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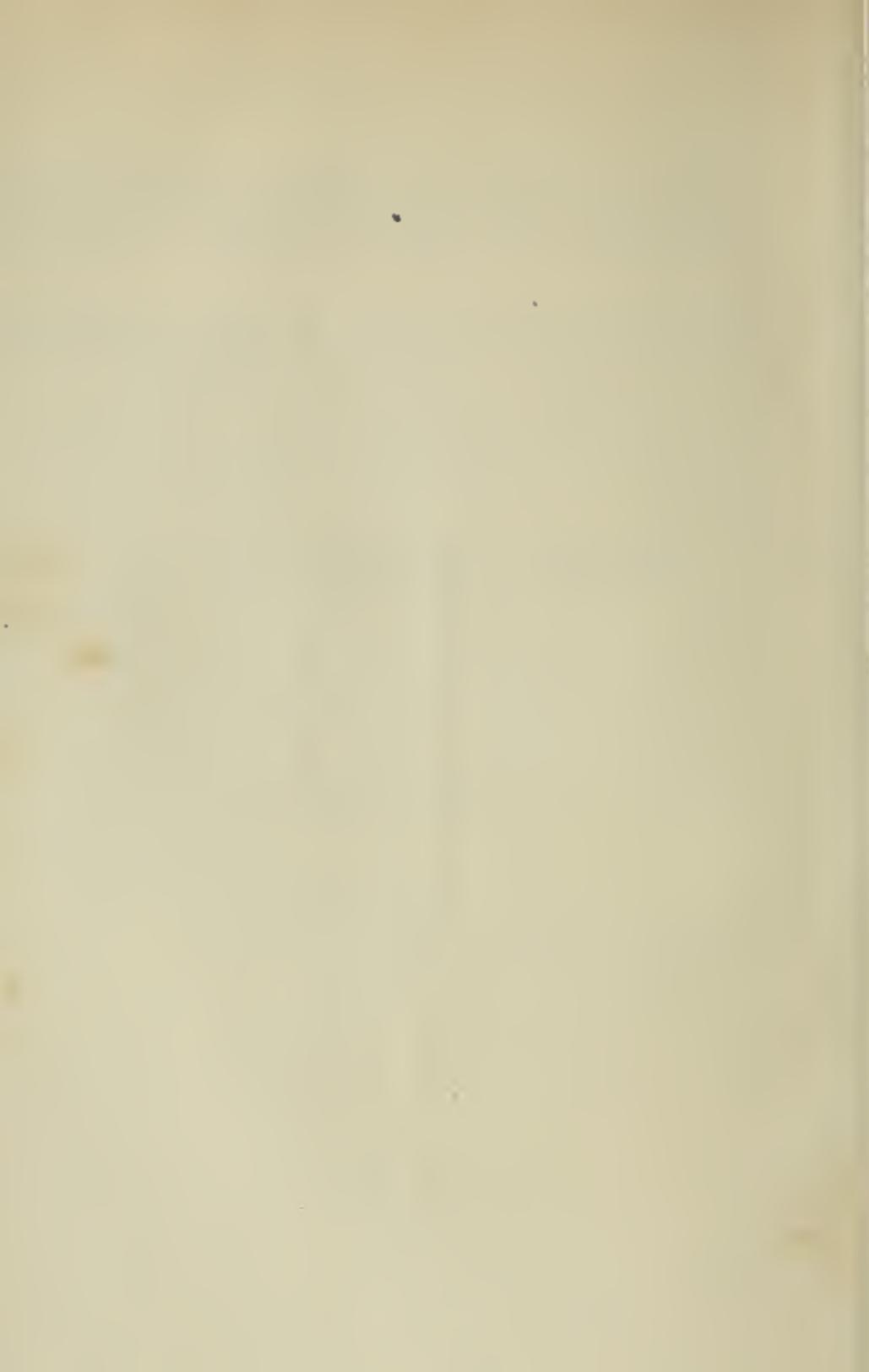
STYLE and SIGNATURE

OF

BISHOPS SUFFRAGAN.

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STYLE AND SIGNATURE
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BISHOPS SUFFRAGAN.

A question having been raised respecting the style and dignity of Suffragan Bishops, it is right that it should be argued on its simple merits. At the same time it is believed that neither the excellent men who have been called to this responsible dignity, nor the Church, in advocating the revival of this class of Bishops, or the still more important extension of her Diocesan system, are careful of personal honours, or influenced by a desire to multiply positions of title and dignity : though this would be only a fitting sequence on the suppression of so many Ecclesiastical dignities by the operation of the Cathedral Conversion Act, 3 & 4 Vict. cap. 113. The increase of Episcopal power, for lack of which the Church, speaking generally, now so greatly suffers, is rather the object of earnest desire.

I. First, let it be observed that the Act 26 Henry VIII. chap. 14, commonly called "Henry VIII.'s Suffragan Act," under the authority of which our present worthy Suffragans have been consecrated, does not profess to be instituting a new class of Bishops whose position had need to be defined in all respects by that Act. On the contrary, both by its title, "By whom Suffragans should be nominated and elected"; in its preamble,—“Albeit that sithen the beginning of this present Parliament

good and honourable Ordinances and Statutes have been made and established for Elections, Presentations, Consecrations, and investing of Archbishops and Bishops of this Realm . . . with all ceremonies appertaining to the same . . . ; yet no provision hath been hitherto made for *Suffragans*, which have been accustomed to be had within this Realm"; and in its enacting clauses, that the Suffragan "shall be taken, accepted, and reputed in all degrees and places according to the style, title, name and dignity that he shall be presented unto, and have such capacity, power, and authority, honour, pre-eminence, and reputation, in as large and ample manner in and concerning the execution of such commission as by any of the said Archbishops or Bishops within their Dioceses shall be given to the said Suffragans, as to *Suffragans of this Realm heretofore hath been accustomed*," and that every Archbishop and Bishop may give such commission "as hath been accustomed for *Suffragans heretofore to have*, or else such" &c. ; it testifies to the accustomed use of this class of Bishops.

We know, too, from sufficient records, that Assistant or Suffragan Bishops had been in use in the Church of England since the eighth century, when Chorepiscopi were still an established institution in Christendom (they were not suppressed in Ireland till the twelfth century). At the time of the passing of the Act these Assistant Suffragans appear to have been numerous. Henry Wharton says he could "exhibit a perfect succession of Suffragan Bishops in nearly all the Dioceses of England for about two hundred years before the Reformation."—(Strype's *Life of Cranmer*, App. p. 1044.) Some Diocesans had more than one Suffragan at a time. H. Wharton believes that there were two in the Diocese of London, and Bishop Longland of Lincoln seems to have had sometimes three Suffragans at once—Dr. Swillington,

A. D. 1533—1546 ; Dr. Hallam 1529 occurs in 1534 ; Dr. Mackerell 1535—1537 ; Dr. King 1534—1542. So, then, we are justified in believing that Henry VIII.'s Suffragan Act was no part of his scheme for providing for the acknowledged need of an increased Episcopate ; but merely intended to continue this accustomed assistance in the new relations of the Church of England, and to transfer to the King the power before exercised by the Pope in their appointment.

Assistant or Suffragan Bishops, then, being an existing institution at the time when the Act was passed, it is only a principle of common interpretation that existing usage should prevail where it is not otherwise ruled by the Act. But we are not left merely to this general principle of interpretation in regard to the points in discussion ; for it is specially enacted that the Suffragan “ shall be taken, accepted, and reputed in all *degrees and places* according to the *style, title, name, and dignity* that he shall be presented unto, and have such capacity, power, and authority, *honour, pre-eminence, and reputation* in as large and ample manner in and concerning the execution of such commission . . . as to Suffragans of this Realm heretofore hath been accustomed. We have then only to prove the usage, and the law in the matter appears to be clear.

The points on which it appears that a question has been raised are the style, precedence and signature of Bishops Suffragan.* Let us see, then, what light history throws upon the subject.

As to the legal signature of Bishops Suffragan there can be no manner of reasonable doubt. I have never met with one example signed with the family surname, but those with the title are numerous, both before and after the passing of the Act. It

* See Gilbert's *Clergyman's Almanack*, 1871.

will be sufficient to cite instances beginning with the sixteenth century.

John, Suffragan Bishop by the title of Negropont, took part in the consecration of Thomas Ruthall to the see of Durham, A.D. 1509. The signatures stand—Chris. York ; Rich. Norwich ; John Negropont. The signatures of the consecrators of Edmund Birkhead, of St. Asaph, 1513, are William (being the name of the Archbishop) ; Thom. Durham ; John Chalcedon. Of John de Athegua to Llandaff, 1517, Charles Hereford ; John Gallipoli ; Fras. Castoricensis. Of Henry Standish, to St. Asaph, 1518, William ; Rob. Chichester ; John Gallipoli. Of Thomas Goodrich to Ely, Rowland Lee to Lichfield, and John Salcot to Bangor, 1534, Thomas ; John Lincoln ; Thom. Sidon. The same signature of Thom. Sidon appears at the consecrations of Nicholas Shaxton to Sarum, 1535 ; William More, Suffragan Bishop of Colchester, 1536 ; Anthony Kitchin to Llandaff, 1545 ; Henry Man to Soder and Man, 1546 ; and Nicholas Ridley to London, 1547.

We have now come to the period when the signatures of the Suffragans consecrated under Henry VIII.'s Act are intermixed with the foreign titles.

William Finch was consecrated Suffragan Bishop of Taunton, A.D. 1538, by John Rochester ; Rob. St. Asaph ; *Will. Colchester*. John Bradley, Suffragan of Shaftesbury, 1539, by John Bangor ; *John Hippo* ; *Tho. Marlborough*. John Skip to Hereford, 1539, by Thomas ; *Rich. Dover* ; Will. St. David's ; where it is to be observed that the Suffragan of Dover signed before the Bishop of St. David's. Thomas Thirlby to Westminster, 1540, by Edw. London ; Nic. Rochester ; *John Bedford*. William Knight to Bath, 1541, by Nic. Rochester ; *Rich. Dover* ; *John Bedford*. Richard Dover appears again at the consecration of John May to

Carlisle, 1577.* John Chamber to Peterborough, 1541, by Thomas Ely; Rob. Down; *Tho. Philadelphia*. Paul Bush to Bristol, 1542, by Nic. Rochester; Tho. Westminster; *John Bedford*. Anthony Kitchen to Llandaff, 1545, by Tho. Westminster; *Thom. Sidon*; *Lewis Shrewsbury*. John Bedford signs together with the above-named Thom. Sidon, at the consecration of Henry Man, 1546, and Nicolas Ridley, 1547; and his name appears again at those of Miles Coverdale to Exeter, and John Scory to Rochester, 1551; of Matthew Parker to Canterbury, 1559, (when it is to be observed that he signs before Miles (ex) Exeter, who was no longer in office); of Edmund Grindall and three others, 1559; and of Nicholas Bullingham and three others, 1560.

The above signatures are quoted from Stubbs' *Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum*. There can be no better guarantee than the Professor's known accuracy. Other instances and authorities might be given, but these are surely sufficient to show what was the usage at the time of the passing of the Act Henry VIII., chap. 14, and the practice immediately following upon it. Canon Trevor's letter in the *Guardian* (Mar. 16, 1870) on this subject, gives other authorities, and the argument of one whose opinion on such a subject has especial weight, from his position in connection with the Convocation of the Province of York.

Such, then, being by law and precedent the authorised signature for Bishops Suffragan as well as for Diocesans, it would seem to be offering them an unnecessary burden, almost amounting to cruelty, to urge upon them, as seems to be the proposal of

* There were three Suffragans of Dover of the same Christian name. Richard Yngworth, consecrated A.D., 1537; Richard Thornden, A.D., 1541; Richard Rogers, A.D. 1569.

the paragraph in question, a signature of Christian and surname, and "Bishop Suffragan of —", instead of simply the accustomed signature of Christian name and title.

II. As regards precedence, surely no priest of the Church of England would fail to accord it to the Episcopal order, even if there were no ruling of law or authority of precedent in the matter. But we are not left so without direction, or rather open to mis-direction, as the author of the paragraph in question appears to suppose, in the case of the "Suffragans of this realm" consecrated under the authority of the Act 26 Henry VIII, chapter 14.

It is to be observed that by the Act the places named are to "be taken and accepted for the Sees of Bishops Suffragan to be made in this realm"; that the Diocesan who desires a Suffragan is to make request to her Majesty to give to one of the two persons whom he shall present "such *title, name, style and dignity of Bishop of such of the Sees above specified*" as her Majesty shall think most convenient. And that her Majesty, "upon every such presentation shall have full power and authority to give to one of them "the style, title, and the name of a Bishop of such of the Sees aforesaid". as she shall think most convenient and expedient. The person to whom her Majesty "shall give any such style and title of any of the Sees aforesaid shall be called Bishop-Suffragan of the same See." (It would seem that the formal title according to the Act is Bishop-Suffragan; but they were commonly called by the shorter form Bishop of the See. Thus Archbishop Parker, leaving by his Will a legacy to Bishop Rogers says "*Do et lego Episcopo Dovenensi*".—Todd's Life of Dean Rogers, p. 53).* "And after such title, style, and name so given, her

* See also Queen Elizabeth's *Ecclesiastical Commission*, Abp. Parker's *Correspondence*, Parker Soc. p. 370, n.

Majesty shall present every such person by her Letters Patent "to the Archbishop of the Province within which "the town whereof he hath his title" is, "signifying and declaring by the same letters patent" "the style and title of dignity of the *Bishopric* whereunto he shall be nominated, requiring the same Archbishop," "to consecrate the said person so nominated and presented to the same name, title, style and dignity of Bishop, &c". And every person so consecrated "shall be *taken accepted and reputed in all degrees and places according to the style, title, name, and dignity* that he shall be presented unto, and have such capacity, power, and authority, *honour, pre-eminence and reputation* in as large and ample manner in and" &c., as quoted above. It is evident then from the Act itself that every Suffragan Bishop so presented is appointed by the Crown to a real See. This alone would sufficiently decide all the questions which have been raised about style, precedence, and signature of Suffragan Bishops, independently of the collateral, but wholly distinct argument to be derived from the known usage of that day. It may be observed that forms of a Bishop Suffragan's presentation to the King, the King's mandate for his consecration, and the Bishop's letters of commission to the Suffragan of a date immediately following the passing of the Act, (see Brett, Suffragan Bishops, p.p. 42—46) fully bear out the above view.

No doubt it was irregular to institute a See within a See, though some precedent might be found for it in the two Bishops allowed in primitive times in one city for the healing of a schism, or some other special cause. This perhaps was felt when it was enacted, that no Suffragan so consecrated "shall take or perceive any manner of profits of the Places or Sees whereof they shall be named, nor use, have, or execute any jurisdiction or epis-

copal power or authority within their said Sees, nor within any Diocese", but only such as shall be licensed for them by the Bishop of the Diocese. But it must be remembered that this course was probably adopted to avoid what might be considered a greater irregularity, the taking titles from foreign countries, especially when the church and nation were vindicating their independence of foreign control in matters of religion. Suffragan Bishops were felt at that day to be too necessary to the church's work to be done without when there was an acknowledged need of a considerable increase of Diocesans. Two Suffragans were consecrated for the Diocese of Norwich at once (A.D. 1536) after the passing of the Act (Stubbs, Brett). The irregularity, then, in this respect, was only localising within the realm a practice which before prevailed to the disparagement of the rights and liberties of foreign countries.

As, however, we have before given precedents to establish the correct signature of Suffragan Bishops, it may be well that we should adduce some evidence of the style and precedence of Bishops Suffragan in former days, and

1—First it may be observed that the idea of spiritual barons not having seats in Parliament was nothing strange in that day. Dugdale says that the Abbot of Whitby was such an one (*Mon. Angl.*, vol. i., p. 409), and perhaps when those of the abbatial rank were being suppressed, it might be thought not unfitting to substitute others in their stead.

2—It is probable that titular Archbishops took precedence of our Diocesan Bishops. So thought Brett (*Suffragan Bishops*, p. 19), else "he could not conceive why John Kyte, the Bishop of Carlisle, should, at the same time he was made Bishop of that See, A.D. 1513, procure the title of Archbishop of Thebes. But having been translated from Armagh to Carlisle, that he might not lose the

place he had before, it is probable this titular Archbishopric was conferred upon him in virtue whereof", he supposes, "he took place next to the Archbishops of this Realm." Thus De Dominis, the refugee Archbishop of Spalato, who was well received by the Court and by Archbishop Abbot, signed next to the Archbishop of Canterbury and before four of our Diocesan Bishops at the consecration of Felton and Montaigne to Bristol and London, A.D. 1617. (Stubbs, *Regist. Sacr. Angl.* p. 92.)

3—We might expect that Bishops Suffragan holding Sees by the appointment of the Crown, and as it seems, spiritual Baronies, though without seats in Parliament, would have precedence of retired Diocesan Bishops. Such appears to have been the case at the consecration of Archbishop Parker (1559), where the Suffragan of Bedford signs before Bishop Coverdale, the two last signatures being *John Bedford ; Miles (Ex) Exeter* (Stubbs.) And indeed it seems that a Suffragan was sometimes allowed to take precedence of a Diocesan Bishop. *Richard Dover* signs before William St. Davids at the Consecration of Bishop Skip of Hereford.

4—Brett says that Richard Rogers, Suffragan of Dover, attended the funeral of Archbishop Parker next to the Bishop of Rochester and *before the Lord Chief Justice*, where it would appear that matters were conducted with exact formality, as we are told that "he had three servants there to wait on him, and the other Bishops each of them six."

It appears that some Suffragans at least had pastoral staff and probably mitre. Brett tells us that Richard Martin, Suffragan to the Archbishop of Canterbury, is thus registered in the obituary of Canterbury, A.D. 1498. 13 Cal. Decem. *obijt Reverendus in Christo Pater Dominus Ricardus Martin Suffraganeus, qui dedit Ecclesiæ Christi Cantuariæ unam mitram cum baculo suo Pastoralis* (Suffragan Bishops, p. 21.)

III. Lewis tells us in his Essay on Suffragan Bishops (p 10, which may be found in Nichols' *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, vol. vi) that these Suffragans had the title of "Lord Bishop." Brett speaking of Richard Rogers, Suffragan of Dover (1569), says, "it appears from private letters in my custody, that he was called, My Lord Bishop of Dover, and that other Suffragans had the same title; and one of the Suffragan Bishops of York being Dean of that Church, his successors in the Deanery were for some time after called Lord Deans". Todd, in his life of Dean Rogers, testifies this latter fact in one of two letters with his signature of *Ri. Dover*, and that there is an entry in the Canterbury Cathedral Register of the burial of "Mrs. Ann Rogers, sometime wife of the *Lord Suffragan of Dover*".* But it is unnecessary to

* One of the above named letters of Dean Rogers, signed *Ri. Dover* is an argument to prove that he was not so *covert* by his Suffraganship as to be prevented from giving leases with the chapter beyond the period of his own life. He nowhere argues that there was no corporate character attaching to his Suffraganship, which would have been most natural and conclusive, if there were any such idea held in those days. But rather that "King Edward in his *nonage*, and Queen Mary in her *coverture*, being invested with the Duchy of Lancaster, the one as Duke the other as Duchess thereof, made leases of land appertaining to that Duchy". And he compares his own case to that of Bishop Hooper, who held two Bishoprics together, yet made leases pertaining to either of them. It is in this letter that he mentions "an old Suffragan, Dean of York, by whom the Dean of that Church came to be first called 'Lord Dean', clearly shewing that he understood this to be the title of Suffragans.—See Todd's *Deans of Canterbury*, p. 63. Strype's *Annals*, vol. iv., p. 431. Rogers was Suffragan under three Archbishops, Parker, Grindall, Whitgift.—Todd p. 53. He is remarkable as having been made Archdeacon of St. Asaph when only in Deacon's orders. —*Ib.*, p. 50.

dwell further on the style and precedence of Bishops Suffragan as they would seem to follow in right of the dignity of the See which the Suffragan holds from the Crown; and Colonial Bishops who are appointed by Royal Letters Patent have had the title accorded to them. And if not of legal right, they might have it of courtesy, or as the ancient and prescriptive title of Bishops, as much as Roman Bishops have from their flocks, though certainly deriving no dignity from the Crown, or the eldest sons of earls, and others.

With such evidence before us can anyone maintain that the style and dignity of Suffragans "only pertains to them when they are present for the performance of any official act by the appointment and on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese"? If so, it may be further answered that if the dignity did depend upon the Bishop's commission, Cranmer's commission to his Suffragan of Dover, A.D. 1537, was a continuous one until it should be withdrawn; he did not issue it afresh for each official act, as the writer of the paragraph in question seems to suppose to be now the case, and such is understood to be the course and example followed in the revival of this class of Bishops. So then according to this view, the style and dignity of the Suffragan would continue as long as he held the commission. But on the contrary it is sufficiently evident by the extracts already given from the Act, that the Suffragan's dignity is wholly independent of the Bishop's commission. He has, according to the Act, been named by the Crown in Letters Patent to "the Style and Title of Dignity of the Bishopric", and consecrated thereto, and declared to be "taken accepted, and reputed, in all degrees and places, according to the Style, Title, &c.," before he receives the Bishop's commission; and such was the order in the case of Cranmer's Suffragan of Dover. The Archbishop's petition presenting the required two

names to the Crown is dated Dec. 1; the King's mandate, Dec. 8; his consecration, Dec. 9; the Archbishop's letters of commission, Dec. 10. And probably, when it was specially enacted that "the Bishops of such Sees shall be called Suffragans of this Realm,"* regard was had to the possibility that they might sometimes cease to be Suffragans to the Bishops who first obtained their consecration, and become such to some other Bishop, as had not unfrequently been the case with their predecessors: But it seems that though the Suffragan's commission should cease by the decease of the Diocesan, or otherwise, he would retain his title and what pertains to it, which, as Brett says (p. 60), could not be taken from him but by a legal prosecution.†

* By the canon law, the consecration was to be by the Bishop: "A quo consecrabitur iste episcopus? Respondeo, à suo Episcopo, non à Metropolitano (cum ei non subsit), adjunctis sibi duobus vicinis episcopis—et illi tenentur venire ad advocacionem illius, quia sibi invicem mutuam consilium et auxilium exhibere tenentur."—*Extra. l. i., t. 31, c. 14, v. Vicarium.*

† As Dr. Brett wrote his Treatise on Bishops Suffragan more than 150 years ago, when there was no apparent prospect of their revival, his judgment at least will be considered impartial.



