

Persecutors. Martyrs. The Causes.  
on the greene side, betwene Leith and Edendburgh, to the extent that the inhabitants of ffitte, seeing the fire, might be stricken with terrour and feare, not to fall into the lyke. Ex eodem Scripto.

And thus muche touching those Martyrs of Scotland, which suffered vnder James Beton, Archbishop of S. Andrewes. After whom succeeded David Beton in the same Archbishopshe, vnder whom diuers other were also martyred as hereafter (God willing) in their order shall appeare.

John Longland Bishop of Lincolne.

Thomas Harding an aged father, dwelling at Chesham in Buckinghamshire.

Rowland Vicare of great Wickham, the Bishops Chaplen.

At Chesham in Buckingham.

An. 1532.

Thom. Harding dwelling at Chesham, in the Countie of Buckingham, with Alice his wife, was firste abured by William Smith, Byshop of Lincolne, an. 1506. with diuers other moe, which the same time for speaking agaynst Idolatrie and superstition, were taken and compelled, some to beare fagots, some were burned in the cheeke with hore-irons, some condemned to perpetuall prison, some thrust into Monasteries, and spoyled cleane of all theyr goodes, some compelled to make pilgrimage to the great blocke, otherwise called, our Lady of Lincolne, some to Wallingham, some to Saint Rowland of Buckingham, some to the roode of Wendouer, some to S. John Shorne, &c. of whose mention is made in the Table before, beginning pag 821. Of this Thomas Harding much rehearsal hath bene made before, as in the pages 821, 822, 823.

First this Thomas Harding with Alice his wife, being abured, and enioyned penance, with diuers other moe, by William Smith Bishop of Lincolne, afterward by the sayd Byshop was released againe in the yeare of our Lorde 1515. of all such penance as was enioyned him and his wife at their aburasion, excepte these three Articles following, and were discharged of their badges or signes of their fagots, &c. Only this penance following, the Byshop continued, Sub poena relapsus.

First, that neyther of them during their life, should dwell out of the parish of Amerham.

Item, that eyther of them during their life, shoulde fast bread and ale euery Corpus Christi euen.

Item, that eyther of them should, during their liues vpon Corpus Christi day, euery yeare, go in pilgrimage to Asherige, and there make theyr offerings, as other people did, but not to do open penance. Also they were licensed by the sayd Byshop to do theyr pilgrimage at Asherige, vpon Corpus Christi euen, or Corpus Christi day, or some other, vpon any cause reasonable.

This penance being to them enioyned ann. 1515. they obserued to the yeare 1522. saue only in the last yeere, the foresayd Alice his wife omitted her pilgrimage going to Asherige vpon Corpus Christi daye. Also the sayd Tho. Harding, being put to his othe, to detect other, because he contrary to his othe, dissembled, and did not disclose them, was therefore enioyned in penance, for his perjury, to beare vpon his right shewe, both before and behinde, a badge or patch of greene cloth or silke embroidered like a fagot, during his whole life, vntill he should be otherwise be dispensed withall. And thus continued he from the yeare 1522. till the yeare 1532.

At last the said Harding in the yeare abouesayd 1532. about Easter holydayes, when the other people wet to the church, to commit their wonted idolatry, toke his way into the woods, there solitarily to worship the true liuing God, in spirit and truth, where, as he was occupied in a booke of English prayers, leaning or sitting vpon a stile by the woods side, it chanced that one did espie hym where he was, and

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came in great haste to the officers of the towne, declaring that he had sene Harding in the woods looking on a booke, wherupon immediatly a rude rable of them, like mad men, raine desperatly to his house, to search for bookes, & in searching went so nigh, that vnder the bordes of his floore, they found certain English bookes of holy Scripture, wherupon this godly father with his bookes, was brought before Jehu Longland, Bish. of Lincolne, being lying at Woburne. Who with his Chaplains, calling father Harding to examination, bega to reason with him, proceeding rather with checkes & rebukes, then with any found arguments. Thom. Harding seying their folly, and rude behauiour, gaue the butfew wordes, but fixing his trust and care in the Lord, did let them say what they would. Thus at last they sent him to the Byshop, prison called little case, where he did lye with hunger & payne enough, for a certaine space: till at length the Bish. sitting in his tribunal fear like a potestate, condemned him for eclapic, to be burned to ashes, committing the charge & ouersight of his Martyrdome to Rowland Bessinger, vicare of great Wickham, which Rowland the day appointed, with a rable of other like to himselfe, brought father Harding to Chesham agayne, where the next day after his returne, the sayd Rowland made a Sermon in Chesham Church, causing Tho. Harding to stand before him all the preaching tyme: which Sermon was nothing els but the main-tening of the iurisdiction of the Bish. of Rome, & the state of his Apostolicall see, w the idolatry, fantasies & traditions belonging to the same. w the Sermon was ended, Rowland toke him vp to the high altar, & asked whether he beleued that in his head after the consecratio there remained any other substance then the substance of Christs naturall body borne of the virgin Mary. To this Tho. Harding answered: the Articles of our belief do teach vs, that our Sauour Christ was borne of the virgin Mary, & that he suffered death vnder Pilate, and rose fro death the thyrday: that he then ascended into heauen and sitteth on the right hand of God, in the glory of his father.

Then was he brought into a mans house in the towne, where he remained all night in prayer, and godly meditations. So the next morning came the foresayd Rowland agayne, about 1. of the clocke, with a company of bis and stanes, to lead this godly father to his burning, whom a great number both of men and womē did folow. Of whom many bewailed his death: & contrary the wicked reioyced thereat. He was brought forth, hauing thrust in his handes a little crosse of wood, but no idoll vpon it. Then he was cheyned to the stake, besiting the people to pray for him, and to giue all his enemyes and persecutors, he commended his spirite to God, and toke his death most patiently & quietly, lifting vp his hands to heauen, saying: Iesus receaue my spirite.

When they had set fire on him, there was one that threw a byllet at him, & dashed out his braynes. Of what purpose he so did, it is not known, but as it was supposed, that he might haue xl. dayes of pardon as the proclamatio was made at his burning of wilkiss Willesworth aboue mentioned pag. 774. whereas proclamatio was made the same tyme, that whosoener did bring a fagot or a stake to the burning of an hereticke, should haue xl. dayes of pardon, whereby many ignorant people caused their children to beare byllets and fagottes to their burning.

In fine, when the sacrifice and burnt offering of this godly Martyr was finished, and he bent to ashes, in the Dell, going to Botley, at the North end of the Towne of Chesham, Rowland their Ruler of the roff, commaunding silence and thinking to send the people away, with an Ite missa est, with aloude voyce sayd to the people these wordes, not aduising heryke what his tongue dyd speake: Good people, when ye come home, do not say that you haue bene at the burning of an hereticke, but of a good true Christian man, and so they departed to dyner. Rowland with his rable of other Bishops much reioysing at the burning of this good man. After dyner they went to Church to Queensford, because it was Corpus Christi euen, where they fell to singing & chaunting, with ryingng, and ppyng of the Organes. Well was he that could reach the hest note: So much dyd they reioyce at this good mans burning, he should haue bene burned on the Aleration euen, but the matter

Tho. Harding put in little case the Bishops prison.

Tho. Harding condemned.

The faith and confession of Tho. Harding.

The patient death and martyrdom of Tho. Harding.

40. dayes of pardon for bringing fagots to burne good men.

Tho. Harding martir.

It was happy that they were not put to taste bread and water.

The taking of Thomas Harding.