

serious sin. If there was anything further on his conscience (did the pope suspect that the promise had been dishonest?), he might confess it to any discreet priest. He (the pope) meanwhile absolved him, and advised and enjoined him to return to his duties.

The first campaign was thus over, and the king was so far victorious. The consent of the bishops having been given, the Constitutions were immediately acted upon. The number of criminals among the clergy happened to be unusually large.<sup>1</sup> They were degraded, sent to trial, and suffered in the usual way by death or mutilation. 'Then,' says Becket's despairing biographers, 'was seen the mournful spectacle of priests and deacons who had committed murder, manslaughter, theft, robbery, and other crimes, carried in carts before the king's commissioners and punished as if they had been ordinary men.' The archbishop clamoured, threatened, and, as far as his power went, interfered. The king was firm. He had sworn at his coronation, he said, to do justice in the realm, and there were no greater villains in it than many of the clergy.<sup>2</sup> That

<sup>1</sup> 'Sed et ordinatorum inordinati mores inter regem et archiepiscopum auxere malitiam, qui solito abundantius per idem tempus apparebant, publicis irre-

titi criminibus.'—*Materials*, vol. ii. p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> 'In omni scelere et flagitio nequiores'