

IV.

THE pope had sent legatine powers to the king, but had requested the king to abstain for the present from using them, and something was still wanting for general satisfaction. He had been required to confirm the Constitutions by a bull. He had hesitated and postponed his answer. At length he sent the Archbishop of Rouen to England to endeavour to compromise matters. The formal authority of the Church was still wanting, and in the absence of it persons who agreed with the king in principle were uneasy at the possible consequences. The clergy might be wicked, but they were magicians notwithstanding, and only the chief magician could make it safe to deal with them. In the autumn of 1164 the king once more summoned a great council to meet him at Northampton Castle. The attendance was vast. Every peer and prelate not disabled was present, all feeling the greatness of the occasion. Castle, town, and monasteries were thronged to overflowing. Becket only had hesitated to appear. His attempt to escape to the continent was constructive treason. It was more than treason. It was a