

not bishops do? Was ever crime more atrocious than that which was lately committed in the church at Coventry? ¹ When did pagan ever deal with Christian as the bishop did with the monks? I, Nigellus, saw with my own eyes, after the monks were ejected, harlots openly introduced into the cloister and chapter-house to lie all night there, as in a brothel, with their paramours. ² Such are the works of bishops in these days of ours. This is what they do, or permit to be done; and so cheap has grown the dignity of the ecclesiastical order that you will easier find a cowherd well educated than a presbyter, and an industrious duck than a literate parson. ³

So far Nigellus. We are not to suppose that the state of the Church had changed unfavourably in the twenty years which followed Becket's martyrdom, or we should have to conclude that the spiritual enthusiasm which the martyrdom undoubtedly excited had injured, and not improved, public morality.

The prelates and clergy with whom Henry the

immo ut fere omnibus episcopis moris est, ministerium confirmationis equo insidendo peragere, sed ob sacramenti venerationem equo desilire et stando pueris manum imponere.—*Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, vol. ii p. 164.

¹ In the year 1191, Hugh, Bishop of Coventry, violently expelled the monks from the cathedral there, and instituted canons in their places.

² 'Testis mihi Deus est quod dolens et tristis admodum refero quod in ecclesiâ Coventrensi oculis propriis aspexi. In claustro et capitulo vidi ego et alii nonnulli ejectis monachis meretrices publice introductas et totâ nocte cum lenonibus decubare sicut in lupanari.'

³ Abridged from many pages of Nigellus. *Sat. Poems*, vol. i. p. 203, &c.