

brought to Harrow church and there buried obscurely and not according to the laws of this land or her majesty's injunctions'. In 1599 Richard was in prison again and his brother Robert was still languishing in the Marshalsea. Eventually Richard managed to cross to Flanders, where he died in abject poverty. One of the charges against him in 1599 may well serve as his epitaph.

'He hath spent all his living in relieving Jesuits and seminary priests..... Also the said Bellamy is and hath been for these twenty years and more a continual harbourer, lodger and host of recusants, their children and servants, keeping them at board, diet and lodging, so that there are few recusants in England of any account but have been succoured and lodged in his house, and neither these nor any of his own family have come to their parish church.'



A SONG OF FOUR PRIESTS

[The Song from which these stanzas are taken is found in a contemporary manuscript book of ballads in the British Museum (Add. 15225). It contains thirty-three stanzas, mostly concerned with the martyrs of the early Church. It has been printed in full by H. E. Rollins in *Old English Ballads*, p. 71. The four martyrs here commemorated are Robert Nutter of Clitheroe (Lancs.) who became a Dominican while a prisoner at Wisbech, Edward Thwinge, Thurstan Hunt and Robert Middleton, all of Yorkshire. The two first suffered 26th July, 1600; the others in March 1601, all four at Lancaster. The sheriff who attended the execution of the first pair wrote to the Earl of Salisbury: 'I do not doubt but much good will come by this little severity, as well to terrify the priests from those parts as for satisfaction of the people'. But the Song rather suggests that the effect was quite otherwise, and it shows us how the memory of the martyrs was kept alive, when it was impossible to publish any account of them.—G.A.]

A SONG OF FOURE PREISTES THAT SUFFERED DEATH AT LANCASTER

(To the tune of *Daintie come thou to me*)

O God of thy great might, strengthen our frailtie soe
 Stoutlie to stand in feight, against our infernall foe.
 They Campe in order standes, where many a Champion bould
 In their victorious handes, eternall Triumph hould.

In this our English coast, much blessed blood is shed;
 Two hundred priestes almost, in our time martered.
 And manie lay men dye, with Joyfull sufferance
 Manie moe in prison lye, Godes cause for to advance.

Amongst these gracious troope, that follow Christ his traine
 To cause the Devill stoupe, foure preistes were latlie slaine
 Nutters bould constancie, with his sweete fellow Thwinge
 Of whose most meeke modestie, angells & saintes may singe.

Huntes hawtie corage staut, with godlie zeale soe true,
 Myld Middleton, O what tonge, can halfe they virtues shew.
 At Lancaster lovingly, these marters tooke their end,
 In glorious victorie, true faith for to defende.

And thus hath Lancashyre, offered her sacrifice
 To daunt their lewde desyre, & please our Saviours eies.
 For by this meanes, I trust, truth shall have victorie
 When as that number Just, of such saintes compleat bee.

Whose sacred members rent, & quarters set on hye
 Cause more to be content, In the same cause to dye,
 Whose lives whyle they did live, whose blessed deaths alsoe
 Doe admonishion give, what way we ought to goe.

If we should them despise, as manie wretches doe
 We should contempne lykewise, our blessed Saviour too.
 Let their examples then, move our hartes to relent,
 These are most blessed men, whom God to us hath sent.

Godes holie truth they taught, & sealed it with their blood
 Dyinge with torments fraught, and all to doe us good.
 Let lyinge heresie, with her false lye billes lout [mock]
 Truth will have victorie, through such mild champions stout

Praise be to Godes good will, whoe doth his truthe defend,
 Lord, to thy vineyard still, such wortheie workmen send.
 And good lord grant us grace, that we may constant bee
 With our Crosse in each place, to please thy majestie.

All laud & glorie great, be to the Trinitie,
 In his eternall seat, one god in persones three,

And to the Virgin mild, the Queene of heaven hye
With Jesus her lovinge Child, in all eternitie.

Unto all prophetes meeke, to Christes Apostles deere,
Marters, Confessers eake, and to all virgins cleare
And unto each of them, crowned in their degree
With Joy in Jerusalem, godes blessed face to see.

finis.



THE MARTYRS' ALTAR

A SERMON PREACHED AFTER THE CONSECRATION
OF THE HIGH ALTAR IN THE CHURCH OF ST PETER
THE APOSTLE, AT EYNHAM, ON THE FEAST OF
ST PETER'S CHAINS, 1950

By

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure was taken for misery: and their going away from us, for utter destruction: but they are in peace. And though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality.—
Wisdom, chapter 3.

IN the splendid ceremony at which we have been assisting, there are two elements: the dedication of the altar and the burying of the relics of martyrs in that altar. At some periods and in some parts of the Catholic world these two elements have been so distinguished that they have even taken place on different days. Since this is the Feast of St Peter's Chains, and St Peter, Apostle and Martyr and first Bishop of Rome, is our great patron, I propose to dwell chiefly on the most Roman of these two elements, which were not conflated as they are now until the Middle Ages; and the most Roman of them is the enshrining of the relics of the martyrs in the altar of sacrifice. It was not till after the Roman Empire had officially recognised the legality of