Opposition to Papal Taxation in England Under Innocent IV

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OPPOSITION TO PAPAL TAXATION IN ENGLAND UNDER INNOCENT IV

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OPPOSITION TO PAPAL TAXATION IN ENGLAND UNDER INNOCENT IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Under Innocent III the papacy became the real center of the Christian world, recognized as such by all western Christendom. No ruler could afford to disregard papal orders, for fear of the sentences of interdict, excommunication, or even deposition. The numerous successors of Innocent in the thirteenth century,¹ strove to exert the same power and influence. Since they had neither the force of character nor the genius of an Innocent III, their success was only partial. Then too, changes, such as the growing spirit of nationality, were being wrought in men's minds, and straightway served as checks to the assertions of papal power in England.

In this century connection with Rome was evident in a number of ways. These will be considered under two main divisions, pecuniary and official. The first contact under pecuniary relations dates from an episode that took place under King John in 1213, and which established a feudal relation between this kingdom and the Roman See. After a long struggle, John had humbly

¹ In all, there were 13 popes between Innocent III and Boniface VIII. By center of the world is meant the political center as well as religious.
submitted to the pope, by acknowledging him and his successors as overlords of the kingdom of England and Ireland. Having taken off his crown, he now received it again from the pope, together with the guarantee of papal protection — an indication that the realm was now a fief of the Holy See. As feudal tribute, he agreed to pay the pope an annual cess of 1000 marks, 700 for England, and 300 for Ireland.¹

A second tie that bound England to Rome, was the obligation of the realm in the bestowal of a yearly gift to St. Peter,² called Peter's pence. Though in name a gift, the payment became a duty demanded each year by the pope. Its origin is found in Anglo-Saxon times, and at first meant the annual payment of a penny for each householder. Later however, the sum for England became fixed at 299 marks. This was in turn parcelled out among the different dioceses.³

In the third class of pecuniary connections, are found the incidental levies made for different purposes, which from time to time called for an extraordinary demand for money, and which could not be covered by Peter's pence. Tallages for crusades, tithes, feudal fines, and subsidies fall in this group.

Under the second heading, we have provision and collation of benefices. The papal chair claimed the right to choose

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1. Annales Monastici, I, 60; a mark = 2/3 pound.
successors to benefices in England, even before vacancies occurred—a claim which roused the English ire to a dangerously high point. What they so strongly objected to, was the fact that, instead of appointing Englishmen, the nepotic pope handed benefices over to foreigners.  

Innocent IV, besides his own favorites, also enriched kinsmen of Henry III's wife, Eleanor of Provence.

The motives which necessitated the collection of more money for the papal treasury, the pope always claimed were strictly for the advancement of Christendom. The century marks a period of trouble in the Holy Land, where the Saracen was ever advancing upon Christian territory. To withstand such an encroachment on his world kingdom, the pope gathered money from all Christian countries to fit out expeditions. He was ever using his influence to get kings to go on crusades in person—sending out nuncios and messengers not only as money gatherers, but also as preachers to influence men to take up the cross. Even in case one took the vow he might on the morrow buy his release from it, by the payment of a sum which the nuncio gladly accepted to swell the papal revenues.

Besides the war against the pagans, the Apostolic See was kept busy with troubles within its own dominions. The cause for dissension lay in northern Italy, where the Emperor Frederick was seizing territories, even approaching the outlying parts of the papal states. To curb these aggressive ambitions of the Emperor, the pope demanded pecuniary aid and troops. It was this very danger that caused the pope to put to sea and escape to France in 1244.

2. See Matthew Paris, V, 73.
3. Ibid., IV, 354-356.
To carry on this business in the Transalpine countries, the Roman court sent out nuncios and legates vested with extraordinary powers of excommunication and interdict to force men to give of their incomes. In addition to the direct papal taxes, these officers would, under the name of procurations, exact large sums, claimed to be necessary for their own maintenance. This enabled them to go about with great pomp and show, even as though they were the Holy Father himself. Many, especially the monks, were quite provoked; for, the nuncio—probably only a monk himself—would get the place of honor, e.g., sitting next to the bishop or even archbishop at table. By threats and promises the legate exacted all he could possibly get hold of, ostensibly for an impoverished papal court. To back up his demands, he would cite innumerable letters from the Apostolic See.¹

The chronicler unceasingly reiterates his tale of woe, by enumerating the many results of these "shameless exactions." "We are beaten, and are not allowed to exclaim against it; our throats are cut and we cannot cry out." To make matters even more wretched for the English, their wavering king, in the end, usually gave in to the apostolic authority. Indiscretion, instability, and fickleness are characteristics attributed to Henry III. What did it mean to gain his ear if on the morrow he might just as easily fall prey to the "honeyed and seductive" speeches of the legate, which the chronicler says were afterwards converted into shafts of enmity?² He was also prone to listen to the advise of foreign nobles, as the count of Toulouse, and the king of Aragon, "friends

¹ See work of Master Martin, especially in Chapter II.
² Matthew Paris, IV, 60-61. (1240).
as fragile as reeds," who did him much more harm than good in time of need. This of course sowed seeds of discord between the king and his subjects.\(^1\) They recognized "Romish tricks and illusions" even in royal taxation.\(^2\)

However much the English people might blame the pope and his court for their seeming arbitrary acts and greed, we must remember that in many cases the king solicited such action. The letters show that Henry asked for provisions of certain benefices. The opposition came because the bishops wished to control the provisions and collations in their own dioceses. The fact that the pope wrote urgent letters to the English subjects, asking them to submit willingly to certain taxes imposed by Henry, would, of course, make the king more lenient in allowing papal legates to come in and gather what money there was left. His vacillation and inconstancy were probably due to the fact that he was hedged in by such a situation. His interests lay in both directions, and it was hard to decide which would prove to be the most advantageous, to oppose the pope and back the complaints of his subjects, or vice versa.

It also follows that many of the extreme assertions of the papal claims in this century were no mere idle dreams to enhance the temporal power, but the vindication of rights which the popes believed legally and canonically their own. Still, there is no doubt but that once able to bring about the compliance of a people, the successors of Peter, were worldly enough in their

\(^1\) Matthew Paris, Chronica Majora (1342), IV, 231.
\(^2\) Parliamentary History, I, 18.
thoughts and actions to ask for money where it might be most readily obtained. Not as much is due to pure greed and rapacity as Matthew Paris, the principal chronicler of this period, makes out. There was a real sense of duty felt by the head of Christendom in carrying on the crusade against the pagan Saracen. One of the leading churchmen, Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, believed that the pope should stay out of temporal affairs as much as possible. In regard to the provision of benefices, he thought that no one had the right of appointment in any diocese without the consent of the bishop. Consequently he resisted any provisions made by the king, even if the latter had done so with papal consent, but without the sanction of the bishop.\(^1\) One the other hand, we must not excuse the popes entirely. There were by no means far above the average man – in fact very often below. Nepotism was sure to creep in, and consequently we have the numerous foreigners beneficed in England, to the extreme disgust of the natives. That enemy of England, the king of France, was also influencing the pope too much to make matters run smoothly.

As for the opposition, it was just as strong, if not stronger on the part of the clergy, than it was on the part of the laity. In all the councils which will be mentioned, it is the former who voiced their complaints. For example, in 1240, we find that the bishops drew up a long list of objections and presented them to the papal legate.\(^3\) In the same year the Berkshire rectors prepared similar arguments but even a greater number of them.\(^3\)

2. Ibid., IV, 37-38.
3. Ibid., IV, 39-43; as many as 14 arguments are given.
Much of the money, ever after it had been wrung from unwilling contributors, never reached the papal See. It had to pass through too many hands, and over too great a distance before reaching the Roman court. So, if a subsidy ever did reach its destination, it was apt to be considerably diminished in comparison with its original amount.
CHAPTER II.

MAGISTER MARTIN, PAPAL NUNCIO

On the twenty-second of August, 1241, Pope Gregory IX, almost a hundred years old, passed from the scene of strife. His death, says Matthew Paris, was hastened by the grief he experienced at the stubborn resistance of rebellious Emperor. A dissension appeared among the cardinals, due to a division in favor of Frederick. Finally they agreed on Geoffrey of Milan, called Clement IV, but he had filled the papal chair only sixteen days when he died, about November, 1241. More than a year elapsed, and still the cardinals had not agreed on an election. The Emperor, angry at their void promises to elect a pope suitable to him, proclaimed to his army, that they might seize and despoil any possessions of the cardinals and the church. Fearing the outcome of this, the cardinals gave in, and promised to do his bidding. About this same time, the French also demanded the election. To keep peace between England and France, the papacy had become a necessary instrument. Pressed to action on several sides, the cardinals agreed to meet in council at Rome. The result was that on June 24, 1243, they chose Cardinal Sinibald, who took the name Innocent IV, after a vacancy of over eighteen months. He immediately displayed

1. Matthew Paris, IV, 162.
2. Ibid, IV, 164-165.
3. Ibid., IV, 172.
4. Ibid.; IV, 239.
5. Ibid.; IV, 250.
6. Ibid., IV, 256.
his attitude by confirming the sentence pronounced against the Emperor, by his predecessor Gregory. Also, by being created pope at Anagni, he gained the hatred of the Romans. Early in 1244 Innocent sent a "new extortioner of money" into England, Master Martin by name, already noted for "his infamous rapacity," and therefore a ready tool for the pope. The latter demanded money to relieve the church from debts incurred, he said, in the preceding pontificate. He "asks, warns and commands" them to give the money to Martin or his messengers, within the period which the nuncio may fix. The legate was vested with new and extraordinary powers, even greater than the people remembered any former legate to have had. Strengthened by these he suspended the English prelates, so that they were unable to reap the fruits of their benefices until they had paid the specified amount into the papal treasury.

Altho not invested with the legate's robes, Master Martin bore himself as one. He made the Temple in London his abode, and a kind of headquarters whither the payments might be brought at a specified time. In order that he might travel from place to place in the greatest comfort and splendor, he imperiously demanded magnificent palfreys and provisions for his retinue.

2. Ibid., IV, 256.
3. Ibid., IV, pp. 369-370, gives the letter of Innocent IV of January 1244.
4. Ibid., IV, 368. See also Annales Monastici, I, 265.
5. Ibid., IV, 284.
6. Ibid., IV, 379.
7. Annales Monastici, III, 166.
8. Matthew Paris, IV, 368. See also Annales Monastici, III, 166-7 concerning his procurations.
Martin proceeded to exact contributions and make provisions for unknown purposes, "in accordance with the impulse of his own mind." Armed with letters from the pope, he produced new ones as often as he needed them. There were rumors to the effect that he carried with him many blanks, to which the papal bulls had already been attached, and which he might fill out as he pleased. He first approached the king and induced him to influence his prelates in favor of the pope, so that they would consent to grant a contribution to the Roman Court. The nuncio demanded that they should at least make a speedy payment of one thousand marks. Lest anyone should accuse him of caring about trifles, Martin disdained to accept any sum unless it amounted to thirty marks or more. Later he asked as an aid from the clergy for the work of Innocent against the emperor Frederick, about ten thousand marks. The clergy answered that in the absence of the bishops of Lincoln (Robert Grosseteste) and Farnham, they would not contribute, and altho Martin was reluctant to agree, the negotiations were delayed until a general council should meet.

Meanwhile he continued to make lesser exactions. Those who made excuses or opposed were punished to his full satisfaction. By these ceaseless demands, the discontent which had been lurking for a long time in the hearts of many Englishmen, burst forth in

2. Ibid., IV, 284.
3. Annales Monastici, III, 166-167. From these taxes only the Hospitallers, Templars, and Cistercians were exempt. See also Papal Registers, I, 205; and 229.
open complaints. No longer able to contain themselves, they voiced a protest in the council of London held in 1344. At this gathering of nobles and prelates the king asked for a pecuniary aid. Hearing that the nobles had given consent to this, Master Martin hastened to appear at the assembly to lay his demands before it. Since they had obeyed their temporal father he argued, it now behooved them also to obey their spiritual one, who was "fighting on behalf of the church universal against the rebellion of his children." By this he of course referred to the trouble with Frederick, and a point which the nobles were to use as one of their strongest arguments against the validity of such a tax. Since the sentiment of the council was so violent against consent to the papal demands, the king, probably fearing the strength of their opposition, gave Martin no encouragement. He told the nuncio that his nobles and prelates had so often been despoiled of their property that they had scarcely enough left for their own maintenance, and at that time would not or could not give anything either to him or the pope. At this Master Martin went away with a dejected look. A little later he himself called together a meeting of prelates, and showed them the papal letters.

These deliberations resulted in elaborate protests framed up by the English people in council against the papal demands. They declare that if the pope could see conditions of the past as compared with those of the present, he would not harass the church

2. Ibid., IV, 372-374.
3. Ibid., IV, 369.
with such exactions and afflictions or extort from them "what is not his." From time to time, they relate, their kings have given the Church of their lands and goods, but not with liberty so absolute, that they should not have first right to them in case incomes from them were needed for the kingdom. If the revenues should be sent away to Italy, how could means for the king be procured? English territory at this very time was in danger of being invaded by Louis of France. Should the English have given Innocent money to fight Frederick, they would have incurred the latter's hatred and animosity, even to the point of making a vengeful attack on England.¹ In fact the emperor did write a letter to them urging them not to contribute to the papal revenues. As a bribe he offered to free England from the yearly tribute laid on the kingdom by Innocent III, and other burdens which the Head of Christendom daily heaped upon them. If Henry would not carry out this request, Frederick threatened to maltreat all English subjects, found in his imperial dominions.² Then too, warfare which they might support against the emperor would be wrong, since Frederick's wife was Henry III's sister.³

The prelates above voiced even a more radical protest to demands on their revenues. From the king they might expect some remuneration, but from the pope, none. On one side they were "oppressed," on the other "bound and bruised, as it were between

2. Ibid., IV, 371-372.
3. Ibid., IV, 314.
the hammer and the anvil, and are ground as between two mill-stones."
As for the pope's speeches, altho "honeyed and softened for the occasion, sweeter than the honeycomb and softer than oil, in the end, they were more bitter than gall and more piercing than arrows."
The prelates appointed the dean of St. Paul's at London "a discreet and eloquent man "to give the answer to the nuncio Martin. In it they declare that they must needs have the consent of all the prelates to any contribution to the pope; and as not nearly all were present at the council no definite reply could be given. Master Martin therefore named a day in the middle of Lent for a full assembly, but in it the prelates refused to contribute even more strenuously than before. A more formal answer was now prepared. The arguments were practically the same as those of the general council, with a few additions. They declared that should this tax be willingly accepted, there would be danger of its becoming a custom. The coming ecumenical council in 1245 they feared would levy still another tax. It is in such an assembly of the whole church that such matters, which touch all, should be brought up, and not so arbitrarily by the pope. "What chiefly concerns all, should be approved by all," and the result will be a better relief. They also pleaded the poverty of the English church. On hearing these words Master Martin "burst forth into violent threats." To console himself he laid his hands on the revenues of all the vacant churches, among others the treasurership of the church of Salisbury, which he gave to a nephew of the pope. But of these

2. Ibid., IV, 374.
3. Ibid., IV, 374-376.
it best grievances the chronicler says, he thinks to remain silent, since they only excited the more scandal in the church.¹

One method of thwarting papal plans, was by guarding the English ports, thru which communication with the Apostolic See took place. Orders were given to the nobles and officers to stop papal letters which were daily brought to England to extort money. "One of the papal messengers came to the isle early in 1245, landing at Dover "laden with letters" and under papal bull. The governor of the port seized and imprisoned him in Dover Castle. Master Martin, on hearing of this complained to the king. Henry declared he was not the instigator of the act, and "to the injury of the kingdom and detriment of his own honor," he ordered the messenger to be liberated, and the letters to be taken from the mayor of Dover and restored to Martin, in order that he might rejoice at pleasure in the effects produced by some of them.²

Meanwhile the nuncio kept watchfully and unceasingly collecting revenues in any way he could for the use of the pope, or bestowing them on his relatives. Procurations and presents he continually demanded to be sent to him immediately for his own use. The wavering king, probably hoping for papal remuneration, favored the cause by not hindering the nuncio's progress.³ The wretched conditions in the various parts of the island led the English to take drastic measures against such an evil. One, Fulk Fitz-Warren, no doubt at the instigation of a few irate nobles and

¹ Matthew Paris, IV, 376.
² Ibid., IV, 417.
³ Ibid., IV, 416.
prelates, went up to Martin at London. "Eyeing the clerk with a scowling brow," he ordered him and his attendants to depart and leave England immediately under peril of death. Master Martin doubted Fulk's authority to give such a command, but Fulk replied that it was an injunction delivered by him from a community of armed knights, who had lately met at London and Dunstable. Frightened by these threats, Martin, "breathless with alarm," hastened to Henry and related the incident. The king assured him that he was not the author of the proceeding, but that it would be safer for papal emissaries to leave the island. He admitted that he had allowed depredations and injuries, "exceeding all measure and justice" to be committed by them in the realm; and that it had been difficult for royal authority to keep down the fury of the nobles so as to prevent attacks on the clerk. The trembling Martin then humbly asked the king to grant him safe conduct to the sea. The chronicler relates that the king, being very angry, replied "May the devil take you and carry you to hell and through it." The nobles appease him however, and Robert Norris (seneschal of the palace) was chosen to act as the escort. The clerk quickly betook himself on his way, keeping close to his guide.

One incident in the journey is quite significant. They came in sight of a body of men who were selecting trees which the archbishop of Canterbury had for sale. The nuncio, not knowing their purpose, turned to Robert and exclaimed "Alas! alas! what I feared has come to pass: they are about to attack us. My lord and friend Robert; have you any son, nephew, relation, or friend whom you desire to be benefited by an ecclesiastical revenue? I am ready
to grant any request you may make. Behold, they are lying in wait for my life; protect me under the shadow of your wings." Robert replied, - "God forbid that anyone of my relations should, through my means, be thus admitted to an ecclesiastical benefice: I do not know who they are; but do you await me here, and I will hasten to them, so that if they be evil disposed persons, I may check any rashness on their part, by showing them the king's warrant." When he came to the men and learned the truth, he returned to Martin, but, quite willing to deceive the latter, he related how difficult it had been for him to check their fury, and prevent them from cutting the nuncio to pieces. Therefore he urged a hasty travel, and advised Martin, that it would be wise for him never to return, lest he fall into the hands of revengeful enemies. The nuncio evidently was quite willing to comply with the request.

By this departure many were made glad, but that the oppressive plague might not be entirely wiped out, the nuncio left behind an agent, Master Philip, who was delegated with full powers to extort revenues.¹ Master Martin hastened to relate these events to Innocent, who was thrown into a violent rage, declaring that he would yet crush the insolent English.²

Tho Martin did extort much money from the kingdom probably only a small percentage ever reached the Roman treasury. He, himself, spent lavish sums for his own enjoyment, and the rest was taken up in gifts to papal relations and friends,³ and in

1. Matthew Paris, IV, 420-434. Annales Monastici, III, 167. In this account Master Martin is said to have departed about the time of the feast of the Annunciation, which comes on March 25.
3. Ibid., IV, 284.
payments of his companions. One account states that six thousand marks were taken from religious men and beneficed clergy of England, excepting only the Cluniacs, and the orders of Cistercians, Templars, and Hospitallers.\(^1\) Nevertheless there is no doubt but that the English made their complaints out of proportion to their real misery. They were always averse to any measure which might touch their purse. Anything which savored of money payments was odious. They regarded taxes as a wrongful imposition on them. Kings and popes were still supposed to be able to live off their own.

Annales Monastici, IV, 94. (1245).
While the foregoing events were taking place, the pope was preparing for a general church council to be held at Lyons in midsummer of 1245. He prepared summons, dated January 30, 1245, for all the Christian countries, to attend. Messengers sent into England for this purpose arrived in mid-Lent of that year. That realm prepared to make a great complaint of their many grievances before the assembly, and consequently delegates were carefully chosen and dispatched thither with numerous instructions. The king had finally been moved to realize the need for opposition to the oppressions of the Romans in his realm. Altho late, he began to reflect, and was "struck with abhorrence at the insatiable cupidity of the Roman court," and at the many "robberies, committed against the English church. Henry, himself, therefore prepared a letter, setting forth an account of the "execrable extortions" of the pope and his legates and clerks.

One matter the English were especially desirous of bringing up, was the abolition of the yearly tribute with which their

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1. During all this time the pope has been in France as shown by his letters which are dated from different cities in that country - chiefly from Lyons. See Papal Registers, I, Matthew Paris, IV, and Rymer's Foedera, I.
3. Ibid, IV, 419. Also Thomas Walsingham, 144.
kingdom had been burdened since 1313.\(^1\) A parliament was held in London respecting the action to be taken concerning it.\(^2\) They claimed that the general community of England had never consented to the cess, and begged to be relieved from the payment of the thousand marks a year.\(^3\) Another complaint to be brought up was the matter of revenues which were ever enriching the many Romans beneficed in England. To have definite statistics on this, the king caused a diligent inquiry to be made in all the counties. These revenues were found to amount to sixty-thousand marks, or more than the total annual revenue of the whole of England.\(^4\)

The council opened June 26, 1245. Representatives from all Christendom were there, except from Hungary; only a few from Germany;\(^5\) a number from England.\(^6\) Bad news from the Holy Land was reported, which meant that a new subsidy for aid against the Saracens would have to be levied.\(^7\) After a full discussion of these and other matters, lasting about four days, William de Poweric spokesman for the English, rose, and made an eloquent speech in which he set forth their grievances.

To the demand concerning the tribute the pope answered not a word "nor did he even raise his eyes." After a full account of the numerous burdensome extortions William showed the letter from the community of England on these same subjects. In this they

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1. See Chapter I, concerning this tribute.
5. Ibid., IV, 431.
6. Ibid., IV, 420. Six from England were Earl Roger Bigod; John Fitz Geoffrey; William de Cantelupe; Philip Basset; Ralph Fitz-Nicholas; and Master William de Poweric, a clerk
declared that they had always shown due obedience in aiding the Holy See by the payment of Peter's pence. But, not satisfied with this ample supply, the greedy Romans had imposed upon them numerous other payments. Due to the fact that they had always yielded, the pope went to extremes till he had fairly impoverished the realm. Not only tallages for crusades, subsidies for unchristian warfare against the Emperor, but fruits of many choice benefices were continually pouring out of that country as a result. Innocent gave no immediate reply, but said the matter needed long deliberation. He then turned to a question he considered of importance - that of the Emperor, whom he straightway excommunicated.\(^1\)

Near the close of the council, he informed the English representatives, that they would not obtain their demands.\(^2\) The agents departed in anger, vowing with "terrible oaths" that they would never pay the tribute or allow revenues to be extorted from their realm. Innocent patiently bided his time. Just before they departed for home, he summoned them before him, and forced each one of them to affix his seal to "that detestable charter of tribute to which King John, of unhappy memory," had agreed. The bishops who were become "inexcusably effeminate thru fear" did what he bade them "to the enormous prejudice of king and kingdom."

Henry is said to have been violently angry at this, and swore he would never pay any tax to Rome as long as he lived.\(^3\) Little, however, did this mean to his disappointed subjects.

The pope remained quite indignant at the English complaints at Lyons, and began to threaten the king and kingdom, declaring

\(^1\) Matthew Paris, IV, 478-479.
\(^2\) Thomas Wakeling, IV, 144.
\(^3\) Ibid., IV, 478-479.
that as soon as he had subdued the defiant Frederick, he would "tread down their insolent pride." At a council at Cluny he tried to get the French king to take vengeance by attacking the English king. In this he assured the former that papal assistance would not be lacking. Louis however refused, and a truce was made between the two countries. Thus we see that the Council produced no change in the papal policy for the betterment of the English. In fact, the latter thought Innocent more greedy than ever, judging from an incident related by Matthew Paris. The pope, happening to notice some handsome gold fringe amongst the ecclesiastical ornaments worn by some English prelates, asked where it was made. On hearing the reply "in England," he exclaimed, "Of a truth is England our garden of delights; truly it is an inexhaustible well, in which many things abound: from which many things may be extorted." Then he is said to have immediately sent to the Cistercians in that realm for some of the fringe "as if they could get it for nothing." Though it pleased the Londoners who had it for sale,"it struck many with detestation of the evident avarice of the Roman church." To intercept letters of the Holy See and prevent the work of nuncios, the king ordered such persons wandering about under papal authority to be seized and imprisoned. However Paris says this little inspired the English who knew "the slippery disposition of Henry III."

About mid-Lent, March 18, 1246, Henry called together

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2. Ibid., IV, 546-547.
3. Ibid., IV, 510.
4. Ibid., IV, 518.
a "most general parliament" to talk over the deplorable conditions of the kingdom. All the nobility and prelates including abbots, priors and bishops, earls and barons, responded to the summons.

The sentiment of the assembly was that the continued oppression of the Roman court was becoming unendurable, and likely to precipitate ruin upon the ill-fated English. Complaints were brought against the Romans beneficed in England; against the tallages, collections, and assizes made without the consent of the king and contrary to the appeal made by representatives of the kingdom in the Council at Lyons. The church and kingdom were greatly injured in that the many Italians could not even understand the English language, and only helped to carry all the money out of the country. Then too the English had been "forced to prosecute their rights out of the kingdom against the customs and written laws thereof and against indulgences granted by the pope's predecessors to the king and kingdom of England." In order to find out the sentiments of the people in the "properest way" the king conferred with the bishops alone, and then in like manner with the earls and barons; and lastly with the priors and the abbots. They decided to try the mildest method with their Holy Father. It was agreed that the king should write a letter by himself, the bishops by themselves, and in like manner the earls and barons; and the abbots and priors. By the humble and submissive style they show that the "fear of the vatican thunder, bulls and interdicts, was terrible in those days." Little effect was ever produced

1. Parliamentary History, I, 22.
3. Parliamentary History I, 22-23. See also Matthew Paris, IV, 518-536. The letters are given in Matthew Paris. They are dated March 28, 1246. (Continued on next page).
by these missives.

On the other hand, the pope's agents were as active as ever in their efforts to procure money for the Apostolic See. To collect as tallage of one-twentieth for the Holy Land, he appointed the bishop of Norwich and a few other resident ecclesiastics. They in turn wrote to the other clergy and religious men, informing them of their separate amounts. For the one-twentieth demanded became only the name for a subsidy of six thousand marks, which was divided up among the different religious bodies of the realm. 1 To appear favorable to the English people, the king issued royal letters on April 1 and again later, forbidding the prelates to pay the tax, "since no tallage or levy of this kind has ever been a custom, nor can it be exacted without great prejudice to our royal dignity." At least he begs the agents not to allow the papal order to be carried out until the messengers, who had been sent to Innocent with letters of complaints, should return. 2 To counteract the king's opposition, Innocent IV directed a bull to Henry asking him not to interfere with the exaction of the Holy Land subsidy. 3 As usual the chronicler chants another lamentation

(Continued from page 22.)

Matthew Paris also cites the letters in which the pope granted the English people privileges at the Council of Lyons. See also Annales Monastici, III, 169.

1. Matthew Paris, IV, 554-557. Paris quotes the papal letter sent by the bishop of Norwich to the abbot of St. Albans as an example (dated March 24, 1246). The amount for that abbey was 80 marks. The first division was among the bishoprics, and the bishops again divided it in their bishoprics. See also Papal Registers, I, 225 and 229.
3. Rymer, Foedera, I, 441-442. This bull is dated June 23.
at the thought of another tax. He speaks of the English church as "dreadfully crushed, as if it were between two mill-stones revolving in contrary directions". The king in this matter supported and strengthened by general opinion, strove for the preservation and renovation of the kingdom, whilst the pope eagerly aimed at impoverishing it. But many of the prelates fearing the king's instability espoused the cause of the pope."

Another Parliament was held in Winchester in July of this year to take up the deplorable condition of the kingdom and hear the reports from the Roman court. The messengers sent in March brought back no hope of alleviation "but rather the words of anger." The pope is recorded to have said "the king of England who is now kicking against me, and following the example of Frederick has his own plans, and I have mine, which I will also follow." From this time on it was hard for any native Englishmen to arrange any business at the Roman court. This provoked the anger of Henry and he forthwith sent a proclamation to all the counties, that no one should consent to any contribution that the pope might make, or to transmit any money for his assistance. This was carried into effect. Enraged at this Innocent again wrote in even more severe words to the English prelates, ordering them under penalty of excommunication and suspension to make their payments to his agent at London before the feast of the Assumption. Alarmed by such

2. The date was July 7 — that is the opening day. See Matthew Paris, IV, 560.
threats the weak king yielded to the demands of the bishops to whom it seems the pope had given power of laying the land under an interdict. Thus all hope of release for the realm died away, and Roman avarice was satisfied without hindrance. The chronicler, who recognizes Henry's faults, lays the blame on the influence of counsellors, who feared they would lose their revenues. "With averted eyes and closed ears, then, the king to the great impoverishment of the whole of our country, allowed the church to be robbed of 6,000 marks, at the will and pleasure of the Romans." Delighted at this change in Henry's attitude, Innocent became wonderfully calm with such expectations of gain. As a result he now, "imperiously, and more imperiously than usual," demanded that all resident beneficed persons in England should give a third part of their goods to the pope, and those non-resident a half, for a period of three years. The pope appointed the bishop of London to carry this decree into effect. On St. Andrew's day, the bishop called a few people together to discuss the new taxes. The king, evidently now influenced by another group of counsellors, sent agents to forbid those assembled to consent to the contribution. The meeting therefore broke up amid ostentations of joy. However in order that

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2. Ibid., IV, 578-580.
3. Annales Monastici, I, 276-277. This meant a third part of the income each year for 3 years. See also Matthew Paris, IV, 578-580, and Annales Monastici, IV, 94.
5. St. Andrews day is on August 32.
he may not seem to pass over the "very efficacious words" of those who opposed this decree, Matthew Paris inserts in his narrative the replies made by the opponents.¹

Meanwhile the pope had constituted a new set of men as his proctors for collecting the papal taxes: the Preachers and Minorites, "thus estranging them from the path of humility and voluntary poverty of which they themselves were followers." Besides the regular Apostolic taxes, they might receive payments for absolutions from crusading vows, and the revenues and property of people, if they could find out that such possessions had been wrongfully acquired. One of their main objects was to rouse enthusiasm for a crusade. They went about the country preaching, influencing men either to give of their revenues for the cause, or to assume the cross.² Early in the following year, 1247, two Minorites (Englishmen by birth) obtained from Innocent the power of extorting money, and were sent to the island kingdom. Armed with a great number of letters under papal bull, and "concealing the rapacity of the wolf under the wool of the sheep, they came before the king with simple looks, downcast eyes, and bland speech, and begged his permission to wander thru the kingdom to ask charity for the benefit of the pope, declaring they would not use coercion." The simple-minded king saw nothing out of the ordinary in this, and straightway gave them the desired permission. However, in reality they were equipped with full legative powers, and it did not take long before they were practicing the tyranny of legates, first extorting procurations of

¹. Matthew Paris, IV, 581-585. They show even a greater plea than before, for alleviation by giving reasons and explaining conditions.
². Matthew Paris, IV, 564-566.
twenty shillings each, for maintenance. 1

About Christmas time, 1246, Henry sent out summons for a parliament to be held at London early in the following February. The king, nobles, and archdeacons came together for several days to discuss the perilous situation of the state. The bishops purposely absented themselves in order to give the lower clergy free rein to speak their minds, and that they might appear to be opposing their own acts. 2 The result was that complaints were heaped on complaints. Finally, they decided by one more appeal to the pope, to attempt an alleviation of present conditions. Consequently one letter was sent from the community of England at large to the pope; another to the cardinals. In them they enumerated the various taxes that had recently been levied and promptly paid by the English. They went on to state that the limit of their resources had now been reached. Their purses had already been strained to the utmost. Even if everything the clergy owned were put up for sale, it would not have been enuf to satisfy the last demands. 3 One fear of the prelates was that the secular princes and nobles who had formerly endowed and enriched the churches, should retake possession of the property thus given over. 4

Another convocation of nobles and prelates was held on April 7, 1347 and following days. The bishops especially were included since the king "saw that they were so frequently impoverished by the pope's extortions." It was hoped that the Parliament would make some resolution against these exactions, but in this the people were deceived; for altho some had previously decided to

3. Ibid., IV, 594-597. See letter in VI (Addimenta) 144.
4. Ibid., IV, 619.
oppose any tax, they were induced to submit to a contribution of eleven thousand marks,\(^1\) which in the course of the year was paid into the papal treasury.\(^2\)

In the meantime the Minorite brethren were exerting themselves in gathering the above mentioned subsidies and revenues. They went first to the higher prelates, demanding money under "fearful penalty" allowing but a short time for payment. Grosseteste, himself an admirer of the Minorites, was extremely astonished at the behavior of these brethren. In his bishopric (Lincoln) they demanded six thousand marks. He answered that the exaction would be impossible and could not be listened to without consulting the kingdom in general. The Minorites then proceeded to St. Albans where they demanded four hundred marks. The abbot replied, like Grosseteste, "with all humility." The brethren "putting on the secular habit and gesture, and mounting their noble horses, went away with murmurings and threats."\(^3\)

One of this order, John, by name, came to London at the beginning of Lent (1247). The abbot of St. Albans had appealed to the Apostolic See, but Innocent sent a mandate urging the abbot to obey John, his messenger. For in the meantime, John had also written to the pope, exciting the latter's anger, and telling him that all the abbots had agreed except him of St. Albans. As a consequence the abbey paid not only the subsidy but an additional three hundred marks: two hundred marks fine and one hundred marks

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2. Thomas Walsingham, 145.
4. Ibid., VI, (addit.) 119-120 - which gives the letter of Innocent IV giving John his powers (dated October 13, 1246). The pope (continued on next page).
for expenses incurred. 1 Innocent thru John made greater and greater exactions. Most of prelates claimed they were exempt, but the pope gave him power to force them to pay whatever he chose to exact. 2

Evidently, the pope did realize that these brethren, notwithstanding the fact that they had professed a life of poverty, were fattening on the procurations demanded and collected for their own personal use; for, in June 1247, he issued a bull stating that procurations were not to exceed five marks. 3 Later in 1252 a similar bull reduced them still more, i.e., to four marks. 4 He probably thought they were keeping down the amount that went to swell his own treasury. One instance of unfair procurations is witnessed in case of one, bishop of Sabina, sent as cardinal legate from the pope to Norway. He obtained the reluctant consent of Henry to enter the kingdom - reluctant because such messengers were likely to impoverish the country through which they travelled. But the bishop swore that he was coming into England for no harm to the king, kingdom, or church. However he stayed three months. Unable to restrain his cupidity he clandestinely sent messengers to demand large procurations and costly presents. He is supposed to have received as much as four thousand marks. 5

(Continued from page 28).

also sent the bishop of Lincoln (Grosseteste) letters concerning these orders - addressed to archbishops of Canterbury and York. Grosseteste sent these on - evidently acting as medium between pope and English.

2. Ibid., IV, 618-619.
3. Ibid.; VI, (addit.) 133, (June 10, 1247).
4. Ibid.; (addit.) VI, 289-290. (Feb. 28, 1252). These relate especially to procurations - exacted by prelates on their visits.
5. Ibid., IV, 626-627.
Another collector of revenue, was Earl Richard the king's brother. By authority of the pope he collected an immense sum from those who had assumed the cross.\(^1\) From one archdeaconry, he is said to have taken nine hundred marks. Under a similar protection William collected one hundred marks and more from crusaders.\(^2\) That is, the pope granted him certain amounts out of the subsidies collected for the Holy Land.\(^3\) Others were similarly provided for, the object in all cases being the payment of expenses for the journey of crusaders to the Holy Land.\(^4\) To those who contributed to the tollages indulgences and concessions were granted, in proportion to amounts given.\(^5\) On complaint of those who were exempt from exactions, that they had been forced to give contributions, the pope issued a mandate that such persons are not to be molested.\(^6\)

In this year the crusading fever reached the king. Henry assumed the cross, and ordered all four monastic orders to give sermons in order to excite people to go on the pilgrimage.\(^7\)

Papal abuse had before this been brought to such a point that the "devotions of Christians grew lukewarm," and many thought the pope no longer possessed power from heaven.\(^8\)

\(^1\) Papal Registers, I, 240.
\(^2\) Matthew Paris, IV, 635-636.
\(^3\) Papal Registers, I, 232. (June 1247) show the grant. Pope orders bishop of Lincoln (Crosseteste) to pay it to William.
\(^4\) Papal Registers, I, 239. (1247).
\(^5\) Ibid., I, 234-235. (1247).
\(^6\) Ibid., I, 232.
\(^7\) Capgrave 155.
\(^8\) Also Monastic Annals (1250) II, 342.
hatred entered the hearts of many. Conspiracies against the pope resulted in attempts on his life. In 1246 Frederick sent two unsuccessful assassins to Rome,¹ and in 1247 we find that certain nobles of France were vainly conspiring against Innocent.²

2. Ibid., IV, 590-592.
CHAPTER IV

THE LAST YEARS OF INNOCENT IV'S PONTIFICA TE

In the last years of Innocent IV, the foremost motive in his requests for taxes from England, was the desire to go on a crusade to the Holy Land. All possible means for getting money were employed. The Preachers and Minorites still acted as toll gatherers in the island. They were diligently employing themselves preaching. Crowds flocked to hear them, and were influenced to take up the cross. The very next day, or even directly afterward, these papal agents would offer to accept certain payments of money to absolve the faithful from the vows of pilgrimage they had just taken. Much of this money was given over to Earl Richard and other crusade enthusiasts.¹

One of these who came forward, whenever Innocent pushed a crusading project, was William de Longuespee, former Earl of Salisbury.² He had already been on one expedition to the East in 1240 with Richard.³ In March 1248 the pope granted a concession of two thousand marks to him from the redemptions of crusading vows or other moneys gathered for the Holy Land subsidy. ⁴ To insure the payment of this the pope also wrote to the bishop of London and archdeacon of Berkshire to cause the bishops of Worcester and Lincoln, collectors of money due to the Holy Land,

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¹. Matthew Paris, V, 73 (1249).
². Also Gervasse of Canterbury, II, 203.
⁴. Ibid. IV, 44.
to pay the sum to William immediately.\(^1\) To the bishops of Lincoln and Worcester he issued the mandate that they should proceed to the collection and distribution of moneys gathered in ways pointed out above.\(^2\)

Another mandate to the same bishops ordered them to deposit their receipts in certain places in the name of the Roman church, and to send an account of the amount to the pope, so that he might dispose of it.\(^3\) It is evident that the English made the above payments even tho reluctantly.\(^4\) Oppressions seemed to rest upon them as heavily as ever, but the chronicler probably considered them an old story by this time. He merely mentions that they were "daily increased and multiplied."\(^5\)

In September 1249, Innocent IV granted Henry the twenty-third part of all English goods - including that of clergy and religious men, but he obtained very little - the bishop of Lincoln (Grosseteste), and even the bishop of London refusing.\(^6\) Robert Grosseteste was one of the strongest papal exponents in the island at this time. By sheer force he tried to bend to his will all religious men, even those of exempt orders. These appealed to the pope, and it was only thru payments to the latter, that they were able to purchase peace for themselves. Robert in 1250 went to the pope in "sorrow and confusion," and acknowledged

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2. Ibid., I, 244.
3. Ibid., I, 249.
4. Annales Monastici, IV, 438 (in 1248), and also Ibid., IV, 441, (in 1253).
6. Annales Monastici, I, 139.
himself defeated in his purpose. Innocent answered to him
"Brother what is it to you? You have freed your soul; we have
done them a favor." The bishop replied "Oh money, money, how
much power you have, especially at the Roman court"; but being
overheard by Innocent, His Holiness was exasperated, and retorted
"Oh ye English, most wretched of men are you. Each of you gnaws
his neighbor and endeavors to impoverish his fellow. How many
religious men, who are subject to you, like sheep, your native
countrymen and your domestics, whilst intent on prayer and showing
hospitality, have you labored to depress, in order to satisfy
your tyranny and cupidity out of their poverty, and to enrich
others perhaps foreigners." Thus baffled the bishop went away
amid the insulting cries of all those present.1

All the many disasters that befell the Christians in
fighting the Saracens, Paris attributes to the unjust papal
extortions. "Such are the fruits produced by the rapine and
depredations, which, by permission, indeed the teachings of the
Roman church, the nobles practice on the all suffering poor
in order that they might fill their own pouches, whenever setting
out on a pilgrimage to fight for God. From the foregoing events
it is clear as light, how displeasing to God is the gain which
arises from oppression and impoverishment of the poor."2 "Would
that the king and his brother, Earl Richard, and other crusading
princes, who are intent on the acquirement of the filthy lucre,

would weigh these things in the scale of reason; for altho the act of holy pilgrimage is plainly holy in itself, yet the supplies for the journey, when acquired by foul means, stain the performance for pious action.  

In 1250 the bishops of Lincoln and Worcester were succeeded in the capacity of collectors for the Apostolic See by the bishop of Chichester and the archdeacon of Essex; for Grosseteste had become disgusted with the avaricious Romans, and the bishop of Worcester had decided to go in person on a crusade. To the archdeacon of Essex, Innocent sent a mandate, ordering him to audit the bishop of Worcester's accounts of receipts and expenditures of Holy Land subsidies, and the grants thereof by papal nuncio. The new collectors are also told to take "their moderate and necessary expenses" from the said money. A papal mandate to the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and other prelates, and collectors of redemptions of crusaders' vows, and preachers of the crusade, requested them to assist the bishops of Chichester and archdeacon of Essex in the collection of the Holy Land subsidy.  

Henry III, in 1247, had assumed the cross; however, without any intention of fulfilling the vow. He kept putting off starting merely to hoodwink the pope. He proceeded to use the crusading plan as a subterfuge for getting large sums of money, collected apparently for preparations for the journey, but in

2. Papal Registers, I, 263.  
3. Ibid, I, 263.  
4. See Annales Monastici, II, 342, which says that the King and Queen took the cross in 1250; probably a renewal of the former vow.  
5. Papal Registers, I, 246.
reality to swell his own treasury. Henry had often used the pope to order the English to obey their monarch, when he desired money. The method now used was to collect a papal tax, and then hand the results over to the king. Wherefore, according to the petition of Henry,\(^1\) Innocent granted him a tenth of all church revenues of England, Ireland, and Wales, for two years; later he extended the time to three years.\(^2\) Letters were also sent from the Roman Curia to the archbishops and bishops ordering legacies and redemptions of vows to be granted for two years. Sums collected were to be placed in a safe place, and assigned to Henry when he should be ready to cross the sea.\(^3\)

To publish the Apostolic mandate Henry called a Parliament at London about the feast of St. Edward, 1252.\(^4\) Almost all the prelates of England responded to the royal warrant. The bishop of Chichester was ill, and the archbishop of Canterbury was on the continent. The King showed those present the papal document which was destined to be detrimental to the welfare of the realm. Having assembled without knowledge of the purpose, the bishops are said to have been "amazed at such poisonous words."\(^5\) To make the tithe even more detestable, it was not to be computed upon the old basis, but upon an entirely new computation which was forthwith to be made. Grosseteste in anger asked "In the name

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1. Rymer, Foedera, I, 471.
   Rymer, Foedera, I, 471; 480. (Mch., 1251).
   Annales Monastici, I, 325. (1254).
   Matthew Paris, VI, (Addit.) 296 (1254).
of our Lady what is this? You are proceeding on the ground of concessions which have not been made to you. Do you suppose we will consent to this accursed contribution? God forbid that we should thus bend the knee to Baal." In reply to this the bishop of Winchester said: "My father, how shall we be able to oppose the will of the pope and the king? The one pushes us on, the other draws us. In a similar case the French consented to a similar contribution to assist their king, when about to undertake a pilgrimage . . ." To this Grosseteste retorted: "For this very reason that the French contributed, we ought to oppose this levy; for a thing done twice becomes a custom. Besides we see clear as the day what result this tyrannical extortion of money by the French king has arrived at. Let us be warned by previous examples. . . For my part I say without hesitation, I oppose this injurious contribution." The bishops of London and Worcester, the bishop elect of Winchester, and almost all others assembled agreed to entreat the king "to curb the violence of his rash desires."¹

Henry then assumed a much more humble attitude, and begged pecuniary aid from the churchmen, as one who is about to make a pilgrimage for the good of Christianity and the church. This soothed the opposing nobles to consider the demands more leniently. After a long discussion of the wretched conditions in the church, they, apparently in a wonderfully complaisant spirit, agreed to comply with the royal wishes.² However much they make

¹ Matthew Paris, V, 324-326.
² Ibid., V, 326-328.
it appear to cost them, there is evidence that a good deal of the complaint about impoverishment and wretchedness was invented for a purpose. The English as a rule were exceedingly reluctant about straining their generosity. Now they even consented to see that the money should be collected "carefully and faithfully." But they attached a set of provisions to their willingness to comply. Henry was to preserve their charter of liberties in return, and to grant another so that the English church might not again be subjected to such an "execrable contribution and extortion." The king was exceedingly angry at their attitude and demanded a reply free from such "shufflings." He vented his spite upon them in the distribution of vacant revenues among undeserving foreigners. Then he turned to the bishop of Ely, offering him rich rewards in case he would give his assistance. But the bishop was too honest and refused to agree to what he termed robbery. Angrier than ever Henry sent the bishop away, determined by force to bend the will of his subjects to his own.¹

Notwithstanding the unwillingness of the English, in the end they usually paid some of the taxes at least. One instance of success of the king was that of the London citizens, who gave twenty gold marks, when by right of their charter they should have enjoyed freedom from any such exactions.²

The subject of taxation was again taken up in the convention at Westminster (1253-3), having continued by adjournment until after Easter in the following year (1253). In this last session a curse was pronounced "in the most solemn manner" by the archbishop of Canterbury, and thirteen other bishops against all

¹: Matthew Paris, V, 327-328.
persons "who sought to infringe the liberties of the holy church and those of the great charters."\(^1\)

The result of this year (1252) says Matthew Paris was "trouble for all mankind." "England trampled under foot by foreigners, bowing the neck to many masters, and deprived of the sincere affection of its kind, and submitting to the abject conditions, pined away in despair; . . . and, what was most grievous, the deadly hatred existing between the church and the people daily increased."\(^2\)

During the years 1253 and 1254 Innocent kept on sending mandates to the clergy of England, demanding that the tenth be paid to Henry. He was getting impatient for him to start out on his crusade, which Henry kept putting off from time to time on this or that pretext. All the church was subject to this, with the usual exception of Hospitalers, Cistercians, and Templars. Innocent appointed Walter, bishop of Norwich and the abbot of Westminster to execute the mandate.\(^3\) Henry by numerous letters urged it upon the prelates as their duty, i.e., to do all in their power toward forwarding the noble cause of a crusade.\(^4\) The king eagerly grasped at the tithes that were granted him, and made a pretense at preparations for the journey against the Saracens.\(^5\)

During all these years we also have the realm of England bound to pay its annual tribute of one thousand marks to the See of Rome. Both in 1246,\(^6\) and the two succeeding years,\(^7\) Innocent

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3. Annales Monastici, I, 325 (1254); also III, 190. Matthew Paris, VI, (Addit.) 296 (July 4, 1254).
5. Ibid., V, 451. (1354).
6. Rymer, I, 266.
7. Ibid., I, 267.
IV urged Henry to pay the yearly cess. In 1349 we find that only five hundred marks remain unpaid, showing that the feudal obligation of England was duly recognized.

In 1354 Henry III was relieved for a time at least of the pressure brought to bear for the purpose of getting him started on the crusade, by the death of the pope in December. As Innocent IV was dying, he raised his eyes and saw his relatives and friends standing about him weeping. It is recorded that he said to them: "Why do you weep, wretched beings? Do I not leave you all rich?"

These last words are indeed significant of his pontificate. Paris relates that he had impoverished the universal church more than all his predecessors since the establishment of the papacy. The revenues of foreign clerks appointed by him in England alone, amounted to more than seventy thousand marks: more than three times the revenue of the English king.

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