

story of such conflicts is always interesting—comedy and tragedy winding one into the other. They have furnished occasion for remarkable exhibitions of human character; and I take advantage of the publication of new materials and the republication of old materials in an accessible form to draw a sketch of the once famous St. Thomas of Canterbury, who, after three centuries of neglect, is again being lifted up as an object of admiration, and in whose actions and whose fate an incredulous world, though unconvinced that he was a saint, may still find instruction. I must commence with an attempt to reproduce the mental condition of the times in which St. Thomas lived. Human nature is said to be always the same. It is no less true that human nature is continuously changing. Motives which in one age are languid and even unintelligible have been in another alive and all-powerful. To comprehend these differences, to take them up into his imagination, to keep them present before him as the key to what he reads, is the chief difficulty and the chief duty of the student of history.

Characteristic incidents, particular things which men representative of their age indisputably did, convey a clearer idea than any general description. Let the reader attend to a few transactions which