

authentic is known, except that she was a religious woman who brought up her children in the fear of God. She lived till her son was twenty-one. The father had been impoverished by fires in the city, and was unable to give the child as expensive an education as he had desired.¹ Nor was he perhaps wise in his own management, if an anecdote told by Fitzstephen, the most sober of the archbishop's biographers, is really true. He had sent the young Thomas to school at Merton Abbey. He went once to see him there, and when the boy was brought in, he fell on his knees before him and adored him. 'What do you, foolish old man?' the prior, who was present, said. 'Fall at your son's feet! He should rather fall at yours.' 'Sir,' said Gilbert Becket

opinion had been that the Becketts were of Saxon extraction. An anonymous biographer, however, asserts that Gilbert Becket came from Rouen and his wife from Caen, and there is now a disposition to accept this positive statement as conclusive. It does not appear, however, who this anonymous writer was, and his authority is weakened by the name which he gives to Becket's mother. All the other biographers who were personally intimate with the archbishop

call her Matilda. The anonymous writer calls her Rose. Very little is probably known about the matter. A tradition arose, and was at one time generally believed, that she was a Saracen. This is doubtless a legend; but the Norman origin is unproved also. See *Materials*, vol. iv. p. 81.

¹ 'Pater quippe jam senuerat nec ad filii sumptus sufficere poterat substantia quæ remansit.' — *Materials*, vol. ii. p. 359.