all England with dignity and success. His career and antecedents are too well known to need recapitulation here. A glance at the archbishop at work will be of fresher interest, although it is nearly impossible to present in writing any adequate picture of the heavy duties and overwhelming responsibilities which pertain to the see of Canterbury, and which are so well and faithfully carried out by its present occupant.

From February to the end of July the archbishop resides at Lambeth Palace, retiring for the other six months of the year to the comparative quiet of the life at Addington Park, Croydon.

His grace is an early riser. He once mentioned to me in conversation that he began his day at 6.30, and I remember at the time being divided between a great admiration for his action, and an equally great fear lest he should question me as to when I began mine. The first hour of the day is set aside for devotional study. At 8.30 breakfast is served, at which the family and chaplains are present. At Addington there are frequently visitors staying in the house, and breakfast is sometimes quite a large gathering. At 9.15 there is service in the house chapel. At 9.45 the archbishop retires to his study to go through some of the more important letters and documents needing his revision or signature; and here it may not be amiss to say a few words on the subject of archiepiscopal correspondence.

Within late years this department of work has developed enormously. Dr. Davidson states, on the authority of a former porter at Lambeth, that in Archbishop Howley's time his grace's letters were all placed in a small china bowl on the hall table—"there were scarcely enough to cover the bottom of it"—and an hour's work sufficed for their perusal and for replies. During Dr. Tait's tenure of the primacy the same authority mentions that the correspondence increased immensely. The daily average of letters was about forty-seven during the summer months and thirty-six in winter. Dr. Davidson tells how, when chaplain to Archbishop Tait, he used to be reduced to sore straits on windy

days when the primate, who loved the open air, dictated letters to him as they both strolled along the cliff at Broadstairs, or on the terrace at Lambeth. The climax was reached when the archbishop insisted on his chaplain's revising and annotating a series of visitation statistics on sheets of flimsy foolscap while riding on horseback along the Thames Embankment.

For some years after Dr. Benson took up his residence at Lambeth he had only one chaplain, who, with a private secretary, managed to cope with the work; but such a state of things is past for ever. Each year brings an enormous increase of correspondence, interviews, and official business generally, and his grace's two chaplains and his private secretary, Mr. M. B. Phillips, find their hands fuller than ever.

The ever-growing extension of our colonial and missionary episcopate is a source of great additional anxiety and labour to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and he has shown in more than one instance his great wisdom in giving advice to daughter churches, which not only benefits them, but consolidates and strengthens the power of the Anglican Church as a whole.

The affectionate relations existing between our own Church and the sister Church in America have been greatly due to the joint policy of our primates in according a brotherly welcome to the members of the American episcopate. Nor must it be forgotten that the late Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Thorold) did much, by his frequent visits to the States, to draw closer the bond which unites these two powerful branches of the Anglican Church.

The vast problems which confront our bishops and clergy in distant lands, and the decisions which have to be arrived at—in many cases fraught with grave issues for the future—are usually submitted to the Archbishop of Canterbury for advice. It will readily be seen how serious is the responsibility laid upon him, and how necessary it is for the successful progress of the Church that he should not only be capable of taking a wide and comprehensive view of ecclesiastical imperialism, but that he should devote continuous thought and labour to the solution of the questions on which he is asked for guidance. Yet the incessant routine of duties, especially during the six months' residence at Lambeth, renders this almost impossible. When not engaged in the diocese, confirming, consecrating churches, preaching, etc., or occupied with the

examination and preparation of candidates for ordination, the archbishop must hurry from one appointment to another. He must preside at the meeting of the Ecclesiastical Commission, or at one of the many committees where his presence is almost indispensable. With but scanty time for preparation, he must be present to make an important speech at a Mansion House gathering or annual meeting of a leading church society. Hardly has he finished his address before he is due at the House of Lords, to take charge of a Bill which he has introduced on behalf of the episcopate. Frequently the evening finds him attending a public dinner, where again he must speak almost impromptu. And the most trying part of all is that, great as may be his power and influence in the affairs of the Church, he is totally unable to escape from the inevitable reporter. He must beware of the fate that is generally ascribed to Archbishop Tait—although I am not prepared to vouch for the accuracy of the story. Dr. Tait, according to rumour, was giving the address at the annual meeting of a prominent society. No new developments had recently arisen, and he devoted himself to explaining the objects and operations of the excellent institution whose cause he was advocating. The reporter—evidently an old hand—saved himself the trouble of taking down the primate's words, and the next day there appeared in the paper a brief account of the proceedings, with a list of those present, concluding with the words: "The Archbishop of Canterbury made an interesting speech, which will be found in our account of the annual meeting of this society last year!"

Archbishop Benson is devoted to riding, and many a good gallop does he enjoy with his daughter and sons in the neighbourhood of Addington. When in London he will often escape from the pressure of his duties, if only for three-quarters of an hour, in order to indulge in a ride round Battersea Park or in the Row.

He is fond of animals. His kindness to the birds in winter, feeding them with his own hand every morning, is well known; while Miss Benson has given to the world a charming story of the faithful old family friend, "Watch," his grace's collie.

The most momentous utterances made of recent years were those of the two archbishops at the opening of the Church House. The Archbishop of Canterbury said that his brother primate and the northern bishops would be welcome to use the Church House when it was not occupied by the southern



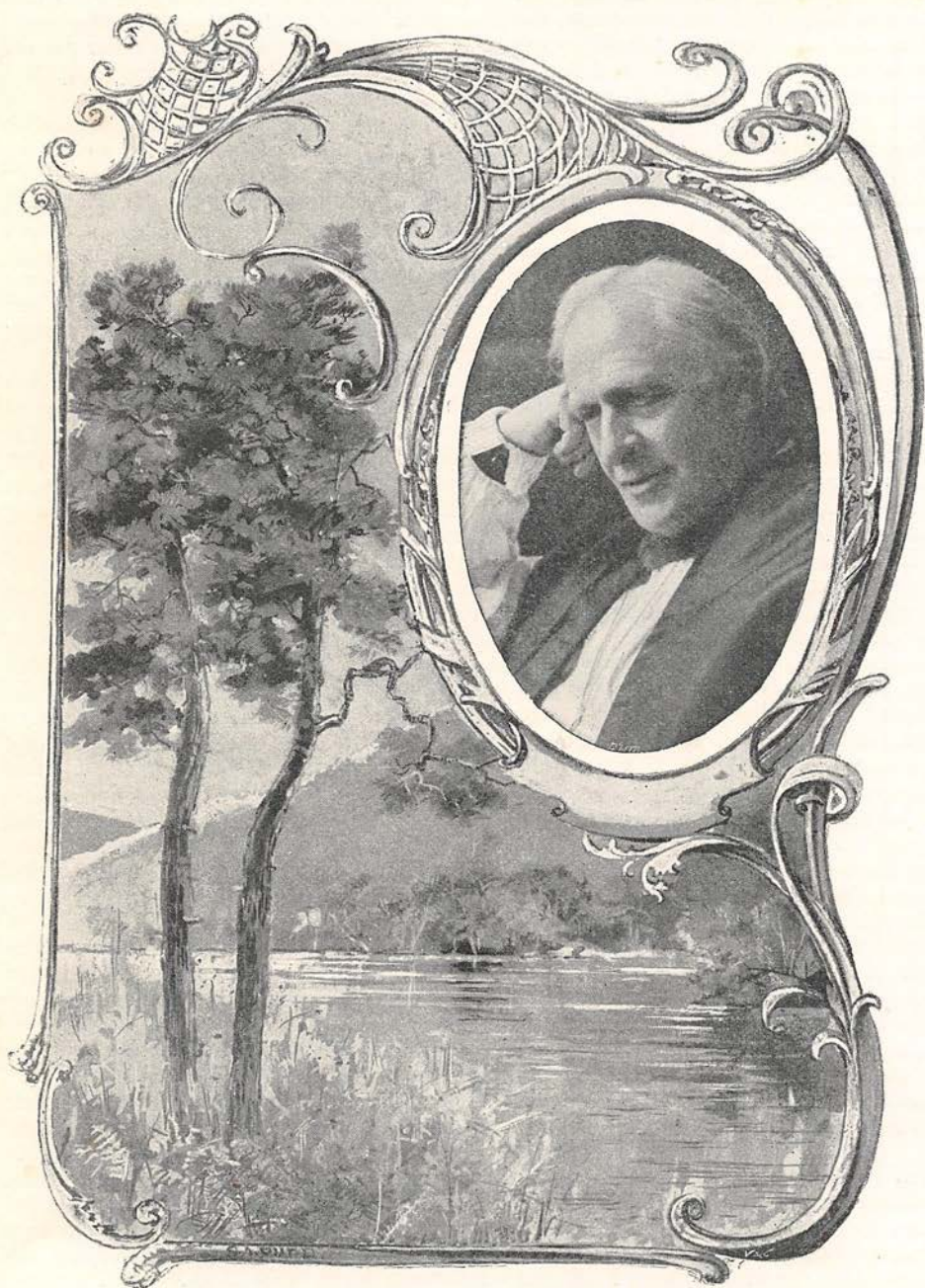
convocation, but if they came when it was they would be more welcome still; to which Dr. Maclagan replied that he hoped the day was not far distant when he should accept this invitation—not when the rooms were empty, but when they were filled with the members of the Convocation of Canterbury, and the two primates could sit side by side. This utterance was received with an enthusiastic outburst of applause, foreshadowing as it did the inauguration of a new era, when the Church of England will be represented by one national synod, and the differences of the northern and southern provinces, which at times have been somewhat acute, will belong to the history of the past.

It is a regret to me that I may not see our

southern primate enter Canterbury, as did his predecessor, with a following of 1000 horsemen. But a still grander sight may be the lot of those who live to see the thirteen hundredth anniversary of the advent of St. Augustine to Britain. For then, it is said, the Archbishop of Canterbury will visit the shores of Kent where his predecessor landed, and following his grace will go, not 1000 horsemen, but many hundred bishops gathered in England for the Lambeth Conference, and clergy from all parts of the globe. Not Whitgift nor Wolsey himself could boast such state as this, for it tells of a Church that, like the country from which it has its name, claims an empire on which the sun never sets.



[Drawn by E. Drake.]



DR. BENSON, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.  
*(From a photo by Russell.)*