

THE SAINTS AND  
MISSIONARIES OF THE  
ANGLO-SAXON ERA.

*D. C. O. ADAMS.*

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**S. BONIFACE'S DEPARTURE. (Page 69.)**

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Frontispiece.

The  
Saints and Missionaries  
of the  
Anglo-Saxon Era.

*SECOND SERIES.*

BY THE  
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## P R E F A C E .

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THE Saints in this Second Series are still given chronologically, but grouped in periods of time. The first of these periods, characterized as it was by the evangelical labours and successes of our countrymen on the Continent, may well be termed the Missionary Period. SS. Guthlac and Egwin, though not Missionaries, are included as cotemporaries in this period.

All Missionary enterprise suddenly ceased in England soon after the middle of the 8th century. Letters and learning perished also. For a hundred years and more few Saints are recorded in the annals of the Church, and little is told us of them. All this, no doubt, was caused by the ravages of the Danes, who turned the country upside down, and destroyed the religious houses. With the Abbeys perished their libraries, their stores of MSS., and other documents. The monks also, the chroniclers of their times were slain without mercy. The country, in consequence, sank into an abyss of ignorance. This we have named the Dark Period. Towards the close of the 9th century a revival of letters and of religion took place. This was inaugurated by King Alfred, to whom we all owe a debt of infinite gratitude—and this must be our apology for introducing a memoir of him in this book of Saints.

The revival, commenced by Alfred, continued and developed in the reigns of his immediate successors, and culminated in that of Edgar, his great grandson. In less than a hundred years from the date of King Edgar's death, the Anglo-Saxon Era came to an end. This period therefore we have named *The Close*. As the sky is, oftentimes, brightest at sunset, so this closing period of the Anglo-Saxon Era had a lustre shed on it by some remarkable Saints, who adorned by their lives and virtue this most sad period of our history.

Most of the illustrations in this second volume are photographs taken from old pictures in the British Museum. The three original drawings are by Mr. George Ostrehan, who supplied some excellent illustrations in the first volume. We take this opportunity of thanking the Rev. H. A. Wilson for a photograph of *S. Frideswid*, taken from a very old book in the library of Magdalen College, Oxford. Our thanks are also due to the Rev. E. ff. Clayton, for a photograph of painted glass (representing the *Legend of the Ring*) in Ludlow Church; and to the Rev. J. H. Eld, for a photo of *S. Kenelm's Church*, taken by Mr. Bates, of Belbroughton. Above all, our best thanks are due to Canon Carter for continued revision of the letter-press.

D. C. O. ADAMS.

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The Kingdom of Mercia.



## S. Guthlac.

HERMIT.

A.D. 714.

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GUTHLAC was one of the most celebrated Hermits of the Western Church. He was born in the Midlands of England towards the close of the 7th century, in the reign of Ethelred, one of Penda's sons.

His father, Penwald, nearly allied to the King, was able to trace his descent through a long line of warriors, who lived and flourished in the north of Europe in times anterior to the advent of the English in this country. He lived with his wife, Tetta, in a castellated mansion, suitable to his rank, in that part of Mercia which was occupied by the *Middle Angles*.<sup>1</sup> Their marriage was blessed with one son, to whom his parents gave the family name of Guthlac. Much pains was taken by his pious parents to bring him up well. Education—in our sense of the word—was out of the question, “but he “was early imbued with the noble discipline of the

<sup>1</sup> This Tribe occupied the modern counties of Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, and part of Warwickshire.

“Ancients,” which probably means that he was inured in habits of hardihood, and to join in manly sports. He grew up a bright, adventurous boy, full of activity, yet withal, gentle in his manners, obedient to his parents, and with such an amiable disposition and temper as made him much beloved by his companions. When he was old enough to choose a profession, “emulating the exploits of his ancestors, he became a soldier.” There was, in these times, no military system such as is usual in modern times. The custom then was with those who wished to be soldiers to join a company under some chieftain—or, if they were qualified to do so, to raise a company for themselves and become its chieftain. Guthlac was of the latter class, and thenceforward for nine years his life was spent in deeds of arms in the King’s service. Unfortunately his biographer gives no details of this period of his life, and does not even tell us who were the enemies with whom he was engaged. They were, doubtless, the old *British* (or as we now call them, the *Welsh*), who, at this time, still held extensive parts of the Midlands. War between the Welsh and the English was constantly going on, it was internecine, neither side spared the other.

Guthlac greatly distinguished himself as a soldier. None were braver in battle, or more daring in adventurous exploits. Yet amidst this cruel work, his heart retained its natural tenderness. The



following anecdote is told of this time of his life:—  
“He had made a raid into the enemy’s country,  
“which he laid waste with fire and sword; cities,  
“castles, and villages were taken in succession, and  
“an immense booty gathered. This was included in  
“a vast heap for division, and the miserable owners  
“stood by, helpless spectators. Guthlac was so  
“touched by the sight of their misery that he  
“commanded, and obtained the consent of his  
“followers, that the third part of the spoil should  
“be given back to them.”

At the end of nine years there was a pause in this warfare. It was at this juncture that a sudden and wonderful change came over him. Possibly, if we knew all, we should find it was not so sudden as it appeared! There may have been many an internal conflict before. Be this as it may, the event came before the world as a surprise. Guthlac, we are told, was lying one night on his bed, unable to sleep, when a crowd of thoughts took possession of his mind; the vanity of this world, and of its glory, flashed upon him with vivid light as he reflected on the miserable end of some of his ancestors; and this led him on to the thought of his own death, and how little he was prepared for it. Whilst he was revolving these matters, and meditating a change of life, the following text kept ringing in his ears—“Let not your flight be in the winter, nor  
“on the Sabbath-day.” It seemed to him to be the

voice of GOD calling him to seize the present opportunity, and he made a solemn resolution that he would at once forsake all secular employments and dedicate himself to GOD.

When morning dawned, and spread light and cheerfulness around, he remained true to his resolution. As a first step, he summoned his soldiers together, and bade them choose another captain, for he was leaving earthly warfare to enter into a higher service. His astonished comrades, greatly grieved, did their best to change his determination, but failed to do so. Nor was he moved by the solicitations of the King. Nor, in this matter, did he listen to his parents. "Guthlac was at the age of 24, when, renouncing this world's glory, he, with most undoubting faith, fixed his hope firm on CHRIST."

When all arrangements had been completed, he betook himself to Repton, so famous in these early times. Here was an Abbey, which, as usual with the English, was a double one, with compartments, i.e., for men and women. The Abbess Elfrida presided over both. She admitted Guthlac, who was here initiated in the religious life. He proved as devout a monk as he had formerly been a brave soldier. Anxious to redeem the time, and to make amends for past neglects, he practised himself in the severest discipline. One of the rules which he set himself was to drink no wine or strong drink. This was no

part of the discipline of the House, and, as a singularity, it brought him for a time into ill-favour with the other inmates ; but when they observed the sincerity of his purpose, and the humility and soberness of his mind, their feelings changed, and he won their love.

“Guthlac,” his biographer tells us, “was of excellent proportions, of a beautiful ruddy countenance, amiable and affectionate in disposition, yet, none the less, of iron determination, which could not be turned from the course which he believed to be right.” He took great pains at this time to remedy the deficiencies of his education by learning to read. As soon as he was able to do so, he got the Psalms by heart, and busied himself in the study of the Scriptures, and other books containing rules for a holy life. He made it his aim, we are told, to notice in each one of his associates the virtue in which he particularly excelled, in order to emulate it. In these and such-like practices two years of strict monastic discipline were passed ; he then began to desire a still more arduous life.

Among the books which he now delighted to read were some that told of the solitary lives of famous Saints in Syria and Egypt, and his bosom glowed with the eager desire of following their example. This, however, could not be done without the permission of his superiors. Guthlac made known his desire, and obtained their consent. The next

point was to find a locality suitable for his purpose.

After much prayer for guidance, he set out on a tour of investigation. There was at this time on the borders of the Midlands a tract of bitter marshland of vast extent. It abounded in deep stagnant pools, dykes, quagmires, streams, and frequent woody islets, usually enveloped in fog and vapour. Guthlac, in the course of his journey, came to this waste, and it pleased him well. He made enquiries with respect to its interior, and was informed that the greater part of it was uninhabited. One of his informants, Tatwin by name, added that there was an islet in the more secret recesses of the marsh, which many had essayed to inhabit, but had been driven from it by the strange monsters and terrors of various kinds met with in it. Guthlac requested the man to show him the place ; and Tatwin, taking a fishing-boat, which happened to be lying there, conducted Guthlac through the devious windings of that dark pool till they arrived at the isle, which is called in the English language, Cruland, which had been hitherto an untilled waste. The look of the place pleased Guthlac well, and he felt instinctively that he had been guided there by GOD. He began at once to search the islet, and the more he saw the better was he satisfied with it.

Before, however, settling down in Cruland, he deemed it proper to return to Repton to bid a final



S. GUTHLAC ON HIS WAY TO CROYLAND.



farewell to the brethren, whom he had left somewhat hastily. Accordingly he went back to the Abbey, and spent three months in holy fellowship with them. And, then, commending himself to their prayers, returned to Cruland, "as to his paternal inheritance."

"Guthlac was twenty-six years old when he left "the world and its crooked ways to serve GOD in "prayer and holy solitude." He was not, however, the sole inhabitant in Cruland. A clerk, named Beccelin, obtained leave by his entreaties to accompany him. Beccelin had a cell of his own at some distance from Guthlac's, but was allowed to visit him from time to time.

The privations of Guthlac's life in Cruland were very great. He took but one meal a day. This consisted of barley-bread, and was taken at sunset. Whence he obtained it is not told us; he probably brought a supply, and secured it afterwards by cultivation. His clothing was sheepskins and goatskins. His house, or cell, was not constructed for him. He found in the slet an old tumulus, which had been cut in half by treasure-seekers. A roof was put over this hollow, and it served him for a cell.

Guthlac, we learn, suffered much from spiritual depression and other mental trials in the early part of his stay in Cruland. He fell into a slough of despondency and almost despair. The old mediæval

writer tells the story thus : “ It came to pass on a  
“ certain day, soon after his arrival in Cruland, as he  
“ was engaged, as usual, in singing psalms and chants,  
“ that the enemy of mankind let fly at him the  
“ poisonous arrow of despair. The shaft went  
“ home to its mark, and Guthlac became agitated  
“ with the most distressing thoughts, the remembrance  
“ of the sins of his past life pressed heavily on his  
“ soul. They seemed too great to be pardoned, too  
“ black to be washed out. Doubts also came over his  
“ mind, whether he had not undertaken a course of  
“ life which was beyond his power to pursue. Thus  
“ he remained in misery and dejection three days.  
“ On the ensuing night, recovering himself a little, he  
“ began to sing the psalms, and finding comfort in  
“ them, persevered in prayer and psalmody through  
“ the greater part of the night. And it came to pass  
“ in the morning watch” (he had probably fallen  
“ into a sleep) “his cell was filled with a glorious  
“ light, and a bright Being appeared by his bed-side,  
“ In a moment all his despairing thoughts vanished.  
“ and his soul was filled with exceeding joy.”  
“ Thenceforward Guthlac,” we are told, “fixed his  
“ faith more firmly than ever in the LORD JESUS.  
“ Nor did the devil attempt again to assault his faith  
“ with the weapons of despair.” He was subjected,  
however, to various other trials, and to a series of  
extraordinary illusions. We read of the same (or  
similar) in the lives of other celebrated Hermits.



They were believed in olden times to have been the machinations of evil spirits doing their worst to drive the Hermit from his cell. It is a question whether some of them, at least, may not be traced to more natural causes. Certainly the tendency of a life of solitude and of extreme asceticism would be, at all events at first, to disturb the imagination and unhinge the mind. It seems also not unlikely that some of the molestations to which Guthlac was subjected in Cruland were inflicted on him by beings not so immaterial as he supposed. The vast fens in East Anglia were well adapted to serve as a refuge for outlaws, and were resorted to by others in difficulty. These rough outcasts were not likely to relish the presence of Guthlac in their asylum, and would probably use any means in their power to drive him away. Such thoughts, at least, are suggested when we read of his being taken out of his cell in the middle of the night and plunged in a neighbouring pool, and when we are told that he distinctly heard his persecutors talking to each other in *Welsh* (a language with which he was well acquainted).

However, from whatever cause these molestations were due, they became less and less frequent as time went on, and at last ceased altogether. Partly, it may be, because he had become accustomed to solitude, partly also because the strain on his mind was not so severe as at first. Cruland was ceasing

to be a solitude: such a solitude, at least, as he had found it. Several of his old companions in arms, attracted by his example, and emulating his faith, followed him to Cruland, and implored him to allow them to spend the rest of their days in holy religion, under his spiritual guidance. These men had each a separate cell of his own, and lived as hermits, remote from, but within reach of Guthlac. Cruland began also to be resorted to by many others from various parts of England, who came, not to reside, but to consult Guthlac for the good of their souls.

It was about this time that he incurred a more real danger than he had yet met with in Cruland: and indeed he had a very narrow escape of his life. The story is a strange one, such an one, surely, as could only be met with in mediæval times! He had allowed (it may be remembered) the clerk, Beccelin, (at his earnest entreaty) to occupy a cell in Cruland. This man either, as we may charitably suppose, under temporary derangement of mind, or, as the old writers say, "seduced by the devil," made up his mind to murder Guthlac, in order that he might succeed to his cell, and its famous reputation. He had been allowed by Guthlac to perform certain little offices for him, one being to shave him from time to time. On one of these occasions, Beccelin entered his cell fully prepared to make use of the opportunity. How Guthlac became aware of his

intention, or whether he did become aware of it, is difficult to tell ; but he saw plainly that something was wrong, and as a father might deal with an erring child, he bade Beccelin go down on his knees, and confess his sin, and Beccelin did as he was told, and with lachrymose voice acknowledged his guilty purpose. Guthlac not only forgave him, but did not even withdraw his confidence from him, but treated him on the same friendly terms as before, and Beccelin, after this, never again swerved to evil, but remained true and faithful to his master.

The fenny country, from the very fact that it was so sparsely inhabited by men, abounded all the more in other animal life. The sluices and pools were full of fish, and the islets and morasses were the favourite haunts of birds.

Guthlac made friends with these lower creatures. Even the fish learned to know him, and scudded through the water to receive food from him. As for the birds, they became so tame that they would eat out of his hand. The following story is told on the authority of a certain Wilfrid, "who for many years "had been united in spiritual friendship with the "man of GOD." This man was in Guthlac's cell, one spring morning, when two swallows, evidently just returned from their winter haunts, entered it. They flew round and round the cell with joyful notes, and then with the utmost confidence alighted on Guthlac's shoulders. The Saint took down a winnowing fan,

and placed it for them under the roof of his cell, and the birds, instinctively understanding the hint, took possession of it for their nest. Some of these creatures, however, as might be expected, were great plagues. The crows in particular were most troublesome and annoying. Two of them haunted the neighbourhood of his cell, and carried off or tore in pieces anything they could pick up, nor did they hesitate to enter his cell for the same purpose.

A friend of Guthlac's was making a short stay in Cruland for the benefit of his counsel, and employed his time in transcribing a valuable MS. One day when he was thus employed, he left the parchment on the table to go into the Oratory to observe one of the hours of prayer. Whilst he was thus engaged, a crow entered the cell, noticed the parchment, and flew off with it. The unfortunate owner, happening to look upwards in his devotions, beheld the crow in mid-flight with the scroll in its talons. He rushed out in pursuit, but only to see the bird winging its way in the distance over the privet-beds in the stagnant marsh! Strange to relate this scroll was recovered (one can scarcely wonder that in old times it was counted a miracle). Guthlac, coming out of his cell, learned his friend's loss, and by way of consolation, offered to go with him in search of his scroll. The two got into a boat (or punt), which they propelled in the direction which the bird had taken.

After a long and wearisome journey, one of them noticed a very large reed in a drooping posture, and looking at it more intently, beheld to his great joy the precious MS. hanging on its top, safe, and uninjured by the water.

Such good fortune did not happen every day. The Saint, we are told, accustomed himself to bear with equanimity these petty annoyances, accounting them very serviceable as an exercise of patience.

Among the visitors, who, as time went on, came in increasing numbers to Cruland, many might be seen conveying invalids, who, with infinite pains and labour, they brought from various parts of the country for Guthlac to bless. And many wonderful cures are recorded. There is no need to discuss whether these cures were miraculous. They were probably as much so as those we read of in our own day at places of Pilgrimage on the Continent, where we are told, on good authority, that many bonâ fide cures take place, though there may be reasonable doubt if such cures are miraculous. We give one instance out of many attributed to S. Guthlac. There was in East-Anglia a young man of noble family, Huctred by name. "This man was suddenly seized by an evil spirit, yea, so vehemently was he vexed by it, that he lacerated and tore his own flesh with his nails and teeth, and in this cruel madness he not only injured himself, but also any one else he could lay hold of. At last he became

“so mad that no one dared to control him; for one  
“day, when a crowd had collected, and some men  
“were endeavouring to put him in bonds, he seized a  
“hatchet, and with fearful blows laid three men  
“dead at his feet. In course of time he became  
“emaciated, and lost his strength. His parents took  
“him to many Priests and Bishops, but they could  
“do nothing with him. At last, hearing of Guthlac,  
“they brought him by a long journey to Cruland,  
“and presenting him to Guthlac, explained the cause  
“of their journey. The Man of GOD, pitying their  
“sorrows, took the afflicted lunatic by the hand, and  
“led him into his Oratory. There he continued with  
“him three whole days in fasting and prayers. After  
“this, the man being restored to his reason, he  
“baptized him and sent him home. Nor did the man  
“from that day forward suffer molestation again from  
“the evil spirit.”

Another class of visitors was composed of those unhappy persons with whom the world was going hard. Unfortunate men, suffering from the tyranny and oppression of those in power. Among these was a Prince of the Royal Family in Mercia, Ethelbald by name. This Prince had a good title to the Crown, and was possessed of high martial qualities, for which reason he had become an object of jealousy to the reigning King Ceolred, who constantly sought his life. Ethelbald found a refuge in the wilds and thickets of the fens, never venturing to stay long anywhere,

but flitting from place to place. Guthlac, it may be remembered, was of the Royal Kin, and therefore related to him; and Ethelbald found in him a most kind and sympathising friend, who compassionated his adversity, and gave him good and judicious counsel. Ethelbald, reduced to despair, had begun to plot for the death of his persecutor. From this he was withheld by Guthlac, who bade him "renounce counsel that could not be established." "The kingdom," he continued, "will not come to thee as a prey, nor by way of rapine, but thou shalt obtain it from the hand of the LORD. Await then his end, whose days are failing, for the hand of the LORD will overthrow him whose hope is in evil, and his days shall pass away like a shadow."

Ethelbald was wise enough to be ruled by Guthlac, and he had abundant cause afterwards for rejoicing that he had done so. King Ceolred,<sup>1</sup> whose scandalous life gave occasion for these reflections, died not very long after this, and Ethelbald received the Crown.

Many other anecdotes are related by Guthlac's biographer in proof of his prophetic powers. They prove at least that he had a wonderful insight into men's characters, and in our day would have been reckoned an eminent thought-reader! The reader

<sup>1</sup> King Ceolred, who persecuted Ethelbald, was valiant in battle, but lived dissolutely and profanely. His death occurred two years after that of S. Guthlac. He died most suddenly, at a great banquet, while splendidly regaling "himself and his nobles."

will remember his detection of Beccelin's design. The following anecdotes lead to the same conclusion:— Two Monks came on some occasion to visit him "in order to receive his admonitions." They prudently took the precaution of bringing refreshments with them, for they were not likely to find much to eat in Cruland! Among their refreshments were two bottles of ale, which they did not like to bring into Guthlac's cell, so hid them somewhere by the way, intending to make use of them on their return. Guthlac received them with his usual kindness, and they had much talk together. When they were leaving he said with a smile, "But, my sons, where are your refreshments and the bottles of ale? Why did you not bring them with you here?" The conscious Monks blushed as if detected in a crime, and with much shame acknowledged what they had done. Guthlac speedily reassured them, and dismissed them with his blessing.

An Abbat was in the habit of visiting him from time to time, and usually brought with him two attendants, who were Clerks in Minor Orders. These men on one occasion requested leave to stay behind on plea of necessary business. The Abbat came on alone to Guthlac's cell. Whilst they were conversing together, Guthlac inquired where his attendants were; the Abbat replied that they had been detained at home on urgent business. Guthlac smiled. And when the Abbat entreated some



explanation, he told him he had good grounds for believing that they were at that very time drinking themselves drunk at a certain house which he named. The Abbat, on his return home, enquired into the matter and found it true. The men stoutly denied the charge at first, but afterwards, confounded by what the Abbat seemed to know, confessed their guilt.

“Nor ought we to omit,” his biographer continues, “another instance of miraculous prescience “in the Venerable Guthlac, who was divinely gifted “to know the words of the absent, and to understand “the thoughts of those present as if they had been “spoken.” A certain Bishop, Hedda,<sup>1</sup> “drawn by “divine counsel, came to visit Guthlac.”

The Bishop was accompanied by a retinue of attendants, amongst whom was a Scrivener named Wilfrid. These men rode together, and as they conversed by the way, spoke much of Guthlac. Some dwelt on the severity of his mode of life, others on his virtue and holiness; others, again, about the miracles imputed to him. On the other hand, there were not wanting some of a more sceptical turn of mind, who expressed their doubts whether he was really so great a Saint as he was reported.

<sup>1</sup> It would appear that this Bishop was not S. Hedda, the Bishop of *Winchester*. (See vol. i. p. 150.) S. Hedda died, A.D. 705, not many years after Guthlac's arrival in Cruland, when there was no need for a Church. It is more likely that it was Bishop Ætta of *Dorchester*, in whose diocese Cruland was included.

Wilfrid, joining in the conversation, assured the company that he should soon be able to tell them, "for," said he, "I have lived some years in Ireland, "in which country," he continued, "are many hermits. "Some of them good and holy men, but others mere "hypocrites, and by continued intercourse with both "I have gained such experience that now I can easily "read any man's character at the first interview." That evening Guthlac was constrained by the Bishop's express wish to dine with the company. In the course of the banquet, at which Wilfrid was present, in a pause of the conversation, Guthlac, addressing him, exclaimed, "Well, Brother Wilfrid, "you have not told us yet what you think of the "person whose character you promised to read!"

Bishop Hedda's visit to Cruland was not fortuitous or purposeless. A Church had become a necessity, partly for the benefit of the Anchorets, who lived there under Guthlac's spiritual care, partly on account of the numerous visitors, who frequently made a short stay in the islet. A little wooden Church had therefore been constructed, and the Bishop came to consecrate it. But, of what service would a Church be without a Priest to minister in it? and there was no Priest yet in Cruland (Guthlac and all his associates were *laymen*). This did not escape the Bishop, and he came to the conclusion that Guthlac's ordination would be the best solution of the difficulty. Accordingly, in the course of his visit, after much



S. GUTHLAC BUILDING HIS CHURCH.



edifying conversation had passed between them, he suggested, recommended, enjoined Guthlac to receive ordination at his hands. Guthlac did not dare to refuse the Bishop, so went down on his knees and gave his consent. "Then the Bishop, rising up joyfully, consecrated, first the Church, and then Guthlac to serve GOD faithfully in it."

The date of Bishop Hedda's visit is not given, but it would appear to have been towards the close of Guthlac's life. That life was not a long one. It may be that the unhealthiness of the fens, or the severity of his mode of life, or the two together, injured his health. At the end of fifteen years from the date of his arrival in Cruland, he passed away "from the laborious servitude of this life to the rest of eternal bliss." His illness was short. One day, when he was praying in his cell, he was seized with a sudden internal pain. Recognising that this was no transient attack, he began, without delay, to prepare himself for his passage to eternity. But a short time intervened indeed, "for it was on Wednesday in Holy Week that his illness commenced, and on the following Wednesday he migrated to the LORD."

He was attended in his last illness by Beccelin, who, it may be remembered, had once plotted against his life, but who since that time had ministered to him with most faithful service, and who was now privileged to wait on his last hours. Guthlac never

rallied, he was just able to rise from his bed on Easter-day, and even to officiate in Divine Service ; for he Celebrated at the Altar, and also preached the Word of GOD. Beccelin, who was present, testified afterwards that "never in his life had he "heard such preaching from other lips." This was his last effort. On the following Tuesday, Beccelin, going early into his cell, found him lying on the ground facing the Altar. He was speechless, but recovered his voice sufficiently to be able to tell Beccelin his last wishes, and to send an affectionate message to his Sister Pega, who had become an "Ancess" in another part of Cruland.

Guthlac survived that night. On the following morning, as the sun began to rise, "he fortified "himself with the LORD'S Body and Blood, and "then, with eyes raised to heaven, and arms extended, sent forth his soul to rejoice in eternal "bliss."

"O blessed man," exclaims his biographer ; "how great the gravity, the exceeding dignity which "pervaded all his words and conversation ! Who "more able than he in deciding cases of conscience ! "More prompt in solution of Scripture questions ! "More unflagging in the service of his GOD ! In his "mouth was CHRIST ; in his heart piety ; in his "mind nought but charity, peace, mercy, and com- "passion. So profound an equanimity possessed his "mind, that no one ever beheld him angry, proud,

“elated, or depressed. His countenance reflected  
“the joy of his spirit, and also the sweetness of his  
“temper, the wisdom and humility of his mind, so  
“that he seemed more than human to strangers, and  
“to his acquaintance.”

S. Guthlac is believed to have died on April 14th, A.D. 714. He was buried according to his injunctions in his own Oratory. At the end of a year from the date of his burial his body was taken up (in order to elevate it above the pavement), when it was found perfectly incorrupt—the limbs were flexible, so that he seemed a sleeping, rather than a dead man. The body was replaced in the same sarcophagus, which was raised above the ground, and a monument of wondrous ornamental work, presented by Prince Ethelbald, was placed at its head. None mourned more sorely for his loss than this Prince, who was still an exile at the Saint's death. Ethelbald never forgot his love for Guthlac. The Saint had once requested him to grant him so much land in Cruland as would serve for a home for the Anchorets who had settled there. Ethelbald promised to do this, if ever it should be in his power to do so. Nor did he forget this promise when he became King of Mercia. About two years after Guthlac's death he fulfilled it most munificently. Not content with providing for the Anchorets, he determined to found in Cruland, with royal magnificence, an Abbey, “in  
“which those who wished to serve GOD day and

“night might live together, and cause the solitudes  
“in which Guthlac had striven in prayer, to resound  
“with chant and hymns.”

The most lavish endowments were bestowed by him on this Abbey—“five miles in extent towards  
“the East, three miles to the South, and five miles to  
“the North, freed from all secular tax, or custom of  
“any kind.”

The Abbey itself was built on the grandest scale. Wood was still the material most in use in England for building purposes. Houses and Churches alike were of wood (marvellous structures! some of them in their way). Croyland Abbey was built of wood; but the King had set his heart on having a *Church of stone*, a difficult undertaking, most difficult *in Cruland*, where the marshy nature of the soil could not sustain much weight. To meet this difficulty huge oak-piles in great numbers were fixed in the ground, and tenacious soil was brought in boats nine miles by water from Upland, and thrown into the marsh, and on this foundation the Church was erected.

Such was the origin of Croyland Abbey, which took so high a place among the institutions of the Middle Ages in England, and in which religion flourished for nearly a thousand years.

In the story of S. Guthlac's life we have a remarkable instance of the marvellous influence of a good man's life on the world at large. Whatever



may be thought in modern times of the way in which S. Guthlac's piety shewed itself, of the *sincerity* of that piety there can be no doubt. It was not to please himself, but because he believed he could serve GOD best in solitude that he left the society of his fellow-men to become a hermit.

It is most interesting to note how the world from which he fled was influenced by him who fled from it! Not a few of his companions in arms were moved by his example (without a word of exhortation from himself) to wish to adopt the same life. The fisherman who conveyed him to his islet entreated permission to share it with him. Guthlac hid himself in the obscurest corner of the fens, known only to outcasts and aliens, and there we see him sought out by crowds of his fellow-men, who came trooping from every part of the country, heedless of the fatigue, only too happy if they were allowed to see him, to sit at his feet, and be guided by his precepts.

What a contrast have we not here to the sad experience of many a good man, who spends his days in efforts to benefit his fellow-men, and meets only with disappointment, so that at last he is fain to cry out with the prophet, "I have laboured in vain. I have spent my strength for nought, and to no purpose." One thing seems clear, that Society is not always influenced most deeply by those who live in it. There are, indeed, good men,

who seem to have a special gift, or talent, for elevating those among whom they live. Such men, living in the world, but "not of the world," are no doubt the salt of the earth, in which their lot is cast; but is it not equally true that there are others who have no such talent, and yet may do as much good in the world as the former? The prophets of old lived apart from the world to which they bore GOD'S message. John the Baptist dwelt in the desert, yet he drew all Jerusalem there to hear his burning words, and thousands were moved to repentance by the "voice of one crying *in the wilderness.*" History repeats this lesson in other ages. Men are moved as much by example as by precept. A life of holiness and of prayer is in itself a benefit to others.

The man who lives near to GOD will be a holy influence for good wherever he lives, whether in a city or in a desert.

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#### CROYLAND ABBEY.

Founded by a King of Mercia, and in memory of a Saint so nearly connected with the royal family, Croyland was highly favoured by succeeding Kings of Mercia. Principal among these royal benefactors were Kings Offa, Kenulf, and Witlaf. Witlaf engaging rashly in war with Egbert, King of Wessex,

and defeated in battle, escaped into the marshes, and was concealed by the Abbat in Croyland until he was able to make terms with his conqueror; who allowed him to retain his crown in subjection to himself. Witlaf retained through life a lively sense of gratitude for the benefits received in this time of distress, and his love for Croyland was very great. He lavished gold, jewels, and treasures in abundance on the Abbey, and among other privileges conferred on it, made it a sanctuary.

Croyland was also in these early days in high favour as a place of pilgrimage, and resorted to it as such by visitors from every part of England. Thus it continued in great prosperity till the arrival of the Danes, when it was plundered and burnt by Oskeytel, A.D. 870. The account of this awful episode in its history, graphically told by one who was apparently an eye-witness, has come down to our times. For about a hundred years, the ruined Abbey remained in a state of poverty—when it happened that the Chancellor of England, Turketul, who was related to the royal family, was taking a journey through the Midlands, and happening to pass by Croyland, paid the Abbey a visit. He became so interested in the place that he determined to rebuild it. This he did with the utmost magnificence, and to crown all, resigned his worldly dignities, embraced “religion,” re-endowed Croyland with all his worldly wealth, and became the first Abbat of the

restored house. Under his auspices Croyland became one of the principal Abbeys in England.

To pursue its fortunes further would be out of place here ; but it would not be right to omit the important share which it had in the foundation of the modern University of Cambridge, which indeed had its origin in the efforts of the Monks of Croyland to improve the education of the people in their neighbourhood.

The story, as told by Ingulph is as follows: A certain eloquent and learned Abbat of Croyland, Joffrid, who had been formerly Professor at Orleans, in conjunction with four other Norman Monks (who had been transplanted to Croyland), bethought themselves of opening a public course of instruction in the neighbourhood. Accordingly they hired a barn for the purpose, situate at the gates of the town of Cambridge. Success attended their undertaking. Before long neither the barn nor any other building to be had could contain the crowd of both men and women who flocked to listen to them. Thus encouraged by this success the Monks determined to continue their teaching on a more systematic plan. Lectures on grammar, logic, science, and on the Holy Scripture, undertaken by those who were learned in them, were delivered in succession daily from early dawn to the close of day. "Such was the slender "stream which became in time a river fertilizing all "England."

## SANCTUARIES.

Sanctuaries and their privileges have been for so long a time a thing of the past, that a few words about them may not be out of place. They proved of great service as a remedy against private revenge. Their origin may be traced, partly to the cities of refuge, instituted by the Mosaic law ; partly to the pagan system of asylum, granted to criminals who fled to the altars of their gods. When the Roman world became Christian, this right of asylum was transferred from pagan to Christian Temples. It was an institution not consistent, doubtless, with a perfect system of legislation, but was not unsuitable, and indeed was very serviceable in times of anarchy and barbarism, and suitable for the Anglo-Saxon race, because of the ancient ferocity of their character, and their tendency to resort to deeds of retaliation and private revenge. The privilege of asylum in a Sanctuary did not necessarily prevent the punishment of the guilty. In most Sanctuaries only three days of grace were allowed. When these were over the fugitive was bound to satisfy the legal demands of his adversary. Failing this, he was delivered to the officers of justice.

Sanctuaries varied not a little in the extent of their privileges. Chief among them were the Churches of York, Beverley, Ripon, Ramsey, Westminster, and Croyland. No Sanctuary in England was so

highly privileged as Croyland. The whole islet was free, "and a line of demarcation drawn at a distance "of 20 feet from the opposite margin of the lake "arrested the pursuit of the officers of justice." All who fled to Croyland were under the Abbat's control, and bound to do him service.

**S. Pega.**

VIRGIN.

CIRCA 720.

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S. PEGA shared largely (in Anglo-Saxon times) in the veneration felt for her brother. Following his example, she lived as an "Ancess" in a cell in some distant part of Cruland. After S. Guthlac's death she remained in his cell until the foundation of the new Abbey, when she left Croyland, and having no home in England, made a toilsome pilgrimage to Rome, where she finished her days in great devotion.

Her cell in Croyland was converted into a religious house in connection with the great Abbey, and was amply endowed with extensive lands, embracing the villages of Glington, Northanburtham, Makesey, Etton, Badynton, and Barnack. As time went on, it became an independent Abbey, and flourished till the 11th century, when it was burnt by Sweyn. The community escaped, but never recovered their endowments, which were granted away by K. Hardicanute to Earl Godwin; and the House was not rebuilt.

S. Pega's name still survives in the modern village of Peykirk (Northamptonshire).

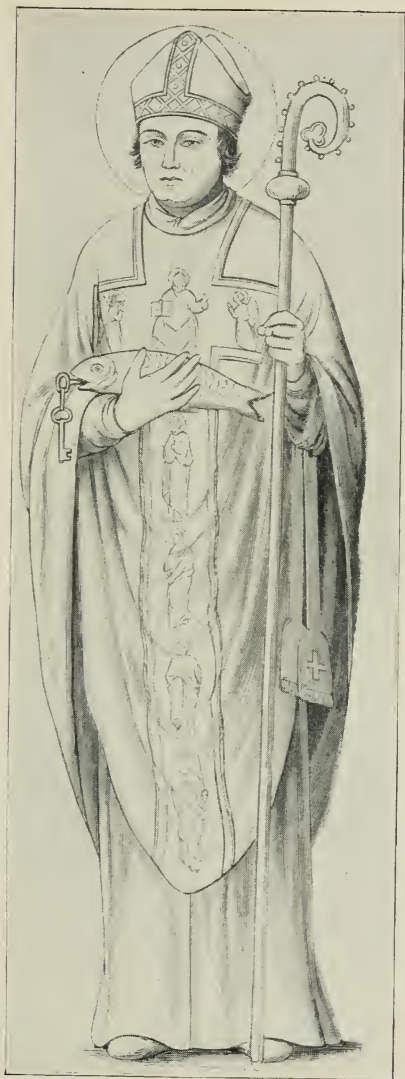
S. Guthlac's companions, who followed him to Croyland, and lived as Anchorets under his guidance, were (locally at least) regarded as Saints.

Ingulph, in his *History of Croyland*, gives the following account of them :—

“One of them, Cissa, was a man sprung from a  
“noble family, and in former times of great influence  
“in worldly matters, but now having left all things  
“behind, he had become a follower of our LORD  
“JESUS CHRIST. Another was Bettelin, a most  
“attached servant of the same faithful father (Guth-  
“lac). A third was Egbert, who was admitted by  
“him to a more strict confidence than any of the rest.  
“A fourth was Tatwin, who had formerly been his  
“guide and steersman to the said island. All  
“these had separate dwellings to the end of their  
“lives.”

When these hermits died, they were buried in marble sarcophagi, which were placed in a circle round the tomb of S. Guthlac. In this honourable position they remained till the arrival of the Danish army in 870. The barbarians, noticing the handsomeness of the coffins, broke them all open in the expectation of finding treasures in them, and enraged with disappointment at finding none, heaped them and their contents together and consumed them with fire.





S. EGWIN, THIRD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.



## **S. Egwin.**

### **THIRD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.**

CIRCA A.D. 717.

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S. EGWIN, third Bishop of Worcester, was born about the middle of the 7th century. He was of high birth, related to the royal family of Mercia. From his earliest days he devoted himself to religion. "Renouncing the desire of worldly honours, and the enjoyment of temporal prosperity, he embraced voluntary poverty for the love of GOD, giving himself up to ecclesiastical studies, and to the offices of religion."

The minor orders were still in use in England. Egwin passed, step by step, through them to the Priesthood, and when the See of Worcester became vacant by the death of Bishop Oftfor, about 693, the Clergy and also the people were urgent that he should be raised to the Episcopal dignity. The King of Mercia (Ethelred<sup>1</sup>) heartily concurred; and so Egwin, though sorely against his will, was made Bishop of Worcester. "Straightway," we are told,

<sup>1</sup> Ethelred, son of Penda, succeeded to the throne of Mercia on his brother Wulfere's death, A.D. 675. He resigned it A.D. 704; built Bardney Abbey, and became its first Abbat.

“he became a famous preacher of the Divine Word, hoping thereby to save the souls of his people.” The English in the Midlands were still but half-weaned from their old heathen ways; many evil customs yet lingered amongst them. S. Egwin, in his zeal to eradicate these errors, often preached against them—“sharply rebuking his flock for their wicked and erroneous practices, and unlawful marriages, which he prohibited them to contract in the future, reproof, entreating, rebuking in all patience and doctrine.” Such plain speaking was not likely to meet with popular approval. S. Egwin’s preaching gave great offence. Some of the nobles, whose practice was not in accordance with their profession, became his bitter enemies. So it came to pass before long that a storm of opposition was raised against him. The populace joined in the outcry, and S. Egwin was driven out of Worcester. The King himself concived at this injurious treatment of him, for Egwin’s enemies had taken care to poison his mind against him.

“In this distress the man of GOD, perceiving himself to be called to the conflict, clothed himself with the armour of faith, and supported himself with divine consolations.” Conscious of his innocence in respect of the charges laid against him, yet not doubting of his sinfulness in the sight of GOD, he determined to make a *penitential* journey to

Rome, which he also did, occupying himself the whole of the way thither in prayer and fasting, daily humbling himself in the sight of GOD. In this mind and spirit he entered Rome, where he met with a most gracious and honourable reception. Old writers attribute this gracious reception to a miracle said to have occurred on the way, or soon after his arrival in Rome (see Appendix). It seems more probable that the story of his wrongs had become known in Rome, and Egwin met with that sympathy and honour which is due from all good Christians to those who suffer in a righteous cause.

S. Egwin made some little stay abroad. In the mean time a great change of opinion occurred at home. Scarcely indeed was he removed from their sight than his people began to regret their treatment of him. None more so than the King, who was heartily ashamed of the weak part which he had played. So it came to pass that when S. Egwin returned to England, he met with a welcome, and was joyfully received back without any opposition into his diocese. The King shortly afterwards chose him to be his spiritual father, and confided the princes, his sons, "to his care for instruction in "letters and moral culture."

In the time of his adversity and exile the Saint had made a vow to GOD, that if ever he should be freed from his misfortunes, he would build, as a thankoffering, a House of Religion. Finding himself

now in great prosperity, he began to consider how he could best fulfil his vow. Many valuable estates of land were about this time conferred upon him. One of these was at Fladbury, which he exchanged for another at Stratford. Among the rest was an extensive tract of land, then called Hethehome, given him by Kenred, King of Mercia (who had lately succeeded his Uncle Ethelred). This contained about eighty manses of heathy land, situate on either side of the river Avon. On it stood a little old *British* Church, a relic of past times. S. Egwin took great interest in this Church, which he frequented much for private devotion, and eventually he decided to build his Abbey here. In the mean time, until his plans could be matured, he placed four herdsmen on the estate to farm it. The chief of them, whose name was Eoves, lived upon it. From him the place came to be called *Eoves' home*, which in time became abbreviated into *Evesham*, and remains its name to the present day. The new Abbey was consecrated A.D. 709, and was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It was a grand Foundation for these times, and at once took a place among the chief religious houses of the Midlands of England.

It happened, soon after the completion of the building, that King Kenred resigned his throne from religious motives, and contemplating a visit to Rome, requested S. Egwin, who had travelled that way before, to accompany him. Egwin complied,

and took advantage of his stay in Rome to obtain a valuable Charter of Privileges for his new Foundation. This Charter of Privileges, we are expressly told, he submitted, on his return home, to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, by whom it was confirmed.

S. Egwin, in his latter years, retired from his Episcopate into his Abbey. There he devoted himself to the spiritual training of his new Community, and in pious preparation for his own death. "For this Bishop Egwin," says the old writer, "was a very holy Confessor, humble in his demeanour, cheerful in conversation, devout as a preacher, candid in judgment, of revered life, very watchful in prayer, assiduous in reading, pious in affections, and remarkable for many miracles." When, at last, he fell into a chronic illness, he "ceased not night and day from the praise of GOD, and such works as he could not now perform himself he caused to be done by others."

He departed to the LORD on the 3rd of the Kalends of January, about A.D. 717, and was buried in his Abbey at Evesham.

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Evesham Abbey flourished exceedingly after S. Egwin's death. Its monks were in high repute for the holiness of their lives, and were sought for when any good work of difficulty had to be accomplished.

When Ethelbald, King of Mercia, founded Croyland Abbey, he committed the care of it, and the training of the new Community, to the Monks of Evesham. And, later on, when Christian teachers were required for Denmark, where a certain King Eric had become favourable to Christianity, he was supplied with Missionaries from Evesham.

The Abbat of Evesham was mitred, and sat with the Peers of England.

S. Egwin's Church fell into decay in course of time, but was magnificently rebuilt after the Norman Conquest, and must have been a grand building. Inside were sixteen Chapels, with Altars to respective Saints. The Cloisters of the Abbey were supported upon 164 gilt marble pillars.

Many curious old legends are told of S. Egwin. The most noted of these is connected with his penitential pilgrimage to Rome. It is told variously in particulars by different writers, but all agree in the main story. It is thus given by William of Malmesbury :—

“S. Egwin, in penitence for his own sins and those of his people, fettered his legs together with chains of iron.<sup>†</sup> These he locked together, and then threw the key into the river Avon, declaring publicly that he would ever remain bound with these fetters,

<sup>†</sup> This was a form of penance in use at this time. Persons who had committed great crimes, were condemned, or condemned themselves, to wear chains for certain periods. Allusion to this custom is frequently met with.



“unless he were freed from them by GOD, or unless they were unlocked by the same key which had fastened them on his legs. Thus bound he set out on his journey to Rome. On the way, as he was crossing the sea between France and England, a great fish leaped into the ship, which the sailors caught, and in its inside the key was found. All were astonished,” he continues; “none more so than the man of GOD, who, however, submitting to the Divine Will, accepted the key in the presence of them all, and unlocked his chains. The fame of this wondrous event soon spread everywhere, and filled all Rome. . . .”

In another legend his choice of Hethehome for the Abbey he was going to build is attributed to the following vision:—

“Eoves, the herdsman, having lost a sow, sought her a long time among the thickets. After some months, continuing his search, he penetrated further into the wood, and there beheld in a vision three virgins, whose radiance, brighter than the sun, nearly blinded his eyes. Returning hastily home, Eoves reported what he had seen to the Bishop, who after some time spent in prayer and fasting, repaired to the spot, where he beheld the same vision. By this the man of GOD understood that this spot should be consecrated for the worshippers of GOD, and that it should be dedicated to the Virgin Mary.”



The Missionary Period.



## S. Egbert.

A.D. 729.

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NO one can read the early records of our history, without being struck with the fervent zeal which animated the English on their first conversion to Christianity, how dearly they loved their new religion, and how earnestly they desired to communicate it to others. So long, however, as the old heathen superstition retained its sway in any part of the country, this zeal naturally found a vent in seeking the conversion of their pagan fellow-countrymen. When, however, the Faith had been at last received into every Province in the Heptarchy, it was necessary to look elsewhere, and, accordingly, we soon find English Missionaries leaving our shores to convert the pagan nations on the continent. This was the commencement of the first missionary movement of the Church of England, of which we may say, without exaggeration, that it has never been surpassed for devotion and zeal, or for the grandeur of its results. It is matter of no slight interest that we know not only the name of the individual who first inflamed his countrymen with

missionary zeal, but also the circumstances through which it became enkindled in his own bosom. Egbert, for that was his name, was a young Northumbrian noble, a contemporary and friend of S. Chad, with whom he was educated in S. Aidan's School in Lindisfarne. In pursuit of his sacred studies, he repaired to Ireland, where he remained several years. In the course of his stay there, Ireland was visited by a fearful plague, which devastated the country, and before long attacked the inmates of the Monastery (Melfont) in which he was residing. Some died, others fled, and at last only one of his companions remained, Ethelhun, who was plague-stricken, as he was also himself. They were both desperately sick. "One morning," Bede continues, "Egbert, waking up early, and concluding that he was at the point of death, rose up from his bed, and went out of the chamber where the sick were lying, and sitting alone in a convenient place, began seriously to reflect upon his past actions, and being full of compunction at the remembrance of his sins, bedewed his face with tears, and prayed fervently to GOD that he might not die yet, before he could make amends for the offences which he had committed in his infancy and younger years, or might further exercise himself in good works." Moreover, he made a vow, that if GOD would grant his prayer, he would thenceforth live a life of penitence, and would never return

to his home and friends, but would pass the rest of his life, as a pilgrim, in some strange land. Having relieved his mind by this prayer, he returned to his chamber, and composed himself to rest. The following night his friend Ethelhun died, but he himself began to recover, and before very long he regained his health and strength. When recovered, he began to consider how he could best fulfil his vow, and after much thought he came to the conclusion that, since he was to pass the rest of his life among strangers, he could not do better than make himself useful to them, instead of merely attending to his own spiritual benefit by living a life of penitence among them. Thus the missionary idea entered into his head, and he decided to pass the rest of his life in efforts for the conversion of the heathen. It further seemed to him the most proper plan to choose for his missionary labours those nations on the Continent which were most allied to the English people—"the Fresons, the Rugins, the Danes, the Huns, the Ancient Saxons, and others who were still following pagan rites." Such were the nations to whom this "Soldier of CHRIST" (as Bede terms him) determined to repair, "to deliver as many as he was able from Satan, and bring them to CHRIST." As a first step, Egbert busied himself in gaining companions—"courageous men, fit to preach the Word of GOD, as being renowned for their learning and virtue." He also made all

needful provision for their journey, and when all was ready they sailed for Frisia. Never, surely, was enterprise undertaken with purer zeal, or with more hopeful prospects, or by more earnest men, and yet it proved, apparently, an utter failure. The ship, with its precious burden, never reached Frisia.<sup>1</sup> Whilst they were still in the North Sea, a sudden and violent storm arose in the night-time, which cast the ship upon the neighbouring shore (of Scotland). The Missionaries' lives were saved, nor did they lose their effects. In this predicament they made their way, it would appear, across the country to the west coast, and found a refuge in Iona. Only one of the whole party (Wigbert) by some means reached Friesland. "He was a man," Bede tells us, "of great learning, and most holy life, and he stayed two years in Friesland, preaching the word of salvation to that nation, and to its King, Rathbod; but in all that time he reaped no fruit of all his great

<sup>1</sup> The following curious story is told us by Bede:—"When all was ready, and the Missionaries were about to embark, Egbert received repeated warnings from a very holy man that it was not the will of GOD that he should go himself abroad, inasmuch as a work of more importance was awaiting him in the north of Scotland (Iona). Egbert took no notice of these warnings, but sailed with the rest for Friesland. When, however, his ship was wrecked on the Coast of Scotland, he remembered them, and began to fear he was fighting against GOD in pursuing his missionary impulses. He spent, therefore, the rest of his life in Iona. In the meantime he never ceased to take the warmest interest in the Friesland Mission, whither he sent many Missionaries, with means for their work."



“labour among his barbarous auditors. Finding he “could do nothing, he returned home to the beloved “place of his peregrination (Ireland), and gave “himself up to our LORD in his wonted repose; “and since he could not be profitable to strangers “by teaching them the faith, he took care to be the “more useful to his own people by the example of his “virtue.”

Such was the disappointing result of this first missionary adventure, but it proved the prelude to others most successful.

Before very long (principally through Egbert's exertions) another party of Missionaries was formed, being all of them “holy and industrious men.” They were headed by Willibrord, one of Egbert's friends, who led them into Friesland, where they laboured with great success, and won many thousands to Christianity. This was followed by important Missions elsewhere; but Egbert himself was prevented from taking any personal part in this holy warfare. He died in Iona, where his last years were spent in healing the breach and schism between the Scotch and the English Churches. Hitherto the community in Iona (the Mother Church of the West of Scotland) “had adhered,” Bede tells us, “with “inveterate stubbornness to the traditions of their “ancestors,” and in consequence had an Easter Day of their own. But at last they listened to Egbert, “who,” we are told, “was a most agreeable

“teacher, and devout in practising those things which  
“he taught, and so, being willingly heard by all, he,  
“by his pious and frequent exhortations, converted  
“them from their error. So,” he continues, “by a  
“wonderful dispensation of the Divine Goodness, it  
“was brought about that the same nation which had  
“willingly, and without envy, communicated to the  
“English people the knowledge of the true Deity,  
“should afterwards, by means of the English nation,  
“be brought, where they were defective, to the true  
“rule of life.”

S. Egbert lived thirteen years in Iona, and died there A.D. 729, on Easter Day (April 24th), “on which  
“day,” Bede tells us, “he performed the solemnity  
“of the Mass in memory of the resurrection of our  
“LORD, and during the same day, thus finished,  
“or rather, never ceases to celebrate with our LORD,  
“the Apostles, and the other citizens of heaven, that  
“greatest of all Christian Festivals.”

**S. Willibrord.**

ARCHBISHOP.

A.D. 739.

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S. WILLIBRORD, or *Wilbrord*, as he was usually called in his own day, was an intimate friend of S. Egbert. As the latter must ever command our interest as the man who first turned the thoughts of the English people to Foreign Missions, so the former must be remembered as the first *English Missionary who laboured with success* on the Continent. He, like his friend Egbert, was a Northumbrian of noble family. His father, Wilgils, a very pious man, became a hermit in his old age, on a promontory off the sea, overlooking the mouth of the Humber. There he built a little Church, in which he was eventually buried. Locally he was regarded as a Saint. Willibrord, when a child of seven years, was placed in Ripon Abbey, where he was trained in holy ways. The religious life suited him well, and he had no wish to relinquish it. However, in order to pursue his studies with greater advantage, he passed over to Ireland, where the best teachers were still to be had. Here he rejoined Egbert and other friends, who had

preceded him. Delighting in study, he remained in Ireland twelve years, and would probably have finished his days there had it not been for Egbert, who drew him from his literary pursuits to active life.

It is not a little remarkable that one who had lived all his life immersed in study should have been such an excellent Missionary ; but men who live for GOD only are better able, perhaps, than others, to adapt themselves to any course of life to which they may be called. The Mission party which he joined was the second one organized by Egbert. This, it may be remembered, that Saint was unable to accompany, and Willibrord was chosen to be its leader. Friesland was again selected for their destination. Many attempts had already been made to convert the Fresons. S. Eligius, a French Saint, had preached among them. Our own Wilfrid had converted great numbers, when staying on a visit with their King Algise.<sup>1</sup> No permanent results, it would appear, attended these efforts. Friesland was still noted for its stubborn adherence to idolatry, and, under its present King, Radbod, had become more hostile than ever to Christianity. It was no easy task, therefore, that the Missionaries undertook. On the other hand, there were distinct advantages for missionary work in Friesland, for the language of the Fresons was at this date so like our own, that the Missionaries could

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. p. 396.

preach in their own tongue, and be understood ; and, again, the victories of Duke Pepin (of Herstal) had brought a part of the country under the dominion of the Franks. Here, then (if they could obtain Pepin's leave), they would have a vantage-ground for missionary efforts in the regions round about. The party, twelve in number, left for Friesland in the year 690. They sailed for Cataric, a small fort at the mouth of the Rhine, and passed up the river to Utrecht, then a little Roman town with a castle adjoining it. This castle was in Pepin's power, and he himself was in the neighbourhood. The Missionaries, having obtained an interview with him, acquainted him with the object of their journey, and requested his sanction and support. The good Duke welcomed the idea of the conversion of the Fresons, assured the Missionaries of his hearty concurrence, and promised them protection. He gave them, also, introductory letters to his powerful friends, and sent them away with many presents. Bede tells us that Willibrord also paid a visit to Rome (where Sergius then presided over the Apostolic See) "that he might undertake the desired work "of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles with his "license and blessing." Sergius entered heartily into the scheme, gave him his blessing, and with it many valuable treasures likely to be useful for missionary work. The next six years were spent in unwearied labour. Willibrord and his companions

itinerated through the country, preaching to the people in high-ways, villages, and towns, and their efforts met with much success, the number of their converts being very great. Thousands of the Fresons were baptized. But there was no one to confirm them. The Mission suffered much for want of a Bishop. No one felt this more strongly than Duke Pepin, who continued to take the liveliest interest in the success of the Mission. He corresponded on the subject with the Pope, and the difficulty was solved by Willibrord being made Bishop. He was consecrated in S. Peter's, by Sergius himself, who gave him on that occasion the name of Clement, which however has not superseded his English name.

Willibrord stayed only fourteen days in Rome. Returning to Friesland, he now continued his labours with more advantage than before. It does not appear that any particular See was allotted him. He became Missionary Archbishop of Friesland. Utrecht, however, certainly was the centre of his work. "Here, also, the revered Pontiff,"<sup>1</sup> we are told, "built a Church, dedicated to our SAVIOUR, which "served for a Cathedral." Many years were spent by him in building up the Church in Lower Friesland. He made also frequent visits into Upper Friesland, which was still under the dominion of Radbod. Nor were these visits without fruit. Many Churches

<sup>1</sup> The term *Pontiff* was in early times given to all bishops.

were built by him here, and numerous religious houses planted in various parts of the country. He also paid occasional visits into Denmark. Arriving there on one of these occasions, he sought an interview with King Origend, "who," old writers tells us, "was fiercer than any wild beast, and more "obdurate than a rock." The old tyrant, however, instead of being offended, was rather pleased with his visit, taking it as a compliment. However, he soon became very angry when he heard his preaching, and banished him out of the country. Nevertheless he allowed him to take with him thirty Danish boys, whom the Saint carried home to be instructed in the Faith, and baptized into CHRIST. These boys were probably the first-fruits of Christianity in Denmark. On his way back, Willibrord's ship was driven by a storm on an island (supposed to be Heligoland). It was then called Fotiseland, from an idol of that name, of whose worship it was the centre. So sacred to idolatry was this island, that no animal might be slain on it, not even for food. It had also a sacred well, which was held in special veneration. Willibrord, to shew his contempt of the idol, baptized three of his converts in this fountain, and, as need required, caused animals to be slain for food. The amazed idolators gazed in horror at these acts of profanation, expecting to see the perpetrators suffer presently the vengeance of their god; but when nothing happened, they thought it proper to take the matter

into their own hands. Seizing the Missionaries, they carried them before King Radbod, who happened to be staying in the isle at that time. Radbod, having been informed of the matter, much incensed, demanded of Willibrord what he meant by this scandalous treatment of his god. "The preacher of truth," his biographer tells us, "replied: He is "not a god, O King, whom thou worshippest, but a "devil, who has seduced you to his evil purposes. "There is no god but one, the GOD Who made "heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things "therein. They who sincerely worship Him will "have eternal life. I am His servant, and I call "upon you this day to leave the errors and the vain "worship of your forefathers, to believe in the One "GOD Almighty, to be baptized and wash away "your sins, and thenceforward, renouncing all iniquity, "to live as a new man, in sobriety, righteousness, and "holiness. If you will do this, you shall have eternal "life with GOD and His Saints; but if you despise "me and my message of eternal life, be assured of "this, that eternal torments and hell-fire will be your "portion hereafter with your god."

Radbod, it may be, respecting the boldness of the Missionary, deferred judgment until he had first consulted his gods. For the next three days lots were cast continually that it might be known how many victims were required, and who they were to be. Eventually it was decided that only one of the



Missionaries was to be put to death, and the lot fell on one of Willibrord's companions, who thus attained to martyrdom. The rest were allowed to leave without further molestation. They sailed accordingly into French Friesland, where they were received with the greatest joy by Pepin. This great Duke did not long survive. He was succeeded (after a short interval of political disorder) by his natural son, Charles Martel. Charles inherited his father's statesmanlike ability and martial qualities. This is not the place to speak of the triumphs won by his arms, or of the height of grandeur to which he raised the kingdom of the Franks. It must suffice to say that to him, under GOD, was due the defeat of the Saracens, threatening at that time to inundate like a flood the whole of Western Christendom. Charles had the highest regard, love, and reverence for our Willibrord, whom he selected to baptize his child Pepin. It is recorded that on the occasion of this baptism our Saint foretold the future greatness of the child, who, he predicted, would exceed all his illustrious ancestors in glory, a prediction which found its fulfilment when Pepin was placed on the throne of France, the most powerful kingdom at that time in Europe. Willibrord continued his Evangelistic labours during the greater part of Charles Martel's rule, in the course of whose conquests Radbod, who had made so hard a fight for independence, was conquered, and lost his dominions.

He died as he had lived, a heathen.<sup>1</sup> His defeat extended our Saint's mission field, and, as old age had not robbed him of his vigour, he did much in Upper Friesland. He also still continued to pay occasional visits elsewhere. On one of these occasions he had a narrow escape of his life. He had landed on one of the Zealand islands, then called Walacre, and finding an idol, proceeded to throw it down. The guardian of the temple rushed out of it, sword in hand, and struck a blow at his head. He missed his aim, was seized, and would have been put to death, but Willibrord interfered, and, as was only just, would not allow him to be illtreated.

It is remarkable, when we consider the privations to which S. Willibrord inured himself, and the dangers he incurred from his somewhat reckless zeal, that he outlived most, if not all, of his brother Missionaries, and attained to a great age. Fifty years were spent by him in missionary labours. In these he was ably assisted by a number of English Missionaries, among whom must be reckoned the famous S. Boniface, who did good work in Friesland,

<sup>1</sup> This famous Chief was, at one time of his life, "almost persuaded "to become a Christian." He had even prepared himself for Baptism, and was on his way to Church to receive that Sacrament, when unfortunately it occurred to him to enquire of the Missionary (S. Wulfram) whether, if he was baptized, he might hope to meet his ancestors (former Kings of Friesland) in heaven? And when Wulfram replied in the negative, he drew back, saying he preferred to be with his royal ancestors in hell, than with a lot of paupers in heaven.

before commencing his apostolic labours in Germany. Some of these English Missionaries were in Holy Orders, but the greater part of them were laymen.

S. Willibrord, we are told by Alcuin, was of becoming stature, of venerable appearance, and well-formed features. He is said to have been of a joyous turn of mind. To his other good qualities was added a gift, or talent for preaching, which served him in good stead in his missionary labours. He died in his eighty-first year, in the month of November, A.D. 739, and was buried in a marble sarcophagus in the Church at Epternach, where he had founded a very famous Abbey.

## **SS. Swidbert and Adelbert.**

### MISSIONARIES.

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AMONG the most noted of S. Willibrord's Missionaries were Swidbert and Adelbert, who, each in his own sphere, attained to great eminence on the Continent, and after death were revered as Saints. Swidbert had been an Abbat in Cumberland before he joined S. Willibrord. He was, soon after his arrival on the Continent, chosen for the Episcopate. He laboured among the Boructuarrians, a German tribe, who inhabited that part of Westphalia which lies between the Emme and the Lippe. Here great success attended his labours, but they were prematurely brought to a close by an irruption of an army from Old Saxony. The Saxons, taking possession of the country, destroyed the Churches built by S. Swidbert, dispersed his flock, and drove him and his Missionaries out of the land. Swidbert found a refuge with Duke Pepin, who gave him a little islet in the Rhine. It was then called "In littore," now is well known as Kaiserwerdt. Here he built a Church, and an Abbey for himself and his Missionaries. His latter days were spent in devotion, and

in Mission-work in the neighbourhood. He died March 1, A.D. 713.

S. Swidbert's relics are still preserved in a silver shrine in the old Stift's Kirche, Kaiserwerth.

S. Adelbert (or Albert), who, like most of these early Missionaries, was of noble birth, preached the Faith in North Friesland (Holland). Among his numerous converts was Count Eggo, who enriched the Mission with much landed property. The Counts *Egmund* of more modern times were descended from this Earl Eggo. When S. Adelbert died, a large wooden Church, and an Abbey of the same material, was built by one of the family near his grave. These were afterwards rebuilt with stone, and became a famous foundation for religion in Holland.

S. Adelbert is usually styled Deacon. Some writers say he was *Archdeacon* of Utrecht.

## The two Ewalds.

MARTYRS.

A.D. 694.

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THE two Ewalds (or Hewalds) were brothers. They were of English birth, and were studying in Ireland, when they were incited by the tidings of S. Willibrord's success to follow him as Missionaries. When, however, they arrived on the Continent, they passed further on to the East, and, crossing the Rhine, entered Westphalia, then occupied by the Old Saxons, where they were shortly afterwards slain by them. The story of their martyrdom is given us by Bede, who tells us all we know about them. "Two  
"other Priests of the English nation, who, for the  
"sake of the Eternal Country, had lived in exile a  
"long time in Ireland, following their example (i.e.,  
"S. Willibrord and his companions), came into the  
"country of the Old Saxons, for the purpose of  
"gaining some of them to CHRIST, if possible, by  
"their preaching. They were alike, not only in  
"devotion, but also in name, only with this distinc-  
"tion, that one of them, on account of his hair, was  
"called Black Ewald, and the other White Ewald for

“the same reason. Both of them were alike imbued  
“with religious fervour, but the Black Ewald was the  
“more deeply read in the Holy Scriptures. On  
“arriving into the province, they took up their  
“lodgings with a certain bailiff, and desired him to  
“introduce them to his lord, as they had a message  
“and useful matter to bring him. These Old Saxons  
“have no king, but a good many lords over them.  
“When war breaks out these all draw lots, and on  
“whomsoever the lot falls, the same is their general  
“during the war, and him they obey; but when the  
“war is ended, then again they all become of one and  
“the same powers. The bailiff received them into  
“his house, and promising to send them on to his  
“lord (according to their request), retained them  
“with himself some days. But when the barbarians  
“discovered that they were of a different religion  
“(for they were constantly employed in Psalms and  
“Prayers, and daily offered to GOD the sacrifice of  
“the Saving Victim, having with them sacred vessels,  
“and a consecrated table in lieu of an altar), they  
“had them in suspicion, fearing that if they went  
“to their lord and conversed with him, they would  
“convert him from their gods to the new religion of  
“the Christian faith, and so by degrees the whole  
“province would be obliged to change their old  
“religious worship. In consequence they seized  
“them on a sudden, and slew them both, the White  
“Ewald by the quick death of the sword, but the

“Black by a long-continued torture, and horrible  
“disruption of his limbs, which they threw, as he was  
“dismembered, into the Rhine. But when the lord  
“whom they had wished to see heard of it, he was  
“greatly enraged, because these strangers who had  
“wished to see him were not allowed, and sending  
“soldiers, he slew those countrymen, and burned up  
“their village.”

The above-mentioned Priests suffered martyrdom  
on the 3rd of October.

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“Nor did their martyrdom,” continues Bede, “want the honour of  
“miracles, for when their dishonoured bodies were cast by the pagans  
“into the river, it came to pass that they were borne contrary to the  
“course of the stream a space of forty miles, even to the place where  
“their companions were. Moreover, a radiant light, very great, and  
“reaching up to heaven, shone each night over the spot, where their  
“remains chanced to be; and this was beheld even by the very pagans  
“who put them to death. One of the martyrs also appeared in a  
“night-vision to one of his companions, whose name was Tilmon (who  
“from a soldier had become a monk), informing him that their bodies  
“might be found in that place, where the light was seen to shine from  
“heaven. This accordingly was done. Their bodies were found, and  
“buried with the honour due to martyrs, and the day of their passion,  
“or of the finding of their bodies, is celebrated in those parts with all  
“due reverence. Eventually Pippin, the most glorious Duke of the  
“Franks, hearing of these things, sent and had their bodies brought  
“to him, and they were buried by him in the Church of the City of  
“Cologne, on the Rhine. It is reported that a fountain burst forth  
“on the spot where they were slain, which to the present day yields  
“in the same place a copious stream.”—*Bede V., Chap X.*

These martyrs are still honoured through all Westphalia as tutelar  
Saints of the country.

The Church in Cologne, in which their remains were buried, was  
that dedicated to S. Cunibert.



## **S. Boniface.**

ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE, APOSTLE OF  
GERMANY.

A.D. 754.

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### PART I.

OUR earliest Missionaries confined themselves, as a rule, to Friesland, and the countries immediately adjacent; the remarkable Saint of whom we now write, advanced into Germany, where he won such spiritual trophies as have made his name for ever famous.

Winfrid, for that was his English name, was one of a large family, and was born at Crediton, in Devonshire, A.D. 680. His parents were of noble rank. Devout and pious, they brought up their children in the fear of GOD. Winfrid was naturally of a serious turn of mind, and he was early led to interest himself in religion. It was a custom in these primitive times, when there were few parish Churches for the people to resort to, for Missioners (usually Priests or Monks) to go on circuit in their immediate neighbourhood, to preach on Sundays. Winfrid's father made a point of receiving these Missioners

into his house, shewing them all hospitality. His guests naturally took notice of Winfrid, then a child, and thus an intimacy sprung up between them. The child would run with delight to greet them, and seemed never tired of listening to their stories and graver lessons. He became at last so attached to them that nothing would satisfy him but he must go and live with them. His parents were not prepared for this. His father, in particular, objected—for, as “Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children,” so Winfrid was his favourite child. He therefore absolutely refused his consent, and with the view of diverting his thoughts into another channel, took every means in his power to interest him in other pursuits and amusements. It happened, however, not long after this, that he fell into a serious illness, threatening his life. Whilst lying in this sad state he began to question himself, and to scruple, whether he had done right in seeking to divert his child from religious studies. Accordingly he sent for him, questioned him on the subject, and, finding him still in the same mind, gave consent to his leaving home. Presently, therefore, summoning some of his intimate friends, he gave Winfrid into their hands with charge to conduct him to Exeancestre (supposed to be *Exeter*), where was an Abbey, in which they were to leave him. Whether Winfrid’s father recovered is not told us, but, as we hear nothing further of him, it seems probable that he died.

Winfred was only about seven years old when he thus became an inmate of a religious house. There he learned the rudiments of knowledge and of religion, and when he had reached the age of fourteen, he was allowed, according to the Anglo-Saxon custom, to make his profession. He did so, and was shorn a monk. He had by this time learned all that his teachers in Exeter knew, and was transferred by the Abbat to Nutecelles,<sup>1</sup> near Southampton, where was an Abbey well supplied with excellent scholars. Here he made such rapid progress that he was before long appointed to teach, which he did with great ability. Moreover, when, at the age of thirty, he was ordained Priest, he developed a remarkable talent for preaching. People flocked from all parts to hear him. An incident occurred about this time which brought him much into notice. It happened that a Synodal Council, presided over by King Ina, was held in the neighbourhood. In the course of the proceedings a matter of some consequence was under deliberation, and it was deemed advisable to consult the Archbishop of Canterbury. The King enquired of those present whom they recommended as a fitting person to be sent into Kent on this delicate errand. Several of the chief counsellors (his own Abbat among the number) recommended Winfred. He

<sup>1</sup> The Abbey here was destroyed by the Danes, and never rebuilt.

was sent for accordingly, and having received his instructions, despatched into Kent. There he saw the Archbishop Berthwald, explained the object of his journey, received the Archbishop's advice, and returned without delay into Wessex. So ably and expeditiously did he execute this commission, that the King and the nobles were greatly pleased. Ina thenceforth honoured him with his confidence, and when any council of importance was held in Wessex, Winfrid was summoned to attend it. It was at this time, when a bright future seemed to be opening before him in his own country, that Winfrid made known to his Abbat his earnest desire to join the Missionaries who were labouring on the Continent, and requested permission to do so. His request at first was absolutely refused ; the Abbat, it would appear, had no wish to lose such a promising member of his Community, and he would not hear of the proposal. Winfrid conscientiously yielded and obeyed his Abbat, not doubting that if it was the Will of GOD that he should become a Missionary, He would in His own good time make a way for him. And so indeed it happened ! For, without any further request on his part, the Abbat withdrew his objection, and gave his hearty consent. Thus set free, Winfrid, with joyful mind, began to prepare for his work abroad, assisted now by the Abbat and the whole community, who began to interest themselves greatly in his Mission, and did their best to forward it.

It was in the year 716, when he was about thirty-six years of age, that Winfrid left his sacred home to become a Missionary. He was accompanied by two of the Brethren, who were deputed to go with him. They travelled, it would appear, on foot, for we are told they reached London (Lundovic) "after "a long and toilsome journey." In London they purchased such things as were necessary, and then went on to the coast, where, taking a ship, they sailed, having a favourable voyage to Dorstadt, a port at the mouth of the Rhine. Here they landed, and began to preach in Friesland, but Winfrid soon discovered that he had come at a most inopportune time. The country was up in arms. The Freson King, Radbod, had lately renewed hostilities with the Franks, and had recovered from them those parts of Friesland which had, in a former war, been wrested from him. The triumph of his arms was followed everywhere by the destruction of the Christian Churches and religious houses, and by the restoration in their stead of pagan temples, and of their idols. In such a time of din and confusion the voice of the preacher could not be heard. Winfrid soon saw this; yet, before leaving the country, he made one more desperate effort. Hoping against hope, he obtained an interview with Radbod himself, whom he urged to receive the Faith, or, at least, to grant him permission to preach it among his people. Nothing, as might be expected, came of this interview. The heathen King

in his hour of triumph turned a deaf ear to such exhortations, but he took no unfair advantage of the Missionary, who had placed himself in his power. A hero himself, he respected heroism in others. But what now was to be done? Winfrid could not stay in Friesland, and the winter was fast approaching. After much deliberation he deemed it best to return for a time to England; whither, accordingly, he made his sad way, and there found shelter in Nutcelles, where his arrival was hailed with the greatest delight by his old associates. With them he spent the winter of 717-718. And now, to add to his troubles, another event occurred, which distressed him sorely. This was no other than the death of the Abbat Winbert, which took place that winter. Winbert had been much beloved by the Community, and his loss filled them with grief. Winfrid did his best to console and cheer the sorrowing Brethren, with the unfortunate result that they began, one and all, to entreat him to stay among them, and take the place of the Abbat whom they had lost. It was in vain that he told them that this could not be; they would listen to no remonstrance, and when the day of election arrived, chose him unanimously to be the Abbat of Nutcelles. Thus in his early days everything seemed to combine against Winfrid and his missionary aspirations. His first attempt abroad had proved an utter failure. He had been driven back home, and now found

himself entangled in difficulties from which he scarce knew how to free himself. Baffled, however, and embarrassed as he was, he did not stagger in his determination, nor allow himself to be turned aside from the path whither he believed the Voice of GOD was calling him. Nor was it long before he found great help from his Bishop (Daniel, Bishop of Winchester), a saintly Prelate, who gave him excellent counsel. Daniel not only confirmed him in his missionary purpose, but also did his best to free him from home entanglements. For this purpose he sought, and found, an able churchman, likely to make a good Abbat, and to be acceptable to the Community in Nutcelles. The Brethren accepted him, and so the chief difficulty in Winfrid's way was removed. After this the Bishop advised with him about his future plans, supplied him with various necessaries, and gave him letters of introduction to persons of note on the Continent. Much encouraged, Winfrid, as soon as the spring arrived, set out a second time on his travels, accompanied now by a numerous party, who volunteered to share his missionary adventures. Among the letters given him by Bishop Daniel were some to the Pope, and this probably determined him to commence operations by going to Rome. Instead therefore of sailing to Friesland, he made his voyage to France, landing at Quentavic (Etaples) in Picardy. Thence he travelled overland to Rome, where he spent the

winter, and in the course of it made acquaintance with Pope Gregory II., to whom he gave Bishop Daniel's letters. Gregory, after he had carefully perused these letters, entered heartily into his missionary schemes. This journey to Rome was an important event in Winfrid's life, for it proved the occasion of his choosing Germany (which he did at Gregory's instance) to be the field of his labours. From this time certainly he regarded Germany as his own proper mission field, and, as a rule, confined himself to it, though, as the reader will see, there were occasions when his zeal carried him beyond all bounds. Scarcely indeed had he arrived in Thuringia, in which country he began his German mission, when an event occurred which stirred his soul to its very depth. This was no other than the death of Radbod, who for so many years had been the main obstacle to Christianity in Friesland. The victories of Charles Martel and the death of Radbod had now removed these obstructions, and Winfrid, who had not forgotten Friesland, and his fruitless labours in it, felt irresistibly drawn to that country to take advantage of this golden opportunity of winning it to CHRIST. He hastened thither, accordingly, and placed his services at the command of S. Willibrord, who for so many years had been labouring there. Willibrord, joyfully welcoming him, sent him to preach in Upper Friesland, where Radbod's influence had been the greatest, and here Winfrid commenced



his labours with marked success. The people crowded everywhere to hear him preach, and before long his converts might have been counted by thousands. He had spent three years in Friesland when he was recalled by the following incident to his own proper work in Germany. The aged Willibrord, finding that the Church in Friesland by its rapid growth had become too great a burden for himself, contemplated the appointment of a Coadjutor Bishop, and selected Winfrid for that office. This opened Winfrid's eyes to the fact that he was in a false position. He declined the proffered dignity, alleging various excuses, which were easily overruled by Willibrord. At last, being pressed to extremity, he revealed to him his real difficulty, that he had pledged himself to Gregory to work for CHRIST in Germany, and so was not free to remain in Friesland. S. Willibrord, as soon as he heard this, ceased to importune him, and Winfrid shortly afterwards returned to his proper mission field.

And now, before we speak of his work in Germany, it will not be amiss to say a few words on the religious condition of the German States previous to Winfrid's arrival. It would be a great mistake to suppose that they were wholly heathen. Christianity had been introduced into most, if not all, parts of the country. In Hesse, certainly, in Thuringia, and likewise in Bavaria (three provinces in which he laboured

most), there was more or less of Christianity in them all, but vilely represented, and the lives of those who professed it were so untrue that Christianity was odious in the eyes of the great body of the people, who remained firmly attached to their old heathen traditions. The chief among the idols were *Stufo*, *Retto*, and *Bielm*, whose festivals were frequented by immense throngs of worshippers, when various animals, the horse being the chief, were sacrificed to them. There were sacred woods in which the people worshipped, and fountains dedicated to various idols. Auguries, Divinations, and Incantations were in common use, as also Phylacteries and Charms; and no matter of importance was transacted without consultation by lots. Such is the account given us by old writers, and it is interesting to note in how many points continental heathenism was identical with that which was in vogue with our own people before their conversion to CHRIST.

But to return. *Winfred*, leaving *Friesland*, bent his steps towards *Hesse*, and on his way thither made one or two very important conversions at a place then called *Amanaburg*, on the river *Ohm*. Here he built a religious house, in which he placed his converts, and then passed on. He had gained no little experience in *Friesland*, which now proved useful to him. Pursuing the plan he had found so successful, he went about everywhere preaching among the people in the country districts. "The

“poverty of the country, the inclemency of the weather, the caprice and barbarism of the people, furnished a severe trial to his patience ; but his zeal and perseverance subdued every obstacle, and it was not long before he found himself surrounded by a numerous and fervent society of Christians.” Winfrid now deemed it proper to inform Gregory of the success which had attended his mission in Germany. Soliciting also a continuance of his favour, he requested his advice on certain difficulties which he met with in his work. Gregory, instead of answering his letters, wrote to him to come at once to Rome. It is evident that he saw clearly the importance of this Mission, and what great issues depended on it, and had made up his mind, before he gave further assistance, to make sure of the Missionary. Accordingly, as soon as Winfrid arrived he demanded of him a confession of his faith, and when Winfrid had fully satisfied him on that score, he further exacted from him an oath of allegiance to himself and to all his successors in the See of Rome. It is easier to understand the motives of Gregory in exacting this oath, than the right he had to exact it! This much, however, may be conceded, that missionary Bishops ought to be under some authority, and it is not unnatural that they should yield obedience to the See from which they received their consecration. Winfrid, like other Englishmen of his day, held the Papal See in the highest reverence, and felt no

scruple in taking this oath, and Gregory soon afterwards consecrated him Bishop, under the name of Boniface. This took place A.D. 723, in S. Peter's Church. The name of *Boniface* was not then given him for the first time, for it occurs before this in his correspondence. But thenceforward his family name was dropped, and Boniface took the place of Winfrid. Gregory now furthered his mission to the best of his power, and when Boniface left Rome shortly afterwards gave him letters of introduction to persons of quality likely to be able to assist him. Among these letters were some to Prince Charles Martel, whom Boniface visited on his way back to Germany. Charles received him with much honour, became his friend, and thenceforth interested himself greatly in the success of his Mission.

Arrived in Hesse, our Missionary made his first episcopal visitation, and in the course of it confirmed numerous converts, adding to their number continually by his laborious preaching. The province now began to assume a distinctly Christian character, although still there was no lack of heathenism and superstition in the out-lying parts, those especially which had been centres of idolatry. There was at this time, not far from Schonburg, an ancient tree of immense size, called "Jove's Oak," which had been an object of worship for centuries. Thither still, on certain festal days, the population for miles round was accustomed to gather and offer sacrifices. The

Christian converts strongly advised that this oak should be cut down, and S. Boniface, acting on their advice, proceeded thither with his Clergy, and set to work with his own hands to hew it down. A mob of pagans quickly gathered on the spot, who, with loud imprecations on their lips, were about to interfere, when a gale of wind sprang up, and a tempestuous blast seized the unweildy monster of a tree with such violence that it became uprooted, and falling heavily to the ground, broke into four huge quarters. This accident greatly confounded the pagans, who thenceforth lost their faith in the tree. S. Boniface, much rejoiced, caused a Church to be built on the spot, of the wood of the oak, and attached a house of religion to it, in which one or two of his Missionaries might dwell, and see to the religious interests of the neighbourhood. It was about this time that, anticipating an abundant harvest, and feeling sorely the need of more labourers, S. Boniface made a strong appeal to his friends in England to come and join his Mission. This appeal met with great success, all the more so because the fame of his evangelistic labours had already reached England, and the Church there had been stirred to its depths by the tidings. Many earnest men became desirous to join him. Some indeed had, of their own accord, already done so, both men and women. Finding his hands thus strengthened, and satisfied with his success in Hesse,

where the Church seemed now well-organized, he passed into Thuringia, which country, it may be remembered, he had visited on his first arrival in Germany. Its religious condition had not improved in the interim. The Christians in it, so far from welcoming him, viewed him with suspicion, and did their best to thwart his efforts. Leaving them and their angry disputations, he spent his time in labours among the country-people, and being now well supplied with a good staff of preachers, he, with their assistance, reaped an abundant harvest. Wherever he met with sufficient success, he planted there a little Church, and a house of religion, in which he left one or two of his Missionaries to serve it. Thus he continued some time in Thuringia, in the course of which he heard of the death of Gregory II. Well aware of the advantages which accrued to him from his close relations with the Roman See, he wrote to the new Pope (Gregory III.) and requested a continuance of the patronage and support which he had received from his predecessor. Gregory, in reply, assured him of the interest which he took in his Mission, and, in token of it, sent him the Pall, which gave him the rank of an Archbishop.

S. Boniface now passed into Bavaria, in the hope of re-awakening Christianity there. His sanguine hopes were for some time doomed to disappointment. He was met everywhere with angry opposition. Finding that he could do nothing, and that his

presence seemed only to irritate his opponents, he retired for a season, and took the opportunity of paying a visit to Rome. It was the time of the year when it was crowded with visitors from every part of Christendom. His fame had preceded him, and everyone was anxious to see and hear the celebrated Missionary; none more so than those who had come from England and Germany, who thronged the Church, whensoever it was his lot to preach. The new Pope also gave him a hearty welcome. He stayed a short time in Rome, and this little interlude greatly refreshed his spirit, and he returned in the spring with renewed determination to fulfil his hard task in Bavaria. Nor was it long before some success began to attend his efforts. The new Duke of Bavaria, Odilo, became his friend, and entered heartily into his schemes for Church reform. With his advice and assistance, S. Boniface divided Bavaria ecclesiastically into four great Sees—Salsburg, Freisingen, Ratisbon, and Passau, which still remain the most important Sees in that country.

The death of the great Prince, Charles Martel, occurred in A.D. 741. Grievous as this loss was to our Saint, it was more than compensated for by the love and affection borne him by his two sons, Carloman and Pepin, who succeeded to their father's position. Both these Princes looked up to and revered S. Boniface. Carloman, who, as the elder of the two, was in chief power, considered him

his father in CHRIST, and paid him filial honour. These two Princes had much at heart the revival of religion in France. This country, so long renowned for its zeal for the Faith, had lapsed into semi-paganism. There had not been a Synod for nearly eighty years; all Church discipline was gone. The moral condition of the Clergy may be gathered from what we are told of the Deacons, who frequently were polygamists. These scandalous Clergy lived with their plurality of wives in open concubinage, and were yet admitted to take part in the Services of the Church, and occasionally promoted to the Priesthood. Nay, instances had occurred of their attaining to the Episcopate. The Prelates at this time commonly lived secular lives in times of peace, and, if war broke out, went on campaign with the army and fought in battle. Carloman, a zealous, earnest Prince, was most anxious to rescue the Church from these scandals, and he believed it might be done by means of S. Boniface. With this view he put himself into communication with the new Pope, Zecharias, and told him his wishes. Zecharias fell in with them, and appointed Boniface to be his Legate (or Representative) in the whole empire of the Franks. In this capacity our Saint took part in many important Councils, both in France and Germany, and various salutary canons for the restoration of Church discipline were passed. It was easier, however, to make



canons than to enforce them! For a long time the refractory Clergy took no notice of them, and yet retained their favour among the people, who had become so accustomed to these evil ways that they could not see how scandalous they were. Possibly also they may have resented the interference of a foreigner in their Church affairs. Two notable demagogues combined, at this time, to thwart S. Boniface. The first of these, Albert, a gross impostor, passed himself off among the people as "a Prophet of the LORD," appointed such, as he told his hearers, by CHRIST Himself. To prove his assertion he exhibited an epistle written in letters of gold, as he asserted, by CHRIST Himself in heaven. Despatched thence to earth this letter fell into the City of Jerusalem, and was there picked up in the street before the Gate of Ephraim. By virtue of this supernatural appointment, Albert claimed authority to act as a Bishop in the Church, and accordingly made visitations, and consecrated Churches, Oratories, and road-side crosses, presuming frequently to dedicate them to himself. The country-people, in their ignorance, came in crowds to hear him preach, and, regarding him as an angel of the LORD, treasured up as precious relics, locks of his hair, and even the very pairings of his nails. It may seem scarcely credible to some that so gross an imposture should have passed current in any age; but when we call to mind the Mormon imposture

of our own day, and how many thousands of our own countrymen have been deluded by it, we shall better understand how a peasant population in an unlettered age might thus be duped. Clement, who united with Albert in opposing S. Boniface, was no impostor. An Irishman, a very clever man, a man of learning, but a sceptic, he had lost all faith in the Creeds of the Church, in lieu of which he taught certain speculations and ideas of his own.<sup>1</sup> These two misleaders of the people for many years neutralized the efforts of our Saint to rid the Church of its many scandals. Eventually, but not without the aid of the civil powers, they were silenced and placed in confinement in a religious house. Most of the opposition against S. Boniface (it will have been noticed) came from so-called Christians, and chiefly from those who were in high position in the Church. His reforms were most distasteful to the Bishops. This will appear less strange when we consider the means by which they had obtained their Sees. The practice of Simony was at this time so common in France, that most of the Prelates had gained their appointments by means of it. Another scandalous practice, equally common, was this, that patrons and rulers frequently intruded *Laymen* into ecclesiastical offices and dignities. The following

<sup>1</sup> Clement was probably an *Universalist*. One of his chief tenets was that the word *Hell*, in the Creed, meant *the place of torment*, into which, he maintained, our LORD descended after His Passion to bring salvation to the wicked.

anecdote gives an apt illustration of this practice. In one of his campaigns against the Old Saxons, Carloman was accompanied by the Bishop of Mentz,<sup>1</sup> Gerold by name. In the course of the campaign, Gerold was slain. The Bishop had been popular among the soldiers, and by way of expression of sorrow for his loss, his son Gewillieb, *a soldier in the army*, was chosen to succeed him. Straightway he received minor Orders, and so became a Clerk, and shortly afterwards was consecrated Bishop of Mentz.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately no inward change accompanied this outward ordinance. Gewillieb remained in heart a soldier still. It happened, in course of time, that Carloman made another campaign into Saxony, and our new Bishop accompanied him. In the course of the campaign the army came to the place where his father had met his death. The Bishop determined to avenge him, and sent a boy in disguise into the enemy's camp with instructions to ascertain the name of the soldier who had slain his father, and to invite him to meet himself on the following morning at a certain spot near the river. The boy executed his errand too well, and the unsuspecting soldier came as he was invited. The two met, on horseback, in the river Weser, but had scarcely saluted each other, when the Bishop struck the soldier a deadly blow with his sword, with some such words as these : " How like you the taste

<sup>1</sup> Mayence

“of the weapon with which you slew my father?” The unfortunate soldier sank into the river, and was speedily drowned, and the Bishop rode back to the camp, where he was received with the plaudits of the soldiery. A furious battle was fought that morning, in which the Franks won the victory. The Bishop took part in the glory and the triumph which awaited the army on its return home, and suffered no loss of prestige in public opinion on account of his most unchristian act; but the mind of S. Boniface was much exercised by it, and he took the occasion of a great Synod at Mentz to charge the Bishop with this crime, and to demand his deprivation. Gewillieb had grace enough not to defend his act; he resigned his See, and retired into private life.

It is one of S. Boniface's main glories that he did so much to rescue religion from this state of degradation, and to introduce a healthier tone of mind into public opinion. In these labours he was mainly assisted by the Carlovingian Princes, who worked harmoniously with him, and who did their best to make his influence felt in the great empire of the Franks. Nor was it only in France and Germany that S. Boniface became a living power for good. England also, and other countries, profited by his holy example. He never indeed returned to England, after he had identified himself with Germany; but he also never ceased to take a lively interest in the Church of his own country, and in

its welfare, and occasionally intervened when he believed he might do so with advantage. The English Clergy had a bad name at this time on the Continent, for their luxurious habits and unclerical dress. Letters on this subject passed between our Saint and the Archbishop of Canterbury (Cuthbert), by whose means many good canons were passed for the repression of luxury, and better regulation of the dress of the Clergy. At another time we find our Saint in correspondence with Ethelbald, King of Mercia. This is the same Prince in whom (it may be remembered) S. Guthlac took so great an interest (see S. Guthlac). An exile then, Ethelbald had since become the most potent King in the Heptarchy. At first he ruled ably and well, and, evincing much zeal for religion, founded the magnificent Abbey of Croyland; but, as time went on, he gave way to his evil passions, and began to lead a licentious life, one most scandalous to religion. Tidings of this reached S. Boniface in Germany. It grieved him sore, and he made an effort to recall Ethelbald from his downward path. His letter is still extant, and is as remarkable for its affectionate tone as it is for the plainness with which he charges him with his faults, and predicts their certain consequences. "Repent," it concludes, "my beloved son, who art both a Christian and a King, spare your own soul, spare a multitude of people, perishing by your example, for whose souls

“you must give an account.” There are grounds for believing that this letter was not written in vain. King Ethelbald certainly took it in good part, and was moved to make some amends for what he had done. In a national Synod at Cloveshoe he publicly restored to the Church certain estates which he had violently alienated to his own use. He also conferred great privileges on the Church. How far his own moral character was affected cannot be known for certain, because his death occurred very soon afterwards. The end of this great Prince was a sad one. Mercia and Wessex were at this time contending for the mastery of England. After several battles, a decisive one was fought at Burford, in Oxfordshire, in favour of Wessex. Ethelbald saved his life by flight, but he never recovered his prestige, and not long after fell by the hand of an assassin at Seckington in Warwickshire.

## S. BONIFACE.

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PART II.

IT was about this time that a passage of arms (if we may use the expression) occurred between S. Boniface and the Pope (Zecharias). Few Churchmen, even in the age in which he lived, had a greater reverence for the Pope, or devotion to Rome, than our Saint; it is therefore the more noticeable how independent he could be when the cause of CHRIST seemed to require it. The state of religion in Italy, and in Rome itself, was at this time far from satisfactory, little likely to edify the crowds of pious pilgrims, which constantly flowed thither from every part of Christendom. These pilgrims, on their return home, told strange stories of what they had seen and heard in Rome. The mind of S. Boniface was sorely exercised by this, all the more so because he found his labours in Germany much hindered in consequence. When he forbade the use of charms and other superstitious practices, his people would enquire why that was not lawful in Germany which they had beheld with their own eyes practised in Rome, where parties of women might be seen at times, in close proximity even to S. Peter's Church, dancing in the streets, covered with phylacteries and

ligatures, and with charms on their arms and legs, which they sold to the people. Again, when he sought to introduce a stricter discipline among the clergy, he found some who refused to comply, on the plea that they had procured a license from the Pope for their present mode of life. These, and suchlike vexations, were endured in silence for a time, when the following gross scandal brought matters to a head. A powerful layman in Germany sacrilegiously married a nun. This union was the more scandalous because it was within the forbidden degrees, for the lady was his aunt. S. Boniface having reprov'd in vain, threatened excommunication. The layman took no notice of this, and boasted publicly that the Pope had given him leave to contract this marriage. Outraged to the last degree, our Saint wrote a fiery letter to the Pope (which is still extant), in which he details his grievances, and enumerates the scandals attributed in Germany to the Church of Rome, and scruples not to tell the Pope that he (Zecharias) was charged with Simony by common report. Pope Zecharias had the good sense not to be offended with our Saint's freedom of language. In a dignified reply he refutes some of these charges (more especially the one against himself), and bids S. Boniface not to be too ready for the future in believing all the tales that were told him. There was no breach of friendship between them in consequence of this correspondence. On the contrary,



the Pope took an early opportunity for bestowing further privileges on the Church in Germany. Thus this little controversy terminated well, and to the credit of both parties engaged in it. It is chiefly interesting to ourselves in the evidence it supplies of the salutary influence which was exercised by S. Boniface elsewhere than in Germany. Nor shall we be wrong in believing that the Papacy itself was influenced by one who was most devoted to it.

One of our Saint's most important acts before he resigned his position in Germany was the foundation of the famous Abbey of Fulda, so called from the name of the stream which flows hard by. In this great work he was mainly assisted by Prince Carloman, who granted him land for many miles round in the neighbourhood of the proposed Abbey. The solitude in which it was built adjoined the territories of the Old Saxons, from whose incursions it suffered for a time. Eventually it flourished greatly, and proved a principal foundation for the spread of learning and religion in Germany—but this took place after S. Boniface's death. The Abbey was not even completed in his lifetime. During the greater part of his missionary life, S. Boniface had been without a See; when, however, in course of time, the organization of the Church had been completed, this seemed anomalous, and steps were taken for assigning him a metropolis.

Cologne was at first proposed ; eventually, however, this idea was abandoned, and Mentz (Mayence) was selected. It thenceforth became the principal See in Germany, and the Bishops of Cologne, Tongres, Worms, and Spire were made subject to it. And now an important event took place, which altered materially the political situation, both in France and Germany. This was no other than the resignation of his share in the Government by Prince Carloman. This pious Prince, out of pure devotion, left the rule of the country in the hands of his brother Pepin, and retired from the world.<sup>1</sup> This event led to important political changes, and proved the occasion of a revolution in France, in course of which, the Dynasty of the Merovingian Kings was brought to a close. They had now for nearly a century ceased to govern France, and retained nought of royalty

1 NOTE ON PRINCE CARLOMAN.

Carloman, from the time that he resigned his rank in the world, conformed himself to the holy profession which he had chosen. Subjecting himself to the usual privations, he took his share in all the ordinary duties of the cloisters, tended the sheep, served in the kitchen, and worked like a day labourer in the garden. In this he followed the example of some of our English Kings under similar circumstances.

For some years he lived in an Abbey on Mount Soracte, which he had himself founded, but owing to its proximity to the city, the Abbey became besieged with visitors. To avoid this annoyance, he retired to S. Benedict's Abbey on Mount Casino, where he lived some years in great holiness of life. His death took place A.D. 755, in France, at Vienne, where he had been sent on matters of importance by the authorities of his Abbey.

but the regal title. The Franks, tired of this anomaly, now took steps for ending it. They deposed Childeric, the last of the Rois Faineants, and elected Pepin in his stead. The unfortunate Childeric was shorn (according to the custom of the age) and consigned to a monastery. But an obstacle was met with which was not expected. This was from Pepin himself, who hesitated to accept the vacant throne, and demanded as a condition of his acceptance, the sanction and approval of the Spirituality and of the Church. The matter was referred to the Pope, who decided that *the name and title of King ought to go with its real power*. It is not the place here to discuss (the justice or injustice of) this decision, or the revolutionary elements contained in it; it must suffice to say that it was the answer universally desired by the Franks, who received it with great rejoicings. Pepin now laid aside his scruples, and accepted the proffered dignity. His coronation took place shortly afterwards at Soissons, A.D. 752, where he was consecrated King by S. Boniface, who thus took part in the inauguration of the Carolingian Dynasty, which did so much towards shaping the character of *the Middle Ages*. And now the time was come when S. Boniface believed that he might retire from his position in Germany. His task there he felt had been accomplished. Church order now prevailed where before had been only chaos and confusion. The country

had been divided into Sees, which were presided over by zealous Bishops; it was studded over with religious houses, filled with good and earnest men and women. The supreme government was in the hands of a Christian ruler, zealous for the Faith, ready for all good works. Under these circumstances S. Boniface felt himself justified in resigning his Archbishopric. And this he greatly desired to do. Not indeed because he was weary of work, and craved for rest in his latter days. Nor was it for the saintly purpose of preparing himself for death by a quiet time spent in devotion (a common custom of these times). The Saint was moved by none of these motives. It would seem rather that his intensely missionary mind could not rest in peace, so long as there were heathen nations within his reach, which might be subjugated to CHRIST. The Fresons, in particular, allured his soul, all the more so because the task of their conversion had proved so arduous. They had also, it may be remembered, been the first object of his missionary zeal. Most of this high-spirited race had been now converted, but there remained yet one province in the north of Friesland which had defied the efforts of the Missionaries, and which clung obstinately to idolatry. S. Boniface felt within himself a burning desire to spend his last years in winning it to the Faith. Before, however, this could be done, he felt it a necessity to provide that the Church in Germany should not suffer by



OSWALD ERECTS A GREAT CROSS  
ON THE BATTLEFIELD.



his withdrawal. Nor would he leave unfriended and uncared for the English Missionaries, who, in response to his call, had done such faithful service in Germany. Most of these men were serving GOD in great poverty, mainly dependent upon himself for their absolute necessities. In their interests he sought and obtained leave of the civil and spiritual rulers to nominate his own successor (a privilege rarely granted). Taking advantage of it, he selected Lullus, one of his ablest English Missionaries, whom he shortly afterwards consecrated Archbishop of Mayence. Being now assured that his flock in Germany would be left under the care of a shepherd in whom he had confidence, he severed his connection with the German Church, and began without delay to make preparations for his journey into Friesland. Provisions were purchased, volunteers for the mission enrolled, and tents provided for their accommodation. It would appear that S. Boniface had a strong presentiment that he would not return alive from Friesland. At least, it is certain that he gave S. Lullus, before he left, special instructions about his funeral, and where he desired his body to be interred. It is also significant that he ordered a shroud to be enclosed in the package which contained his books and relics. When all was ready, the missionary party embarked in boats, and passed down the Rhine. S. Boniface had a goodly company with him ; one bishop, Eoban, who was to be his coadjutor

in the Mission, and afterwards to have the See of Utrecht. There were also three Priests, and as many Deacons. The rest of the party were monks, clerks, and lay-attendants. As soon as they had reached the marshy flats of Upper Friesland they began their labours, landing at various opportune places to preach to the people. It is not a little remarkable that they nowhere met with any opposition. On the contrary, the people seemed very friendly, and more than ordinary success attended their efforts for their conversion. So they passed through the country to Dockum, which is on the north coast of Friesland. Here S. Boniface determined to make some little stay, and he appointed a day when all his new converts (which were some thousands in number) should gather together for their Confirmation. This day was looked forward to with the happiest anticipations, and the intermediate time was spent in making preparations for the accommodation of the multitudes expected. When the day at last arrived, the sun, we are told, rose with more than usual brilliance. Everything seemed to betoken a day of peace and happiness. Suddenly, however, a loud and heavy tramp of feet was heard in the distance. The Missionaries supposed at first that this was caused by their expected friends, but soon it became known that a hostile armed force was approaching with threatening gestures. The attendants, who had accompanied the Missionaries, began







S. BONIFACIUS MARTIR. GERMANORVM APLVS  
*Benedictus Anglus. Junij. 5. M. baes. f.*

S. BONIFACE.

to fortify the tents, and to arm themselves for the defence of the Missionaries, but this the Saint would not allow, and absolutely forbade the use of arms. His last moments were spent in earnest exhortation to his companions not to flinch from suffering, and, if need be, to die for the sake of their religion. It was not long before the barbarians were upon them. The unresisting attitude of the Missionaries aroused in them no qualms or thoughts of mercy ; they began at once their work of butchery, and ceased not until they had put the whole of them to death. That accomplished, they rushed into the tents, where, it is said, they expected to find valuable stores of treasure from the spoil of their victims. Their disappointment was great when they discovered only the remainder of the provisions, brought for the use of the Missionaries, and some closed up packages. Over these they quarrelled among themselves, and not a few lives were lost in their anxiety to secure them. When at last these packages were opened, and found to contain nothing but books, MSS., and relics, their rage and disappointment knew no bounds. In their fury they tossed them about, some into the river, others into the marshes and adjoining woodland. Not a few of these books, &c., were afterwards recovered, and were treasured up with love and affection by the Christians in Friesland and Germany. One of the most interesting was a volume of the Gospels, which S. Boniface carried about with

him on his journeys, and which, it is believed, was transcribed by his own pen. The cover of this book when found was cleft with a great gash (though the inside writing had escaped injury). It is believed that the Saint had this book in his hand when the infidels came upon him, and that it received the first blow, which was intended to cleave his scull. This book (with another which was stained with his blood)<sup>1</sup> was preserved, with other relics of our Saint, in Fulda Abbey, and they are said to be there to this day.

Tidings of the catastrophe which had befallen S. Boniface and his companions, spread quickly through the country, and the Christians gathered from all parts to Dookum. King Pepin also heard, with the utmost indignation, of this outrage on one whom he loved so dearly, which he also resented as an act of rebellion against his own authority. He sent an army into the province from which the aggressors came, and exacted of it a severe retribution, and many, it is to be feared, suffered who had no part in this outrage. It is a pleasanter task to record the intense sorrow which was felt for the death of S. Boniface, and the universal veneration in which his memory was held. Those who arrived first at the scene of his martyrdom occupied themselves in recovering the bodies of the Missionaries.

<sup>1</sup> The book which is stained with S. Boniface's blood is a work of S. Ambrose on the advantage of death.

The greater part of these they buried on the spot, but the bodies of S. Boniface and thirteen others they reserved for burial elsewhere. These they transported with them to Utrecht, and buried them there. But a sacred rivalry soon sprang up for the possession of the Saint's body. Archbishop Lullus claimed it for Mayence, the See of the martyred Saint. Sturmi, Abbat of Fulda, put in a juster claim for that Abbey on the ground that the Saint himself had declared his wish to be buried there. In the meantime the citizens of Utrecht were in possession, and, moreover, had obtained a grant in their favour from King Pepin. The strife became so hot that at one time there were grounds for fearing it would lead to a recourse to arms. Fortunately this was averted by the intervention, it is said, of more than one miracle in favour of Fulda, which certainly had the justest claim. When once this weighty point had been decided, rivalry and discord ceased, and all parties united in doing their utmost to make the translation of the Saint's body to Fulda as honourable as possible. A long fleet of boats attended its passage up the Rhine, and when the river had to be left, and the body transported overland, the inhabitants for miles round joined the procession, assisting in the hymns and other devotions. When these left, because they could go no further, their places were taken by as many more from the immediate locality through

which the cortège was passing. Wheresoever the body rested, whether at night, or during the mid-day heat, a Church was built on the spot, in honour of the martyr. With such devotional rejoicings (as though in triumph) was the body borne to Fulda, and, as the Abbey was not yet completed, it was buried temporarily in the porch of the unfinished Church. Eventually it lay in front of the High Altar, and in course of time the body of his beloved niece, S. Lioba, and that of his devoted disciple S. Sturmi, were placed on either side of it. S. Boniface was martyred on the 5th of June, A.D. 754, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. He had spent forty years of his life in missionary work, thirty-four and a half as a Bishop.

Our Saint lived in an age in which the condition of the Church differed widely from that of our own day. In the early ages of the Church, Rome had proved herself a stronghold of orthodoxy against prevailing heresies. She was oftentimes a place of refuge for victims of oppression in their own countries. Nor had those evils developed which eventually brought our forefathers into collision with her. On the contrary, the kindest relations existed at the time when S. Boniface lived between the English and the Roman Churches. Under these circumstances S. Boniface is no example to ourselves in his attitude to the Papal See. It is as a Saint and as a Missionary that he commands our admiration,

our love and veneration. Called by GOD to be His instrument in bringing great nations to His service, he followed the Divine Voice whithersoever it led him, regardless of his own private interests. And (we have seen) how it led him to that part of the world which was to be the sphere of his future labours. There he thenceforth devoted his energies, his powers of mind and body, to the task thus marked out for him, and GOD blessed his labours with the wonderful success recorded in these pages. Utterly free from the taint of ambition, S. Boniface attained to a power and a dignity which the most ambitious man might have envied. "Kings and Queens," taught by him, "became nursing fathers and nursing "mothers of the Church." His voice was listened to and obeyed by the rulers of the great kingdoms of Europe. Yet, amid all these triumphs for CHRIST, he lived a life of daily self-denial, as one who believed in his inmost heart that it is a *greater glory to suffer for Christ than to do wonders in His Name*. His martyrdom, therefore, in Friesland was but the fitting conclusion of his missionary life. It set also the seal to his successes, and has invested his name with a halo and a glory which will make it for ever a power for good in the Church, a holy incentive to Christians in every age, to follow his example and missionary zeal and self-devotion.

It has pleased GOD of His great goodness to re-awaken missionary zeal in our own Church in

these latter days, and now, as of old, many sons and daughters go forth to spend their lives in labours for Christ. It is a sign and an assurance that "GOD "is with us of a truth." But what need is there not that we should, *as a nation*, remember the obligations which CHRIST has laid on His Church? Yet how vast a part of the world for which He died is in ignorance of His Name and love. Yet how many millions of our own fellow-countrymen, in India and elsewhere, are the slaves of idolatry. To some, indeed, the idea of the conversion of the world may appear a dream and an impossibility. But such it can never be regarded by the eye of faith; nor that thought impossible which GOD has commanded. On the contrary, the glorious successes of Church Missions in past ages are a pledge and an assurance of those which are to come. There seems to be no reason, in the nature of things, why the Gospel, which is fitted for the needs of the whole human race, should not be universally accepted by it. In any case, CHRIST has laid this burden on the Church, that she shall complete the task of evangelization which He Himself commenced. All who share in the benefits of Christianity are tied to this duty. All may do something towards it! How much may be done by a single individual may be seen in this sketch (most imperfect though it be) of the life of S. Boniface.



Churches were dedicated to S. Boniface, and Festivals held in his honour, from the time of his death, not only in Germany, but also in France, England, and other countries. On the site of his martyrdom an immense mole of earth was raised to keep out inundations of the sea; and on the top of this mole a Church was built and dedicated to him. The ground adjoining was a salt marsh, and there was a great dearth of fresh water. It happened one day that a horse, feeding by this mole, struck his foot so fast into the marsh that he could not withdraw it. When at last it was extricated, a fine fountain of excellent fresh water burst from the spot, and continued to flow. It was known in the old writer's time as S. Boniface spring.

A curious old tradition was handed down to later times that the posterity of the men who murdered the Saint might always be known by their having a patch of white hair on their foreheads.

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#### MEDIEVAL DISCIPLINE.

If a Priest disgraced himself by an act of immorality, he was flogged first, and then kept in prison on bread and water for the space of two years.

Clerks and Monks were flogged three times, but detained in prison only one year.

Nuns were also flogged and shaven.

Parricides, who submitted to penance, were expected to fast three days in the week, to abstain from flesh and wine—and even so, were not admitted to the Holy Communion until their last illness.

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Ordinations were already confined, as a rule, to the four Ember Weeks. The following persons were disqualified from receiving Priest's Orders:—

- 1.—Bigamists.
- 2.—Illiterate men.
- 3.—Those who were maimed in any part of their body.
- 4.—Penitents (such probably as had been put to open penance).
- 5.—Criminals.
- 6.—All Africans.

The explanation of the reason why Africans were excluded is said to have been the dread of the Manichœan Heresy, which was very prevalent in Africa at this time.

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In accordance with the new discipline, introduced by S. Boniface into Germany, Clergy in the higher Orders were not allowed to accompany an army on campaign, except only for spiritual purposes. For these purposes one or two Bishops with their chaplains were selected to accompany an army on campaign, in order that they might conduct Services, hear the confessions of the soldiers, and prepare such as were dying for their departure.

By the new regime, hunting-dogs and hawks were forbidden to be kept by Bishops and Priests.

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Baptism was still confined, as a rule, to Easter and Whitsuntide, and not administered at other times except only to sick persons, whose recovery was doubtful.

Persons who had been baptized by heretics, if the usual conditions had been observed, were not re-baptized, but confirmed.

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#### THE KING'S EVIL.

Pope Zecharias gives S. Boniface much advice on the treatment of those who were subject to the King's Evil. Animals tainted with it were to be destroyed. Human sufferers were to live apart from their fellow-men, and not to be allowed to enter Churches. We may gather from this that *Leprosy*, rather than *Scrofula*, was then termed the King's Evil, and also that that name did not originate, as is usually supposed, with S. Edward the Confessor.

**S. Wigbert.**

ABBAT.

A.D. 747.

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S. WIGBERT was a monk in the West of England, when he received an invitation from S. Boniface to join him in Germany. Though somewhat advanced in years he responded to the invitation, and went to Germany about A.D. 735. Well versed in literature (above all, in the study of the Holy Scriptures), he was also a man of confirmed piety and of self-discipline, and so was admirably suited for training others in the same. S. Boniface made him Abbat of Fritzlar, where he raised his Community to a high state of perfection, and when he was transferred by that Saint to Ordorf (Erfurt), he was equally successful there. In his latter years he retired to Fritzlar, where he spent his last days in much devotion. It is recorded of him that, in spite of his many infirmities, he would not in his old age relax the severities to which he had accustomed himself in early life. He died before S. Boniface, and was buried at Fritzlar. His remains

were eventually translated to Hersfield, where a magnificent tomb, with a ciborium enriched with gold and jewels, was erected in his memory. The numerous miracles recorded in connection with his relics bear witness to the high estimation in which he was held in the country of his adoption.

## **S. Burkard.**

FIRST BISHOP OF WURZBURG.

A.D. 751.

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S. BURKARD was another English Missionary who went out to Germany to assist S. Boniface. When that Saint reorganized the Church in Bavaria, he selected Burkard for the new See of Wurzburg in Franconia. When Burkard arrived there, it came to his ears that certain Missionaries (who had preceded him some thirty years) had been slain in Wurzburg, and buried under the ruins of the house in which they had lived. This report turned out to be true. These Missionaries had come from Iona. Their chief, Kilian, a Bishop of great eloquence, had made many converts in Wurzburg, among whom was Earl Gosbert, the ruler of the province. The story of their martyrdom is not without interest. Earl Gosbert, before his conversion, had married a lady within the forbidden degrees, and the Bishop called upon him to renounce a marriage not allowed by his new religion. The Earl hesitated long, but at last promised that he would do what the Bishop

required when he returned from a military expedition which he was undertaking. This came to the ears of the lady, who was infuriated by the tidings. She hired some ruffians to murder the Missionaries before the day of the Earl's return. These men broke into the house in which they lived, massacred them all, and buried their bodies under the pavement, after which they made a ruin of the house. S. Burkard was at this time intending to build a Cathedral on the top of Mount S. Mary (a lofty eminence in the neighbourhood), which had come into his possession by the liberality of the Lady Immina, a near relation of the late Earl Gosbert. Thither he translated with the utmost honour the remains of the martyred Missionaries. Eventually the building a Cathedral on such a precipitous site proving too arduous an undertaking, the Bishop changed his plans, and built his Cathedral in the city of Wurzburg, over the site of the house in which the Missionaries had been slain. As soon as this had been accomplished, he retranslated their remains, and dedicated the new Cathedral in their honour. S. Burkard is said to have been a man of bright, cheerful countenance, and of gentle, persuasive eloquence. He was much beloved in his new country, and held in high esteem among the people. Among those who valued him most was King Pepin. The nobles also held him in great respect, which they shewed by the large possessions which they gave

him. By this means the new See of Wurzburg became amply endowed. His episcopate was not a long one; he died before S. Boniface, when he had been Bishop about ten years. His last days were spent at Hohenburg, where he died on the 2nd of February, A.D. 751. He was buried in his new Cathedral, close by the shrine of S. Kilian, and there to this day his pastoral staff is shewn. It is said to be of *elderwood*. The present Cathedral itself is probably his work. His relics were eventually translated to Mount S. Mary, on which he had built a Church and Abbey.

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The writer of S. Burchard's Life gives the following remarkable account of the low estate into which the Kings of France (the Rois Faineant) had fallen in his time:—

“They sat indeed on the throne, with flowing locks and long beards, as if they had been rulers, and they received ambassadors from various parts of the world, and returned them answers, but only such as were dictated to them. Possessed only of the mere title of Kings, and a mean stipend, such as the Mayor of the Palace chose to allow them, they had no property of their own, but one villa, and that a poor one, which they made their home, and in which they lived with their family and dependents. When they had occasion to make a journey, they travelled on a Wagon (Carpentum) drawn by bullocks, with a herdman for their coachman, as country-people are accustomed to do. So they came to the annual Parliament (held always on the kalends of May) for discussing the affairs of the nation. Seated there, as Presidents, they made and received salutations, and that done, returned home and remained there, whilst the disposition of affairs and administration of the kingdom was left to the Mayor of the Palace.”

## **S. Richard.**

CIRCA 722.

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S. RICHARD is chiefly memorable as the father of a remarkable family of Saints—SS. Willibald, Winibald, and Walburge, who, all of them also, were renowned for their missionary zeal and labours. Of the Saint himself we know very little, except that he was a man of high rank in the west of England. In his foreign epitaph he is styled indeed “the King of England,” but this epitaph is full of inaccuracies, and wholly unreliable. He married, it would appear, the sister of S. Boniface, a lady of great piety. Having trained up his children to the best of his power in holy ways, S. Richard was himself led on by them in his latter days to greater devotion. Accordingly, when his two sons abandoned home in order to live a life of pilgrimage abroad, S. Richard joined them, regardless of the hardships and dangers which at this time such a life involved. The three travelled together on foot through France, on their way to Rome, visiting the shrines of the Saints which lay in their way. The fatigues of the journey and its discomforts proved too much for S. Richard’s





SS. WILLIBALD, RICHARD, AND WINIBALD.



strength. He fell ill at Lucca in Tuscany, and died there. His sons buried him in Lucca, near the tomb of S. Frigidian. The Italians held his memory in great reverence. They built a Church over his remains, and observed an annual festival in his honour. His epitaph, which was evidently composed by some one wholly unacquainted with English history, may still be seen in Lucca.

## S. Winibald.

ABBAT.

A.D. 761.

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WINIBALD was S. Richard's youngest son ; he was only nineteen when he accompanied his father and brother in their pilgrimage abroad. After his father's death in Lucca, he went on to Rome with his brother Willibald. Here in the following spring they were both seized with malarial fever. The attack was severe, and lasted long, but eventually they recovered. S. Benedict's famous Abbey on Mount Casino (which had been desolated by the Lombards, and had since been left in ruins) was at this time being restored. S. Winibald interested himself greatly in the restoration, and became so attached to the place, that he desired to make it his home, and accordingly sought admission, and became a member of it. Here he remained about seventeen years, when he received an urgent appeal from his uncle, S. Boniface, to come and help him in Germany. S. Winibald did not dare to turn a deaf ear to this call, and soon after, with the full sanction of his Abbat, left Mount Casino

with one or two companions. The party travelled on foot over the Alps, with an ass to carry their books and supplies. In Germany they were received with the greatest joy by S. Boniface, who kept his nephew with him for a short time of study and prayer, and then, having first ordained him Priest, sent him into Thuringia. Here Winibald proved himself an excellent Missionary, as he did also in Bavaria, whither he was after a time transferred by his uncle. "Mighty "in the Scriptures" (like Apollos of old), and an eloquent preacher, he waged perpetual warfare against the vices and errors of his day. Nor would he spare any delinquent, however rich or powerful he might be ; and this he did at no slight risk of his own life. In other respects he was the gentlest of men, winning the love, even of his enemies, by his forbearance, patience, and humility. The Duke of Bavaria, Odilo, greatly loved him, and seemed to take a pleasure in putting into his possession vast estates of land for Church purposes. S. Winibald exercised a wonderful influence over the young, whom he attracted to himself. Many of his young converts greatly desired to live under his personal guidance. S. Winibald thought it best to comply with their wishes, and made his plans for building an Abbey at Metz.<sup>1</sup> On further consideration this site was abandoned. It was deemed advisable to go further from the haunts of men, and by S. Boniface's advice, Heiden-

<sup>1</sup> Metz was at this time the great Emporium for the wine-trade.

heim was selected, then a solitary waste of scrub and wood. He proceeded thither with his companions, each with axe in hand. They cleared the scrub, hewed down the trees, and with the timber erected with their own hands a Church and Abbey. This Abbey prospered greatly under his rule. His sister, S. Walburge, joined him before long at Heidenheim, where, in a contiguous Abbey, she formed a Community of Nuns.

S. Winibald still continued his missionary labours in the neighbouring country, so far as he was able, but his health was fast breaking. He had been an invalid from his youth, and his increasing infirmities warned him that his end was approaching. He still retained his love for Mount Casino, and had a longing desire to end his days there. With this view he sought and obtained the necessary permission for his re-admission. However, when he found how distasteful his departure would be to S. Boniface, and also to the members of his own Community (who were inconsolable at the thought of losing him), he gave up his own wishes, and relinquished all thought of leaving Heidenheim. After a time he became so weak that he could not leave his chamber, even to go to Church. He caused, therefore, an Altar to be placed in his room, at which he celebrated as often as he was able. Thus he continued until the day of his death, which took place on the 14th before the kalends of January, A.D. 761, when he was sixty years of age (having

been Abbat ten years). He was buried in the Church at Heidenheim. A tomb of marvellous structure, adorned with gold, silver, and jewels, was constructed over his remains.

The story of S. Winibald's life reminds us how much may be done by those who are weak in health. S. Winibald was an invalid from his childhood, yet he exercised a marvellous influence for good wherever he lived, whether in his own country, or in Italy, or in Germany. Nor is this a solitary or exceptional instance. Examples of the same kind may be found in every age. Gregory the Great, the master mind of his times, the shaper of succeeding ages, was a great sufferer from ill-health, as also was our own famous Hero-King, Alfred. These, and innumerable instances recorded in the annals of the Church, shew what may be done by those who, having no strength of their own, find in GOD a remedy for their weakness, and become vehicles of His grace for the spiritual benefit of others.

## PILGRIMAGES.

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THE devotion of our forefathers had a passionate tendency to shew itself in pilgrimages—a form of devotion which has fallen into disrepute among ourselves, and which perhaps we regard with suspicion. It is certain, however, that the original idea sprang from the highest motives. Pilgrimage was occasionally *for life*, and consequently involved (and *was chosen because it involved*), the surrender of home and friends, and a life of exile, for CHRIST'S sake, in some foreign land. Some of our best missionaries in early times were pilgrims of this class, who proved of inestimable value in the countries, and to the people, among whom they went to dwell. Such a form of devotion would be but limited. Pilgrimage, in its usual meaning, was only for a time, and merely involved a devotional visit to some religious centre. Such pilgrimages were possible to all classes of people, and were very popular. Many contented themselves with undertaking a journey, in order to worship at some famous shrine in their own country. Others were drawn to a great distance, even to the



Holy Land ; but the central point of fascination was Rome, and thither flowed the great stream of pilgrims, eager to behold the citadel of the world, the burial-place of the great Apostles, SS. Peter and Paul. Kings, Bishops, Clergy, laymen, men, and women of all ranks, made their way there, careless of the hardships they incurred in the journey, the dangers they were exposed to from the inclemency of the weather, and the still greater risks from the merciless banditti, who infested the Alps, and spared none who fell into their hands. It may be questioned by some how much of this mediæval devotion arose from pure religion. Not all, certainly. Mixed motives mingle largely in the springs and under-currents of all popular movements, whether religious or not, and this formed no exception. We know from contemporary records that some of these pilgrims did not return home better for their travels. Not a few of the more incautious fell a prey to the temptations which they met in their journey. But is it just to judge any religious movement, or revival, by what may be called *its failures*? Might not Christianity itself be condemned by such a process? There is no reason to doubt that pilgrimages were edifying to those who undertook them sincerely, and it is certain that the home-country derived no little benefit from the custom in an age when there was no temptation

to travel abroad. Pilgrimage supplied the necessary stimulus. The pilgrims, though they went not for that object, could not but be struck with the beauty, even when in ruins, of the magnificent cities through which they travelled. Their eyes were enchanted with the treasures of art which they beheld in the imperial city. Returning home they naturally sought to introduce there what they had admired abroad. It is said that most, if not all of the improvements made in England before the conquest were due to the observation and the industry of pilgrims.

**S. Willibald.**

BISHOP OF AYCHSTADT.

A.D. 786.

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WILLIBALD was S. Richard's eldest son. When he was a child about three years old he sickened, and his illness proved so serious that he seemed at the point of death. His parents, filled with grief, carried him out of doors to a great cross in front of their house, where they were wont to say their daily prayers.<sup>1</sup> There they laid him down, and made earnest supplication to GOD that his life might be spared, vowing that if their prayers were granted, "he should be "given to the LORD all the days of his life." Their prayer was granted, the child recovered, and his parents, true to their obligation, placed him, as soon as his age allowed of it, in Waltheim Abbey. Thus from his childhood, for he was only five years old when he was sent from home, Willibald became an

<sup>1</sup> It was a custom with the Saxons (i.e., the English people), where there was no Church within easy reach for noblemen and others, to have a lofty cross consecrated to GOD on their estates, to which they resorted for their daily devotions. See *Mabillon*, *Sœc. III.*, Part. 2, p. 334.

inmate of a religious house. There, early trained in habits of devotion, he learned to love religion, and his love for it increased with his years. It does not appear that he became a member of Waltham Abbey, or, if he did so, he obtained the necessary leave for quitting it. This he did in the year 720, when he was about twenty-two years old, "purposing "to live a life of holy pilgrimage for the sake of "CHRIST among strangers in a foreign land." His zeal proved infectious. His brother Winibald, and even his aged father, became desirous of sharing his pilgrimage. The three left England together from Port Hambich (Southampton), and landing on the French coast, pursued their toilsome journey to Rome. The death of their father at Lucca, and their own safe arrival at Rome, has been told elsewhere (see SS. Richard and Winibald). The brothers, it will be remembered, suffered much in Rome from malarious fever. Their prostration was so great, that for many weeks they were totally unable to do aught for themselves, but by a special providence it so happened that the two were never laid up together; one brother getting better as the other sickened, they were thus able alternately to nurse each other. When at last they threw off the fever, they paid a short visit to England, in the hope of inducing some of their friends to join them in their pilgrimage. In this they were very successful, and they soon returned with a troop of devout companions. Winibald now

retired into the Monastery on Mount Casino, but Willibald felt an earnest longing to pursue his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. As soon, therefore, as Easter was over, he set out on his travels with two companions willing to share the dangers of this arduous undertaking. The story of his adventures has been preserved in full detail; it is interesting in itself, and also for the light it throws on the state of Palestine at this early period (see Appendix). Here it must suffice to say that seven years were spent in this pilgrimage, in the course of which time Willibald visited Ephesus, Edessa, Constantinople, and other places of note on his way to and from the Holy Land, in which the greater part of the time was passed. In the course of their pilgrimage the travellers suffered much from hunger, illness, and various mishaps. All the same, it was to them a time of intense happiness and devotion, and their souls glowed with love and holy joy as they passed from one spot to another connected with the SAVIOUR'S Presence.

S. Willibald returned to Italy more ardent in his faith, more resolute than ever to live and die for CHRIST, stored also with an abundant stock of useful knowledge and experience, which proved of great service to him in his missionary work in after years. He had made up his mind on the completion of his pilgrimage to join his brother in the Abbey on Mount Casino. Thither, therefore, he now directed his steps,

travelling on foot through Italy. Wherever he rested for the night he found shelter, rest, and a welcome in some religious house, but the warmest welcome of all in the Abbey in which he proposed to end his days. This famous Abbey, the mother-house of the Benedictine rule, had suffered much in the breaking up of the Roman Empire, but was now being brought into full vigour again by the exertions of its Abbat (Pertinax), who received Willibald with great joy. Our Saint proved a welcome addition to the Community, the members of which were much edified by his life and conversation, and who never wearied in listening to what he had to tell them of the Holy Land.

S. Willibald had passed ten years on Mount Casino, when he received a call to go elsewhere. This came from his uncle, S. Boniface, who had heard of his return from Palestine, and who earnestly desired his assistance in Germany, nor did he cease his efforts until he had obtained leave for him to quit his Abbey. S. Willibald had no desire to go, and hesitated long to do so, but when he was ordered by his superiors he yielded, and in doing so found his true vocation. He made an excellent Missionary, and shared, in no mean degree, in the glorious work of evangelizing Germany. On his arrival there he was welcomed by S. Boniface, who ordained him Priest, and sent him to be his representative in South Bavaria. Vast estates of land had lately been

given him there, which he now made over to Willibald. The place was called Aychstadt, from the number of oaks which grew upon it. It had once been the site of a populous city, the ruins of which were yet visible, here and there, among the scrub and brushwood which occupied the place. S. Willibald proceeded there with a few companions (each with an axe in his hand), and setting vigorously to work, they built sheds for themselves, a wooden Church, and eventually a large capacious Abbey, for so great a fame had preceded his arrival in Germany, that disciples crowded to Aychstadt, anxious to put themselves under his rule. Willibald formed them into an admirable Community, led them on to a high pitch of devotion, and made them missionaries and teachers for the people in the neighbourhood.

It was not long before Aychstadt was made an Episcopal See, and Willibald was chosen to be its first Bishop, being then forty-one years old. He had a very long Episcopate, dying in his eighty-seventh year, A.D. 786. His incessant labours in behalf of his flock were greatly blessed. An old writer says of him, "that by means of his preaching "and holy example a Christian reformation was "effected in Bavaria, *which he found a moral waste, "and left a rich harvest-field for the Lord.*" His body was buried in his Cathedral in Aychstadt, but soon raised above ground. It was a custom for

centuries to carry it in processions, and otherwise expose it for the veneration of the faithful. For this purpose it was kept in the Armarium of the Cathedral. Eventually a Church was built for its reception, and four priests were attached to guard it. This Church was called "S. Willibald's Choir," and his remains are said to be there to this day.

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#### S. WILLIBALD'S PILGRIMAGE.

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##### APPENDIX.

Willibald, with two companions, set out on his pilgrimage in the spring of A.D. 722. They went overland from Rome to Naples, where they took shipping. Their vessel was detained some days at Sicily. This gave them an opportunity of visiting the tomb of S. Lucy in Syracuse, and that of S. Agatha in Catania (here her famous veil was preserved). The town then, as now, was liable to suffer from the eruptions of Mount Etna, and it was a custom, whenever there was an alarm, for the people to go in procession in the open air, carrying S. Agatha's veil, "and so by their Chants and Litanies they believed "that the mercy of GOD was obtained."

From Sicily they passed through the Mediterranean to Ephesus. Here, in the city itself, was the Tomb of S. John the Baptist, and in the neighbourhood that of S. Mary Magdalene, and the famous Cave of the Seven Sleepers. †

##### † NOTE ON THE SEVEN SLEEPERS.

This most ancient tradition is as follows. In the course of the Decian Persecution, about A.D. 250, seven Christian boys, sons of honourable parents in Ephesus, to avoid the persecution hid themselves in a cave in a neighbouring mountain. This coming to the ears of the Emperor Decius, he caused the mouth of the cave to be blocked up. Two or three hundred years afterwards it happened that this block was removed from the door of the cave, upon which the Seven



The coast of Asia Minor had lately been invaded by the Saracens, who had devastated the land, and the inhabitants were suffering from famine. Our pilgrims had a hard time of it, and were brought to the verge of starvation. However, by the mercy of GOD they survived this terrible winter. When Spring made travelling possible, they paid a visit to Cyprus (then a stronghold of Christianity with numerous Bishops), and then returning to the Continent, made their way on foot to Edessa in Mesopotamia. Edessa was a place of much interest to Christians in these early times, in connection with King Abgar,<sup>1</sup> who was healed by the ministry of S. Thomas. His conversion to the Faith led to the introduction of Christianity into those parts. Here the pilgrims found a magnificent Church, built by the Empress Helena.

Edessa at this time was in the hands of the Saracens, and indeed was the residence of their King. The guards of the city, noticing the strange appearance of the pilgrims (they were now a party of seven), their foreign speech and dress, becoming suspicious that they were spies,

Sleepers inside suddenly woke up, as from a deep sleep, perfectly unconscious of the duration of their slumbers. One of them, Jamblicus, left the cave, and venturing into the city, was astonished to find emblems of Christianity everywhere exposed to view. He entered into conversation with one of the citizens, which led to an explanation, as astonishing to one as the other. The rumour of this wonder spreading everywhere, the cave was visited by crowds from all parts. Among the visitors was the Emperor Theodosius, jun., and the Bishop of Ephesus, who conversed with the boys. After a brief space of time, "the seven boys fell asleep again, not to re-awaken till "the Resurrection of the Just."

<sup>1</sup> NOTE ON KING ABGAR.

It is recorded by Eusebius, in his *Church History* (Book I, chap. xiii.), that Abgar, King of Edessa, was much afflicted with some disease, and that, having heard of our LORD'S miracles on the sick, he sent a letter entreating Him to come "and heal him." Our LORD, according to the same authority, replied that He could not leave His work in Palestine, but would send him one of His disciples when it was completed. Accordingly, after His Ascension, Thomas, by a special direction of the HOLY GHOST, sent Thaddæus to Edessa, who healed the King, baptized him, and introduced Christianity into the country. So much, at least, is certain, that Edessa was a stronghold of Christianity from the very earliest times. (See Eusebius.)

seized and cast them into prison. In this trying situation the mercy of GOD did not forsake them. A Moslem merchant in the town interested himself in their behalf. This good Samaritan visited them in prison, sent them daily both dinner and supper. He also obtained permission to take them out occasionally, to Church, and also to the baths. "The citizens," we are told, "crowded to see them out of curiosity, on account of their youth, beauty, and strange appearance."

Others besides the merchant befriended them. Among these was a Spaniard who was staying in Edessa. This man had a brother in the King's household, whom he urged to speak in their behalf. The captain, also, of the ship in which they had sailed to Cyprus, happening to come to Edessa, interested himself in their favour. After a time they were put on their trial before Mirmumni,<sup>1</sup> the King of the Saracens. He demanded where they came from, and was told that they came "from a country at the extreme west of the world, beyond whose shores there was nothing but water." He replied, "Why should we punish them? They have done us no harm! Let them go! The other prisoners must pay a fine, but these may go free!"

Thus happily liberated, our pilgrims left Edessa for Damascus. Here they saw the tomb of Ananias, and (at some distance from the town) the spot where S. Paul's conversion took place: a handsome Church was standing over it. From Damascus, Palestine was reached by way of Galilee. To tell of all they saw there would unnecessarily prolong our account. It is sufficient to say that, commencing with Nazareth, they visited Cana, Capernaum, Mount Tabor, Bethsaida, Magdala. In all these places a handsome Church marked the spot connected with the Gospel story. From Magdala the pilgrims went to see the sources of the Jordan, to wit, two springs "named respectively Jor and Dan, which, rising apart from each other in an adjoining hill, afterwards were united." Their next point of interest was Cæsari Philippi. Here they were shewn the house of the woman who was healed of her issue of blood by our LORD. This woman, who was a native of the town, in gratitude for her recovered health had caused a representation of the miracle to be sculptured in brass. In this sculpture she herself was figured in a posture of supplication, our

<sup>1</sup> NOTE ON MIRMUMNI.

This, no doubt, was only the *official* name of the King. The modern Amir, or Emer, is derived from Mirmumni, as is also our own word, *Admiral*, which we have borrowed from the Turks.

LORD in a flowing robe with fringed hem. It stood on a pedestal in front of the door of her house till the reign of the Emperor Julian, the Apostate, who caused it to be broken down, and an image of himself to be erected in its stead. The pilgrims were shewn the remains of the original sculpture, which had been reconstructed by the Christians, and placed in one of their Churches. From Cæsarea they went to Jordan to visit the site of our LORD's Baptism. The river having changed its course, this spot had become dry, and a handsome Church occupied the place. Inside the Church a wooden cross marked the spot where our LORD had stood. Over the river itself a long cable had been extended, and remained fixed for the benefit of the sick and infirm, who resorted here in great numbers on the Festival of the Epiphany.

Pursuing the course of the Jordan, the pilgrims visited Gilgal and Jericho, and thence proceeded to Jerusalem. Here they spent many months in much devotion. At Calvary they found a magnificent Church built by the Empress Helena. Adjoining this was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Within this Church, on its north side, was the entrance to the Sepulchre itself, which contained the slab of stone on which our LORD's body had been laid. Fifteen golden candlesticks attached to it burned ceaselessly night and day; and before the entrance was an immense round stone, "similar to the one which had "been rolled away by the angels." In the Church called S. Sion they saw the tomb of S. Stephen, "the Archdeacon and Protomartyr." Outside Jerusalem, a tall stone column, with a cross on its summit, marked the spot (so they were informed) where the Jews had made an attempt to carry off the body of the Virgin Mary, on the day of her funeral, as it was being conveyed on a bier by the eleven Apostles to be buried in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. By the mercy of GOD this attempt was frustrated. The pilgrims were shewn her tomb in the valley. "Not that she rests there," the old writer continues; "it is her memorial. But whether the Apostles buried "her here, or whether, as they were preparing to do so, she was taken "up in the body, or, if it be granted that she was buried here, "whether she was afterwards taken up, and deposited elsewhere, or "had a true and real resurrection to immortality, is *better left in doubt* "than certified apochryphally."

On the Mount of Olives the pilgrims found two remarkable Churches, one in Gethsemane, the other on the site of our LORD's Ascension. This latter Church had been left roofless, purposely; nor had it either carpet or pavement, so that certain marks on the ground, which were believed to be the SAVIOUR's footsteps, might be

visible to those who visited the Church. Two stone columns represented the angels which appeared to the apostles, and a circular rail of brass inclosed the spot whence He ascended. Inside this inclosure a glass lamp without an aperture burned perpetually.

When the pilgrims had at last satisfied their religious instincts in Jerusalem, they began to make visits in the neighbourhood. The first of these was to Bethlehem, seven miles to the south. Here they were shewn a well in which (they were told) the Star of the Epiphany appeared at times crossing from side to side. The site of the Nativity, which was originally a cave in a rock, had been excavated, and a Church occupied the place. In this Church a large Altar marked the spot where our LORD was born.

From Bethlehem they visited Thequœ, the scene of the massacre of the holy Innocents. There they were shewn a very aged fig-tree, believed to be the one under which Nathanael, being then a babe, was hidden by his mother, and so escaped the fate of the other children.<sup>1</sup> From Thequœ they penetrated south as far as Gaza. On their road thither their attention was called to the pool of water in which Philip baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch, or, as the old writer expresses it, "in which the *Ethiopian changed his skin.*" At Gaza a distressing misfortune befell S. Willibald. One day, as he was engaged in his devotions in Church, he suddenly lost his sight, and became totally blind. In this state he was conducted by his companions back to Jerusalem. It is not clear what caused this blindness, but happily it was not lasting; two months after his arrival in Jerusalem, he regained his sight as mysteriously as he had lost it.

Our pilgrims now began to think that it was time to leave Palestine, but this they did not find to be easy. Passports were required, and these could only be obtained from "the King of the Saracens," who was at that time "in hiding." Eventually some of their party made a journey to Edessa, and obtained them there. It was now too late in the year for travelling. The winter was coming on. This was spent in Jerusalem. In the following spring they set out for Tyre. Passing through Samaria, they visited the tombs of S. John the Baptist, of Abdul, and of the Prophet Elisha. They saw also the well on which the LORD sat, while conversing with the woman of Samaria. It was close to Mount Gerizim, and a Church had been built over it. Their party was travelling under the guidance of a huge

<sup>1</sup> This explanation of our LORD's mysterious words to Nathanael, *S. John* i. 48, is very curious.

Ethiopian, who had charge of two camels and a mule. As they entered an olive wood, they saw in their path an immense lion. The beast looked keenly at them, and the pilgrims hesitated; but, encouraged by their guide, they marched straight on, and the lion with a great roar leaped into the wood. They heard afterwards that this lion had for some time infested the wood, and had carried off several persons engaged in gathering olives. On their arrival at the coast their passports were demanded at Thalamarcha, and at Tyre, which adjoins that place, their goods were inspected "under pain of death," but nothing was found to incriminate them. <sup>1</sup>

Many months were passed at Tyre before they could find a ship, and then they had a long and tedious voyage to Constantinople, where they stayed two years. In a Church here were the tombs of S. Andrew, S. Timothy, and of S. Luke, and also the sepulchre of S. Chrysostom. One of their most interesting visits was paid to Nicæa, where the first great Council of the Church was held. Here they saw in the Church, in which the Council took place, the pictures of the 318 bishops who had attended that famous Council, and had drawn up the Nicene Creed.

Willibald's stay at Constantinople brought his long pilgrimage to an end, and he and his party returned to Italy.

<sup>1</sup> Willibald managed to secrete a precious balsam (*Opobalsamum*), made from a plant which grows in the valley of the Jordan. It was of great value as a medicine, and its export was forbidden by the Saracens. Willibald secreted it in a calabash, under a false bottom.

## **S. Walburge.**

ABBESS.

FEBRUARY 25, 779.

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S. WALBURGE, sister of S. Winibald, was of great service to S. Boniface in his efforts to introduce the religious life among women in Germany. She herself was trained in the famous Abbey at Wimburne, where she was placed by her father, when he adopted a life of pilgrimage. By the invitation of S. Boniface, she went out to Germany in company with S. Lioba, and other members of her Community. After two years spent at Bischoffsheim, she was transferred to Heidenheim, where her brother Winibald had lately founded his Abbey. Here she formed a Community of Nuns, whom she brought to a high standard of life. After her brother's death she presided over both Abbeys for eighteen years, dying Feb. 25, 779.

Few of our English Missionaries were held in greater honour on the Continent. Several days in the year were observed as her festivals. She became the titular Saint of important Churches, not only in Germany, but also in Belgium and France. Portions

of her relics were preserved in Antwerp, Brussels, Arnheim, Groningen, Cologne, Wurtenburg, etc., etc., and miracles innumerable are believed to have occurred at her shrine, or in connection with her relics.

## **S. Lioba.**

ABBESS.

CIRCA A.D. 772.

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LIOBA was related to S. Boniface on the mother's side. Her parents, Tinne and Ebba, were of noble origin, living in the west of England. They had been long married, and were without expectation of offspring, when this little child was born to them. Imitating Hannah under similar circumstances, the pious parents determined to give the child, as a thank-offering, to GOD. She was placed, in consequence, at a very early age, in Wimburne Abbey, at this time one of the most famous Abbeys in England. It was a royal foundation, built under the auspices of King Ina ; and its present Abbess, Tetta, sister to the reigning King of Wessex, was noted for her wisdom and ability. Wimburne was of the old-fashioned order—a double Abbey, with separate compartments for men and women, but any dangers, to which such Abbeys were exposed, were warded off by the admirable discipline enforced by Tetta. None were permitted under any pretence to enter the department of the other sex, with the sole exception



of the Priests whose duty it was to conduct the Services for the Sisters, and who left as soon as the Services were concluded. It would appear from this that at Wimburne, contrary to the usual custom, the men and women had each their own Church.

Tetta took the greatest care of the little child entrusted to her. Lioba was naturally of a bright disposition, and she soon won the love of all the Sisters, and became a great favourite. Her name, given by her parents, was Truthbega, but this soon passed into Lioba, which means loveable. Gentle, devout, fond of reading (though active enough when any work had to be done), she was very humble in her department to her elders, and so grew up an ideal inmate for a religious house, in which, under ordinary circumstances, she would have lived and died. But, in the course of GOD'S Providence, she was called thence to do a work for Him elsewhere. S. Boniface, it may be remembered, made many appeals to the Church at home for a supply of Missionaries. In one of these he made a special request of the Abbess of Wimburne that for the love of GOD she would send him his relation, Lioba, adding that he judged her to be better qualified than any one he knew for teaching the women in Germany the rudiments "and the discipline of the "religious life." This letter caused sore distress to the Abbess, for she was most unwilling to part with one she deemed the most precious jewel of her Abbey.

However, she generously complied, and sent Lioba with her blessing into Germany. There she was received with the greatest joy by S. Boniface, who made her Abbess of a religious house, which he was forming at Bischoffsheim. Lioba, having received this charge, guided it well, and soon brought her Community to such a high pitch that it came into great repute. Many of her Sisters became Abbesses elsewhere. Indeed, when any new Abbey was built, and an Abbess required, Lioba's Nuns were usually chosen.

From the time of her arrival in Germany she forgot her native country, not from any want of affection, but because she was wholly engrossed in the task which had been laid upon her, and indeed for which she was eminently fitted by a combination of good qualities. Gifted by nature with great mental ability, and fond of study, she became very learned. She knew the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) almost by heart, was acquainted with the writings of the Fathers, and was even expert in canon law. Her joyous temper, which beamed in her countenance, made her much beloved by those over whom she presided. Moreover, she possessed such self-control that she could restrain herself from the utterance of an angry word, even when under the greatest provocation. With all this she combined a great grace of discretion and good judgment, so that she would restrain her Sisters from austerities which

might be injurious to their health. She was not without her trials. The following misfortune befell her house. The devil (we are told) having tried in vain to blacken the reputation of Bischoffsheim, sought by the following device to bring it into disrepute. Among the pensioners of the Convent, who were receiving a daily alms, was a young woman who was a cripple. This person misconducted herself. She concealed her disgrace till the child was born. There was a reservoir of water in front of the Abbey, from which it obtained its supplies, as did also the neighbouring town. The delinquent in the night threw the baby into the reservoir. The following morning a woman from the town came to draw water, and discovered the floating body. She hastened back to the town, and published the tidings. The greatest excitement prevailed, and a crowd soon collected in front of the Abbey, giving vent to their feelings by shouts and ribaldry. The Abbess and the Sisters, in the meantime, were filled with shame and grief. Lioba summoned her Community, and made strict investigation, but was unable to find the slightest clue to the mystery. She was convinced in her own mind of the innocence of her Sisters, but saw little hope of clearing them in the sight of men. In her distress she ordered a three days' Fast, and bade her Sisters pass this time in prayer and supplication to GOD, begging Him to have mercy upon them, "to make their righteousness as clear as

“the light, and their just dealing as the noon-day.” In accordance with her commands, the first day was so observed in various acts of devotion, and in litanies and special supplication. That evening, when the hour of Vespers had arrived, the Church was thronged with excited people from the town, and Lioba, groaning with grief, was standing in prayer before the Altar, when suddenly a loud voice was heard in the Church. It proved to be that of the guilty woman, who, stung with remorse at the misery she had caused to those who had befriended her, publicly owned her guilt, and confessed that she was the mother of the child.

Bischoffsheim took no hurt from this momentary loss of fame. On the contrary, as time went on its reputation increased. The nobles and the rich entrusted Lioba with the education of their daughters; and many matrons, forsaking the world, put themselves under her care and rule. By S. Boniface she was regarded with the tenderest affection. When he was about to resign his See to go into Friesland, he sent for her, gave her his last admonitions, and enjoined her never to abandon the country of her adoption. And when he gave his last instructions to S. Lullus, before leaving Germany, he expressed his desire that he should be buried at Fulda, and that his relative, Lioba, should also be buried there—“that so they might rise together with joy in the resurrection at the last day.”

S. Lioba was held in great esteem, even in the world outside her Convent. King Pepin honoured her greatly. So also did the Princes Carloman and Charles, who succeeded him. The Empress Hildegard, wife of the latter, loved Lioba "as her own "soul." The two were closely united by bonds of mutual affection.

Lioba continued her valuable labours for many years, in the course of which she amply fulfilled the task enjoined her by S. Boniface. When at last she found her bodily powers declining, she made a final visitation of all the religious houses which had been entrusted to her care, and then, resigning her position, retired with a few Sisters to spend her latter days in devotion in a cell at Schonersheim (about four miles from Metz). She never left that cell but once, and then at the earnest entreaty of the Empress Hildegard, who was staying in her palace at Aix, and who would gladly have detained her with her, but Lioba would not stay. "Flinging herself into the arms of "her beloved friend, and tenderly embracing her, she "kissed her face, forehead, and eyes." And so parted with these words, "Farewell for ever, most beloved "Mistress and Sister! Farewell, precious portion of "my soul! May CHRIST, our Creator and Redeemer, "grant that we may meet each other without con- "fusion in the day of Judgment. But be assured "that we shall never more meet again on earth." Returning to her cell, she was a few days later seized

with an attack which confined her to her bed ; and not long afterwards resigned her soul to her Creator, dying in September, four days before the kalends of October. She was buried, in accordance with the behest of S. Boniface, in the Church at Fulda, beside his tomb.

**S. Lullus.**

ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE.

A.D. 787.

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LULLUS, whose English name was Lul, or Lulla, was a relation of S. Boniface, and, like him, born in the west of England. He was placed very early in the monastery at Malmesbury, where he obtained an excellent education. In the year 732 he left England, in company with his aunt Chunechild, and his cousin Berthgit (who are both numbered among the Saints), to take his share in S. Boniface's labours in Germany. He was greatly beloved by that Saint, who reposed the utmost confidence in his good sense and ability. In this reliance he chose him, it may be remembered, to be his successor in the Arch-See of Mayence, to govern the Church in Germany, when he left that country to go on his Mission in Friesland. S. Lul had many admiring eulogisers, but unfortunately no biographer, so that we know but little of his life and rule. It must suffice to say that he exercised that rule for thirty-two years with great benefit to the Church in Germany, doing his best to perfect and complete the noble work inaugurated there by S.

Boniface. He was a man of letters, a good preacher, and an able instructor of his Clergy. Among his numerous correspondents were Kings and Prelates in various countries in Europe, who consulted him as an authority on different questions. King Pepin, and also Charlemagne, held him in great esteem ; on one occasion, when dissension had arisen between the latter and our own King Offa, Archbishop Lullus acted as mediator. In his old age his health became broken, and he resigned his See ; and dying shortly afterwards, was buried at Hersfield, where he had founded a spacious Abbey in the vast Forest of Burchwald, which then covered an extensive portion of the province of Hesse. He died on the 17th of November, 787.

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Hersfield was originally selected by S. Sturmi for the site of the Abbey which S. Boniface wished to build ; but though admirably suited in other respects, it was perilously near the confines of the Old Saxons, and in consequence was abandoned by S. Boniface in favour of Fulda, of which he made Sturmi the first Abbat. As time went on the danger from the Old Saxons became less serious, and Archbishop Lullus, reverting to the original plan, built an Abbey in Hersfield.

Some writers blame S. Lul for his treatment of S. Sturmi, asserting that, resenting the burial of S. Boniface at Fulda, he poisoned the mind of the Emperor against its Abbat. It is certain that S. Sturmi fell into disgrace with the Emperor, and was banished from Fulda. How far Lullus was concerned in this is not clear. In any case there was no lasting disagreement. S. Sturmi was soon recalled to Fulda, and S. Lullus reconciled himself with that Community by making benefactions of land.



## **S. Willehad.**

**FIRST BISHOP OF BREMEN.**

NOVEMBER 8, 789.

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WILLEHAD was a native of the north of England. We know nothing of his parentage and early life, except that he had an excellent education. He was already in Priest's Orders, when, hearing that there was a movement towards Christianity among the Old Saxons (hitherto noted for their adherence to idolatry), he felt a burning desire to go and work among them. With this view he made his desire known to Alchrid, the King of Northumbria, and after due consultation with the Witan in Synod, it was determined that he should be sent to the Continent as a Missionary. Willehad left England accordingly, and landed in Friesland not far from the very spot where S. Boniface had lately been martyred. A revolution in feeling had since occurred among the inhabitants; the Christians had increased greatly in number, they were also full of zeal, and they welcomed S. Willehad's arrival among them. He stayed some time there, building up the newly-planted Church, recalling to the Faith

any that had lapsed, and making converts. After a time he passed on from Hostrachia to Humarch, on the river Lavvers, where the people were still infidel. Here, one day when he was preaching vehemently against idolatry, some of the bystanders rushed upon him in a fury, crying out that one who spoke thus of their gods was not worthy to live. They were going to put him to death, when one or two bystanders interfered, advising the others to do nothing rashly. "It was proper in a matter which concerned religion to consult their gods." To this the rest agreed, and, according to their custom, the issue was decided by casting lots. The lots fell, providentially, in Willehad's favour. This satisfied the people, and they allowed him to depart without injury.

Passing thence he went on to Drentefield, where his preaching was attended with great success, and before long a multitude of Gentile-folk believed and were baptized. Here he abode some time, making converts continually. Many of these were young men, who, in their rash zeal commenced to break the idols and overthrow the temples. The infuriated idolaters rose *en masse*, and seizing S. Willehad, beat him with their clubs; and one, armed with a sword, struck at his neck, intending to cut off his head. By good fortune S. Willehad had a case of relics suspended round his neck; the sword struck the case and broke it, but did no fur-

ther injury ; he escaped scatheless, and the idolaters were so astounded at what appeared to them to be a miracle, that they left him without further molestation. The story of what had happened was bruited about the country by common fame, and it reached the ears of Prince Charles (Charlemagne). Charles was at this time interesting himself greatly in plans for the conversion of the Old Saxons (which, it will be remembered, S. Willehad had equally at heart), so he sent an invitation to our Saint to come and stay with him. S. Willehad went. They talked matters over together, and then Charles furthered his passage into Old Saxony, where he put him in possession of valuable estates at Wigmod, on which to commence his Mission. "Which ministry S. Willehad," we are told, "most faithfully and zealously fulfilled, making frequent circuits among the people, preaching everywhere." But the task imposed upon him here was no easy one. The Old Saxons resented (and who can wonder at it?) Charles' compulsory methods of conversion ; they hated Christianity, because it was the religion of their Conqueror, and they clung with patriotic zeal to their national idolatry. This became apparent in the year 782, when, under the lead of Duke Widikind, they made another desperate effort to cast off the yoke imposed on them by the Franks. They succeeded for a time, and their first act was to restore idolatry. In the meantime S. Willehad's labours had not been in vain. Many true and real

converts had been made by his preaching and ministry. These, preferring death to apostasy, suffered terribly in this crisis, and some were slain. Willehad himself escaped into Friesland, where he awaited in much sadness some opening for a return to his Mission. None occurring for some time, he paid a visit to Rome, where he received much kindness from Pope Hadrian. He spent also two years at Epternach in holy study and prayer, making daily intercession to GOD for his scattered flock in Saxony. In the meantime a desperate struggle was going on in that country between the Saxons and the Franks; the former fought with their usual courage, but were eventually subdued by Charlemagne, who imposed his usual conditions, and so once more it came to pass that the Old Saxons renounced idolatry, and sullenly accepted Christianity again. Duke Wittekind himself submitted to be baptized. It is impossible to justify the un-Christian means adopted by Charlemagne for extending Christianity. It is possible, however, and our bounden duty, to admire his zeal for the faith, so far as it led him to take more legitimate means for propagating it. One of these was to seek continually for the best and ablest Missionaries he could find. These he sent in large numbers into Saxony, planted them among the people, gave them lands for their support, and means for building Churches. As soon as possible, Willehad hastened back to Wigmod, and

recommenced his labours, restoring the ruined Churches, and preaching everywhere among the people. Hitherto, in deference to the prejudices of the Saxons (who, for some unknown reason, held Bishops in aversion), he had remained in Priest's Orders. He was now consecrated Bishop, and selected Bremen for his See. Wigmod and a vast extent of country round about it became its endowment. Here S. Willehad began his Cathedral: it was of wood, but exceedingly beautiful. He lived long enough to see it completed and consecrated. Shortly afterwards, whilst on a visitation in his diocese, he was seized with fever at Plexen. His illness increased daily, and his companions, who loved him dearly, began to lose all hope of his recovery. One of them piteously expostulating, exclaimed, "O holy shepherd, leave not the flock "which thou hast gained to the LORD, lest it be "devoured by the wolf! Forsake us not, lest we "wander and are lost!" The dying Saint replied, "Wish not, my dearest son, to keep me longer from "the presence of my LORD, nor seek to make me "desirous of life, or afraid to die. Pray rather for "me, that the GOD, Whom I have ever served, may "vouchsafe to take me to Himself, and mercifully ac- "cept and reward my labours. My flock I leave safely "in His hands, Who enabled me to do whatsoever I "have done for it. He will not fail it or forsake it, for "the whole world is full of His mercy." S. Willehad

died on November 8, 789, and was buried in his Cathedral at Bremen. From his earliest years he had accustomed himself to abstain from wine and beer, and also from animal food of all kinds, even from milk. His diet was bread, honey, vegetables, and fruit. In his old age, however, when he became infirm, he occasionally took fish. He was a man much given to prayer and private devotions. The psalms he delighted in. It was his custom to repeat the psalter daily, and occasionally twice in the same day. Bremen was before long made a Metropolitan See. Willeric, the first *Archbishop* of Bremen, rebuilt S. Willehad's Cathedral in stone.

**S. Sola.****HERMIT.**

CIRCA 790.

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S. SOLA was an Englishman who followed S. Boniface into Germany, where he became a hermit. He chose for his abode a spot on the river Altmuth in Bavaria, in a bend of that river which closed him in on two sides; on the other sides were mountainous alps, down whose steep declivities one narrow pathway, difficult and laborious in descent, gave access to his cell. The soil was barren, but suitable for pines, which clothed the mountain side with a dense forest. In this secluded spot S. Sola shut himself in, and here he served GOD in great devotion by day and night. It does not appear that he ever left his cell to preach as a Missionary among the people in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, it is certain that he exercised a wonderful influence for good among them, for in such great reverence did they hold him that, unmindful of the difficulties of access to his cell, they resorted to him in great numbers, listened humbly to his words of admonition, and consulted him in their spiritual difficulties. The mountain-side

on which his cell stood belonged to the Emperor Charlemagne, who, hearing of his fame, made him a present of the site of the cell, with lands adjoining. These S. Sola gave to the Abbey of Fulda, to which they remained attached until the destruction of the religious houses in the 16th century. S. Sola lived to a very great age. In his latter days he became too feeble to take care of himself, and an attendant was given him to attend to his wants. He is supposed to have died A.D. 790. He was buried in his cell, over which a little Church was erected. The place is still called from him Solen-hoven.



## **S. Lebwin.**

TOWARDS CLOSE OF EIGHTH CENTURY.

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S. LEBWIN (whose English name was Liafvin) is said to have been a child of grace from his earliest days. He grew up in all virtues, much given to prayer, sparing to himself, liberal to the poor. After he had been advanced to the Priesthood, he became desirous of joining the English Missionaries on the Continent, and for this purpose, crossing the sea, made his way to Utrecht. This was soon after the death of S. Boniface, and he was most kindly received at Utrecht by a disciple of that Saint, Gregory, who was then its Vicar-General, and who afterwards became the Bishop of that See. Gregory sent Lebwin, with one or two other English Missionaries, to Over-Yssel (in modern Holland), where he built himself a cell on the Yssel. By his vigorous preaching he soon made many converts. This excited the wrath of their heathen brethren, from whom he had much to endure. Old Saxony adjoined this part of the country. It was a custom with the Saxons to hold a yearly assembly at Marklo, on the river Weser, to deliberate on the public affairs of the nation, when public sacrifices

were offered to various idols. On one of these occasions S. Lebwin, repairing thither, entered the assembly hall, with a cross in one hand, and a book of the Gospels in the other, and denouncing their idolatry, preached CHRIST to them. The idolaters, full of wrath, but having no weapons with them, would have avenged themselves on the Missionary with stakes from the nearest hedge-rows, and with stones, but were pacified by an old chief named Buto, who interfered in Lebwin's favour, and who claimed for him the privilege of an ambassador. Thus Lebwin escaped. Some years later, when Charlemagne made war on the Saxons, they retaliated by persecuting the Christians, and S. Lebwin's cell was burnt to the ground. This he rebuilt, and continued his labours and hard life till his dying day, November 12th, towards the close of the 8th century. S. Lebwin is honoured in France, Germany, and Holland. His body reposes in a Church built at Deventer (the capital of Over-Yssel), which is the Cathedral of the See.

The Dark Period.







S. FRIDESWID.

## S. Frideswid.

VIRGIN.

CIRCA, 770.

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S. FRIDESWID, whose name is now almost forgotten out of Oxford, was in former times held in great veneration in the midlands of England. Thousands of pilgrims flocked annually to her shrine in Oxford, on the occasion of her festival. This has long become a thing of the past—yet no slight interest must ever remain attached to her name—if only because the Cathedral in Oxford is dedicated to her; and the principal College in that most famous University is the modern outcome of the religious house which she founded in Oxford so many centuries ago. Under these circumstances it is the more to be regretted that no contemporary account was written of her, or, if written, has not come down to our times. The most we know of her, strange to say, is due to a *French* MS. (found at Fontenelle, by Mabillon, who copied and published it). Unfortunately this MS. was imperfect. But from this, and other notices of her in various old English writers,

the main incidents of her life may be safely gathered, and these we now proceed to give, telling the tale as it was told in the original story.

About the year of our LORD JESUS CHRIST 725, when the Word of GOD had flourished and borne excellent fruit in the nation of the Angles, who had possessed themselves of the island of Britain, a certain sub-ruler, Didan, greatly esteemed for his virtuous life, had taken his residence in the city, called in the Saxon tongue, Oxenford. Guided by Divine Providence, this man had associated with himself a wife of like character with his own, Safrida, of whom he had one only child, a daughter, who inherited his own and his wife's virtues, and who, being washed in the Font of Holy Baptism, received the name of Frideswid. When the girl was five years old, she was put under the tutelage of Algiva, a very religious woman, by whom she was instructed in the Holy Scriptures, and brought up in pious and godly ways. Before she was of a marriageable age her mother died, and this brought her into still closer association with her father. He, smitten with grief at the death of his wife, and moved by the assiduous entreaties of his beloved daughter, erected a Church within the city bounds, which he caused to be consecrated in honour of the holy eternal Trinity, and of S. Mary the Virgin, and of All Saints. This Church he committed



in trust to his daughter at her request. Frideswid taking possession of the Church, gave herself up to all good works, shewing bowels of mercy to those in need, and liberally ministering to their necessities. And now, weaned altogether from worldly pleasures, and her heart set on the heavenly country, she began earnestly to desire to dedicate herself wholly to CHRIST. Nor did her father put any obstacle in her way, but, on the contrary, making a willing sacrifice, furthered her desires. Sending for the Bishop of the Diocese, he obtained his leave that his daughter should receive the religious habit. When this was done, twelve of her companions, damsels of noble birth, moved with emulation by her example, forsook all things, and followed the LORD, walking in all His Commandments and ordinances, after the example of the beloved Frideswid. By the munificence of her father, offices, most suitable for a religious house, were constructed nigh to the Church, from whose interior might be heard, both night and day, the sound of Psalms and Hymns, sung in sweet melody by the virgins engaged in their devotions. Not long after this, her illustrious father, seized with a grievous fever, took to his bed, and coming to extremities, fortified himself with the Viaticum of CHRIST'S Body, and so slept with his fathers, completing his days in a good old age. The blessed Frideswid,

thus deprived of both her parents, gave herself with still greater devotion to her heavenly calling. The legend proceeds to tell at some length the various artifices employed by the devil to eject the virgin from her citadel of prayer. His first device was to fill her mind with feelings of self-righteousness. For this purpose, under the guise of an angel of light, he recounted her good deeds, hoping thus to lead her on to some act of spiritual pride. In this attempt he was foiled by the humility of the virgin, who, unconscious of any deserts of her own, trusted only in CHRIST and His merits for her salvation. Defeated here, he turned to another stratagem. There was in the neighbourhood a young nobleman (some writers say, "a King," probably a sub-ruler), Algar by name, "a man sufficiently bad "at all times to serve an evil purpose." He had seen Frideswid, and had fallen in love with her. The evil one took care to inflame his passions. Stirred to the quick by his suggestions, Algar sent messengers to Frideswid to press his suit, and offer marriage. The virgin, much shocked, sent back a respectful, but firm refusal. On which Algar, finding prayers and blandishments of no avail, determined to proceed to violence. This coming to the ears of the virgin, she hastily fled with two of her "Sisters" from Oxford. They came in a boat down the river to Benton<sup>1</sup> (which is about ten miles

<sup>1</sup> Benson, or Bensington.

distant). Here, leaving the river, she hurried into an adjoining wood, in which was a hovel, or stye, long since disused, and then covered over with ivy. In this she concealed herself, and remained (some writers say three years), with the knowledge of the country people, who ministered to her wants. At last, however, her hiding-place became known to her lover, who had not the slightest intention of giving up the pursuit. He was on his way to Benton, when the virgin, hearing of it, fled back towards Oxford "by hidden path-ways (GOD accompanying her), and entered it in the darkness "of the night." Thither she was followed in hot pursuit by Algar, who, with his companions, was in the act of passing through the gates of the city, when the girl, despairing of flight, and unable from weariness to proceed a step further, threw herself in most heartfelt prayer on the protection of GOD. Nor did she seek that protection in vain, but found deliverance. What happened is not clear. According to the old legend, Algar was suddenly seized with blindness. It seems probable that, in the impetuosity of his pursuit, he either overstrained himself, or met with some accident, or was seized with a fit, in which he lay for some time dizzy and sightless. In this miserable plight, realizing the folly of his conduct, and coming to a better mind, he sent a message to S. Frideswid, begging her pardon for the annoyance which he had caused her, and humbly commending

himself to her prayers ; nor did he, after his recovery, molest her again. S. Frideswid lived many years after this. She built, some writers tell us, a cell or priory on the spot where she had concealed herself at Benton, also another at Bisney (not far from Oxford), and a third at Thornbury, on an islet among the marshes of the Thames. Here she erected a little Church, said to have been of wickerwork, and lived some years in a cell hard by. A well in the neighbourhood is still shewn, which is said to have been obtained by her prayers. Eventually she returned to Oxford, and died there in her Nunnery, November 14, circa A.D. 770.

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S. Frideswid's Nunnery was destroyed by the Danes. The Community was scattered or put to death. The house became a ruin. In this state it remained until after the Conquest, when it was rebuilt, but changed into a College for Secular Canons. In their possession it continued until the time of Henry VIII., when Cardinal Wolsey suppressed it, or rather rebuilt and converted it into the magnificent College now called Christ Church. Her Church also had a chequered history. It was burnt down in the reign of Ethelred the Unready, and rebuilt by that King. This Saxon Church was replaced by a grand Norman edifice (in the time of

Henry I.), erected by Roger, Bishop of Salisbury. King Henry III. held our Saint in great veneration. Her old shrine was by him replaced by one "that blazed with gold and jewels, and whose sides "were plated with gold." So it remained until the reign of Henry VIII. His first Queen, Katharine of Arragon (in company with Cardinal Wolsey) paid her devotions at this shrine, A.D. 1518, and was one of the last of the countless multitudes of pilgrims which resorted to it. A few years later, when S. Frideswid's priory was converted into a College for secular students, the Church was attached to the College. Henry VIII., who rifled the shrine of its gold and jewels, spared the relics of the Saint. They lie still in the aisle of the Church, and a modern brass marks the spot. It only remains to add, that when Oxford became a See, S. Frideswid's Church was made the Cathedral of it.

## **S. Ethelbert.**

**KING AND MARTYR.**

A.D. 792.

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THIS Saint, who is distinguished by the title of *Martyr* from the famous King Ethelbert of Kent, was the only son of Ethelred, King of East Anglia, whom he succeeded on the throne of that Kingdom. He was, we are told, a Prince of an exceedingly amiable and affable disposition. The neighbouring Kingdom of Mercia was at this time held by Offa, the most powerful King in the Heptarchy. Negotiations for a marriage between Ethelbert and Offa's daughter, the Princess Etheldritha, were entertained, and Ethelbert was invited to visit Offa at his Palace in Herefordshire. Chroniclers vary in their statements whether the proposed alliance was initiated by Offa, with the purpose of entrapping the young King, or whether the idea of it originated with Ethelbert himself. Be this as it may, the unfortunate King accepted Offa's invitation, came with his retinue to visit him at Sutton Wallis in Herefordshire, was there contracted to the Princess, and then basely put to death. The object of this foul murder was to enable

Offa to seize the Kingdom of East Anglia, and annex it to his own ; and his Queen is said to have been the author of it, for she pointed out the advantages of the scheme, and the facility with which it might be accomplished, and so drew the King, her husband, into it. There are writers, indeed, who would clear Offa of any share in the guilt, and who impute it solely to the Queen, but it is difficult to believe this, when we find the following statement in our best authority (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*): "A.D. 792. "This year Offa, King of Mercia, commanded the "head of King Ethelbert to be struck off."

This horrid crime was carried out with the utmost secrecy, and was executed by one of the Prince's own Earls, named Guibert, who had been suborned by Offa. But, though no one else knew of it, it somehow became known to the Princess Etheldritha, and she at once divulged it to the East Anglian nobles who had accompanied their King, whom she warned, as they valued their lives, to flee from the palace. They did so by night, and happily escaped into East Anglia. The body and head of the Prince were buried, or rather thrust into a hole on the bank of the river Lugg, at a place then called Marden,<sup>1</sup> but they did not remain very long there. They were discovered, taken up, and translated with great honour to Fernlega, which some say was the ancient name of Hereford. A rich man, named Brithric, bore the

<sup>1</sup> A Church was afterwards built over the spot.

expense. Universal compassion was felt for Ethelbert, and the base part acted by Offa was regarded with detestation. It is pleasing to know that this remarkable King, in whose character there is so much to condemn, and so much to admire, evinced no resentment at the honour shewn to his victim. On the contrary, he soon became heartily ashamed of the base part he had acted in this tragedy, and the short remainder of his life was spent in doing whatever was possible in expiation of his guilt. Some writers assert that he made a pilgrimage to Rome to obtain absolution. But there seems no evidence of this (he lived but two years afterwards). It is certain that he gave large lands to the Church in Hereford (where Ethelbert was buried), built religious houses and Churches in different parts of the country, and, in special penance for this crime, refounded with the utmost munificence the ancient Abbey of S. Albans, which thenceforth became one of the most important in England.

It pleased GOD to punish Offa in this world. His latter days were days of sorrow. His Queen died before the year was over. The Princess, his daughter, forsook the Palace to live a life of religion in Croyland. His own life came shortly to an end, and his only son, Egfert, the sole representative of his house, died soon afterwards without an heir, and the Kingdom of Mercia passed to another branch of the royal family.



Ethelbert soon came to be regarded as a Saint and Martyr, and as time went on the veneration for his memory increased. Churches were built in his honour in all parts of England, most of all in East Anglia, where in one Diocese alone (that of Norwich) more than twenty Churches were dedicated to him. The Cathedral in Hereford, where his body lay, became enriched with extensive endowments of land. It was magnificently rebuilt not long after by Milefrid, King of Mercia, who caused it to be dedicated to *S. Ethelbert, Martyr.*

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#### KING ETHELBERT'S DEATH.

Some old writers say that he was led by the traitor, Guibert, through certain obscure passages in the palace, and there put to death. Others assert that in his bedchamber was a chair sumptuously adorned, resting upon planches, which might sink down and draw its occupant with it. Ethelbert having been feasted by Offa, on retiring to his bedchamber, sat on this chair, and sank with it into a cellar below, where he was stifled to death with pillows.

## **S. Etheldritha.**

VIRGIN.

CIRCA 830.

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THIS Princess, Offa's daughter, to whom King Ethelbert had been affianced, is also reckoned among the Saints. The shock of the horrible crime just related created in her mind such a disgust for the world that she resolved to quit it, and to give the remainder of her life to religion. An old writer tells us that, when she was on the eve of quitting her father's palace, "being taught by the HOLY GHOST, she prophesied to her mother on this wise—'Thy sonne shall not live "three years, and the kingdom shall be unstable, "and thou thyself shall not live in the confession of "GOD over three months.' All which," he says, "followed as the virgin spoke." She retired to Croyland, where she became an "Ancess," or Recluse. Her cell, which had compartments, was situate on the south side of Croyland Church, over against the High Altar. Here she lived in much holiness of life many years, dying at an advanced age about 830.

**S. Alcmund, or Alhmund.**

A.D. 800.

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THIS Saint was formerly held in much veneration in the Midlands of England. He was a son of King Alcred (or Alured), who held the throne of Northumbria, A.D. 765-774. This once powerful Kingdom was now fast falling into decay, and its annals are a continuous record of violence and rebellion. Alcmund's father was expelled, A.D. 774. Another revolution occurred later on, when his elder brother, Osred, was placed on the throne, only to be deposed and slain shortly afterwards. The throne was then seized by a powerful Thane, Earduf, who looked with suspicion on the young and blameless Prince Alcmund, whose only crime was that he was the rightful heir to the crown. Some writers say that Alcmund asserted his claim, but was defeated. Whether so, or not, he was obliged before long to flee from Northumbria, and he escaped with some faithful friends, into the Midlands. There he was pursued by the satellites of Eardulf, who discovered him in Shropshire, and slew him and all his companions.

He was buried at Lilleshall, which was apparently the place of his death. It became a custom to visit his tomb, and before long it was reported that miraculous cures had occurred there. This brought sick and ailing people in large numbers to Lilleshall, and many of them reported that they were healed of their plagues. Alhmund was soon regarded as a Martyr, and his relics were translated to Derby, where a magnificent Church was built in his honour. In Shrewsbury, also, a noble Church was erected to his memory by the Lady Alfleda, King Alfred's daughter.

**S. Kenelm.**

MARTYR.

A.D. 819.  

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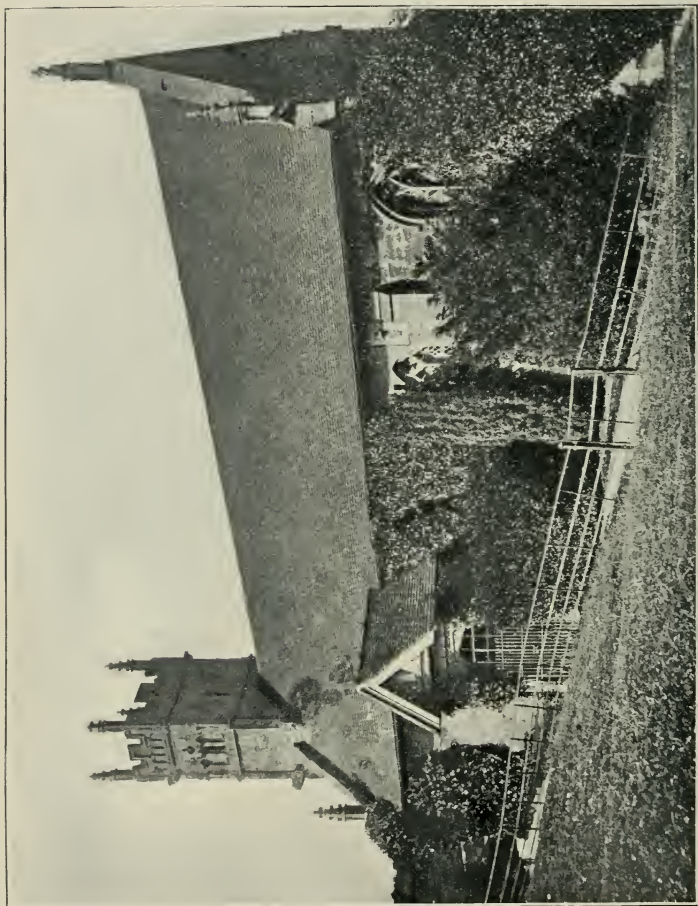
KENELM was the son of Kenulf, King of Mercia, A.D. 795-819. Kenulf had a palace at Kenilworth, and the place takes its name from him. He was a brave and powerful King, eminent among the Kings of the Heptarchy. At his death he left two daughters, who were grown up, Quendrida and Burgenilda, and a little boy Kenelm, only seven years old, to whom he devised the Kingdom. This fair-haired child, "whose head was as white as milk," was left to the care of his elder sister, Quendrida, and a certain Ascobert was appointed to be his tutor and guardian. The government of the country was left in the hands of his sister Quendrida until he came of age. This ambitious lady determined to secure it in permanence for herself, and plotted with Ascobert for the death of her brother. Ascobert, whom she is said to have privately married, took the child one day into the woods near Clent (where his father had a hunting palace), and there killed and buried him. For some time it was not known what had become of the child,

but eventually his remains were discovered. They were taken up and buried with great solemnity in Winchcombe Abbey, where the King, his father, had usually resided, and where he had built a magnificent Abbey. It was well known who were Kenelm's murderers, and they were regarded with universal detestation, but they were beyond the reach of the law.

Quendrida, however, did not retain the government for many years. In the mean time the popular sympathy for the child found satisfaction in regarding him as a Martyr. An annual Festival was appointed in his honour, and it became at once a famous Festival in the Midlands. People crowded to it from all parts of England. This popularity it retained for many ages. *Malmesbury*, writing in the 12th century, says, "There is scarce a place in England more venerated than S. Kenelm's grave, or where a greater number of persons attend his Festival."

There is still standing on the Clent hill-side a Church which, according to tradition, was built over the spot where the child's remains were found. The present structure is 13th century work, when no doubt the Church was rebuilt, but it contains remains of the old original Church. On the south wall may be seen the figure of a child most rudely carved, evidently intended to represent S. Kenelm. A crown of stone is over its head, and the hand is raised in benediction. There is also a beautiful specimen of





S. KENELM'S CHURCH.



*Saxon* architecture in the arch over the entrance into the Church. When this Church was restored in 1848, and the walls were denuded of their coating, frescoes representing S. Kenelm's death were discovered under it.

The old mediæval legend is as follows :

S. Kenelm, Martyr, was King of a part of England near Wales. His father was King before him, and was named Kenulf. It was he who founded the Abbey of Wynchecombe, and when he died he was buried in it. Wynchecombe was at this time the best town of the country. Kenelm was King of Worcestershire, Warwickshire (sic.) and Gloucestershire (and the Bishop of Worcester was Bishop of these three shires). He was also King of Derbyshire, Cheshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire, and Lincolnshire. All this was called the March of Wales. Kenelm had two sisters, Quindrida and Dornenild, and his sister Dornenild loved him much, and they lived holily together to their live's end ; but Quindrida, the other sister, turned her to wickedness, and had great envy at her brother Kenelm, because he was so rich, and above her, and she laboured with all her might to destroy him, because she would be Queen and reign after him. At first, therefore, she plotted to poison him, but having failed in this, she bribed Ascobert, his guardian, to kill him, by offer of great rewards, promising to share the Kingdom with him. It happened at this time that the child, who was in one of his father's houses in Clent, had a remarkable dream, which he told his nurse. "I saw," he said, "dear mother, a tree standing by my bedside, which reached to the stars, and methought that I stood on the top of it, whence I could survey the universe. The tree itself was covered from top to bottom with all kinds of flowers, and glowed with innumerable lights. But, as I was wondering at the sight, one of my people ran to the base of the tree with an hatchet, and cut it down, so that it fell with a crash, and forthwith as a little white bird I mounted the sky heavenwards." The nurse, hearing these words, began to beat her breast, exclaiming, "Alas, my dearest child, I fear me greatly the evil counsels of thy sister and of thy tutor will prevail against thee." But the child had no fear, and when, soon after this, Ascobert proposed that they should go into the woods to see some hunting, he went willingly with him. When they reached the wood,

the child, oppressed with fatigue, slipped off his horse, and went fast to sleep on the ground. His guardian employed himself in the meantime in digging a grave in which to hide him. The child, it is reported, waking up and seeing the grave, cried out with prophetic voice, "You need not dig that grave for me, for I shall not lie here, but in the place appointed for me by GOD, and to confirm my words I will give you a sign in this rod which I hold in my hand." As he said this he stuck the rod in the ground, and, lo, it began to grow whilst he was yet speaking, and became in time a huge ash tree, which may still be seen on the spot. His cruel guardian then led the boy further into the deep valley, in the wood called Clent. Whilst he was searching for a place suitable for his purpose, the little martyr rebuked him in our LORD'S words, saying, "What thou doest, do quickly." At last, under a thorn tree he struck off Kenelm's head. It is reported that the child reached out his hands to receive his head. It is also said that before his death he was engaged in repeating the *Te Deum*, and had just reached the verse, "The noble army of martyrs praise Thee," when he sank down dead. His death occurred on July 17, A.D. 819. Ascobert covered his body in the ground on the spot where he had killed him, and returned hastily home, and for a long time no one knew what had become of the child. After a time, however, a resplendent column of light, descending as it were from heaven, was seen over that place at night, and in the daytime a white cow belonging to a widow woman in the neighbourhood, leaving the common-pastures, attached herself to the place where the child was buried, and would not allow herself to be driven away except for milking, when she gave an abundance of milk, which doubled that of any other cow, so grateful and abundant was the herbage round the grave, and the more it was grazed upon the greater was its luxuriance. Hence the place has obtained its present name, "The Cow's Valley" (Cowdale).

Quendrida, having now obtained the kingdom, published an Edict forbidding any scandal to be raised about her brother's death, under pain of death. But though she might keep it dark in England, she could not do so in Rome. There, one day, as Pope Leo the Younger was engaged in celebrating the solemnities of the Mass, a dove, whiter than snow, flew into the Church bearing in its bill a scroll inscribed with letters of gold. This it dropped on the Altar of S. Peter, and forthwith flew out of the Church. The Pope, anxious to learn its contents, shewed this document to many, but none were able to interpret it. At last some Englishmen arrived, who read the sacred epistle to him. It was as follows: "In Clent in the Cow's valley lies

“the royal child Kenelm, with his head cut off, under a thorn tree.” The Pope upon this, without delay, sent Legates into England to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Wulfred), and the other Bishops, bidding them translate the martyr Kenelm from his unworthy grave into holy ground. When the body was raised from its resting-place, a fountain of running water gushed from the spot, which gave health to many who drank it. Moreover, a great number of blind, deaf, lame, and sick people were healed on that spot. A great contention now arose between the men of Gloucestershire and those of Worcestershire, each claiming possession of the body for their own country. This dispute was at last settled by mutual agreement, that the party which woke up earliest on the following morning should be deemed the rightful possessors of the body of the holy Martyr. The Gloucestershire folk rose earliest, and laden with their sacred treasure were five miles upon their way before the other party woke up. Vexed and angry the Worcestershire people pursued the others, but in vain. The Herefordshire men, after several adventures, and not without immense fatigue, arrived first at Wynchcombe, to the great joy of all the people in it. Quendrida at this time was in Wynchcombe, and from an upper chamber she beheld the crowds below triumphing in her brother’s glory. At the sight she grew pale with shame and anger. She had a psalter in her hand, and opening it at the 109th Psalm, she thought to make an incantation of it by reading it backwards from the last verse to the first, hoping by this means to interfere with her brother’s bliss, but by the Will of GOD her curse reverted on herself, for when in the course of her incantation she had come to the 19th verse, “Let it thus happen from the LORD “unto my enemies, and to those who speak evil against my soul,” her two eyes, torn from their sockets, fell on the page of the book she was reading. This book, bound in silver, and strained with the blood of her punishment, is still shewn in proof of this wonder. The wretched woman did not long survive, and her body, it is said, could neither rest in the Church or in the plain.

## **S. Wistan.**

A.D. 849.

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S. WISTAN was also a Prince of the royal family of Mercia, being grandson of King Witlaf, who died A.D. 839. At his father Wimund's death, Winstan was a child, and so his uncle, Bertulf, was placed on the throne. Wistan was brought up in his uncle's palace, and was noted for his piety. His uncle looked on him with jealous eyes, and procured his assassination by means of his own son Berfert, who hated his cousin. One day when they were out in the field together he entrapped him into a cave, where he slew him, and concealed the body. It was, however, discovered, and buried with great honour at Repton, which was still the burial-place of the Mercian Kings. Repton was destroyed by the Danes before the century was over, and S. Wistan's remains were translated to Evesham.

**S. Swithun.****BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.**

A.D. 862.

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SWITHUN was born of noble parents. He early dedicated himself to the service of the Church, passed, step by step, through the Minor Orders, and was promoted to the Priesthood by Helmstan, Bishop of Winchester. Noted, even in his youth, for sanctity of life, single-minded prudence, and an active habit of mind, he was selected by King Egbert (Alfred's grandfather), to be the tutor and guardian of his son, Ethelwulf. This Prince was himself at this time intended for Holy Orders, and had been attached to Winchester Cathedral, in which he had made his profession, and had been ordained Sub-deacon. It so happened, however, as time went on, that the King, his father, was left unexpectedly without any other heir to the crown. Under these circumstances, special license was obtained from Pope Leo to free Ethelwulf from his vows. He returned to secular life, married, and, at his father's death, A.D. 837, ascended the throne. King Ethelwulf was much attached to his old tutor,

and when the See of Winchester became vacant by the death of Bishop Helmstan, he, "with the full "consent of the Clergy," promoted Swithun to that See.

The country was at this time in a most disturbed state by reason of the frequent incursions of the Danes, and the King, excellent and admirable as he was in private life, possessed none of his father's military qualities, and had no experience in warfare to qualify him to cope with hordes of savages, whom even his father, expert warrior as he was, had found a difficulty in keeping from his shores. What then was to be expected when the defence of the country was in the hands of a King certainly more suited for the cloister than the throne. However, as a matter of fact, the country suffered much less in Ethelwulf's reign than might have been expected; for, this most pious King was led, we may believe by GOD, in Whom alone he trusted, to place the government of the country in able hands. In all matters which concerned religion, he consulted Swithun. The defence of the country he reposed in another Prelate, Alstan, Bishop of Sherborne. This extraordinary Churchman, in the discharge of this office, displayed all the qualities of a most able General, inspirited his countrymen, raised funds for the exchequer, regulated the army, and accompanied it in their military expeditions. Mainly by his

exertions the Danes were kept at bay during the reign of Ethelwulf. It was in this time of deep distress, when armaments of ferocious pirates were following each other in quick succession, threatening ruin to the country, that King Ethelwulf, seeking aid from GOD, "gave by Charter the tenth part of "his land throughout his kingdom, for the glory of "GOD, and his own eternal salvation." This grant was made first of all at Wilton, and apparently was limited to the province of Wessex. But in the following year it was most solemnly renewed in Winchester Cathedral, in the presence of the sub-Kings of Mercia, East Anglia, etc., ratified by the Witan, and extended to the whole of England. Troublous as were these days, when there was so much to distract his attention, Swithun was most diligent in the care of his Diocese, and was noted for his zeal in building, and restoring Churches, giving much personal superintendence in this work. He made frequent visitations in his Diocese, and it was his custom in these journeys to go on foot, rather than with any state. To avoid observation or remark, he usually travelled by night, when he would go barefoot, attended only by a few of his Clergy. Hospitable to all who came to his palace, he gave his kindest welcome to the poor and needy. Honoured by the King, beloved by his people, S. Swithun thought very slightly of himself, for he was a man of deep humility; one who

trembled when he thought of his sinfulness. It is recorded of him that, in his last illness, when he was near his end, he laid a very strict injunction on those who were attending him that they should not bury him with the honourable rites due to a Bishop, but as a sinner, outside the Church, in some part of the cemetery, where his grave might be trodden on by those who passed through it, and where the drippings from the eaves of the Church might fall upon it. In accordance with this express command, his body was so buried, and lay thus unworthily for a hundred years or more, but a general feeling prevailed that this indignity ought no longer to be allowed. The body was taken up from its dishonourable place by the Bishop of Winchester (S. Ethelwold), and translated with the utmost honour into the Church. The King himself (Edgar), prepared a most precious shrine for it, and the Cathedral thenceforth was dedicated to *S. Swithun*.







S. EDMUND'S PASSION.

**S. Edmund.**

KING AND MARTYR.

A.D. 870.  

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EDMUND was only fifteen when he was made King of East Anglia, A.D. 855. It is a moot question whether he ruled that province independently, or in subjection to Wessex. East Anglia, no doubt, had long lost its independence. Apparently, however, the paramount kingdom (Wessex) was at this period engaged in such a desperate conflict with the Danes that it could scarcely hold its own against them, and the other provinces were left free to act for themselves. Edmund, to all intents and purposes, was an independent King. "Sprung from the stock of the ancient Saxon Kings, he succeeded to the throne," we are told, "not so much from his election by his subjects, as by his own natural right." He was a devout Christian, noted for his piety from his earliest days. Nature had endowed him with a most comely form, which was the more pleasing, because it was set off by the virtues of his mind, and the amiability of his disposition, which made him affable, kind, and gracious to his people, by whom

in consequence he was much beloved. He had been King only ten years when Hinguar and Hubba arrived in the North of England. With them were associated other leaders of less fame, Halfden, Oskytel, Bagsag, etc., and they brought with them an army more powerful than any that had yet invaded England. They soon came on to East Anglia (A.D. 866). The East Anglians, unable to cope with such an army, made terms, and bought them off with a ransom, in which was included a large number of horses. The pirates took advantage of this to ride on foray into Mercia, which they cruelly ravaged, and thence returned to the north. There they made themselves masters of the city of York, slew two rival Kings of Northumbria, and appropriated their dominions. It was now East Anglia's turn to suffer. In 870 Halfden came again, with half the army, into East Anglia. Arriving at its capital city, Thetford (where Edmund usually resided), Hinguar defeated him in battle, and seizing Thetford, gave it up to the brutality of his soldiers. Edmund, in the meantime had retired to Framlingham. Hinguar sent an envoy to him there, demanding an immense sum as a ransom, which Edmund, from conscientious motives, refused to pay. The Danish King followed quickly on the heels of his envoy, and seized Edmund at Eggesdune (Hoxne). Enraged by his refusal to pay the money, Hinguar subjected him to various torments.

The soldiers beat him with clubs till they were tired, then tied him to a stake, and made him a target, shewing their skill by filling his body with arrows. It was still palpitating, when one of them struck off his head. With Edmund also perished his faithful Minister, Humbert, Bishop of Elmham, who is also reckoned among the Saints. The Danes, aware of the veneration paid by the English to the remains of their dead, carried off the head into an adjoining wood, and hid it in a thicket. It was a month before the neighbourhood was free from these barbarians, who, at last went off, to continue their ravages elsewhere. As soon as they were gone, the English came out of their hiding-places, and their first care was to attend to the funeral of their beloved King. The trunk of the body was found without difficulty; and a search was commenced for the head. One of Edmund's officers, who, concealed from view, had witnessed his sufferings, pointed out the wood into which the Danes had carried it. Proceeding there, they made a systematic search of the thickets, and in the course of it the head was discovered. (See Appendix.) It was carefully reunited to the body, which they buried in the wood not far from his palace, and a little wooden Church of mean structure was erected over it.<sup>1</sup> This was all

<sup>1</sup> The homely structures in use among the English were formed of trunks of trees, sawn lengthways in the middle, with one end fixed in the ground, all set close together, and the interstices filled with mud and mortar, over which was a thatched roof.

that these turbulent times allowed. As soon, however, as the country began to breathe freely again, and there was a little rest from warfare, a general wish was manifested to give the blameless King a more honourable burial. The body was taken up, and found incorrupt, and conveyed amid universal rejoicings to the royal town of Bedricsworth. There "an exceedingly large Church, a wondrous wooden structure," was built at the expense of the nobles and the people in order to receive it. Seven Priests dedicated themselves to the care of the body, attending to the Services, and living on the offerings of the people who came to worship in the Church. The gifts and offerings were so lavish that they soon became affluent. *Bedricsworth* lost its name, and began to be called S. Edmund's Bury. King Athelstan had a great veneration for our Saint, and in the year 925 caused a handsome Church of stone to be built in place of the wooden structure, also a college for the Priests, who became a body of Regulars. Other Kings conferred additional privileges. The Bury was freed from taxes, and made a Sanctuary. So matters remained until the eleventh century, when the Danish Tyrant Swein renewed in England the atrocities of the ninth century. In the course of his rapine, he demanded an exorbitant fine, or ransom, of S. Edmund, which the representatives of the Saint were bold, or rash enough to refuse to pay. The infuriated barbarian

marched at once with an army towards S. Edmund's Bury, vowing vengeance on the place. On his way he burnt Oxford, Cambridge, and other towns, and rested for the night at Gainsborough, intending to wreck the Bury on the following day. That night, most happily for England, he had a sudden seizure of illness, and died before the morning dawned. Everybody believed that their deliverance from the atrocities of this tyrant was due to S. Edmund, who had interfered in behalf of his Sanctuary (see Appendix); and from this time there was not a more popular Saint in England than S. Edmund. Everyone believed that he owed him a debt of gratitude, and delighted in making offerings at his shrine. To crown all, the Danes themselves began to honour him; none more so than King Canute (Swein's son), who strove, in his latter days, to make all possible amends for the violence of his youth, and the injuries done by his father and himself to religion. For this purpose he re-built, or restored, many Churches and Abbeys. For S. Edmund he had conceived a great veneration, and he lavished his wealth in his honour. Pulling down the old College, he built a grand Abbey on a scale which made it one of the most important in England. Schools also were given to the town. A colony of zealous Benedictine Monks were placed in the Abbey, and endowed with princely munificence. It only remains to

add that the Abbey retained its prestige under the Norman rule, and flourished till the general dissolution of the religious houses in the sixteenth century.

Leland, the antiquarian, who saw the Abbey shortly before its destruction, gives the following account of it:—"The sun hath not seen either a "city more finely seated, or a goodlier Abbey, "whether we consider the revenues and endow- "ments, or the largeness and incomparable mag- "nificence thereof. A man, who saw the Abbey, "would say verily that it was a city, so many "gates there are in it, and some of brass, so many "towers, and a most stately Church, upon which "attend three other Churches, also standing "gloriously in the same Churchyard, all of pass- "ing fine and curious workmanship." Two of these Churches remain, S. James and S. Mary, the latter full of interesting monuments, among which is one to the Princess Mary, sister of Henry VIII.

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## S. EDMUND'S LEGEND.

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### PREFATORY REMARKS.

It is difficult to know how much of this legend is to be credited. Certainly not that part of it in which we are told that S. Edmund was descended



from a foreign stock. There seems to be no doubt that his ancestors were the old English Saxon Kings of East Anglia, not the old Saxons of Germany. On the other hand, it seems most highly probable that Edmund's father was living in Germany, and that our Saint's early years were spent there. When the unscrupulous Offa murdered King Ethelbert, and seized East Anglia, the Princes of the royal blood would have to flee elsewhere, and the Continent would be their safest refuge. The remainder of the story falls in well with this assumption. What more likely than for the King of East Anglia (when on the Continent), to pay a visit to his exiled relation, to take a fancy to Edmund, and, as he had no children of his own, to wish to leave the kingdom to him.

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#### LEGENDARY HISTORY OF S. EDMUND.

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##### I. His birth and parentage, and how he came to be King of East Anglia.

Edmund was the son of Alcmund, King of Saxony. His mother's name was Siwari. They lived in Nuremburg. He had two brothers, S. Edelmund a Hermit, and Elbert a Benedictine Monk in Holland. It came to pass that Offa, King of East Anglia, making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, came into Saxony, and was entertained by King Alcmund. Whilst staying with him he took a great liking to Edmund, then a boy of fourteen, and as he had no children of his own, he determined to make him his heir. Offa died on his way home from Jerusalem. Before his death he commissioned his Bishop

and chief counsellor, Humbert, to carry his signet to Edmund, and to tell him that it was his will that he should succeed him in his kingdom in East Anglia. Edmund accordingly sailed to England, and landed at Port Hunstan. His first act on landing was to kneel down on the shore and make a devout prayer to GOD that his coming might be acceptable and profitable to the country. "Five springs of sweet water immediately flowed from the dry and sandy soil on which he knelt." The town of Hunstanton was built in commemoration of this event. Edmund built a royal tower here, and then went on to Attelborough, "where he learned his Psalter by heart in the Saxon tongue." The East Anglians, however, were not disposed to have a foreigner for their King. Popular dissatisfaction manifested itself. An assembly was called, and the question of appointing a new Sovereign discussed. Bishop Humbert, in this crisis, addressed the assembly, and shewed the people the signet sent by their late King to Edmund. Eventually all agreed in choice of Edmund, and he was crowned amid universal rejoicings and with the greatest ceremony on Christmas day, A.D. 855, in the royal town of Burua. (Sudbury).

## 2. Origin of the hatred of the Danes for S. Edmund.

Now it came to pass that the Danish Chief, Lodbrog (father of Hinguar and Hubba), was cast accidentally by shipwreck on the coast of Redeham in Norfolk, and was taken into King Edmund's household as a hawker. This man was slain by another of the King's hawkers, named Berne Brocarde. Berne, for punishment, was put in the vessel in which Lodbrog had been wrecked. This vessel floated with him safely to Denmark, and Berne, landing there, told the Danes that Lodbrog had been cruelly murdered by Edmund. In consequence of this, and to revenge their father's death, Hinguar and Hubba organized the immense armament which arrived in England, A.D. 865, "under Berne's guidance."

## 3. King Edmund's exploits against the Danes.

"Many of the Danes, wandering out of the ranks, were killed by Edmund's men. The Danes besieged one of his cities, but were deceived by a well-fed ox, and raised the siege. Edmund pursued them, and slew not a few. Another time they surrounded him in a wood, but he escaped by a ford called Berneford. Another time, by means of a traitor, they learned the weakest part of his camp, and broke into it. Edmund was riding out of it at the time. They

“asked him where the King was. ‘He was in the camp,’ replied ‘Edmund, ‘when I was last there!’ They hastened off to the ‘camp, and were a good deal cut up by Edmund’s army.”—*Leland*.

His last engagement with the Danes is thus told by the same writer. “Edmund met them with his army, not far from Thetford, “and a fierce engagement took place, which lasted from morning till “evening, each army destroying the other. At last Edmund, weary “of the slaughter of so many, retired to Eggesdun with the remainder “of his army. Whilst Inguar was puzzling over the loss of his men, “Ubba arrived at Thetford with 10,000 men, they joined their forces, “and went to Eggesdun, and there put S. Edmund to a Martyr’s “death, A.D. 870, in the 29th year of his age.”

#### 4. The recovery of the Martyr’s head.

The people, who retained a grateful sense of the benefits they had received from the late King, flocked together from all quarters, anxious to recover that part of his body which was missing. They provided themselves with horns and trumpets so that in their search of the wood, this might keep them within reach of each other, etc. “Now “while they were thus engaged, a most wonderful thing happened, “one unheard of before our times, for the head of the holy King, “which was lying, separated from his body, uttered a voice, and, as “it were, answered the men who were searching the wood, and crying “out to each other, ‘Where are you?’ When the head replied (in “the Latin language) ‘Here! here! here!’ or as the Latin express “it, ‘Hic! hic! hic!’ Nor did it cease repeating this word till it “had brought all the people to itself. The string of the dead tongue “might still be seen vibrating with the effort.” “To this miracle the “Creator of the world added yet another, by providing an ex- “traordinary guardian for this heavenly treasure, to wit, an immense “wolf, which was found lying there, embracing the head between “its feet, and keeping watch over it. Nor would it allow any other “beast to injure it, but preserved it inviolate, forgetting its own “natural voracity.” “With united devotion, those present took up “this pearl of inestimable value, and shedding tears of joy, carried it “to the body, singing praises to GOD as they went. The wolf also, “which had been its guardian, followed, hanging on their rear, and, “as it were, grieving for the treasure it had lost, but hurting no one, “not even when irritated, nor making itself troublesome. When “it could go no further, it turned and sought the secret haunts of its “loved solitude. Nor ever afterwards were there seen in these parts a

“wolf so fierce in aspect.” Other writers speak of this wolf. (See Malmesbury.) Lydgate says, the head was found in a thicket guarded by a wolf, “an unkouth thing, and strange ageyn nature.”

5. The troubles in the eleventh century, and how, by the Saint's interference, his Church (S. Edmund's, Bury), was delivered.

In the year 1010, East Anglia was over-run by a vast horde of barbarians under Turkyll. To save S. Edmund's body from violence, it was taken privately to London, where it remained three years in S. Gregory's Church. It passed into London, we are told, through Cripplegate (so called from cripples who sat there for alms: some of these cripples were healed as it passed by). At the end of three years (probably after Sweyn's death), it was brought back to the Bury. The story of Sweyn's death is thus told by Florence of Worcester—“A.D. 1014, the Tyrant Swane, after innumerable and “cruel acts of evil done in England and other countries, for his greater “damnation dared to exact a great tribute from the town where the “incorrupt body of the precious Martyr, Edmund, rests . . . If “the tribute was not quickly paid, he threatened over and over again “that he would certainly burn the town with its inhabitants, raze the “Church of the Martyr from its foundations, and put the Clerks to “different kinds of torture. Moreover, he even dared at times to “detract from the Martyr in many ways, and even vomited from his “profane and sacrilegious mouth that there was no holiness in him. “But forasmuch as he would put no limit to his wickedness, the “Divine vengeance would not suffer the blasphemer to live any longer. “At length, in the evening of the day in which at an assembly held at “Geynesbury, he had reiterated the same threats, when he was surrounded by the dense ranks of his Danes, he alone beheld S. “Edmund in armour coming towards him. When he saw him he “grew pale, and began most loudly to cry out, ‘Help, soldiers, help! “‘See! S. Edmund is going to slay me.’ Whilst he spoke the “words he was struck forcibly by the Saint with a lance, and fell “from the throne on which he was sitting. He lay in great agony “until evening, and then finished his life by a miserable death on the “3rd of February.”

## **S. Ebba, Abbess, and her Companions.**

MARTYRS.

A.D. 870.

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THE story of S. Ebba and her companions tells how those faithful servants of CHRIST found an awful way of escape, if not from death, at least from dishonour. It is thus told by Matthew of Westminster.

In the year 870, an immense army of Danes entered Scotland, and at once commenced their bloody work, slaying all the men they met, sparing neither old men nor children. Their utmost barbarity, however, was reserved, as usual, for the inmates of the religious houses. The Abbess of Coldingham (the largest Abbey in those parts) hearing of their approach, and fearing for herself and her family of virgins, after much anxious thought, summoned them into the Chapter House. There she informed them of the imminent danger from which there seemed no escape, intimating at the same time, that if they were minded to be guided by her counsel, and would follow her example she believed they might come out of this

distress with unimpaired honour. All professing themselves ready to do so, she took a razor and with it cut off her upper lip and nose, and so stood before them a grinning, ghastly spectacle. Undeterred by the horror of it, and animated by her example, the virgins, with heroic courage, took the knife, one by one, and used it upon themselves. The Danes arrived not long after, and broke into the Abbey, where they beheld the Community of Sisters weltering in their own blood from their faces downwards. Accustomed as they were to deeds of brutality, and to bloody sights, this awful spectacle bewildered them, and they turned away in horror and disgust, and not long after left the Abbey, which, however, they took care before doing so to set on fire. Thus perished these noble virgins, giving to the world an example of female heroism, and winning for themselves the martyrs' palm.

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NOTE.

Self-mutilation, as a general rule, is forbidden by the Church. S. Augustine, and other approved writers, shew that under exceptional circumstances it may be permissible, and honourable. Nor does this opinion rest on private authority only. The Church may be said to have given her sanction to it by her placing in the Calendar of the Saints many individuals (noted for the holiness of their lives), who, in the absence of any other alternative, found a refuge from dishonour in a voluntary death.

**S. Neot.**

ABBAT.

CIRCA 877.



THIS Saint, who has given his name to more than one town in England, was a cotemporary of King Alfred, and is said to have been related to him. He was brought up religiously, and had the advantage of a good education—an advantage rare in those days. Loving study and holy discipline, he retired from the world, and became a monk in Glastonbury. There “he inured himself to endure hardness as a good “soldier of JESUS CHRIST.” In Glastonbury he was admitted to Holy Orders, and was advanced to the Priesthood. There was little preaching in those days, and for that reason it was the more valued. S. Neot possessed a rare talent of eloquence, which he turned to good use, and he soon became noted as a preacher. People flocked in crowds to the monastery to hear him, “and for the healing of their souls.” “He poured out the wine of the Word of GOD to “those who were thirsting for it.” His biographer adds that he was “discreet in language, of wonderful “learning and science, amiable to all, and of angelic

“countenance.” In stature, however, S. Neot was so short that he seemed a second Zacchæus, so much so that, when he celebrated Mass, it was necessary for him to use an iron grating to stand on.<sup>1</sup> When he had passed some years in Glastonbury, he became desirous of serving GOD as a Solitary, and having obtained permission to do so, left the Abbey in company with a faithful disciple, Barrius, “who would not forsake him either in life or death.” Coming into Cornwall, he found there a spot most suitable for the life he proposed to live. It was a wooded locality not far from the sea, watered by streams that ran to the shore. It was about ten miles from S. Petroc’s Monastery, and is now called after him, Neotstoke.<sup>2</sup> Here he lived a hermit’s life for seven years. He was followed into his solitude by many disciples, and for their sakes he determined to build an Abbey. Before he began this he made a journey to Rome, where he was honourably received by the Pope (Martin), “who granted him all that he desired,” which probably means a Charter of Privileges for his proposed Abbey. Returning home without delay, he built and filled it with a flock of monks, over whom he presided as Abbat. The monks always paid great attention to agriculture, and had much

<sup>1</sup> This iron grate was long preserved in Glastonbury Abbey in memory of him.

<sup>2</sup> “The Church and village of S. Neot,” writes Dr. Gorham, “is in a beautiful valley, about five miles off Liskeard, and about eight from Bodmin, and fifteen from Launceston.”



skill in cultivation. Under their careful tillage, the wilderness in which S. Neot came to live soon became a very fruitful field. Many visitors from the outside world came to consult S. Neot for the good of their souls. Amongst others, King Alfred, who held him in great veneration. This glorious King, in his early youth, so the story runs (owing to an over-weening confidence in his own powers), treated his nobles with less consideration than was their due. S. Neot gravely rebuked him for this fault, which was likely to produce consequences grievous to himself. Alfred disregarded his rebuke at the time, but remembered it afterwards, when in his time of adversity he was deserted by his nobles, and obliged to conceal himself in Athelney.

The exact date of S. Neot's death is not known. It was on the last day of July, probably in the year 877. "Before his death he received the Viaticum, and exhorted his little flock to live in peace, and spoke much of the means by which the salvation of the soul might be promoted. He then committed his soul to the mercy of GOD, and stretching forth his hands towards heaven, breathed out his spirit in the midst of psalmody and prayer." He was buried in the Church, which he had built at Neotstoke. Seven years after his decease this Church was replaced by one of larger and handsomer dimensions. His Church and Abbey flourished for two centuries, till the time of the Norman Conquest. In the troubles which then

ensued, they were destroyed, and their endowments appropriated. No vestige of the buildings remain, nor is it now known in what part of the parish of Neotstoke they were situated. Some years before the destruction of his Abbey the Saint's remains were conveyed into Huntingdonshire, to a town then called Einulfsbury. It soon came to be called *S. Neot's*. Eventually his relics were translated to Croyland Abbey.

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The well-known story of King Alfred and the cakes is taken from the Life of S. Neot, where it is thus given—

“ It happened on a certain day (when Alfred was hiding in Athelney) that a countrywoman was preparing to bake cakes of bread, and the King sitting by the hearth was putting to rights his bow and arrows and other instruments of war, when the luckless woman, beholding the cakes burning at the fire, ran hurriedly up and removed them, scolding the unconquerable King, and saying, ‘ Ho, man, will you not turn the cakes, which you see are burning? You are ready enough to eat them when hot from the hearth ! ’ The good woman little thought she was scolding King Alfred, who had fought so many battles against the pagans, and gained such victories over them.”

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## GLASTONBURY.

The earliest traditions of Christianity in this country are connected with Glastonbury. Curious, weird old stories gather round the place, and invest it with a marvellous interest.

The first Evangelists for Britain were sent, some writers say, by Elentherus (Bishop of Rome), at the

request of Lucius, King of Britain. Others maintain that these first Evangelists came from Gaul, despatched by S. Philip the Apostle, who was at that time preaching in that country. All agree that whether they came from Rome or Gaul, these first Evangelists settled in the locality we now call Glastonbury. Joseph of Arimathæa is said to have been one of them, and the old story runs, that he happened to fix his staff in the ground soon after his arrival, upon which it budded, sprouted, and grew into a tree, and remained for ages "a standing miracle," flowering annually on Christmas Day.<sup>1</sup> The place, in these early times was a marshy tract of land, containing in its centre an "islet" of good, excellent soil. The Welsh called this islet *Ynis Witrin* (Isle of Glass), but from the fact of its abounding in apple-trees (which were scarce elsewhere), it soon came to be called *Avallona*.<sup>2</sup>

In course of time—but still in very early days—a family of twelve brothers, emigrating from North Britain, settled in these parts, and the youngest, whose name was *Glasteing*, took up his abode on *Avallona*, and from him it got the name of *Glastonbury*. There was at this time a little Church there, which was believed to be the oldest in the land. It was a most flimsy construction, made of wattle, but

<sup>1</sup> The Author, when wintering at Cannes, has more than once found the whitethorn in blossom in December.

<sup>2</sup> *Aval* is Welsh for apple.

was held in extraordinary honour. In its precincts King Arthur is believed to have been buried, and his wife, Queen Gwenhaveré.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all the old British Saints of note were also buried here. Among them was a certain S. Patrick, who lived in the 5th century. S. Patrick, coming to Glastonbury, found twelve hermits living in separate cells on the islet. He built an Abbey for them, gathered them into it, and became first Abbat of Glastonbury. S. David, who was his cotemporary, was cited, or came of his own accord, to consecrate the Church, and slept the previous night on the spot. That night he was warned by GOD, in a dream, of fearful consequences which would ensue to himself, if he presumed to consecrate a Church which CHRIST Himself had already hallowed. S. David, to make amends for his error, built a second Church in Glastonbury, and contented himself with consecrating that. When the pagan English arrived in Britain, they took pains to destroy nearly every vestige of Christianity which they found in the country. But somehow Glastonbury (it may be from its secluded situation) escaped their vandalism. And when, two centuries later, they themselves were converted, (in spite of the racial hatred which continued between them and the British), Glastonbury was taken into favour. The first Christian Kings of Wessex (in whose dominions it stood) interested themselves in Glastonbury. Kenwalch conferred benefits on it. Kentwin rebuilt it.

Later on, King Ina, dissatisfied with its appearance, rebuilt it again with the utmost magnificence, and lavished his royal wealth upon it. Some idea of this munificence may be gained by what we are told of "*the Chapel of gold and silver*," which he made for the Abbey. 264 pounds of gold were spent on the Altar alone, which was covered with a pall adorned with gold and precious stones. The chalice, patten, censer, and other ornaments of the Altar were of pure gold. Above it, or on it, were images of our LORD and the twelve Apostles, made of gold and silver. The candlesticks and holy-water bucket were of silver. The vestments of the Priests were equally magnificent. "All this wealth did King Ina "give to the monastery, A.D. 705," at a time, we must remember, when the value of the precious metals was about thirty times as great as their value is now, when a sheep might be bought for a shilling, an ox for six shillings, and a horse for a pound or thirty shillings.

**S. Modwen.**

VIRGIN AND ABBESS.

NINTH CENTURY.

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S. MODWEN was an Irish Saint noted for the holiness of her life, and also for her skill in medicine. It happened that Alfred, when a child, was seized with a very serious illness, which threatened to prove fatal. His father, King Ethelwulf, in his great distress sent him to S. Modwen, and under her care he recovered. The King, full of joy and gratitude, conferred most costly gifts on S. Modwen. Among these were large possessions of land in various parts of the Midlands. On these S. Modwen built several religious houses. She was either the founder of Polesworth Nunnery, or in any case a great benefactor to it. She also built an Abbey at Trentfall, or Strenshall, in Staffordshire, over which she presided as Abbess. After this she retired, and lived as an "Ancess" on an islet in the river Trent, called Andresey, close by Burton. Here she died at an advanced age, and was buried. In the following century, Ulfric Spot, a rich inhabitant of that town, built a handsome Church and Abbey in

Burton, which he endowed with his valuable estates. S. Modwen's body was translated from Andresey, and enshrined in this Church, which was dedicated to her.

## **S. Clare.**

HERMIT.

TENTH CENTURY.

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S. CLARE was an Englishman, born of noble parents at Orchestre (Dorchester?), on the Thames, in the time of Edward the Elder. The desire of perfection led him to quit his country and fortune. He embarked with two companions, and landing in France, took up a retired abode in the confines of Neustria, not far from Nacqueville. The tranquillity of their life here was much disturbed by the people in the neighbourhood, from whom they suffered no little persecution. The Saint, in consequence, left his hermitage, and retired into an Abbey nigh the place. Here he made some little stay, but soon, with the Abbot's consent, returned to a solitary life. The spot he chose was in the neighbourhood of the Abbey. Here he was much resorted to by persons who sought his advice in their spiritual needs. Among those who came was a lady of high position, who, under pretence of requiring his counsels, came frequently to his cell. This lady had conceived a base passion for him, which, when the Saint discovered, he fled in



horror from his cell. For some time he wandered about in the solitudes of Neustria, and eventually took up his abode on the Vexin, near L'Epte. Here he built himself a cell and a little oratory, and supported himself by the produce of a garden which he cultivated. One day when he was at work in this garden two strangers entered it and demanded if he knew a hermit, named Clare, who had formerly lived in Cotentin. The Saint suspected their purpose, but did not deny his identity, and was forthwith put to death by these assassins, who were the satellites of the lady whom he had offended.

Numerous Churches in France are dedicated to S. Clare. He is represented in art as carrying his head in his hands, which seems to betoken the mode of his death, i.e., by decollation.

**S. Ibes or Ubes.**

BISHOP.

DATE UNKNOWN.  

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THIS Saint is not historical, but, inasmuch as one of our towns takes its name from him, some brief notice of him seems to be required. He is supposed to have been a Persian Bishop, who somehow came to be buried in England, where his remains were discovered in the eleventh century. The discovery took place as follows: A labourer was ploughing in a field near a village, then called Slepe, in Huntingdonshire. In the course of his work, his share suddenly struck against something solid. He went to see what was the matter, and to his astonishment found that the obstruction was caused by a large and handsome stone coffin lying below the surface of the ground. The village adjoined the Abbey of Ramsey, and the ploughman at once reported this discovery to the Abbat, who came without delay and caused the coffin to be opened, when inside was found an incorrupt body dressed in pontifical garments, with a golden chalice by its side. There was an inscription on the coffin, and

the Abbat gathered from it that the body was that of a Persian Bishop, named Ivia or Yvo, and that it had lain in the ground 400 or 500 years. On his causing further search to be made, two more coffins were found not far off, and also "a nobleman's monument," all which, apparently, belonged to Ivo's companions. The Abbat caused the coffins to be removed for a time into Ramsey Abbey, but as soon as he was able, he erected a Church over the spot where they had been found, and re-translated them to it. This Church was resorted to by pilgrims from every part of England, drawn, some by curiosity, others by religious motives. So famous did the place become that it soon lost its old name of *S'lepe*, and came to be called *S. Ives*. A Benedictine Priory replaced the original Chapel. The village has long since become a town of considerable size.

## KINGS AFTER THE HEPTARCHY.

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	A. D.
EGBERT, <i>first monarch</i> ... ..	800
ETHELWULF, <i>son of Egbert</i> ... ..	836
ETHELBALD, <i>son of Ethelwulf</i> ... ..	855
ETHELBERT, <i>brother of Ethelbald</i> ... ..	857
ETHELRED, <i>brother of Ethelbald</i> ... ..	866
ALFRED, <i>brother of Ethelbald</i> ... ..	871
EDWARD, ELDER, <i>son of Alfred</i> ... ..	901
ATHELSTAN, <i>son of Edward</i> ... ..	925
EDMUND, <i>son of Edward</i> ... ..	940
EDRED, <i>son of Edward</i> ... ..	946
EDWY, <i>son of Edmund</i> ... ..	955
EDGAR, <i>son of Edmund</i> ... ..	957
EDWARD, MARTYR, <i>son of Edgar</i> ... ..	975
ETHELRED THE UNREADY, <i>son of Edgar</i> ...	979
EDMUND IRONSIDES, <i>son of Ethelred</i> ...	1016
CANUTE, <i>Danish King</i> ... ..	1016
HAROLD HAREFOOT, <i>son of Canute</i> ...	1035
HARDICANUTE, <i>son of Canute</i> ... ..	1040
EDWARD, CONFESSOR, <i>son of Ethelred</i> ...	1042

The Revival.



## King Alfred.

A.D. 901.

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KING Alfred was born at Wantage, A.D. 849. He was the grandson of Egbert, the greatest warrior of his day, and the founder of the English Monarchy. His father, King Ethelwulf, though admirable in private life, possessed none of his father's martial qualities, which, however, reappeared in all his sons, who were conspicuous for their valour and skill in warfare. Their names were Ethelbald, Ethelbert, Ethelred, and Alfred.<sup>†</sup> Their mother, Queen Osburga, was a lady noble by birth and nature, descended from the Jutes (or Goths), who settled in Kent, and the country adjacent to the Isle of Wight. Alfred in his childhood was noted for the comeliness of his form, the gracefulness of his manners, and the brightness of his countenance. "The beauty, vivacity, and playfulness of the child endeared him to his parents, who affected to foresee that he would one day prove the chief ornament of the race of Cerdic." This partiality induced the King to send him (when only in his fifth year), with

<sup>†</sup> Another son is attributed to King Ethelwulf named Athelstan. (Others say he was his *brother*.) He was King of Kent, and fought bravely against the Danes.

a numerous retinue to Rome, to be crowned by the Pontiff, and we are told in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that "the Pope (Leo IV.), consecrated him King, and "took him for his son at Confirmation." <sup>1</sup> This was in the year 853, and two years later, when Ethelwulf himself went to Rome, he took Alfred with him. It was on this occasion that the travellers, passing through Normandy, stayed on their way at S. Omers, where Alfred made acquaintance with Grimbold, whom many years afterwards he invited into England, and who proved to be of such signal service in the revival of learning in this country. On their way back from Rome, Ethelwulf made some stay in France, at the Court of King Charles the Bald, and there married Judith, the daughter of the King. The ceremony was performed by Hinomar, Archbishop of Rheims, and at the conclusion the Princess was crowned and seated on a throne by the side of her husband, a distinction which she afterwards claimed in England. This marriage was the occasion of troubles at home; it was offensive to the West Saxons, and Prince Ethelbald, who had been left in charge of the Kingdom, made use of this opportunity to form a party against his father. In this he was assisted by Bishop Alston and other powerful nobles. When, therefore, Ethelwulf landed in England a civil war seemed imminent. It was however averted by the mildness and forbearance of the old King, who

<sup>1</sup> Lingard.



consented to a division of the Kingdom between himself and his unnatural son, to whom was assigned the better half, i.e., the Kingdom of Wessex; Ethelwulf contenting himself with the Kingdom of Kent. Two years of peace and tranquillity were accorded to this good old King, who died about, A.D. 857.

He left a will by which he devised the Kingdom to his two elder sons, with a provision, that after their death it should fall to his younger sons in succession to each other. In accordance with the terms of this will, Ethelbert became King of Kent, whilst Ethelbald retained the Kingdom of Wessex. This Prince, who had begun his reign so basely by rebelling against his father, now disgraced himself by another most odious act. He took to himself as Queen his father's relict, Judith. This brought him into great opprobrium with his people, but before long he died, A.D. 860, within two years of his father. He was a valiant and able soldier, and had signalized himself more than once in engagements with the Danes; it is therefore the more to be regretted that he should have died in ignominy. The whole Kingdom now fell to Alfred's second brother, Ethelbert. In his time Danish troubles ceased. Ethelbert's short reign of five years was only occasionally disturbed. He died, A.D. 866, and Ethelred became King. Alfred was at this time about 17 years old. His early years had been spent first in his father's, and afterwards in his brother's Court. From his child-

hood he had suffered from a constitutional complaint, which had given him constant pain. This illness, however, happily did not interfere with his bodily activity and powers of endurance, "he delighted in "active recreations, more especially in hunting, in "which he incessantly toiled, disposing himself to "labours, and skilful sagacity in understanding all "stratagems, which proved to him of great profit "afterwards against enemies more savage than wild "beasts themselves."<sup>1</sup> In the midst of all these active and robust exercises he had a deep sense of piety, and a conscientious fear of displeasing GOD. "His noble nature," writes Asser, "had implanted in "him from his cradle a love of wisdom above all "things, but, with shame be it spoken, by the unworthy neglect of his parents and nurses, he "remained illiterate even till he was twelve years "old or more." It was then that his latent love of learning was brought into action by the following happy device of his mother.<sup>2</sup>

"On a certain day," Asser tells us, "she was "shewing him and his brother a Saxon book of "poetry, which she held in her hand and said, "'Whichever of you shall the soonest learn this volume, "'shall have it for his own.' Stimulated by these "words, or rather by the Divine inspiration, and

<sup>1</sup> Asser.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred's mother died, A.D. 856, when he was not yet seven years old. It seems, therefore, that it was his step-mother, Queen Judith.

“allured by the beautifully illuminated letter at the beginning of the volume, Alfred spoke before all his brothers . . ., and answered, ‘Will you really give that book to one of us, that is to say, to him who can first understand and repeat it to you?’ At this his mother smiled with satisfaction, and confirmed what she had before said. Upon which the boy took the book out of her hand, and went to his master to read it, and in due time brought it to his mother and recited it.” “After this,” he continues, “he learned the daily course, and certain Psalms, and several prayers contained in a book which he kept day and night in his bosom; but, sad to say, he could not gratify his most ardent desire to learn the liberal arts, because there were no good readers at that time in all the Kingdom of the West Saxons.” He had learned by heart many of the Psalms, and other Divine passages. These he caused to be written in a manual, which he kept about him, and which he daily used. Among other pious exercises which he practised was that of early rising for the sake of prayer, in special guard against those temptations to which by reason of his youth, and high position, he was more easily assailable. In his 20th year he married a lady of great worth and piety, Alswitha, daughter of Athelred, surnamed Mucil (the Great), Earl of the Gaini<sup>1</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> From this tribe the town of Gainsborough takes its name.

Lincolnshire. Alswitha's mother, Edburge, was of the royal line of Mercia.

But to return to our story. It was about the time of his brother Ethelred's accession that the Danish troubles increased again. That terrible armament gathered in the North of Europe, in comparison with which all other Danish invasions sink into insignificance. We allude to the well known armament headed by the ten sons of Ragnar Lodbrog.<sup>†</sup> All Scandinavia, it would appear, joined in this invasion. This storm burst upon England A.D. 866, threatening to involve in ruin the whole country. Ethelred's brief reign of five years was spent in a series of desperate engagements with it. This noble Prince, as brave, as high-minded, as devout as Alfred himself, stemmed the torrent for a time. In all his glorious efforts he was most ably assisted by Alfred. The brothers fought side by side. In one year alone, nine pitched battles were fought, besides endless skirmishes by

† NOTE ON RAGNAR LODBROG.

This chief had been in his day one of the most adventurous and successful of the pirate sea-kings. Contenting himself, at first, with ravaging the Orkneys, the Hebrides, and Ireland, he, later on, invaded France, and passing up the Seine, took possession of Paris, from which he obtained an immense ransom. After this, building ships of a larger size, he ravaged the English shores, but was wrecked by a storm on the coast of Northumbria. He escaped with some of his followers to land, and commenced at once to harry the inhabitants, but was taken and put to death. It was to avenge his death that his ten sons gathered the immense armament alluded to in the text.

night and day; some of the battles within a few days of each other. This was in the year, 871, and in the same year this valiant King, Ethelred, died, it is said of a wound received at Morton in Berkshire. He left the Kingdom and all its anxieties to his brother Alfred, who now succeeded according to the terms of his father's will. This was ratified by the council of the whole nation, and the unanimous wish of the West Saxons. Alfred was at this time about 22 years old. And now, before proceeding further, the state of the Kingdom to which he acceded should be considered. The whole of the North of England was in the hands of the Danes. So also was East Anglia, and the Midlands. Kent also was much in their power. *Only the West of England* yet maintained its independence, and thitherwards the Danes were drawing in order to complete the occupation of the country. Alfred's first year on the throne was spent in determined efforts to preserve Wessex. In this he so far succeeded that the Danish Kings, not relishing the stubborn resistance they met with at his hands agreed to go elsewhere, and withdrew to other parts of the country, which they could ravage at pleasure.

This gave Alfred a little breathing-time. Before long, however, vast reinforcements arrived in the country from Scandinavia, under Guthrum, Oskytel, and other chieftains. Thus reinforced, the Danish army again returned to Wessex. They burst on it

as an overwhelming flood, carrying everything before it. This was in the year 877. Chippenham, the royal seat of the Kings of Wessex, was seized in midwinter. So great was the terror which now seized the English people that, as though paralyzed, they lost all power of resistance. Alfred's lords and soldiers fled to hide themselves, and great numbers left England for the Continent. Others made peace with the Danes. The land was left untilled. Thus deserted, Alfred found a refuge in the marshes near Taunton. In their midst two rivulets, the Thone and the Pedred, formed between them an islet, since called Athelney, which could only be reached by boats, or by means of a bridge which could be defended. Here, with a few attached followers, Alfred concealed himself for some months, hard pressed for want of provisions, which he obtained by occasional inroads on the Danes.

It was at this time, when all seemed lost, and England to be irrecoverably in the hands of the Danes, that an event occurred which proved a turning point in Alfred's fortunes. Hubba was engaged with a large force harrying the Devonshire coast, and coming to a Castle at Kynwith, on the river Taw, held by some English forces, sat down to besiege it. The English, driven to desperation, for they were unprepared for a siege, sallied forth by night in the hope of forcing their way out, and finding the Danes asleep, slew the greater part of them. Among the

slain was Hubba himself and many Danish chiefs. In the *mêlée* the mystic banner, called the Raven,<sup>1</sup> (which, from association with many Danish victories, was held in terror by the English) was taken. The news of this wonderful success spread like wildfire everywhere, and the English began to recover from their panic. Gathering in small parties together, they now eagerly enquired for their King, and when in due time, Alfred appointed a trysting-place where they should meet him, they gathered joyfully together in large numbers. Alfred led them to Okely (near Westbury), and then to Edington, where the Danish army was encamped, and there won a most glorious and decisive victory. The Danes, fleeing before him, took refuge in a stronghold in which they could safely hold out, but were soon reduced to a state of starvation. Alfred then offered them terms. They might either leave the country, or if they were willing to relinquish their piracy and heathenism, if they would live under his government and accept Christianity, he would give them part of the country in which they might settle down. The Danes agreed to accept these terms. The wilder spirits among them, those who were devoted to

<sup>1</sup> The Reafan, or Standard of the Raven, had been woven in one noontide by the three daughters of Radnar Lodbrog. It was held in superstitious regard by the Danes, and it was a custom with them to observe it when they went into battle. If it appeared to flap its wings, it was a sure sign of victory, but if it seemed to droop, they anticipated defeat.

piracy, left England with Hastings, but King Guthrum and the greater part of the army preferred to settle in England under Alfred. All hostilities now ceased. Alfred invited King Guthrum, with thirty of his chief men, to visit him at Aller. They came, and were entertained by him with the utmost liberality for twelve days, and before they left they were all baptized (Alfred "receiving Guthrum from the holy "laver"), and afterwards confirmed at Wedmore.<sup>1</sup> The natural question arises, did this strange mediæval policy answer? Certainly much better than might have been expected. No doubt these "wolves" were not turned into "lambs" in a day. Their old heathenish instincts lingered long, and broke out from time to time. Guthrum and his Danes (to whom Alfred assigned East Anglia) gave him no little trouble, fraternising as they did with their countrymen, when on foray in England. Still, on the whole, the experiment answered. These immigrants soon began to occupy themselves with tillage of the land and other home pursuits, and became weaned from piracy, and mingling with the people among whom they lived, became a part of our home-population. And now, at last, Alfred obtained a real rest from warfare, and set himself without delay, and with all his power, to restore order and good government in the Kingdom. It had lapsed into a state of complete confusion. To reduce this chaos into

<sup>1</sup> Wedmore is about five miles from Axbridge, in Somersetshire.



order Alfred now laboured. One of his first endeavours was to reintroduce learning among his people: the knowledge of letters had well nigh vanished out of the country. The seats of learning (the religious houses) were in ruins: the men of learning had been slain. The people, who were daily in peril of their lives, had had no leisure for the cultivation of the arts. But the lack of learning in the country may best be understood by what Alfred himself has told us. "So entirely," he writes, "has knowledge "escaped from the English people, that there are only "a few on this side the Humber who can understand "the Divine Service, or even explain a Latin Epistle "in English, and, I believe, not many on the other "side of the Humber. But they are so few that, "indeed, I cannot remember one south of the "Thames when I began to reign." In this dearth of teachers, Alfred made it his first care to procure some wherever they might be found. In the Midlands he obtained four superior men, Plegmund (who became Archbishop of Canterbury), Wenefrith (Bishop of Worcester), and two others. From Wales he drew Asser, who became his Chaplain, to whom we are indebted for that delightful Memoir of King Alfred, which tells us almost all we know of his private life. From the Continent he obtained a further supply. Chief among them was S. Grimbald, and John of Saxony. These and other men of learning he drew to his Court with "cords of love," and not content

with setting them to work to teach his people, he sat himself at their feet to learn their lessons. This he did with such assiduity and diligence that before long he was able to compose books. Not a few are still extant, written by him.<sup>1</sup> They are such as he believed would be of service to his people. Thus setting his people a noble example, he invited and constrained them to attend to their own, and their children's education.

Of his studious care in restoring good government in the country we must not dilate. If he did not divide it (as many historians assert) into shires, hundreds, and tithings, it seems beyond doubt that he fixed their limits, and restored the use of their courts, giving the utmost care to the due administration of justice. This was the more requisite because, in the course of the Danish troubles, great irregularities had crept into the courts. Men had wrested the law to their own advantage. To stop this Alfred gave ready access to any who were suffering from an unjust decision, and also made frequent enquiries into the sentences given in the district courts of the Kingdom, exercising a keen severity in his dealings with the judges. If they pleaded ignorance in excuse for their errors, he would reply, "I am astonished at your great temerity, that you who are entrusted

<sup>1</sup> Among Alfred's books were *Orosius' History*; *Gregory's Pastoral*; *Bede's English History*; *Boethius' Consolations of Philosophy*; *Translation of the Psalms* (commenced).

“with so high an office should have neglected to furnish yourself with sufficient knowledge to perform it. Either therefore resign your temporal power, or assiduously prepare yourself for its due performance,” This severity, we are told, had a great effect. Many nobles and officers of high rank would frequently seek to acquire in their old age what they had neglected in their youth, and would, like schoolboys, learn the very rudiments rather than relinquish their offices. Others, who were hopeless of acquiring knowledge, were most careful to have their children and other relations taught. Thus severe with those who erred through ignorance, he was most unsparing with any of his judges who wilfully perverted the law from human respects, and favoured the rich against the poor. Some of these corrupt judges were put to death without mercy.<sup>1</sup> With the same object he caused a code of laws to be drawn up, selected principally from those which had been promulgated by Ethelbert, Ina, and other Kings of the Heptarchy. To add greater solemnity to his code, there was an introduction taken from the Holy Scriptures, commencing with the Ten Commandments.

Whilst thus engaged in the affairs of his Kingdom, Alfred laboured with no less zeal for the revival of religion among his people. His first religious foundation was at Athelney. This he filled as best

<sup>1</sup> Forty-four judges, it is said, were executed in one year.

he was able, striving to make it a seat of learning and of religion, under the auspices of John of Saxony. At Shaftesbury he caused a nunnery to be built, over which his own daughter, the Princess Ethelgiva, became Abbess. Plans were also made for building a magnificent Abbey in Winchester, to be presided over by his beloved teacher, Grimbold. This was completed, after his death, by his son and successor, Edward the Elder.

In the midst of all these laborious undertakings for the welfare of the country, Alfred did not forget the necessity of providing for its defence against future invasions of the Danes. With wise forethought, in order to meet them on their own element, he caused ships to be built on an improved method. No slight success attended this scheme. He won several victories at sea. Most diligent care was also taken in the building of forts and strongholds in various parts of the country. These building operations were on a very large scale, including the rebuilding of the City of London, which the Danes had ruined. He strove also, we are told, to persuade his nobles to do the same on their own estates, but his earnest admonitions "fell upon sluggish ears." Too many of them neglected to attend to their defences till the last moment of necessity. Many castles, which he had ordered to be built, were begun but not finished. When hostile troops "again broke "in upon them by land and sea, the thwarters of

“the royal ordinances repented, when it was too late, and blushed at the non-performance of his commands.”

How wise had been his admonitions became clear enough in the year 893, when all his admirable efforts for internal reform were suddenly interrupted by the return of his old enemy, Hastings, one of the ablest and most experienced of the Danish Kings. Hastings, who had spent the interval since he left England in ravaging France, was now bent on seizing and subjugating England. The next four years of Alfred's life were devoted to the defence of the country. Of the furious contests, sieges, surprises, defeats, and victories, which then took place, it must suffice to say that fortune, after wavering between these two most able opponents, in the end verged to Alfred's side. Hastings discovered that he had found his match, sought terms of peace, and agreed to leave the country for ever.<sup>1</sup> The old heathen Pirate King departed soon after, and Alfred was left in peace, but four valuable years had been lost for perfecting his internal reforms.

Only three more years were accorded to him, of which little is told us. They were spent, no doubt,

<sup>1</sup> Hastings compensated himself for his disappointment in England by ravaging France, which he did to his heart's content. Eventually he came to terms with King Charles (the Simple), who gave him the City of Chartres, with its adjoining territory. Here he settled down, and became the vassal of a throne which he had often shaken to its foundation.

in retrieving the country from the state of confusion into which it had again been plunged, and then in 901 comes the record of his death. "This year died Alfred, the son of Ethelwulf, six days before the Mass of All Saints, and Edward, his son, succeeded to the Kingdom."

It is scarcely possible to do justice to Alfred's character. An old writer, Sir Henry Spelman, lost in admiration of it, apostrophises him thus: "O Alfred, the wonder and astonishment of all ages! If," he continues, "you think of his piety and devotion, you might suppose that he had never gone out of a monastery, or had lived his whole life in an university; if, of the administration of his Kingdom, that all his thoughts had been employed in nothing else but enacting laws and promoting justice; or, again, if you regard his warlike exploits, you might imagine that he had lived nowhere but in camp."

His valour in the field is thus described by *Malmesbury*—"Present in every action, ever daunting the invaders, he inspirited his subjects with the signal display of his courage. He would oppose himself singly to the enemy, and by his own personal exertions rally his declining forces. The very places," he continues, "are yet pointed out by the inhabitants where he felt the vicissitudes of good and evil fortune. It was necessary to contend with Alfred even after he was overcome,

“after he was prostrate, insomuch that when he might  
“be supposed altogether vanquished, he would escape  
“like a slippery serpent from the hand that held him,  
“glide from his lurking-place, and with undiminished  
“courage spring on his insulting enemies.”

Unconquerable in the field, he lived in profound subjection to the dictates of his conscience, and to the perfect law of GOD. The lofty life he set himself to live may best be seen in the rules he set himself. “It was,” his biographer tells us, “his fixed determination, so far as his infirmity and means would allow, “to give up to GOD the half of his services, bodily “and mental, by night and by day, voluntarily and “with all his might.” It was his conscientious anxiety to fulfil this engagement, and the difficulty which he found in measuring time without the aid of clocks, which led to his inventing a method by means of candles. Nor was he less scrupulous with himself in the use he made of the vast revenues, which at this period enriched our English Kings. His annual income he divided into two halves, one for GOD, the other for his own use. The first of these was spent on the poor, in support of religious houses, and of schools, and on other charitable purposes. Foreign Churches, in need of help, shared in this bounty. Ambassadors carried his alms abroad—to Jerusalem, to Rome, and even to India. From the other half of his income, which he called his own share, his soldiers and other functionaries of his Court were paid.

Operatives shared in this, such as were skilled in various kinds of construction. Foreigners also, whose presence he encouraged at his Court, "to whom," we are told, "he was invariably affable, eager to learn any information they were able to give him. In consequence of this large numbers of foreigners, Franks, Fresons, Gauls, Pagans, Britons, Scots, Armoricans, noble and ignoble, submitted themselves voluntarily to his dominion, and all of them, according to their nation and deserving, were ruled, loved, honoured, and enriched with money and power."

It is very significant that in the midst of all these innumerable cares Alfred found time for reading his Bible. "The King," we are told, "was in the habit of hearing the Divine Scriptures read by his countrymen, or, if by chance it so happened, in company with foreigners. His Bishops, too, and all ecclesiastics, his earls, nobles, ministers, and friends were loved by him with wonderful affection; and their sons, who were bred up in the royal household, were no less dear to him than his own. He had them all instructed in all kinds of good morals, and among other things never ceased to teach them letters night and day." This and much more was accomplished by one who suffered much in health, who was never wholly free from pain. He recovered, indeed, from that first malady which plagued his early years, but it was soon replaced by another still more painful.



The following interesting anecdote is told us by Asser: "He was one day, in his early youth, hunting "in Cornwall, and according to a custom not unusual "with him, had turned aside to pray in a Chapel "dedicated to S. Guerir. Prostrate there in private "devotion, he entreated of GOD'S mercy that He "would of His boundless clemency relieve him of his "malady, or, at least, exchange the torments of it for "some other lighter disease, so only that it were not "one which would make him an object of contempt "to others, or disable him for work." The writer adds, that his prayer was heard. His early disorder left him, but was soon replaced by one which tormented him by its pain night and day. This dreadful malady seized him first on his wedding-day, and he was subject to it through life.

It only remains to add a few words on Alfred's family. He lost several in their infancy. Those who survived him were as follows:

1. *Edward*, surnamed "the Elder," who succeeded his father in the Kingdom, and reigned 901-925. Edward was a son worthy of his father, a valiant King, whose whole reign was spent in incessant warfare with the Danes, who still held the greater part of the country.

2. *Ethelfleda*, his eldest daughter, was married to Earl Ethelred. This famous Earl recovered Mercia from the Danes, and kept in order the neighbouring provinces of Northumbria and East Anglia, which

were still in their possession. In all his campaigns he was most ably assisted by the Lady Ethelfleda. Many castles in the Midlands were built by her—at Warwick, Tamworth, Stafford, and elsewhere.

3. *Ethelgiva*, Alfred's second daughter, suffered in her health. She became Abbess of the royal foundation of Shaftesbury.

4. *Ethelswitha*, married Baldwin, Earl of Flanders, by whom she had two sons, Arnulf and Ethelwulf. The former became Count of Bologne. From the latter, who succeeded his father, descended Matilda, Queen of William the Conqueror.

5. *Ethelwerd*, the youngest of the family, inherited his father's love of literature, and was an eminent scholar in his day.

## **S. Grimbald.**

ABBAT.

A.D. 903.

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S. GRIMBALD was a native of S. Omers, in Picardy. At a very early age he became a member of S. Bertins' Abbey. King Alfred, it may be remembered, made his acquaintance when, being only a child, he was on his way to Rome. In after years, when busy-ing himself with the education of his people, he bethought himself of Grimbald, and sent an honourable embassy to Fulco, Archbishop of Rheims, requesting his permission for Grimbald to come into England. Leave was granted, and Grimbald came, and remained the rest of his life in this country, occupied in superintending the King's studies, and the education of the people. Alfred valued him highly, and when Athelred, the Archbishop of Canterbury, died, A.D. 889, would have made him Primate of all England. This honour Grimbald declined. He retired, as his age increased, to Winchester, where the King was engaged in building an important Abbey (which got the name of the New Minster). S. Grimbald was to have been its first

Abbat, but he died before its completion, as did also his royal master. They were, both of them, buried in this Minster. Old writers tell us that S. Grimbald was a venerable man, adorned with every kind of virtue and ecclesiastical discipline. He was also an "excellent singer, and, above all, most learned in the "Holy Scriptures."

He was over eighty when he died. In the following century his body was taken up by Bishop Elphege, and placed in a rich silver shrine.

**S. ODO.****ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.**A.D. 961.  

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S. ODO was a Dane, "descended," as his biographer expresses it, "from one of that impious crew who "had accompanied that most wicked robber, "Hinguar, into England." His parents, who were of a good Danish family, did not return with the army to Denmark, but settled in England, and lived in Canterbury. They caused Odo "to be "diligently trained in all their national institutions." It came to pass, however, as he grew up, that he began to attend the "Churches of the Christians, "and being much delighted with the divine discourses which he heard in them, straightway "retailed them at home into his parents' ears." His heathen father, irritated beyond measure, "forbade him to relinquish his national religion, "or ever to make mention of the Name of CHRIST." This prohibition Odo disregarded, and became a still more frequent worshipper at Church, and continued to repeat at home the lessons he had learned there. For this he received a severe corporal

chastisement from his father, who also took from him the right of inheritance, which by the law of primogeniture was his due. This rigour served only to confirm Odo in his new religion, and before long he was either turned out of doors, as some writers say, or obliged to leave home on account of his father's brutality. In this predicament he found a friend in a nobleman of Alfred's court, Athelm, Earl of Wiltshire, who received him into his house "and gave him protection from his "parents' fury." Moreover, "observing the young "man's excellent disposition, the Earl supplied "his necessities, and began to feel towards him "the affection of a father." For a short time Odo served as a soldier in the King's army, from which, however, he was soon withdrawn by his lord, who, noticing the turn of his mind, and his intellectual capacity, judged him to be more suitable for the Church. With a view to this, he had him instructed in Greek and Latin, which languages were still taught in S. Theodore's famous school, attached to S. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury. Odo soon became such a proficient in these languages "that "he was able to compose poems, write prose, and, "in a word, express most clearly in Greek and "Latin whatsoever he had a mind to say." Brought up a heathen, and consequently unbaptized, he now made his Christian profession, "was regenerated in "the Sacrament of Baptism, and also honoured with

“the clerical tonsure.”<sup>1</sup> For some years he served in the sub-diaconate, in much holiness of life, and with such an aptitude for teaching that by unanimous consent he was thought worthy of the Higher Orders in the Church, though he was not yet arrived at the age required by the canons. For this reason he resisted for some time the pressure put on him by his lord, who was most anxious for his Ordination. When at last he yielded, and was ordained, the Earl made him his private chaplain and spiritual adviser. Moreover other princes of the royal court, we are told, came to him for spiritual advice, “Opening to him the secrets of their evil lives, and willingly giving heed to his counsels for their amendment.”

It happened about this time that Earl Athelm contemplated a visit to Rome, which coming to the ears of King Alfred, he commissioned him to carry there the royal alms. The Earl accordingly set out on his journey, with a great retinue, taking Odo with him. The fatigue proved too much for Athelm (who was now in advanced age); he was laid up on the road by a sharp attack of illness, and could with difficulty draw his breath. Thus he continued without any amendment for six days. In the meantime their provisions were daily decreasing. The Earl at last judged it best that the

<sup>1</sup> The clerical tonsure was given to those who were in Minor Orders.

company should proceed on their way with the letters of trust to the Court of Rome, leaving Odo behind with himself. Odo accordingly remaining with his beloved patron, spent his time in careful nursing of his lord, and in earnest prayer to GOD for his recovery. Nor were his prayers unanswered. The Earl very soon began to mend, the fever abated, he could rise from his bed. Before very long the two were able to proceed on their journey. In this they made such good progress that they caught up the party which had preceded them. As for the Earl, he gave the credit of his recovery, under GOD, to Odo, and his love for him increased exceedingly. The travellers thenceforth had a very prosperous journey, and in due time returned home safely, "to the great joy of the King and "the nobles of his court." Earl Athelm died soon after his return. Odo lost in him one who had shewn him the kindness of a father; friends however he had now many, powerful friends, who were greatly attached to him, for he had been much at court in attendance on his late patron, and there had won the respect of the nobles, and the royal Princes by his modest behaviour. The King himself, Edward the Elder, who had succeeded his father, Alfred, knew him well, and valued him, as did also his son, the young Prince Athelstan, who had the highest opinion of his wisdom and prudence. Athelstan made him his confidential adviser, and







KING ATHELSTAN AT BRUNANBURG.

when, in due course of time, he was placed upon the throne, he consulted him not only in time of peace, but also when engaged in warlike expeditions. Thus it came to pass that Odo was present at one of the most famous battles which occurred at this time, when Athelstan won at Brumby<sup>1</sup> (or Brunanburg), a most glorious victory over the Danes. Five Danish Kings and seven Earls were left dead on the field of battle, and the power of the Danes was thenceforth greatly broken in the North of England. It happened incidentally that S. Odo, who was present on the field of battle, contributed not a little to the happy issue of that day. King Athelstan, hotly engaged in a hand to hand fight with the enemy, was driving the Danes before him, when his sword suddenly broke at the hilt, and he was left defenceless. Discouraged by this most unexpected accident, he stood for a moment, like one astonished, with his broken sword in his hand. A party of Danes noticing the mishap, were on the point of rushing back upon him, when Odo, who happily was not far from the spot, ran up to the King, and either, as some say, supplied him with a sword, or as others write, called his attention to one hanging by his side, which the King, in the confusion of the moment, had forgotten. Athelstan, once more

<sup>1</sup> This site of Brumby is not now known accurately. It was in the North of England, not far from the Humber.

himself again, quickly beat off those who had hoped to take advantage of his defenceless position. It may well be imagined that, in the rejoicings of the people over this glorious victory, the timely help given by Odo was not forgotten, either by the army, or by the King himself. This brave King, the darling of the English nation, died soon after the battle of Brumby, and was succeeded by his half-brother, Edmund, who was as partial to Odo as his brother had been. In the course of his reign the Arch-see of Canterbury became vacant, and Odo was elected to fill it. For a long time he refused the offer. The See of Canterbury hitherto had been always held by monks, and as he was not a monk he scrupled to make a new precedent. The general wish eventually prevailed. The difficulty was got over by his accepting the Benedictine Habit from the hands of the Abbat of Fleury, who came to England to give it him.

Odo was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury A.D. 942. His Archebishopate was not a long one, for he died A.D. 958. It was, however, a very vigorous one. We are told that in its brief space "he raised the whole character of the Kingdom." Among his good works was the rebuilding of the Cathedral, which he found in a most dilapidated state; the roof rotten, and the walls ruinous. On the other hand, the congregations which now gathered in it were so large, even on the week-days,

that no other building in the town could hold them. Under these circumstances Odo scrupled to close the Cathedral, even when it had been dismantled, and continued to hold the daily Services in the roofless building. Old writers tell us that the congregations suffered no inconvenience thereby, for, by a special providence, fine weather prevailed the whole of the time during which the Cathedral was unroofed. The tranquillity of S. Odo's latter days was for a time disturbed by the troubles which ensued on the accession of King Edwy to the throne (see S. Dunstan). Here it must suffice to say, that the young King scandalized his people by an unlawful wedlock. Archbishop Odo did his best to disengage him from it, admonishing, entreating, and also warning, and Edwy for a time dissimulated with him, fearing that his coronation might be deferred if the Archbishop should refuse to take part in it. As soon, however, as that ceremony had been performed, he openly disregarded his admonitions. This ended in a breach between the two; the Archbishop declared the marriage illegal, "and separated Edwy" and his "so-called wife." The young King, who made severe reprisals on others who offended him, did not venture in any way to molest the Archbishop, who was held in universal esteem. These troubles were soon over; and tranquillity was restored to the Kingdom under the rule of Edgar. S. Odo

was now drawing nigh his end. One of his last acts was the consecration of Dunstan, who had been elected to the See of Worcester, and who, in the spirit of prophecy, Odo foretold would be his own successor in Canterbury. He remained to the last indefatigable in his Cathedral duties, "daily irrigating with heavenly doctrines the people committed to his trust." He died happily in Canterbury, A.D. 961, and was buried in the Cathedral on the south side of the Altar.

S. Odo inherited from his parents the vigorous qualities which characterized the Danes, and to these were added the virtues and the graces gained through his Christian faith. These were so conspicuous in all that he did and said, that people called him *Odo the Good* whilst he was yet alive—and when he died the chronicler of his times, as though nothing more was needed for his praise, thus summarily records his death: "This year, 961, departed *Odo the Good*, Archbishop." He may justly be regarded as the morning star, or herald, of the bright revival of religion, which was about to dawn on the country. It is interesting to note, as we read his life, how in him GOD raised up a "restorer of breaches" for the benefit of His Church out of that ruthless, sacrilegious nation, red-handed with the blood of Saints and "Martyrs." What a lesson have we not in this against faint-heartedness in evil days, when the Ark of GOD

may seem to be shaking, or when the enemies of the Faith, "when Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, "the Philistines also, and they of Tyre, with the "Morians," band together against the Church of GOD! Is there not good ground for assurance that, if the Church be true to herself and to GOD, history will repeat itself, and even if her enemies should prevail for a time, it would be for a time only, and the sons and the daughters of those who have afflicted her will be among the first to honour and comfort her, and to repair the breaches made in her walls by their own parents?

## **S. Edburge.**

CIRCA A.D. 915.

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S. EDBURGE was the daughter of King Edward the Elder, and consequently a grandchild of Alfred the Great. Her father, a most brave and wise King, "paid especial attention to the nurture and education of his children. The Danes gave him few opportunities for domestic leisure; but he took care, nevertheless, that his sons received the completest benefit of learning, and his daughters were brought up in such wise, that in childhood they gave their attention to literature, and afterwards employed themselves in the labours of the distaff and needle." His daughter, Edburge, from her earliest years gave manifest tokens of piety and love of religion. Her father, it is said, wished one day, when she was yet but a little child, to try her affections, and caused to be placed in her chamber the symbols of different "professions"—on the one side, a chalice and the Gospels; on the other, bracelets and necklaces. Hither the child was brought; her father placed her on his knee, shewed them to her, and bade her choose which she pleased. The child, without a moment's hesita-



tion, ran to the emblems of religion, and knelt before them in an attitude of devotion. "Those present exclaimed aloud, and fondly hailed the prospect of the child's future sanctity; her father embraced her in a manner still more endearing. 'Go,' said he, "whither the Divinity calls thee, follow with prosperous steps the Spouse whom thou hast chosen, and truly blessed shall my wife and myself be if we are surpassed in holiness by our daughter."

King Alfred's Queen, Alswitha, had commenced a Nunnery in Winchester, which was completed after her death by King Edward; over this the Abbess Etheldrida presided, and the little Princess was placed under her care to be educated, and in this Abbey she became a nun. Her piety and devotion kept pace with her years, and she was noted among the nuns (by whom she was greatly beloved), for her humility and consideration for others, delighting to do little acts of kindness, if possible by stealth, for any of the community, and more especially for the elder Sisters. She was carried off at an early age by a fever, and was buried in Winchester. Bishop Ethelwold enshrined her remains in a costly tomb, which some years later was plundered by the Danes. It was again clothed with gold and silver by the Abbess Elfleda. Part of her relics were given to Pershore Abbey, near Worcester.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THIS life of S. Dunstan is derived principally from one written by Osbern, who lived after the Conquest, and who was Precentor of Canterbury Cathedral. He tells us that most of the earlier Lives of the Saint perished in the fire, by which the Cathedral was destroyed, A.D. 1070. One or two volumes, however, escaped, notably a life of our Saint written by Bridferth, who flourished about A.D. 1000. Osbern assures his readers that his own *Life of S. Dunstan* is derived entirely from, and is in strict accordance with, Bridferth, from whose pages he has only omitted the relation of those prodigies, "which might seem "incredible to the faithless."

## **S. Dunstan.**

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

A.D. 938.

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DUNSTAN was born in Glastonbury in the reign of Athelstan (Alfred's grandson), who came to the throne A.D. 925. Our Saint's parents, Herstan and Chinistrita, were of noble birth, akin to the royal family of Wessex. "Great in worldly dignity, they "were greater still," writes Osbern, "in the nobility "of their lives, the sincerity of their religion, and in "the practice of all good works." Born of such parents, Dunstan, from his earliest age, was brought up in good and pious ways ; and as a child he loved no place so dearly as the old Church in Glastonbury, in which his parents worshipped with frequent, if not with daily devotion. The ancient Abbey, to which the Church was attached, was at this time in a dilapidated state, and was no longer used as an Abbey. It had become an appanage to the Crown, and was supported by royal stipends ; it was not, however, tenantless, but was occupied by some learned men from Ireland, who are said to have been "nobly instructed in sacred and profane litera-

“ture.” These holy men had been drawn to Glastonbury from Ireland by the fond belief that their National Saint had died and was buried there,<sup>1</sup> and they had been allowed by the King to take up their quarters in the old ruinous Abbey. There, in order to obtain a maintenance, they opened a School, in which they gave an admirable education, and taught the liberal arts to the sons of the nobles living in the neighbourhood. Thus it happily came to pass that at this time, when education was at its lowest ebb in England, Dunstan became provided with learned and good masters. It was a great opportunity, and he did not fail to make use of it. On the contrary, giving his whole mind to his studies, and having naturally excellent ability, he soon surpassed all his school-fellows. It seems probable, however, that in his devotion to study he overtasked his powers, for before long he suffered from a brain fever. The attack was so serious that there were grave fears for his life; he lay for some days insensible. “His school-fellows gathered round his bed in tears. The whole house was in tears. The masters grieving as much as any, fearing they were about to lose their best and most talented pupil.” It came to such a pass that at last all hope was given up, “and they ceased to think of anything else but

<sup>1</sup> A certain S. Patrick lived for some time in Glastonbury, and was buried in the Church. It is now generally believed that this was not the famous Irish Saint.

“of his funeral.” It was at this crisis that the following extraordinary event occurred. The sick boy, who had been left a brief space to himself, rose out of bed in the night (doubtless in his sleep) and slipped out of doors. No one saw him go out, but he was soon missed, and a search made everywhere for him. For a long time he could not be found. At last it was discovered that he had gone to the Church, and finding it locked had mounted a long ladder placed against the wall of the Church, and left there by some workmen engaged in repairing the roof. The boy in his sleep had gone up this ladder, walked on the roof of the Church, and made his way through the roof into the interior of the Church, where he was found at last lying fast asleep in front of the Altar. When he was asked to explain how he got inside the Church, he replied that on his conscience he could not tell. It is not a little remarkable that this extraordinary instance of somnambulism proved to be the turning-point in his illness. The fever left him, and he began from this time to recover. Dunstan passed the rest of his boyhood in Glastonbury, imbibing all the knowledge that his masters taught. When he had reached that age when it became necessary that choice should be made of his future profession, it was in accordance with his parents’ express wish that he determined to devote himself to religion and the Church.

The Minor Orders were still in use, and were the

ordinary entrance to the Priesthood. They were marked by a peculiar dress. From the time that Dunstan was so set apart, he began with all his power to conform his life to the sacred calling which he had chosen. Fleeing youthful lusts, he inured himself in habits of prayer and fasting. He now also gave much of his time to the study of the Bible, which he found to be "a great help against the "importunities of temptations, and for proficiency in "virtue." Besides his study of Divinity he was also, we are told, much drawn to philosophy in its various "branches, such as relate to essences, magnitudes, "motion, and numbers." The art in which he delighted most was that of music. In instrumental music also he excelled. "It was as great a delight "to him, as it had been to David of old, to take the "Psaltery, to play the harp, to modulate the organ, "and to strike the timbrel." Moreover, he was cunning of hand, able to engrave in gold and silver, in brass and iron, in painting pictures, and in the illumination of books.

And now, in view of the profession which he had adopted, it seemed well to his parents that he should make acquaintance with his uncle, who was Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>1</sup> Thither, accordingly, Dunstan

1 NOTE ON DUNSTAN'S UNCLE.

Osbern calls him *Athelm*, who was Archbishop of Canterbury 914-923. But if the right date is given for Dunstan's birth, i. e., 925, Athelm must have been dead before Dunstan was born. It is certain,

went, and he met with a most kind reception. The Archbishop was gratified by this mark of attention, and became much attached to his nephew, "being "not a little taken with the beauty of his form, the "vigour of his intellect, and his other excellent "qualities." "Whence understanding through the "Spirit of GOD that he would be a vessel of election, "he raised him to a higher grade of Orders. More- "over, when he left Canterbury to return home, he "gave him letters of commendation to the King, in "which he wrote as follows: 'This youth, closely "related to myself, and in some degree allied to the "royal stock, I commend to your Majesty (Excel- "lency) that he may stand continually in your "presence. This I shall take as a favour to myself, "who have received so many already, and trust to "receive more in the time to come.'"

The King (Athelstan), on receipt of this letter, gave Dunstan a most favourable reception, and being much impressed with his appearance, assigned him an appointment in his palace, with some high charge and office. So much of his time was now taken up in attending to his official duties, and in personal attendance on the King, that Dunstan found little leisure for study and for prayer. This difficulty he got over by a constant habit of rising early for his

therefore, either that Dunstan was born at an earlier date than is usually supposed (as *Wharton* believes), or else that the uncle Archbishop was *Walfhelm*, who succeeded Athelm.

devotions. The King became more and more partial to him, and liked to have him with him in his lighter hours ; and now Dunstan's musical accomplishments stood him in good stead. "When he saw his lord, the King, fatigued through worldly business, he would sing an accompaniment with the harp or timbrel, or some other musical instrument, and by doing so wonderfully delighted both the King and the Princes."

The King's favour, however, soon brought with it unpleasant consequences : there was a party in the Court which began to look on him with jealousy. Moreover, it befell Dunstan, as it has befallen others who were ahead of their age in science and art, that he was misunderstood and suspected. It was whispered about the Court that he knew more than was right, and had dealings which were not lawful for a Christian man. It happened about this time that a lady, Ethelwina, who busied herself much in ecclesiastical embroidery, was engaged in making a stole of great beauty, and being aware of Dunstan's skill in such matters, earnestly entreated his advice and superintendence ; he went accordingly to her house, and coming into the room where the ladies were busy with their work, hung a lyre, which he had brought with him, on a peg in the wall. Whilst they were all engaged in embroidery, the ladies were startled by a sweet strain of music which proceeded from the lyre. "Untouched by any one, it gave



“forth in clearest, sweetest melody, a well-known piece of sacred music, set to this Antiphon, ‘The souls of the Saints rejoice in heaven, who have followed the steps of CHRIST, and for His love have shed their blood. Wherefore with CHRIST they shall reign for ever.’” It seems probable that Dunstan, by his skill in mechanism, had contrived this as a pleasant surprise for the ladies. If so, he was much mistaken in his expectations, for they were filled with consternation, and frightened beyond measure. They rushed screaming out of the house, denouncing Dunstan as a magician or sorcerer. Henceforward, among the people in the neighbourhood he was regarded with suspicion, and many felt sure that he had dealings with the black art. His enemies were not slow to take advantage of these stories, which they reported maliciously to the King, and no doubt exaggerated, and Dunstan soon became aware that “the face of the King, towards him, was not as yesterday, nor as heretofore,” and he made up his mind to retire from the Court, as preferable to being expelled from it. Unfortunately his enemies became aware of his purpose, and they lay in wait by the side of the road by which he was to pass that night. When he arrived at the spot they rushed out upon him, drove away his companions, seized and beat him severely, and then, having first bound him in chains, threw him into a marsh, where they left him to perish. It happened, however, providentially, that

some country-people that night passed by that way, and their attention was called to Dunstan (who was insensible) by a number of dogs, who had been attracted to the spot where he was lying, and who barked continually. These men, finding him lying in this plight, and compassionating his misery, took him up kindly and carefully, and carried him to a neighbouring village, and gave him such hospitality as they were able, in one of their cottages. The next morning he found himself sufficiently recovered to be able to proceed on his journey. Parting with his kind hosts, and not knowing where else to go, he turned his steps to Winchester, where his Uncle Elphege<sup>1</sup> was the Bishop. The Bishop gave him a kind reception, and was glad to have him with him. Dunstan accordingly made a long stay in his palace. The uncle and the nephew were, in most points, like-minded, and agreed admirably together; only on one point they differed in opinion. The Bishop was most anxious that his nephew should become a monk, whilst Dunstan, at this time, was not prepared to take the vows. The Bishop plied him daily with arguments, which Dunstan answered with no little ability. It is said by some writers that he had formed an attachment for some young lady (in Athelstan's Court), and clung to the idea of marriage,

<sup>1</sup> This Elphege (or Alphege), Bishop of Winchester, is usually called *Elphege Calvus*, to distinguish him from his more celebrated namesake, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was martyred by the Danes.

which would have been compatible with most of the Minor Orders. On the other hand, as the law then stood, it would have been inconsistent with the Priesthood, to which he had aspired. If this be the case, it seems probable that Dunstan, even whilst refuting his uncle's arguments, was conscious that he had fallen away from his original high purpose, and was dissatisfied with himself. This, at least, seems the most probable explanation of what followed. Owing perhaps to the strain on his mind, and his present distraction, he fell into a high fever, and lay for days without signs of life. But though unable to speak or move, his mind was keenly alive, and a fearful struggle was going on in it. It ended in his condemning himself for what he now considered a sinful weakness and vacillation of purpose, and he made a vow, that if GOD would spare his life, he would dedicate it to Him in holy poverty and celibacy. Soon after this a turn for the better took place in his illness, and he recovered his power of speech. The first use he made of it was to send a message to his uncle to inform him of his recovery, and to acquaint him with his change of purpose. The Bishop, filled with overflowing joy at the tidings of his nephew's recovery, and also of his change of mind, came without delay to see him, and in due time consecrated him to be a monk. At the same time, raising him to the Priesthood, he attached him to the Parish Church of S. Mary's, Glastonbury.

Thither (after some little time spent together in study and fatherly counsel) he dismissed him.<sup>1</sup>

Dunstan's "conversion" (for so old writers term it) changed the whole tenor of his mind and thought. It had entailed the sacrifice of what he held dearest on earth. The world was now nothing to him, and he gave himself up heart and soul to his new duties. In the fervency of his zeal he found a relief in enduring privations at which men ordinarily shudder. Unable to live as a monk in the old Abbey, which was still secularised, he determined to make a cell, in which to immure himself. This cell he built with his own hands, attaching it to the wall of the Church. The roof of it, we are told, did not rise much higher than the level of the Church-yard, but he made it habitable by excavating the earth beneath. Bridferth (his biographer) tells us that he had been in it, and assures us that it was not more than five feet in length, two and a-half in breadth, and in height that of a man. The entrance-door had a little window in it, which gave light to its inhabitant. This door, when closed, became the outside wall of the cell. "On the whole," he concludes, "it had more the appearance of a grave than of a human habitation."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some writers of later date say that his uncle sent Dunstan abroad to Fleury, and that he there took the monastic vows. It may be so, but there is not a word about this in Osbern, who says distinctly that his uncle made him a monk, and sent him to Glastonbury.

<sup>2</sup> It seems probable that Bridferth is here speaking of that part of his

Such was the cell in which Dunstan immured himself, "and in which he macerated his body by fasting, and "strengthened his soul by prayer. Such of his time "as was not required for his religious exercises and "for study, he spent in painting, engraving in gold, "silver, and iron, and in the fabrication of musical "instruments, in all which arts he excelled."

His biographer tells us that in this cell he suffered a fearful fight of afflictions from his spiritual enemies, who molested him all the more violently because he was determined to subdue them. It was during his stay in this cell that that extraordinary event occurred, with which most of us are familiar, and which even those who know not who S. Dunstan was, have heard of. We allude to the old legend (which, like most old legends, seems to be but *the popular rendering of a real story*). It is thus told by his biographer: The devil, having tried by other artifices to expel him from his cell, adopted the appearance of a man,<sup>1</sup> and towards the dusk of evening proceeded to Dunstan's cell, and leaning against the door, put his head into the window, and observing him to be engaged on some work of art, asked him to make something he was in need of. Dunstan, not noticing

cell which might be called his *domicile*. Dunstan certainly had an oratory for his devotions, and also a smithery, with a forge in it, for his work.

<sup>1</sup> Some writers say he took the form of a woman.

the deceit, or wishing to get rid of the fellow, complied. Whilst he was fashioning it, the man began to talk profanely and loosely. At last Dunstan discovered who he was, and presently heated the tongues in the fire until they were red hot. Then, "full of holy fury, he snatched them from the fire, caught the ghastly visage between them, and drew the struggling monster into his cell." It was only by breaking through the wall of it that at last his victim escaped. He got away, but his cries were heard in the whole neighbourhood.

Such is the story, as it is told in the Saint's life. It is plain that this visitor was no immaterial being. We may safely conclude that some evil-minded person came with mischievous intent to the Saint's cell, and received such punishment as would make him hesitate to repeat his visit. In the sequel of the story we are told that crowds of people assembled on the following morning, anxious to know the cause of the uproar, which had frightened them out of their sleep. "It was caused by the devil," replied Dunstan, "who will not let me live in peace, and who endeavoured last night to eject me out of my cell. Beware of him, for if you could not endure his voice, how will you bear his company in hell?" We may see from this story that Dunstan, though living the life of a recluse, was not shut out from communication with the world outside, but held

intercourse with any who came to his cell. Whether at this time he took part in the Services and public worship of the Church is not said, but as he was in Priest's Orders, and also one of the Clergy attached to the Parish Church, it may be presumed that he did so. Certainly, many persons now began to put themselves under his spiritual guidance. Notable among these was the Lady Ethelgifa, who was akin by birth to the royal family. This benevolent lady had voluntarily made herself nurse to the young Princes<sup>1</sup> in their infancy. She was naturally of a very charitable disposition, and when her self-imposed task was concluded, she determined to spend the remainder of her life in works of charity, and in care of the poor. This lady derived great benefit from Dunstan's counsel and teaching, and, in order that she might enjoy with greater facility opportunities of consulting him, she asked and obtained permission from the authorities to build herself a mansion within the precincts of the Abbey Church. Here, taking up her residence, she spent her time, her wealth (which was very great), and all her energies, in works of mercy. When some years had thus been spent in labours for CHRIST and His poor, the Lady Ethelgifa was seized with a severe attack of bodily infirmity. Dunstan, having been informed of it, came

<sup>1</sup> The Princes here alluded to were doubtless Edmund and Edred, half-brothers to King Athelstan, who reigned in succession after him.

to see her, and received her most humble confession, amid floods of tears from them both. She died on the following morning in Dunstan's presence, after he had given her the holy unction, and the Sacrament of the Body and *Blood* of CHRIST. She was buried honourably in S. Mary's Church, Glastonbury. This lady bequeathed her great wealth to Dunstan. The first use he made of his newly acquired fortune was to distribute among the poor the whole of the household goods, chattels, and furniture; the rest of the property he reserved for future purposes. Immense wealth was at this time at his command, for, in addition to the vast fortune left him by the Lady Ethelgifa, he had also, by the death of his parents, and of his only brother (Wulfwin), become the sole inheritor of the family estate and property. What use he made of this great wealth will be seen later on. In the meantime, as though offering the first-fruits to GOD, he endowed the Parish Church of Glastonbury, enriching it with money, and also with very valuable lands adjacent to the town. It seems not improbable that the administration of his property obliged him at times to leave his cell. Certainly he gave it up about this time. The immediate cause was a most earnest entreaty, sent him by the King (Edmund<sup>1</sup>), who loved him with a brother's love, and desired greatly to have him with him in his palace.

<sup>1</sup> Edmund had lately succeeded his half-brother Athelstan. His Palace at Cheddar was only nine miles from Glastonbury.



Dunstan, either because he did not think it right to refuse the King's request, or "in the hope of exalting "the kingdom of righteousness in England, where it "was much decayed," left his cell, and went to live in the King's Palace. He did not, however, change his mode of life, but, on the contrary, strove as he was best able "to induce the King, his nobles and "courtiers, to follow the rule of righteousness." What the reforms were which he laboured to introduce we are not told, but, as might be expected, they were very unpalatable to many of the courtiers, who had no wish to be reformed. Before very long Dunstan had a host of enemies at Court, who resented the King's partiality to him, and who bitterly hated one who was endeavouring to interfere with their old and evil customs.

In the hope of getting rid of him, they did their best to turn the King against him, losing no opportunity of defaming him, and at last they succeeded. The King, either believing their tales, or more probably, wishing to be rid of the strife in his Court, made up his mind to sacrifice Dunstan, and issued an order for his expulsion, and, with unnecessary cruelty, confiscated his estates. Dunstan accordingly left the Court, and, it is said, resolved to go abroad and spend the remainder of his life in some religious house on the Continent. Thus his enemies prevailed against him; but their triumph was short. The following most unexpected event

upset all their schemes. King Edmund, like all our early English Kings, was passionately fond of hunting. On the third day after Dunstan had left, he went out with his Court to hunt. The exact locality is not told us, but we may safely conclude it was not far from Chedder. The royal party entered a wood which was situated at the bottom of a very steep hill, clothed with pines. In the middle of it was a great gulf, with a precipice fearful to look at from the top. A stag was started and pursued by the hounds. "On came the King "in full course up the hill in hot pursuit of the stag "hastening onwards in his devious flight; both out "of breath with fatigue; the stag anxious to save "his life, the King to overtake it. At last, finding "no egress left by which it might escape, the "animal bounded over the precipice and was crushed "to death at the bottom, the pack of dogs followed "and experienced the same fate. Behind them came "the horse on which the King was seated. He, "seeing as he came nearer to the precipice, the peril "which threatened him, drew rein, and would have "turned his horse aside—when suddenly the reins "broke, and started from his hands and he was borne "madly on." In this moment of agony, the wrong which he had done to Dunstan flashed on his mind, he doubted not that his present disaster was a judgment on him in consequence, and he made a vow that if GOD would spare his life, he would repair



**KING EDMUND'S ESCAPE.**



his injustice. Scarce had he had time to form this solemn resolution, when the horse, it may be, noticing the danger, pulled up of his own accord, and stood stock-still on the very verge of the precipice. The King's first act was to dismount, and on the ground he returned heart-felt thanks to GOD for his wonderful escape. His next was to go back to his palace and to give immediate orders for Dunstan's re-call. On Dunstan's arrival he received him with open arms, humbly begged his pardon for the wrong which he had done him, and assured him that he should henceforward regard him as his best and truest friend. Moreover, he now made him Chamberlain of his palace, with full power "freely to order and arrange it." Dunstan also had now conferred upon him an high office in the State. He was made "Supreme Judge in all causes between man and man." King Edmund, it will be seen, did not do things by halves. Bent on making full amends, and knowing well the gift which would gratify Dunstan most, he now also made him a present of the Old Abbey of Glastonbury,<sup>1</sup> with full power to rebuild and restore it to its original purpose, promising, at the same time, liberally to supply anything that might be wanting with the necessary funds.

<sup>1</sup> The ceremony of induction was as follows:—Edmund took Dunstan by the hand, kissed him on the cheek, then led him to the Provost seat in the chancel, and placed him in it with these words, "Take thou this seat as lord and master, and be thou of this Church the trustworthy Abbat."

Dunstan, we are told, "having thus received "authority over the royal domain which is called "Glastonbury (a few days only intervening), laid the "foundation of a more handsome Church, erected a "set of offices, and gathered into them a noble "company of monks, over whom he was made first "Abbat." Thus it came to pass that Glastonbury, which was the most ancient Abbey in England, became also the first to be brought into actual use again after the destruction of the religious houses by the Danes. Moreover, under Dunstan's guidance and care it flourished exceedingly. The Glastonbury monks were noted for their piety, learning, and holy life. The Abbey became a model for other religious houses, which began to be founded elsewhere, and its members were in much request for the filling up of vacant Sees, and for other important positions in the Church.

To return to our story. It will have been seen from the preceding pages that Dunstan, in almost a moment of time, had experienced such a change of fortune as falls to few men. Yesterday he was a disgraced and banished exile; to-day one of the most powerful men in the land, high in office, and in the King's favour. It is very interesting to read that in this time of great prosperity "the Saint began to "be in much fear for himself, and to see the special "need of being on his guard against his spiritual "enemies." He made it a point, we are told, "not

“to slacken his private devotions in the midst of his “divers worldly cares, giving particular attention to “Divine meditation and to prayer.” King Edmund remained an unvarying friend to Dunstan during the rest of his reign, but that reign was not a long one, and ended sadly enough: Edmund was mortally stabbed by one of his Thanes (Leofa), when banqueting with his nobles at Puckle-church in Gloucestershire. Leofa had been banished for his crimes, and returning home without leave, had intruded himself into the royal banquet. The King in his indignation sought to expel him with his own hand, and was slain by the ruffian. Dunstan was not present when this happened; he was at Bath, busily engaged in the restoration of the Church. There having received a summons from the King to return to Court on some urgent business; he was on his way back, arriving only in time to find his beloved Sovereign dead. This catastrophe did not diminish Dunstan’s power in the State, for Edmund was succeeded by his brother, Edred, who loved Dunstan dearly. Edred was a brave and pious Prince, possessed of many noble qualities, but, unfortunately, disabled from much exertion by severe bodily infirmity; the food which he took seemed to give him little nourishment, and he became a confirmed invalid. Not being able to take much part in official duties, and in the government of the country, and having implicit confidence in Dunstan,

he put the chief rule in his hands ; and as Pharaoh set Joseph over his house and kingdom, ordaining that his people should be ruled by him, so Edred committed his kingdom to Dunstan's care. It was about this time that the See of Winchester became vacant by the death of his uncle, Alphege. Much pressure was put upon Dunstan to fill this See, but he steadily declined it. Perhaps we shall not be wrong in thinking that he was moved to this by a belief that he could do more good, and serve the Church better, in his present position in the palace, than by engaging in Episcopal work elsewhere. Certainly, even in these early days, he had great projects in his mind which he believed would be for the benefit of the Church. Foremost among these was the restoration from their ruins of the old Monastic Foundations, which had been so serviceable to religion in days gone by, and indeed a principal means for the introduction of Christianity into England. At present they were (most of them), occupied by bodies of irregular Clergy, who had patched up the ruins, and lived on what remained of the old endowments. These Clergy (known as seculars), had undoubtedly supplied a need in their several localities by their ministrations. On the other hand, they were, most of them, free from Episcopal control, and in consequence had fallen into slack and easy ways. They wandered about the country, and did very much as they pleased. *Wharton* says,



“ They were often non-resident for seven years at a time. Their duties they left to curates, to whom they paid such small stipends that there was nothing left for the repair of the Churches, or for the decencies and solemnities of worship. The Churches were naked inside and out.” The law of the Church did not now allow the marriage of the Clergy. But these Seculars were, most of them, married, and lived with their wives and families in the old Abbeys; which were thus certainly being turned to a purpose for which they were not intended by those who had founded them. Under these circumstances it was but natural that Dunstan should look forward to the time when these old institutions might be restored to their original purpose. In the meantime, till this could be done, he, with great prudence, turned himself to that which was a more feasible task, to wit, the founding and endowing new religious houses in various parts of the country. Here he would meet with no opposition. No “vested interests” stopped the way, the only difficulty lay in the vast amount of funds required for such a great undertaking. This difficulty he surmounted principally by means of his own patrimony, and the vast treasures bequeathed him by the Lady Ethelgifa. The King also, and the Queen mother, and many devout laymen contributed in lands and money most munificently. By these means a number of new religious houses were

built, in which he established an admirable discipline. He was in the midst of these congenial labours, when the King's death put a sudden stop to them. Edred was at Frome when his illness took an aggravated form. Conscious of his danger, he sent an urgent message to Dunstan to come to him without delay. A fearful storm was raging at the time. Dunstan set out on horse-back, and, putting the animal to its best speed, was well on his way towards Frome, when suddenly, in the midst of the storm, the horse fell down on the road and expired (probably struck by lightning). Dunstan himself escaped unhurt, and as soon as he was able proceeded on his journey. But he was too late! On his arrival at the palace he found that the King had passed away. It is sad to read that, when he entered the royal chamber, he found it *deserted*. The courtiers had all hastened off to pay their respects to the new King. Full of serious and painful thoughts, Dunstan took upon himself the office of arranging for the late King's funeral, and in due time his body was honourably interred in the old Minster at Winchester.

And now a crisis had arrived in Dunstan's life. The new King, Edwy, was the son of Edmund, who had raised Dunstan to his present high estate, but Edwy inherited none of his father's love for him. Young and of exquisite form, he was intemperate and licentious. As such he naturally entertained an aversion for the strict

religious party, of which Dunstan was the representative, and he determined as soon as possible to free himself from the shackles of his presence. Surrounding himself with a number of youthful associates, and listening to their counsels, he acted very much the part of Rehoboam, whose fate he also eventually shared. For some time however he dissembled his designs. Dunstan remained in the palace, hoping by kindness and good counsel to lead the King into a wiser course. When this failed, "he "tried the effect of sharp rebuke, but all to no "purpose. On the contrary, Edwy derided his "rebukes, and threatened vengeance on him." Under these circumstances, Dunstan judged it best to leave the Court, which he did, and retired to Glastonbury. There he spent his time in improving the buildings of the Church, and in other business such as his active mind suggested. It was not long, however, before he was brought into sharp collision with the King, for Edwy had formed an attachment to a lady whom he could not marry, because she was within the forbidden degrees. He had nevertheless taken her as his wife, and treated her as his Queen. This caused a great scandal. So reckless, however, was Edwy of public opinion, and of all sense of propriety, that, on the day of his coronation, when all the nobility of the land had assembled to do him honour, "and his "presence was required for grave affairs of State,"

he hurriedly withdrew himself from the presence of his nobles, to enjoy this lady's society. The nobles were gravely offended at this sleight, and they came to a general resolution that a deputation should wait on the King, and request his return to his Court. By the unanimous desire of the assemblage (chief among whom was Archbishop Odo), Dunstan was requested, and consented, to carry out this dangerous office. Taking with him the Bishop of Lichfield as an associate, he went to the King, delivered the message of the nobles; and when Edwy hesitated, and showed signs of reluctance, he placed his crown on his head, and drew him with him to the Court. Edwy thus yielded, but Dunstan was thenceforth bitterly hated, both by him and also by the lady whom he had thus offended. They made up their minds to take a bitter requital. Counting it little to avenge themselves on him alone, they busied themselves with schemes which should include in a wholesale ruin himself, his friends, and the inmates of his religious houses. Accordingly, shortly after this, Dunstan was declared an outlaw, and at the same time the Abbeys on which he had spent so much treasure were confiscated, and an order given for the expulsion of their inmates. Dunstan was still at Glastonbury when the royal commissioners arrived to take an inventory of the goods.<sup>1</sup> But it was

<sup>1</sup> Osbern gives us the following account of the parting scene:—  
“ Now as he was taking a sad parting, amid the weeping of the monks,

high time for him to leave. Parting from his sorrowing people, he hastened across England to the East Coast, which he safely reached. Thence he passed over the sea to Flanders, where he was received with the utmost kindness by the Prince of that country, who gave him quarters at Ghent, in a monastery which surpassed all others in his Kingdom in reputation and for learning. It was fortunate for Dunstan that he had not lingered on the way; he had indeed a most narrow escape. The lady whom he had offended had sent her servants after him, with instructions to seize him and put out his eyes. They arrived at the shore just after his ship had sailed. Frustrated in this, the lady took a pitiless revenge on any who had received him into their houses, or had otherwise assisted him.

In the meantime King Edwy continued with greater freedom his mad career. If he had confined himself to acts of persecution on the religious party which he hated, it is not impossible he might have done so with impunity, for the present at least; but his government of the country was lawless and despotic, he made exactions at will on the citizens of the towns, and arbitrarily confiscated the goods of

“the lamentations of his friends—who flocked to see him before he left—and amid the sobs of the poor, who had received their daily food from the monastery, amid all these sounds of sorrow was heard the voice of the devil in the nave of the Church, as of one rejoicing with unholy glee. Dunstan replied, ‘you need not rejoice at my exile, for you will have cause enough for sorrow at my return.’”

his nobles. He was soon bitterly hated by his subjects. Before the year was over a rising took place in the Midlands. The chief men in Mercia re-asserted their independence, and placed upon their throne Edwy's younger brother, Edgar. This became the signal for a general revolt. From the river Humber in the north to the Thames the people with one accord declared for Edgar. Only that part of the country which comprised the old Kingdom of Wessex remained loyal to Edwy. Edwy was away from home at the time, and had to find his way there as best he could. By disguising himself, he by devious paths escaped into Wessex.

The lady whom he had treated as his Queen was not so fortunate. She was overtaken by her enemies near Gloucester, treated with great barbarity, and, some say, put to death.

There was a Civil War in England for two or three years. Edwy's party, however, grew weaker and weaker, and his death (probably due to vexation and disappointment), put an end to the war. The whole country then, with great unanimity, accepted Edgar as its King. Edgar was very young, scarcely more than a boy. He was not above sixteen years of age when he was thus called to fill the throne, but he was a man in judgment, and had sense enough to avoid the mistakes which his brother had made. His first act was to give an order for the assembling together of a general council of his whole Kingdom, to settle the

affairs of the nation. The Witan met, without delay, and "with one consent cancelled all the unjust decrees and laws which had been made by the late King, restored the property which he had by violence seized, and recalled with great honour the Venerable Father and Abbat Dunstan from exile." Dunstan accordingly returned to England, where he received a most warm welcome from the young King, who had been attached to him from his earliest days. There was not at this time a man in the whole Kingdom more beloved by the people than Dunstan. One cause of this, no doubt, was the general aversion in which the memory of the late King was held. No honour was thought too great for the man who had rebuked him for his evil doings, and who had suffered in consequence. Ecclesiastical dignities were now showered upon him. He was first made Bishop of Worcester. The See of the metropolis shortly afterwards became vacant, and the citizens would be satisfied with no one but Dunstan; he became Bishop of London, and, as soon as he was able, obtained the appointment of S. Oswald to the See of Worcester. Archbishop Odo had died during the Civil War, and the See of Canterbury was not yet filled up. Two appointments indeed had been made, but for one cause or another had fallen through. Alfsin, Bishop of Winchester, the first to be appointed (he is accused of having gained his preferment by simony), perished of cold on the Alps,

on his way to Rome to obtain his pallium. The Arch-see was then offered to Brighthelm, Bishop of Sherborne. Brighthelm, a good and pious man, but of little ability, accepted the See; but shortly afterwards resigned it, on the plea that he felt himself unequal to the duties of so important a post. Probably he was well aware of the general desire in the country that Dunstan should be the Archbishop. He sent in his resignation, and without delay this great position was offered to Dunstan, who accepted it. Meanwhile the government of the State was chiefly in his hands. "The King," we are told, "put implicit trust in his wisdom . . . , "ordering all he willed to be ordained, and dis-annulling all that should be disannulled." Dunstan used his opportunity for the repression of vice, the encouragement of temperance, and for the abolition of many gross abuses. "The King by his advice "condemned to long and perpetual banishment all "who meddled with diabolic arts, thieves, sacrilegious "persons, perjurers, makers of poison, libidinous "people, also any that had conspired against their "country, or had raised their hands against their "parents, adulterous women who had slain their "husbands, etc."

Edgar's laws are said to have been severe, and probably were so. It was a rude and lawless age, and deterrents no doubt were necessary, but the administration of the law was not cruel. Edgar's



reign was "no reign of terror." Far from it. It was regarded a *halcyon* time by his people, regretted by those who came after him. Not only was good order kept within the Kingdom, but excellent measures also were taken for its defence against foreign invasion. Mainly, in consequence of this, there was peace in England during the whole of Edgar's reign—both internal and external. This is the more remarkable, because the personal character of the King will not bear inspection, he was unable to control his passions. It is believed by many that the glory of Edgar's reign was mainly due to Dunstan, by whom he governed the Kingdom. Dunstan certainly excelled in statesmanship. A modern writer (Dr. Hook) calls him "the greatest "of statesmen."

Whilst Dunstan, at the King's bidding, was giving his best attention to these secular affairs, he was patiently awaiting the time when he might be able to carry out his plans for the reform of the Church. It was not long before a blow was struck against the secular Clergy. A decree was passed in Synod, approved by the King, in which it was enacted that such of the Clergy as were married should be called upon either to relinquish their wives or their Churches. The married Clergy were perplexed, for the law was undoubtedly against them. The breach of it, however, had hitherto been winked at, and had not involved any loss of reputation. (Among

the people the married Clergy were regarded favourably.) It may be, relying on their popularity, the married Priests refused to dismiss their wives. If they presumed they might do so with impunity, they were mistaken in their calculations. The law was at once put into execution, and they were summarily ejected from their Churches. Whilst, however, this was in process, an event occurred, which, for the moment, arrested all proceedings, and which filled Dunstan's mind with grief and shame. The King, in whose name he was exercising this stringent discipline on the Clergy, was known to have disgraced himself by an outrage on a Nun (or if not a Nun, on a lady who had fled for refuge into Wilton Nunnery). This great scandal was the talk of the whole country. It may easily be conceived that Dunstan's position, as spiritual adviser to the King, had become both painful and embarrassing. Few, we think, will deny that in this most distressing and difficult emergency he acted otherwise than became a Christian Bishop, and a true man of GOD. We give the account as it is told by Osbern. "When this sinful outrage had been committed, and the fame of it had reached the ears of the people, Dunstan, pained most grievously, as well for the sin, as for the infamy of the King, boldly went like another Nathan to him, and with furious indignation came into his presence. The King, rising up, extended his hands towards the

“ Archbishop to make him sit beside his throne, but  
“ Dunstan refused to take his hand, and charging him  
“ with the sin he had committed, declared he would  
“ never be the friend of that man who was an enemy to  
“ CHRIST.” “ The King, terrified by these threaten-  
“ ing words, at once prostrated himself at the feet of  
“ the Prelate from whom he had received this rebuke,  
“ and humbly craved for pardon. Overcome by this  
“ even to tears, Dunstan raised the weeping King  
“ from the ground. Then, when he had made him  
“ fully understand the greatness of his sin, and the  
“ King had promised satisfaction, he imposed on him  
“ a seven years’ penance. During this time he was  
“ never to wear his royal crown, he was to fast two  
“ days in every week, to make large dispersion of his  
“ ancestral treasures among the poor, and besides all  
“ this, and more, was to found a monastery for con-  
“ secrated virgins to live in.” “ All this,” Osbern  
continues, “ the King performed.” We are not in a  
position to avouch the exact accuracy of this, but there  
is no doubt that in the main Osbern tells the story  
aright. It is matter of history that Dunstan boldly  
rebuked the King, that Edgar submitted to his re-  
buke, and underwent a seven years’ penance, at the  
conclusion of which, when he was to wear his crown  
again, there was a solemn Coronation Service, at  
which Dunstan officiated. This was performed with  
great ceremony and the utmost festivity at Bath, in  
the year 973, not very long before Edgar’s death.

But to return. All this having been satisfactorily settled, Dunstan returned to his reforms. The recalcitrant Clergy were ejected from the Abbeys, and their places filled with monks. The former, now in great trouble, appealed to the King, and entreated his interference. Edgar so far conceded to their wish that he gave them an opportunity of making an appeal which should be considered in a Synod, or general assembly of the Church and nation. This took place at Winchester. The King was present, and also the nobles, but it is probable that they did not take part in the voting, for the appeal of the seculars was rejected by an unanimous vote, and to the end of Edgar's reign this controversy ceased. It is impossible for us, as English Churchmen, not to feel some sympathy for Dunstan's opponents in this question, nor to regret that at least some provision was not made for them. Many were sent homeless at large, to find a subsistence as they were able.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it is clear that they had deliberately chosen with their eyes open to disobey the law of the Church as it then stood. It must also be admitted that in his efforts to restore life and vigour in the Church, Dunstan was right in beginning with the Clergy; for what hope is there of re-awakening

<sup>1</sup> This was not always the case. It is recorded of S. Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, that he assigned for the maintenance of the deprived Canons many lands belonging to the Church, and those the nearest to the city, and the richest for revenue.

fresh life in the Church when the Clergy have become lax in their lives?

Edgar's reign was not a very long one. He died unexpectedly, in the prime of life, at the age of thirty-three. There had been no diminution in his love for Dunstan. Nevertheless, in his latter years there had been a cloud in the sky which must have, in some degree, dimmed the sunshine of their intimacy. The King had contracted a secret marriage under very questionable circumstances,<sup>1</sup> and between the new Queen and Dunstan there existed a mutual antipathy. It does not appear, however, that she shewed her hostility to Dunstan so long as Edgar lived. She had two sons, Ethelmund, who died early, and Ethelred, who was a child when his father died. Edgar had an older son, Edward (by his first wife, Alfleda the Fair), who was naturally heir to the crown. The King, however, dying suddenly, the Queen took occasion, in the confusion which followed, to make a party among the nobles, and to intrigue for the election of her son. The plea on which she founded her pretensions was based on the fact that Alfleda had never *been crowned* a Queen (dying early before Edgar's coronation), whereas her own child was the son of a *Queen*. On this slender pretext she managed to draw to her side an influential party among the nobles, and on the day of election there was hot

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

discussion in the Chamber; but when Dunstan, supported by the other Prelates, entered the room, and called upon the nobles to carry out the late King's will (he had nominated Edward as his successor), the waverers joined the more loyal party. Edward was elected, and crowned the same day. Moreover, so well did this young Prince conduct himself during the short time he was allowed to reign, that he won the goodwill even of those who had been prejudiced against him, and who blamed themselves much for the part they had taken against him. His brief reign was sadly disturbed by ecclesiastical strife. No sooner was Edgar dead, and the reins of government had become slack, than the controversy between the secular clergy and the monks revived. Many of the great Earls in various parts of the Kingdom favoured the former, and seized the opportunity for ejecting the monks, not only out of the old foundations, but also out of the Abbeys, which had lately been built at such great expense. Excited meetings were held in various parts of the country. It was at this time, and when this strife was thus hotly raging, that that extraordinary accident occurred, with which history has made us familiar, when the flooring of the chamber in which the meeting was being held gave way, and the greater part of those present were precipitated into the offices below. This occurred at Calne, in Wiltshire. The circumstances are variously told by

different writers. The following simple account, taken from *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, seems by far the most reliable :—" A.D. 978. In this year all the " chief Witan of the English nation fell at Calne " from an upper chamber, except the holy Archbishop " Dunstan, who alone supported himself upon a beam, " and there some were grievously maimed, and some " did not escape with life." This accident did more for Dunstan than any amount of argument and disputation, for it was generally accepted as a Divine interposition in his favour, and from that time the cause of the secular Clergy languished.

Not long after this an event occurred which sent a thrill of surprise and horror through the country, silencing all controversy. This was no other than the death of the young King, who had fallen a victim to his stepmother's ambition. The full account of this tragedy, with all its sad details, is given elsewhere (see Edward the Martyr), and need not be repeated here. S. Dunstan loved this young Prince most tenderly, and the news filled him with passionate grief. Edward's death proved the occasion of his retiring from that high position in the country, in which he had been kept by so many preceding Kings.

There was now no heir to the throne but the child Ethelred. Dunstan accordingly acquiesced in his election, and on his coronation day placed the crown upon his head. He relieved his soul at the same

time by publicly denouncing the crime which had caused the vacancy in the throne, and avouched his belief that it would bring a judgment from GOD on the country.<sup>1</sup> It is noticeable that Elfrida, who had stuck at no crime in order to obtain the Kingdom for her son, made no attempt, so far as we know, to avenge herself on Dunstan. Her own heart failed her in her hour of triumph. She shrunk from public view, and apparently took no part in her son's government. It was, however, no doubt chiefly in

<sup>1</sup> The words, *put into Dunstan's mouth* on this occasion, are as follows :

“ Because thou hast aimed at the Kingdom by the death of thy brother, whom thy mother has ignominiously slain, the sword shall not fail from thy house, but shall rage against thee all the days of thy life, destroying thy seed, until this Kingdom shall become another's Kingdom, whose rites and language thy people knoweth not. Nor shall thy sin, the sin of thy mother, the sin of those who shared her wicked counsel, be expiated, but by a lengthy punishment.”

His biographer does not say that he used these words, but only *that he is reported* to have used them. We may well believe that what he said, in general terms, was shaped afterwards by his admirers in accordance with the events which happened in King Ethelred's reign. In their anxiety to prove Dunstan a prophet, they have put words in his mouth which would lay him open to a charge of injustice, and a want of charity.

There is not the slightest ground for believing that Ethelred, a mere child, and one exceedingly fond of his brother, was concerned in his death. On the contrary, Ethelred is said to have been inconsolable when he heard of it, and his mother, at last falling into a passion, nearly beat him to death with the first thing she could lay hands on, which happened to be a parcel of wax candles. Historians add that Ethelred, in consequence, retained through life such an antipathy to wax candles that they were never allowed to be burnt in his presence.



the hands of her people and adherents, and the tone of their rule was distasteful to Dunstan. He now therefore retired from public affairs. His latter years were spent in Canterbury, where he devoted himself with the utmost vigour to his spiritual duties. In the pulpit he excelled. The Cathedral was crowded with congregations, which came to hear him preach. His leisure he employed in literary work, and in works of art.<sup>1</sup> Nor did he decline the visits of his friends, who came to see him from all parts of the country. These were indeed a great pleasure to him. His relations with the young King were friendly, but not cordial. It is certain that Dunstan never liked him. When Ethelred was only a baby, Dunstan, on occasion of his baptism, exclaimed, "By S. Mary "this child will prove a nidering" (a poltroon), and this instinctive feeling certainly did not decrease, but grew stronger as Ethelred's character developed. In the whole line of our early English Kings it would be difficult to find one so destitute of noble and manly qualities, so miserably effeminate and morally weak.

The following anecdote shews the distant attitude in which they stood towards each other:—Ethelred, on some occasion, had taken offence against the city

<sup>1</sup> The study of letters had been on the decline in England since Alfred's death. Dunstan did much to revive it. He composed books, one of which, called *The Concord of Rules*, is still extant in Spelman. He was also diligent in imparting knowledge to his pupils.

of Rochester, and came against it with an army. The citizens defended themselves with great spirit, and the King besieged the town in vain. Unable to force an entrance, he revenged himself by ravaging the country round about, not sparing even the lands belonging to the Cathedral. Dunstan, much moved by the tidings, sent a letter with a strong remonstrance to the King on this sacrilegious act. The King took no notice of this letter, on which Dunstan sent a second to the same purport, but at the same time also despatched a third messenger with a hundredweight of silver. This latter "argument" proved of more weight with Ethelred than the letters. He took the silver, broke up the siege, and departed from Rochester. Thus, by his policy, Dunstan saved the Cathedral and the city, but the relations between the two became more strained than ever.

Though now far advanced in age, S. Dunstan allowed himself no indulgencies, but still practised the severities to which he had habituated himself in early life. Rising from bed in the coldest nights he resorted to one or another of the Churches in Canterbury, most usually to that of S. Augustine's Abbey. His death took place on Saturday, May 18th, A.D. 988 (the Saturday after Ascension day). How wonderfully he retained his mental faculties, and his bodily power, to the last, may be seen in the part which he took in the Services of that great Festival, when he not only celebrated at the principal Service in the

Cathedral, but also preached three times to crowded congregations. Nor were these sermons brief addresses, but long and earnest discourses on the subject of the day, delivered with an eloquence and power which entranced his hearers, who testified afterwards that they had never heard him preach so before. After these Services he went to the refectory, not to join in the banquet, but to greet a number of poor persons, whom he had invited to be his guests, with whom he spent some time before he took his own refreshment. Thus this Festival was spent in a succession of labours which might have taxed the powers of a young and vigorous man. In the evening of the same day he was taken seriously ill. This attack one might have supposed to have been due to an over-straining of his strength. His biographer assures us that it was not so, and that Dunstan knew well that his time was come. Certainly, in one of his sermons on that day he spoke to that effect so plainly that there was a scene in the Cathedral in consequence. It is also significant that in the afternoon of this day he took with him two friends into the Cathedral-yard, to point out the spot where he wished his body to lie. It would seem, therefore, that these laborious exertions were the sustained efforts of a holy man, conscious that they would be his last. He never afterwards appeared in public. Friday was spent quietly in his cell, where he saw his friends and gave them his last counsels.

The earlier part of that night was passed in great tranquility. On Saturday morning, as soon as it began to dawn, he received his last communion in company with a number "of his dearest sons, whom "he had tenderly nourished in the bosom of the "Church, and had led on to a more perfect advance "in spiritual grace. He had communicated, and was "in the act of returning thanks to GOD for all His "gifts, above all for the Bread of life, which cometh "down from heaven, when his summons came, and "his holy soul, with joy, left its earthly tabernacle to "behold the brightness of the Eternal Creator."

Such was the peaceful end of this great Saint, who, for variety of genius and force of character, had scarcely his equal in the Anglo-Saxon Era. Animated by a zeal for religion, which seemed at times almost to border on fanaticism, he united with it a vast amount of worldly wisdom, practical ability, and shrewd common sense, qualities which gave him immense influence among his fellow-men. Gifted by nature with talents fitting him to sway others, Dunstan would have been lost in a cell, shut out from his fellow-men, and we may safely believe that it was by the providence of GOD that he was drawn out of it to take that part in State affairs for which he was by nature fitted. Supreme power, as we have seen, was placed in his hands by four successive Kings, and Dunstan exercised it with great benefit to the Kingdom. Under his sway, also, and influence, a

great revival of religion took place, and spread everywhere through the country. The form of this revival may not approve itself to everyone's mind. It was essentially a mediæval movement, and no doubt took its character accordingly. (No other, probably, was then possible.) In any case, it was very real and earnest, and under its influence religion once more flourished in England. Other good men—as we have seen elsewhere—shared largely in bringing this about. It was by no means due to Dunstan only, but *his* was the master-mind, and the genius which developed, and which guided it to a successful issue.

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#### APPENDIX.

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Old writers delighted in telling anecdotes about S. Dunstan. Some of them are very curious, and throw no little light on his character, and on the ideas of the age in which he lived. We give one or two.

I. Dunstan's zeal in the cause of temperance.

“The Danes,” Stow tells us, “and all the people in England used the vice of great drinking. The King, by counsel of Dunstan, put down many ale-houses, and would suffer but one in a village or town, except it were a great borough. He ordained certain cups with pins or nails, and made a law that whosoever drank past that mark in one draught should forfeit a certain paine.”

Another writer tells us this device was to stop the frequent quarrels of the English over their cups.

## 2. He forbids hunting on Sundays.

“It happened one Sunday that the King went out hunting in the morning and requested Dunstan, who was staying with him, to delay Mass till his return. When the third hour of the day was approaching, the man of GOD went to Church, and having put on the sacred garments, went into Church and awaited the King’s arrival. He stood for some time, leaning with his elbows on the altar, engaged in his devotions, in tears and prayer. Suddenly falling into a slight slumber he was (in his dream) caught up into heaven, where he seemed to mingle with the blessed company of the angels who were singing melodious praises to the glorious Trinity; *Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison*. When he had learned the celestial strain he woke up out of his sleep and enquired of his attendants whether the King had arrived or not, and being answered in the negative, he returned to his devotions, and being again carried out of himself, heard in heaven a loud voice proclaiming, *Ite missa est*. The response, *Deo gratias*, had scarcely been given, when the King’s chaplains hastily entered the Church announcing that the King was come, and begging the Bishop to begin Mass without delay. But Dunstan, leaving the altar, declared that he had already been present at one Mass, and must decline to celebrate another that day. When he had put off his sacerdotal garments and entered the pulpit, he took occasion from this incident for a sermon on the subject, and forbade the King to hunt, thenceforth, on Sundays.”—*Mabillon v.*, 687.

## 3. Dunstan’s inflexibility in maintenance of the Marriage law.

“A certain powerful Earl had made an unlawful marriage with a lady related to himself. Though once, twice, and thrice reprov’d for this by Dunstan, he refused to expiate his crime by submitting to a divorce. For this he was smitten by the man of GOD with the sword of the HOLY SPIRIT, and expelled from the precincts of the Church. The Earl, swelling with pride, went to the King, and accusing Dunstan of unmerciful severity, prayed that the royal sanction might set him free from the prelate’s tyranny. The King, bending his ear to these complaints, sent a message to Dunstan, bidding him leave the man in peace with the lady whom he had married, and allow of their entrance into Church. Dunstan, wondering at such a message, and that a religious King should thus allow himself to be imposed upon, put himself into communication with the Earl to reason again with him on the score of the crime which he had committed—but he, confiding in his interest with the

“ King, obstinately refused to listen, and even proceeded to threaten  
“ the Archbishop. On this, Dunstan, who had only suspended him,  
“ before, from entering into the Church, now cut him off from all  
“ communion with the faithful until such time as he should amend his  
“ wickedness. The Earl going from worse to worse, and in his fury  
“ ready to expend his fortune, if only he could prevail against  
“ Dunstan, now sent an embassage to Rome, and by large gifts, and  
“ still larger promises, bought the hearts and tongues of certain  
“ Romans, not unused to such practises, with a view to further his  
“ cause. What followed? The Head of the Apostolic See sent a  
“ message to Dunstan, verbal, and in writing, to the effect that he  
“ should condescend to the weakness of sinful humanity, and further  
“ admonished, and ordered him to reconcile himself to the Earl by  
“ receiving him into the bosom of the Church. To all this Dunstan  
“ made the following answer :— ‘ When I shall see this man repenting  
“ ‘ of his wickedness, I will willingly obey the precepts of my Lord  
“ ‘ Pope, but that he should continue in his sin, and glory in it, and in  
“ ‘ setting all Church discipline at nought is not the will of GOD.  
“ ‘ GOD forbid ! that for the sake of any man—or to save my own life,  
“ ‘ I should disregard the law which the LORD JESUS CHRIST has given  
“ ‘ to His Church.’ When the Earl heard this, knowing assuredly that  
“ Dunstan would never flinch from this, his deliberate resolve, being  
“ moreover not without shame at his own position of excommunica-  
“ tion, etc., he laid aside his obstinacy, and renouncing his unlawful  
“ wedlock, imposed on himself the duties of repentance ; for when  
“ Dunstan was holding a general council of the whole Kingdom on  
“ the observance of Christianity, he, unregardful of what people might  
“ say of him, threw himself into the midst of the assembly, clothed only  
“ in woollen garments, with his feet bare, and with rods in his hands,  
“ and so fell groaning and lamenting at Dunstan’s feet. All present  
“ were moved to pity, and the Father himself to still tenderer pity.  
“ Nevertheless keeping up in appearance the severity of discipline, as  
“ one, whose object was to reconcile the man to GOD, he rigorously  
“ restrained his tears for a time, till at last, at the request of the whole  
“ council, he gave vent to his tears, and forgave him his fault, freeing  
“ him from the pains of excommunication, and restoring him, amid  
“ universal joy, to the communion of the faithful.”—*Mabillon* v.,  
685.

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King Edgar's second marriage (i.e., with Elfrida), who caused S. Edward to be put to death.

“There was in his (Edgar's) time one Athelwold, a nobleman of celebrity, and one of his confidants. The King had commissioned him to visit Elfthrida (daughter of Ordgar, Duke of Devonshire, whose charms had so fascinated the eyes of some persons that they commended her to the King), and to offer her marriage if her beauty were really equal to report. Hastening on his embassy, and finding everything consonant to general estimation, he concealed his mission from her parents, and procured the damsel for himself. Returning to the King, he told a tale which made for his own purpose, that she was a girl nothing out of the common track of beauty, and by no means worthy such transcendent dignity. When Edgar's heart was disengaged from this affair, and employed in other amours, some tattlers acquainted him how completely Athelwold had duped him by artifices. Paying him in his own coin, i.e., returning deceit for deceit, he shewed the Earl a fair countenance, and, as in a sportive manner, appointed a day when he would visit his far-famed lady. Terrified almost to death with this dreadful pleasantry, he hastened before to his wife, entreating that she would minister to his safety by attiring herself as unbecomingly as possible, then first disclosing the intention of such a proceeding. But what did not this woman dare? She was hardy enough to deceive the confidence of her first lover, her first husband, to call up every charm by art, and to omit nothing which could stimulate the desire of a young and powerful man. Nor did events happen contrary to her design. For he fell so desperately in love with her the moment that he saw her, that dissembling his indignation, he sent for the Earl into a wood at Warewelle (Wherwell), called Harewood, under pretence of hunting, and ran him through with a javelin; and when the illegitimate son of the murdered nobleman approached with his accustomed familiarity, and was asked by the King how he liked that kind of sport, he is reported to have said, ‘Well, my Sovereign Liege, I ought not to be displeased with that which gives you pleasure.’ This answer so assuaged the mind of the raging monarch, that for the remainder of his life, he held no one in greater estimation than this young man, mitigating the offence of his tyrannical deed against the father by royal solicitude for the son. In expiation of this crime a monastery, which was built on the spot by Elfthrida, is inhabited by a large company of Nuns.”—*William of Malmesbury's English Chronicle*, p. 159.



## **S. Ethelwold.**

**BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.**

A.D. 984.

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S. ETHELWOLD was a native of Winchester. His parents were of gentle birth, noted for their piety. They gave Ethelwold a careful education, of which he took the best advantage. The old city of Winchester, formerly the capital of the Kingdom of Wessex, had lost somewhat of its prestige since the West Saxon Kings had become the Monarchs of England, and necessarily were much elsewhere, still the old city retained their love, and they frequently resided there. King Athelstan, in particular, oftentimes held his Court in Winchester. On one of these occasions young Ethelwold was introduced to his notice. The King took a fancy to him, and shortly afterwards gave him an honourable appointment in his Palace. Ethelwold remained in Athelstan's Court a few years, and in the course of them won the esteem of some of the chief nobles of the country, whose friendship proved of great advantage to him in after years. A high career was now opening before him, but Ethelwold had no turn for a secular calling, either

military or political. In his heart of hearts he was longing to devote himself to the service of the King of kings. When Athelstan became aware of this he kindly forwarded his wishes by giving him letters of commendation to the Bishop of Winchester. Elphege Calvus at this time presided over that See. He was, it may be remembered, Dunstan's uncle, and Dunstan, as it happened, was then residing in his Palace. Thus Ethelwold and Dunstan became acquainted with each other, and they formed a friendship which lasted for life. Ordained the same day, and separated for a time, they soon rejoined each other in Glastonbury, where Ethelwold became a member of the Community gathered by Dunstan in his rebuilt Abbey. On his life in Glastonbury we need not dilate; it is enough to say that whatever he did, he did it to the best of his power. A studious and excellent scholar, he was equally good in that outdoor work which formed part of the duties of monastic life. "In gardening there was not his equal in the Community—in the cultivation of apples, in the growth of legumes, and other vegetables for the use of the refectory." In addition to this, he was also a very good architect, a mechanist, and artificer in gold and silver.

Aiming constantly at perfection, he had at this time a great desire to visit Fleury, which was then the headquarters of the Benedictine Rule. From this, however, he was diverted by King Edred, who knew

him well, and valuing him highly, was much averse to his leaving the Kingdom. To turn his thoughts into another channel, he presented him with an old Abbey at Abingdon. This Abbey had been famous in days gone by. Founded by Kentwin, one of the first Christian Kings of Wessex, it had been much favoured by his successors, above all, by King Ina, who enriched and endowed it munificently. Such had been its glory in the past. Its present condition was deplorable enough, for it was a ruin without an inhabitant, and its endowments were gone, only forty manses at most remained of its former vast possessions. The idea of its restoration took fast hold on Ethelwold's mind, and he soon became so interested in it that he lost all thoughts of going abroad. His skill in architecture now proved valuable. He personally superintended the rebuilding of the material fabric, and whilst doing so, taught and disciplined a number of young persons, who wished to become members of the new Community. King Edred took almost as much interest as himself in the restoration, contributing munificently towards the expenses, and giving lands and money for the endowment. One of the last acts of this pious King was to lay the foundation-stone of the handsome Church which Ethelwold had planned for the new Abbey. He died very shortly afterwards, and Ethelwold lost in him a most loving friend and benefactor.

We need not dwell on the political troubles which disturbed the Kingdom after Edred's death. (See S. Dunstan.) They delayed for a time the completion of Abingdon, but as soon as peace was restored, the work was resumed and finished. Abingdon Abbey flourished greatly, and soon came to be regarded as one of the best religious houses in the Kingdom. It had not, however, been completed when Ethelwold was chosen to fill the vacant See of his native city, Winchester.

Before we speak of his life there, it will not be amiss to dwell a little on the wonderful amount of Church restoration accomplished by him in various parts of the Kingdom. This he was authorized to do by the new King, Edgar, who had chosen him to be his confidential adviser, in which capacity he employed him much in matters of State. S. Ethelwold made use of his interest with the King to rescue from profanation and secular purposes many of the old religious foundations, which had been ruined by the Danes, and whose endowments had, for the most part, lapsed to the King. One of the first which he so rescued was S. Etheldrida's Abbey, which, it may be remembered, she had endowed with the Isle of Ely, and other vast possessions. Ely was on the point of being sold by the King, and two noblemen of Edgar's Court, well aware of the goodness of the land, were competing for the purchase. Before any bargain, however, was completed, the matter came to

the ears of Ethelwold, who, hastening to the King, acquainted him with the history of Ely, and urged its restoration, offering at the same time to purchase the land for that purpose. Edgar consented, and sold the estates to Ethelwold (no doubt on easy terms). He also assisted him munificently in the cost of rebuilding, and in the endowment of the new Abbey. Thus Ely was saved by Ethelwold, and has remained, under one form and another, a most important Church-foundation to the present day. Whilst Ethelwold was still engaged in rebuilding Ely, an incident occurred which, sad enough in itself, prepared the way for another grand Church restoration. Chief among the nobles of Edgar's Court was his Chancellor, Athulph. Rich in virtue, he abounded also in material wealth. The Earl lived most happily with the wife of his youth, and their union had been blessed with one little child, which they dearly loved and allowed to be the partner of their bed. One morning they woke up to find to their horror that they had overlaid it in their sleep. The child was dead! In their misery they charged themselves with its death, and could find no pleasure in life but in bewailing their folly. The Earl contemplated a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but afterwards, by Ethelwold's advice, changed his plans, and gave himself and all his fortune to the restoration of Medehampstead. This he rebuilt on a grand scale, and taking the vows, became the first Abbat of the

new house. The King and his nobles, who valued Athulf much, gave great contributions. So rich did the new Abbey become that Medehampstead lost its old name, and people called it *Goldenburg* (Golden City). Goldenburgh soon became abbreviated into Burg, and now we call it Peter-burg (*Peterborough*), from the name of the Saint to whom the Church is dedicated.

We must not pursue the story, however marvellous, of Ethelwold's further restorations. They included S. Guthlac's Abbey in Croyland, Olney, Thorny, and many others. *Malmesbury*, speaking of them, says with truth, that "it is indeed a wonder that a Bishop "of one See should be able to effect what the King "of England himself could scarcely undertake." No private munificence, indeed, could have sufficed for these gigantic works. S. Ethelwold, no doubt, was materially assisted by others; yet, is he justly entitled to this encomium. For the zeal which animated his own heart infected those among whom he lived, and caused them to vie with each other in pious and holy works. S. Ethelwold, in his Church restorations, was very careful to rescue from their dishonoured graves the bodies of the Saints which were lying under the ruins of their own Churches. For them he prepared costly shrines, and located them in places of honour inside the fabrics. In his own Cathedral (Winchester) he enshrined the bodies of SS. Birinus, Swithun, and his old Preceptor, Elphege Calvus.

Though much engaged in Church work elsewhere, S. Ethelwold proved himself a true and careful shepherd of his own flock. His Episcopate was noteworthy for the interest which he took in the education of the young, and for his charity to the poor. Naturally fond of children, he took a pleasure in teaching them. Many of his pupils, profiting by his instructions, rose to eminence, four of them are said to have become Archbishops. His unbounded charity for the poor may be gathered from the following anecdote :—“It happened in the course of his Episcopate, that there was once a very grievous famine in all parts of England, and great numbers died for lack of food. Ethelwold spent all the money that was in his possession on the perishing people, and when his money failed he ordered the ornaments of the Church, and a vast number of silver vessels, to be broken in pieces, and turned into money, protesting, with all his heart, that he could not endure to see metal images whole and entire, whilst man, created after the image of GOD, and redeemed by the precious blood of CHRIST, was perishing for the lack of food. By this means he purchased supplies of provisions, and sustained an innumerable crowd of needy people, who, to escape the misery of famine, had fled to him from all quarters. Moreover, those that were found half-dead in the streets and ways, he cherished with warmth, and so snatching them out

“of the very jaws of death, nourished them with “daily food.”

In the midst of all these varied labours, Ethelwold himself was far from strong. “The man of GOD,” his biographer tells us, “suffered frequent infirmity in his “stomach, and was troubled with a tumour in his legs, “so that he frequently passed the night sleepless from “pain, and yet in the daytime he went about, pale “indeed, yet as though he was well, and had nothing “to trouble him, for he was mindful of the Apostle’s “words, that ‘virtue is made perfect in weakness.’”

His last great work in Winchester was the rebuilding of the Cathedral, which was then attached to the old Abbey. The monks, emulating the Bishop’s zeal, joined heartily in the manual labour, carrying hods for the masons, and preparing their dinners, etc. So the work went merrily on, and the edifice soon rose to a great height. Ethelwold’s Cathedral has, of course, long ago perished. It was a wonderful structure for its day, “supported,” we are told, “by a great number of Oratories placed “round about it. It had so many entrances into “these side Chapels, that a stranger might be puzzled “to find the main entrance, and when led in by a “guide, would find, if left to himself, still more “difficulty in getting out.” The new Cathedral was dedicated on the 13th of the kalends of November, A.D. 980, with great solemnity and rejoicings. King Ethelred (the Unready) was present, and nearly all



the Dukes, Abbats, Earls, and nobles of England. "Never, perhaps," says the old writer, "was there such a Dedication Festival held in England for grandeur and generosity. The feast lasted two days, during which time all comers were feasted at tables groaning under the weight of meat and wine." Numerous Services were held in the new Cathedral in the course of the Festival. In these Services nine Bishops took part, among them Archbishop Dunstan, "now snowy-white with hoary locks." One most happy result of this joyful occasion was the creation of a most friendly feeling towards the Bishop in the minds of Ethelred's courtiers. Some of them, both judges and rulers, had hitherto stood aloof, and had opposed and resisted him. Henceforth, to the end of his life, he met with nothing from them but kindness and goodwill.

S. Ethelwold lived four years after this, but his health was breaking fast. In the year 984 he was able to pay S. Dunstan a visit in Canterbury, where they spent a most happy time together. On his journey home he was taken ill at Beddington, about sixty miles from Winchester, and his sickness increasing rapidly, he received the last Sacraments, and died shortly afterwards, August 1st, 984, in the 22nd year of his Episcopate. His body was conveyed to Winchester. He was buried in his new Cathedral, lamented by all, most of all by the poor who knew that they had lost in him their dearest friend and benefactor.

## **S. Oswald.**

**ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.**

A.D. 992.

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S. OSWALD was born of heathen parents, rich and noble Danes, who, settling in England, were there converted to Christianity. This was probably due to the influence of S. Odo, to whom they were nearly related. Embracing the Faith with all their heart, they lived pious and holy lives. They also paid great attention to the education of their children. Oswald, as a child, was remarkable for the elegance of his shape, and also for the sobriety of his disposition. He was sent by his father, at an early age, to his uncle Odo, who was now Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop welcomed his nephew, and noticing his ability, took care that he should receive the best education then possible, both in sacred and profane literature. As soon as he was of sufficient age, he made him a Canon of the old Church in Winchester, hoping that the introduction of a young and zealous Priest might be a step to better things in this ancient city, where of late

religion had decayed. In this, however, he was disappointed. The old Canons, accustomed to their easy ways, gave no favourable reception to the young Priest, who, they suspected, had been sent to reform them, and they made his position among them so painful that Oswald thought it best to resign his canonry, feeling assured that he could do no good in Winchester. He returned to his uncle, and entreated permission to go abroad to Fleury. Odo himself had been affiliated to that famous Abbey; he listened, therefore, with pleasure to his nephew's request, gave him commendatory letters, and sent him there with his blessing. Oswald found in Fleury the religious home he had longed for. He soon won for himself the love and esteem of the other members, and proved himself so good a neophyte, "that, coming "as he did, to be a disciple of others, he was found "before long a model for their imitation in all "Christian graces, above all, for his humility and "sweetness of temper." The Abbat, noticing his love of devotion, allowed him a private place in Church, whither he might retire at will, without fear of interruption, and where he might give himself up to prayer and contemplation.

His uncle, the Archbishop, hearing from time to time excellent reports of his nephew, returned thanks to GOD, and became very desirous of having him back in England. He wrote, accordingly, to the Abbat, begging him to send his nephew home, that

he might assist him in his old age, and also might benefit the English Church by teaching the admirable institutions which he had learned in Fleury. Oswald, however, had become so attached to the place that the thought of leaving it pained him grievously. He wrote many letters, excusing himself and delaying his return. But when tidings reached him that his uncle was seriously ill, he hastened back to England. It was, however, too late. The first news he heard on landing at Dover was that of his uncle's death, and his first sad task was to superintend his funeral. It was probably on this occasion that he met another uncle, Oskytel, then Bishop of Sherborne. Oskytel invited him, and would gladly have kept him with him to assist him in his work. He had not, however, been long with his uncle, when the See of Worcester was offered him by the King.

S. Oswald became Bishop of Worcester about A.D. 960. When he came to reside in his Diocese, he found himself confronted with the same difficulty which he had met with in Winchester. The Dean and Canons of the Cathedral (*S. Peter's*) gave him a very cold reception, and combined to oppose him. They were, most of them, men of good family in the Midlands, and could count upon the support of the chief nobles in Mercia. Secure in their position, they thwarted the new Bishop, and disconcerted his efforts. He was practically shut out of his Cathedral. Baffled for the time, Oswald contented himself with

planting a little community of zealous men at Westbury. These were of great service to him in his labours in Worcester. Here, too, he could retire for spiritual refreshment from the annoyances which he met with in his episcopal work. As soon as it was possible, he began to build a handsome Church in Worcester, which he dedicated to S. Mary. In this Church he could minister without let or hindrance. The people in Worcester soon began to discern the difference between the hearty devotional Services and earnest preaching in this Church, and the unedifying Services given elsewhere, and so it came to pass, before long, that S. Mary's Church was crowded and S. Peter's emptied. Several of the Canons, at this time, threw up their preferments, and placed themselves at S. Oswald's service. The old Cathedral never recovered its prestige. S. Mary's came to be regarded as the Episcopal See in Worcester, and has remained so to the present day. Thus S. Oswald's work in Worcester was crowned with success, and, as his influence increased, he was able to do much in his extensive Diocese, which reached far beyond the limits of the present See. Zealous laymen, uniting with the Clergy, now began, of their own accord, to rebuild the Churches and religious houses in their own immediate neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup> Others founded new houses. Among these

<sup>1</sup> Chief among these restorations was that of Whinchelcombe, in Gloucestershire. S. Oswald recovered its endowments and rebuilt the

none might compete in grandeur with that of Ramsey Abbey in Huntingdonshire. Founded by Earl Ailwin, a cousin of King Edgar, Ramsey remained for many centuries one of the most famous Abbeys in the Midlands. This Abbey was built under the superintendence of S. Oswald, by Earl Ailwin's particular desire. Thus the revival of religion which had begun elsewhere, spread, through S. Oswald's influence, into the Midlands. When Oswald had been eleven years in Worcester, his uncle Oskytel, Archbishop of York, died, and Oswald was called upon to succeed him. By the express wish of the King, he did not resign the See of Worcester, but retained it with the Archbishopric. The custom of the times allowed of such pluralities, and no doubt great pressure was put upon Oswald. Nevertheless, it is much to be regretted that he yielded to it, for he thus helped to form a bad precedent, which others used for their own private ends, and from which the See of Worcester suffered greatly in after times. This arrangement, however, enabled him to complete his work in Worcester, and at Ramsey; in both of which he took the greatest interest. He held the Arch-see in the North of England for many years, but few particulars of his work there are recorded. His biographer contents himself with saying, "that he was most assiduous in the visitation

Abbey and the Church. It was now dedicated to S. Kenelm, son of its original founder, King Kenulf.

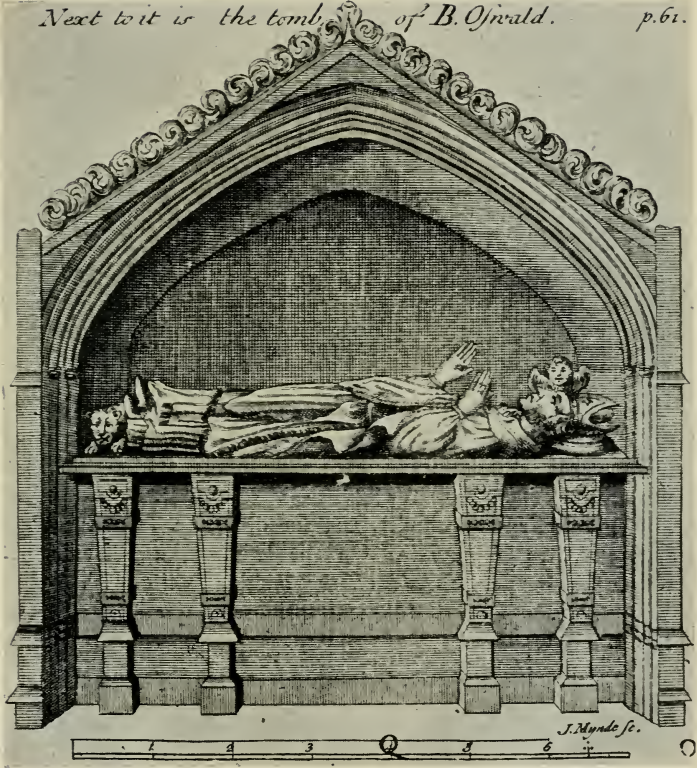
“of his Diocese;” his chief interest seems to have been in Worcester, where he not unfrequently resided, and he was staying there when his last call came. For some time previous his health had begun to fail, but though now old and feeble, he could not be induced to make any change in the severity of his life. It happened to be Lent, and it had long been his custom to wash the feet of twelve poor men before he took his own breakfast. This was no perfunctory ceremony. He washed and dried their feet with his own hands, and waited upon them afterwards, whilst they had their breakfast. Such was his daily custom. The day before his death he seemed to be much absorbed in thought and prayer, and, although apparently the same as usual in health, he asked for, and received, the last Offices of the Church. That night he went to bed at the usual time, and rose, as was his custom, at midnight, for Nocturns in the Church, where he remained after the Service in private prayer till the morning dawned. Then he went to the chamber where his pensioners were awaiting him, and washed their feet. When all had been completed—and they, before leaving, were bowing their thanks—he suddenly fell down and expired at their feet. Thus this holy man, faithful to the end, passed through death into life whilst engaged in ministering to CHRIST in his poorer members. No death can be imagined more worthy of a Christian or a better conclusion to a holy life.

S. Oswald died February 29th, A.D. 992, in the 30th year of his Episcopate. His body was laid in the Cathedral of Worcester, on the south side of the Altar ; but it does not rest there now. It was translated by his successor, Bishop Aldulf, who, becoming Archbishop of York, took up the body, enshrined, and translated it into York Cathedral.



Next to it is the tomb of B. Oswald.

p. 61.



S. OSWALD'S TOMB.



**S. Edward.**

MARTYR.

A.D. 978.

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EDWARD was the son of King Edgar, by his first wife, Elfleda the Fair, whose piety and faith he inherited. Comely of countenance, and cheerful in disposition, he was much beloved by all who knew him, with the exception of his stepmother, Queen Elfrida, who had a son of her own, for whom she was anxious to secure the throne. It is said that Edward suffered not a little from her violence, even in his father's lifetime. When King Edward died, somewhat unexpectedly, A.D. 975, she did her utmost to obtain the election for her son, Ethelred, a child of seven years, but her intrigues were baffled by S. Dunstan. Edward was elected and crowned, and the disappointed Elfrida retired from Court. The young King, who was of a most amiable temper, in no way resented his stepmother's designs, but continued to treat her with uniform kindness, and assigned to her the county of Dorset for her residence and maintenance. In the same spirit of moderation

he conducted himself with such kindness towards the disaffected nobles, who had been drawn by her to intrigue against him, that they became much attached to him. On the other hand, the Queen, his step-mother, never for a moment relinquished the object of her ambition, but lay in wait for any opportunity by which she might effect her purpose. Thus matters remained for two years or more, when at last this relentless woman gained her desire. The young King, who had been hunting in an adjoining wood, came to her mansion at Corfe to see his brother Ethelred, and was there slain by one of her servants in front of her palace.

The oldest account we have of this base deed is that given in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which may be regarded as cotemporaneous: "This year, A.D. "979, was King Edward slain at eventide at Corfe-gate, on the 15th before the kalends of April "(March 18th), and then was he buried at Wareham "without any kind of kingly honour."

This brief notice is supplemented by old writers, who give the particulars, and who in the main agree. The following interesting account, taken from Bolland, seems on the whole reliable:—"It happened that on "a certain day he (Edward) came with hounds "and horsemen to hunt in the wood, which adjoins "Wareham, then a very large wood, though now the "trees are gone, and only a few shrubs remain to "mark the site of it on the now open fields. After

“ he had been engaged in hunting for some time he  
“ thought of his brother, young Ethelred, and deter-  
“ mined to go and see him, for he had a very sincere  
“ affection for him. The house of his stepmother  
“ (in which Ethelred was brought up) was near this  
“ wood in a place called by the inhabitants Corph,  
“ which is about three miles from Wareham, where a  
“ celebrated castle has since been built. Now as he  
“ was on his way thither, it happened that his com-  
“ panions, intent on their sport, dispersed themselves,  
“ so that he was left without a single attendant, and  
“ he came on alone to the house wholly unsuspecting.  
“ He was seen in the distance, and it was announced  
“ to the Queen by her servants that King Edward  
“ was coming to see her. She, rejoicing that she had  
“ found an opportunity for her evil plans, presently  
“ went out to meet him with her satellites, received  
“ him joyfully, and with a most bland and friendly  
“ manner invited him to share her hospitality. This,  
“ however, he declined, expressing at the same time  
“ his wish to see and speak with his brother Ethelred.  
“ The wicked Queen on this turned herself to a new  
“ device. She ordered wine to be brought, in order  
“ that, as he was thoughtlessly drinking it, she might  
“ have a better opportunity of carrying out her design.  
“ In the mean time one of her attendants, worse than  
“ the rest, imitating the deed of Judas, gave him the  
“ kiss of peace, the better to lull all suspicion by this  
“ shew of love, and he succeeded, for, when Edward

“had received the cup from the butler, and had put it to his mouth, the man who gave him the kiss leapt in front, and fixed the knife in his stomach.<sup>1</sup> Edward, having received this wound, rode off, but only a short space, when he fell from his horse to the ground, and so died.”

It would appear from another account that he was dragged to death in the wood. *Malmesbury* writes, “Dreadfully wounded, with all his remaining strength, he clapped spurs to his horse in order to join his companions, when one foot slipping he was dragged by the other through the trackless paths and recesses of the wood, where the streaming blood gave evidence of his death to those who were sent by the Queen in pursuit of him.” By the Queen’s order his body was concealed for one night in a lonely cottage in the wood.<sup>2</sup> On the following morning it was taken by her domestics and thrust privily into a lonely marsh, not far from the village of Wareham. She herself retired to an estate belonging to her at Bere (which is about ten miles distant from Corfe), hoping thereby to avoid suspicion. In this she was altogether disappointed. Whether through the betrayal of her own servants, or in some other way, the dreadful secret came abroad, and it was known every-

<sup>1</sup> The long, thin knife with which Edward was stabbed was preserved for a long time in Faversham Church.

<sup>2</sup> A small Church was afterwards built over the site of this cottage.

where that the King was dead, and also who had been the cause of his death. It became necessary that the proper steps should be taken for placing a successor on the throne, and her son Ethelred, the only remaining heir to the crown, was elected. Thus she obtained the object of her ambition. Moreover, she was above the reach of justice, yet she was not left unpunished. It is remarkable how vengeance overtook this woman, even in her hour of triumph. So strong was the sense of popular indignation against her that she found herself universally hated. Unable to endure it, she retired into private life, and eventually hid her shame and infamy in a convent, which she built for herself on a spot near Wareham, on which her first husband (whom she had betrayed) had been slain by King Edgar. Here she strove, in her latter days, to deaden the pain of remorse by various kinds of strangely-devised penances.

In the meantime the outraged loyalty of the English people found a vent in paying every honour possible to the remains of their late King. His body had been already taken up from the marsh into which it had been thrust, and placed in holy ground, i.e., in the Churchyard at Wareham ; but it soon came to be generally felt that it ought to be translated to some more worthy place. The nobles of the land (Earl Elfer, above all, who at one time had combined with Elfrida against Edward) were the first to urge

Dunstan, as Archbishop of Canterbury, to take the necessary steps for this translation. After much consideration the town of Shaftesbury, where King Alfred (great grandfather of S. Edward) had built an Abbey, was selected to be Edward's resting-place, and a day was fixed for the ceremony. On that day a wonderful assemblage might have been seen at Wareham. There, with S. Dunstan, were the Bishops and Clergy; there also the Earls and Thanes, and numerous companies of monks and nuns; there, lastly, a countless multitude of people. The body was taken up, and was found to be incorrupt. This added greatly to the enthusiasm of the people, who accompanied the funeral with hymns and chants and shouts of joy to Shaftesbury. There the body was laid in the Church of Alfred's Abbey, on the north side of the Altar.

Edward's popularity (if we may use such an expression) lasted for centuries. How far it was traceable to the innate loyalty of the English people, how far to their intense hatred of oppression and injustice, may be a question, but the fact is certain, that from the time that Edward's remains were laid in Shaftesbury it became one of the most popular places of resort in the whole Kingdom. Crowds of pilgrims came to worship there. Benefactions of land and of other valuables—"offerings to CHRIST and "His holy martyr"—were contributed by the great people of the land. Notable among these benefactors



was his own brother, Ethelred, the innocent cause of his death, who, no doubt, loved his brother. By his command the body of the Saint was taken up, and elevated above the pavement. *Three days in every year*—the day of his death, that of his translation to Shaftesbury, and the day when his body was enshrined and elevated above the pavement—were observed as Festivals in S. Edward's honour.

## S. EDITHA.



## PREFATORY NOTE.

Mention is made in old writers of several English Saints called Editha. Two only of them seem to be historical, viz., S. Editha, a daughter of King Edward the Elder ; and S. Editha, daughter of King Edgar. The others, so-called, are either legendary, or, when correctly rendered, may be identified with one or other of the above, who, by way of distinction, may be termed from their respective Abbeys, *S. Editha of Polesworth*, and *S. Editha of Wilton*. We give them in the order in which they lived.

## **S. Editha (or Eadgith) of Polesworth.**

CIRCA A.D. 926.

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THIS lady was a sister of S. Edburge; both were daughters of King Edward the Elder, and granddaughters of King Alfred. After her father's death she was given in marriage by her brother, King Athelstan, to Sihtric, King of Northumbria. This Sihtric was a Danish King, who had established himself in the North of England. Previously to his entering into an alliance with Athelstan, he had renounced heathenism, and had been baptized, and on these terms Athelstan gave him his sister in marriage. Scarcely, however, had the marriage been solemnized, when the faithless King changed his mind. He renounced Christianity and repudiated his wife. This treatment gave so rude a shock to the mind of the Princess, that she could thenceforth find no pleasure in the ordinary pursuits of life. She retired from the world, and became a nun in a Convent in the Midlands. This was at Polesworth, in Warwickshire, near Tamworth. Here she lived many years,

“practising holiness in the fear of GOD.” After her death she was regarded as a Saint. Several Churches are dedicated to her. Among these are Monk’s Kirby and Polesworth in Warwickshire, and Church-Eaton in Staffordshire.

## **S. Editha of Wilton.**

CIRCA 984.

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S. EDITHA of Wilton was a natural daughter of King Edgar. Her mother, the Lady Wulfritha, to escape from the King's importunities, had fled into a Nunnery, but not even the sanctity of the place proved to be a protection for her. The King found means to have her taken by force from her place of refuge. For this shameful act he afterwards underwent a seven years' penance, and remained for that time without his crown. (See S. Dunstan.) S. Editha was brought up most religiously in Wilton Nunnery, of which her mother had become the Abbess. She repaid her mother's care by an admirable docility, and was so attached to the Abbey that she never felt any wish to leave it. "Her's was a mind," we are told, "that delighted in prayer, yet would she find leisure to serve CHRIST in his distressed members. She fed the poor, took care of the sick, and dressed their most foul and leprous sores, preferring those afflicted persons to the King's children." She was allowed very early to make her religious profession, for which the

consent of the King, her father, was obtained, though not without much difficulty.

King Edgar became a great benefactor to Wilton Abbey for her sake, and would have made her Abbess of other houses, but she humbly preferred to remain in her own community in subjection to her mother. *Malmesbury*, speaking of S. Editha, tells us that there was one point in her conduct which staggered the opinions of her friends, and led them into false conclusions, from the splendour of the costly garments which she wore. For this she was once openly reprov'd by S. Ethelwold, who exclaimed, "O daughter, these are not the garments which CHRIST delights in!" To whom she replied, "Believe me, father, as pure and humble a mind may dwell under these robes as under the roughest goatskin." And, indeed, it was her habit to wear beneath these costly garments a sharp and painful haircloth. Archbishop Dunstan had a great affection for her, and could not restrain his grief when he saw too plainly that her health was seriously declining. Before she died she built at Wilton a Church to S. Deny's, and to this Church was attached a Xenodochium (or hospital), wherein thirteen poor people were refreshed and fed. She died six weeks after the consecration of her Church, about A.D. 984, and was buried in it.

**S. Wulfhilda.**

ABBESS.

ABOUT 990.



THIS lady was descended from Count Nesting, who obtained his name under the following strange circumstances. King Alfred, one day, attended by his lords, was hunting in a wood, when the cries of a child were heard from the top of a great tree. One of the courtiers climbed the tree, and there found on its top an immense nest, in which lay a child of exquisite beauty. It was wrapped in purple, and had two rich bracelets on its arms. The King, delighted with its beauty, caused it to be brought up in his Palace, and when it was baptized, gave it the name of Nesting. In due time, when the child was grown up, he placed him among his nobles, and made him a Count. This Nesting was the grandfather of Earl Wulfhelm, the father of S. Wulfhilda (who was his youngest child). She was a young lady of great beauty, but destined, by her parent's wishes as well as by her own, for the cloister in which she was brought up. It happened, before she had taken the vow, that King Edgar saw

her. He fell in love with her, and sought to delude her by promise of marriage. Failing to deceive her, he betook himself to an aunt of hers, the lady Wenfleda, who lived at Whenwell. This base woman, under pretence of illness, obtained permission from the Abbess of Wilton for her niece to visit her. Wulfhilda had not been long in the house before the King also came to be a guest there. Wenfleda prepared for him a great feast, and caused her niece to sit by his side at the entertainment. During the dinner, the King paid her every attention, but his attentions were received by her coldly and in silence, and as soon as she was able, she obtained permission to retire to her room. A guard was placed at the door, but she managed somehow, in disguise, to escape from the house to a cottage in the vicinity, whence, in the early dawn, she found her way to her home in Wilton. The King soon discovered her retreat, and followed her there. On hearing of his arrival, she fled into the Church, and laid hold of the altar. But her fears were needless. The King, fully convinced of her constancy and resolution, came into the Church, but only to assure her that she need fear no further molestation from himself; on the contrary, he would do what lay in his power to further her wishes. Not long after this she took the vows, and was made by the King Abbess of Barking, which he greatly enriched for her sake. She herself also conferred on Barking twenty-four villages (the chief part of



her patrimony). With the remainder she built an Abbey at Horton, in Dorset. She ruled both these houses with great prudence till her death, which occurred about 990.



The Closing Period of the  
Anglo-Saxon Era.



## S. Alphege.<sup>1</sup>

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

A.D. 1012.

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S. ALPHEGE was of noble birth. His parents, good and devout Christians, noticed with joy tokens of early piety in their child, which they encouraged to the best of their power. They took care also to give him a good education. Alphege was tenderly attached to his parents, more especially to his mother, but his religious instincts carried him away from home; he renounced his inheritance, and, as soon as his age allowed of it, became a monk at Derehurst, in Gloucestershire, where, at that time, was a small but devout Community. There he learned the first rudiments of the religious life. After a few years spent in Derehurst, he passed on to Glastonbury, which, under S. Dunstan's rule, had become the chief Abbey in England. Thirsting for perfection, he, after a time, obtained leave to retire from Glaston-

<sup>1</sup> S. Alphege's English name was Aelfeah, which, rendered into Latin, became Elphegus; and this was re-translated afterwards into Elphege, or *Alphege*, which is the name by which he is usually known in modern times.

bury to live a life of solitude. For this purpose he built himself a little cell, contiguous to Bath, into which he shut himself. He was followed there by a number of his friends, who came to consult him in their difficulties, spiritual and temporal. Not a few of these were of high rank, and great wealth. Some of them gave large possessions to the Church. Others retired from the world, and put themselves under Alphege's guidance and rule. Thus a little Community was formed in Bath, and Alphege, for their sakes, left his solitude to live among them. When he believed that they were sufficiently initiated in the discipline of the religious life, he returned to his cell. His departure was premature. These young converts were not yet fit to be left to themselves. Misled by one, worse than the rest, they fell into various irregularities, wholly discordant with their religious profession. They rose at night to eat and drink, and feasted together like so many schoolboys, and committed various other improprieties. This went on for some time, when an event occurred which startled them out of their profanity. This was the sudden death of the ringleader, "who," we are told, "died horribly," i.e., it would appear whilst in the commission of some act of wickedness. This awful event brought the other delinquents to their senses, and they thenceforth began again to live in accordance with their rule. Not very long after this, i.e., in the year 984, Ethelwold, the saintly Bishop of

Winchester, died, and his death proved the occasion of a strenuous struggle between the two parties in the Church, the seculars and the regulars, to secure the election of one of their friends for this most important post. The appointment lay principally with the King, and Archbishop Dunstan had sufficient influence to obtain it for S. Alphege. This was a defeat for the seculars, but S. Alphege was in such repute that not a single voice was raised in opposition. All classes united in approval of his election. He was forthwith conducted with great ceremony, and amid a vast concourse of people, to Canterbury, where he was consecrated by Archbishop Dunstan. From this time S. Alphege made a total change in the mode of his life. All thoughts of solitude were thenceforth banished. Feeling that his time was no longer at his own disposal, he devoted it to the needs of his Diocese, and the edification of his people, in whose behalf he expended all his energies. In the meantime, opportunities for his private devotions, as they occurred, he gladly welcomed, and still continued to practise (so far as he was able) the austerities to which he had accustomed himself in early life. In habit of body he was indeed so thin and emaciated that when he held up his hands in Church to give the Blessing the light could be seen through his fingers. But his health was good, and he was able to do an amount of work which few of his cotemporaries could equal. He soon endeared him-

self to all the people in his Diocese, but most of all to the poor, who found in him one ever ready to help them in their necessities, and to shield them from oppression. Stirred by his example, many of those in affluence gave alms with such liberality that a poor man, it was said, could not be found in his Diocese.

The state of the country, at this time, was most unsatisfactory. Its government was in the hands of a young, incapable King (Ethelred the Unready), and the Danes, who had been kept out of the country in previous reigns, were quick to discern their opportunity. They soon recommenced their depredations, and meeting with feeble opposition, came over in larger numbers, and plundered England at their will. So it came to pass that the horrors of the ninth century were repeated in the eleventh, only with this sad difference, that, whereas in the former age the tale is brightened by the heroic acts of the English, and by the exploits of King Alfred and our other Princes, the base conduct of the English in the eleventh century fills the reader with burning shame, as he reads of the incapacity of the King, the treachery and cowardice of his officers, and the want of all public spirit among the people at large. It became a common custom in Ethelred's reign to buy off the hostility of the Danes by giving them large sums of money. This only whetted their appetite. They quickly returned, and had to be



bought off again with still larger sums. Thus the country became impoverished to the last degree, drained by the payment of these vast sums of money, and spoiled at the same time by the ravages of the pirates. During this time of gloom, however, some streaks of light were discernible, giving hopes for the future. The Danes, who had been for so long a time the scourge of civilized Europe, were beginning to be affected by the superior manners, and by the religion of their victims. Strange as it may appear, not a few of these barbarous Vikings, who left their own shores only to plunder, were converted to Christianity before they returned home. It may be that some of these converts had an eye to the splendid gifts which gilded their baptism, and such converts naturally fell away afterwards ; but it is also equally certain that others remained true to their profession, and were of great service in the introduction of Christianity among the nations of Scandinavia. Among these must be classed a remarkable chief, Olave Trigva, who was baptized by Bishop Alphege under the following circumstances : Olave, in one of his voyages, made the acquaintance of a Christian Anchoret, who lived in the Scilly Islands. This man's conversation impressed him greatly, and predisposed him in favour of Christianity, and so it came to pass that when, later on, he came to England, he made friends with King Ethelred, and when that King invited him to stay with him at Andover, he

willingly accepted his invitation. Bishop Alphege, with another lord, was commissioned by the King to conduct the Danish Viking to Court. In the course of this visit Olave declared his wish to become a Christian. He was baptized and confirmed by the Bishop before he left. On his departure he gave a solemn pledge to the King that he would never come again to England with hostile intent. This pledge he faithfully kept. In process of time, Olave became King of Norway, and his latter years were spent in extirpating idolatry. Fierce as another Jehu, whom he somewhat resembled in character, Olave was more zealous in uprooting the idol worship of his ancestors than in cultivating the graces of his new religion—but he prepared the way for better things in Norway; nor was it long before that country, under a more pious King of the same name, received the Faith.

But to return. When Alphege had been Bishop of Winchester twelve years, the Arch-see of Canterbury became vacant by the death of Archbishop Alfric, and he was chosen to succeed him. His Archiepiscopate lasted six years: of its details we know but little, and must content ourselves with the following summary: After paying the customary visit to Rome, he began his labours by holding many councils for the better knowledge of the Faith. He gave much attention to preaching, in which he laboured for the conversion of sinners, whom he

sought to win by kindness, weeping with them, and pleading daily in their behalf the Sacrifice of the death of CHRIST. On high Festivals of the Church he made use (we are told) of much ceremony, hoping thereby to allure the people to greater reverence. In the course of his Episcopate he added greatly to the Ornaments in use in the Cathedral; yet on pressing occasions he, like S. Ethelwold, his predecessor at Winchester, was ready to sacrifice them in behalf of the poor.

In the meantime the troubles from the Danes increased continually. In the year 1009 a vast horde, under Thurkyll, arrived off Kent. Canterbury was unprepared for a siege; the citizens paid £3,000 to be left in peace, and the Danes went elsewhere, but only to ravage wherever they went, and in the autumn of 1011 they returned to Kent and laid siege to Canterbury. The chief men in the city, consulting their own safety, escaped by flight before the city was fully invested, and urged the Archbishop to accompany them, but he refused to leave his people. Their leaders gone, the citizens were in a helpless state, but were inspirited by the Archbishop. Gathering them together, he exhorted, comforted, blessed them, urging them to fight manfully for their homes, their wives, and their children. Thus encouraged, the citizens made a brave defence, and for twenty days defeated the Danes. At the end of that time their provisions

began to fail; the Danes pressed on the siege more closely, and getting nearer to the town, hurled flaming firebrands into it. Nor was it long before they effected an entrance. Over the horrors that then ensued we must draw a veil, it must suffice to say that neither women nor children were spared. The citizens had fled into the Cathedral, which was thus completely filled to its utmost extent. The Archbishop himself was there engaged in his devotions; when, however, he heard of the cruelties which the Danes were enacting in the streets, he broke from the hands of those who would have detained him, and presenting himself to the soldiery in the midst of their bloody work, made an earnest appeal to them. He was immediately seized, brutally treated, chained, and so led back to the Cathedral that he might see its ruin. Some of the soldiers mounting on the roof, which was plated with lead, made fires upon it, and the heat caused the molten mineral to fall upon the people crowded beneath: a general rush was made to the doors, which were guarded by the Danes, who slew the people as they appeared outside. The Clergy, the monks, and other prisoners were brought into the market-place, and were there divided into four groups. In one were placed the women, in a second the children, in a third the men, and in the fourth the Clergy and monks. These groups were *decimated*, not in the ordinary sense of the term, i.e., by slaying one in every ten, but

by killing nine and saving only one alive. Thus out of forty monks only four were spared. A certain number, however, of their captives were not subjected to this decimation. These were the individuals from whom they expected to obtain a high ransom, and the Archbishop was among this number. As he was being hurried through the streets by a guard of soldiers, he met on the way a band of wretched captives who, with loggared feet, were being driven through the city; he lingered to whisper a few words of comfort in their ears, for which he was stabbed in the shoulder by one of his guards, and that so severely that the blood ran freely down. Even some of the Danes were shocked at this outrage. Arrived at the Fleet, he was thrust in a dark, narrow, damp dungeon, where he was kept in chains for many weeks. During this time he never ceased to say the Offices of Prayer, and daily celebrated the Holy Eucharist. After a time the Danish army left Canterbury, and took up its quarters at Greenwich, hoping to terrorise London, from which city a heavy ransom was expected. They brought *S. Alphege* along with them. Whilst they were at Greenwich an alarming epidemic (of the nature of cholera) broke out in the army, and as many as 2,000 were prostrated. It continued to spread, and many died daily. There were among the Danish soldiery a certain number who were Christians, and these now openly declared their belief that the plague was a

judgment on the army for its bad treatment of the Archbishop. The soldiers derided this at first, but, as the plague continued to spread, they, in their alarm, were frightened into believing it, and thenceforth began to treat the Archbishop with greater leniency. Easter was approaching, and the Christians in the army persuaded their companions to form themselves into a congregation on Maundy Thursday. S. Alphege was brought out of prison to preach to them. He did so, and gave to the sick some bread which he had blessed. After this, though still detained in prison, he was treated honourably. This calm, however, only preceded another storm. It arose as follows: the Danes notified to the Archbishop that he might be set at liberty on the payment of fifty talents of silver, a condition being appended that he should persuade the King to pay £10,000, as the price of peace. S. Alphege absolutely declined to listen to these conditions. What his reasons were we cannot say for certain, but there is little or no doubt that he scrupled to give to these heathen Danes the treasures of the Church for the sake of his own safety. It would be difficult to describe the fury of the Danes when they heard of his refusal. They resorted to every means in their power to force him into compliance. Among other rigours resorted to, his cell was filled with noisome smoke.

It happened about this time (it was Saturday in





MARTYRDOM OF S. ALPHEGE.



Easter week) that the army held a great feast in Greenwich. Large stores of wine had lately been brought into the camp, and in course of the feast the Danes drank freely. When they were well drunken they ordered the Archbishop to be brought into the hall. Fetched out of prison, a piteous spectacle, he passed through the streets of the town on horseback to the Danish hustings. On his entrance into the hall of feasting, he was greeted with loud shouts, "*Gold! Bishop! Gold!* or we will make a spectacle "of you."

"I will give you gold," the Saint calmly replied, "*the gold of God's Word.*"

Catching the meaning of his answer, and enraged by it, they rushed like wild beasts from their seats, and struck him down with the backs of their axes. Others hurled at him the bones and heads of the oxen on which they had been feasting. More dead than alive, S. Alphege tried to rise on his knees, only to fall again. As he was still struggling to rise and address them, a Dane, named Thrum, whom the Saint had baptized shortly before, seeing his misery, and moved, as it were, by a sort of "impious piety," ran up to him, and striking his axe into his head, put an end to his sufferings. Thus perished this noble Archbishop, in the 59th year of his age. A great revulsion of feeling occurred in the minds of the Danes when the effects of their feasting had passed away. They began to regret what they had done, and they treated the

Archbishop's remains with respect. The Bishop of Dorchester (Ednoth), a friend of S. Alphege's, hearing of his death, ventured into the camp to beg the body, and it was given up to him. The Bishop of London came also to Greenwich. The body was conveyed by these prelates to London "where the townsmen received it with all reverence, and buried it in S. Paul's Minster." "And there," the old chronicler continues, "GOD now manifesteth the miraculous powers of the holy Martyr." S. Alphege's body remained in S. Paul's till the year 1023. In the course of the eleven intervening years great political changes had occurred in England. Ethelred the Unready finished his miserable life and reign, A.D. 1016. Edmund Ironsides, who rallied the English around him and so often defeated the Danes, fell by the hand of an assassin the same year; and Canute obtained possession of the whole of England. Then, when matters seemed at their worst, a change for the better came. Canute, so cruel and barbarous in his earlier years, was changed from a wolf into a lamb. All traces of barbarism vanished from his character, and the English had reason to thank GOD for giving them a wise, a good, and capable King. He passed his latter years doing his best to make amends for the injustice and cruelty of his earlier days. Delighting in good works of various kinds, he took an especial pleasure in restoring Churches and Abbeys which

had been ruined or injured by himself or his father (Swein). And for the same reason he paid the utmost honour to the memory of those who had been slain by his countrymen. When, therefore, it was proposed that the body of S. Alphege should be translated to his own Cathedral, he joined most heartily in the proposal, and took a personal share in the translation, and, it is said, assisted with his own hands in raising the body from the tomb. It was taken up on the sixth day before the ides of June, A.D. 1023, and was found to be incorrupt. An immense cortège of Churchmen and nobles, headed by the King, conveyed it to the Thames, where it was placed in a ship, which was steered by the King himself, and so carried over the river to Southwark. "There," the old chronicler continues, "the body of the holy Martyr was delivered to the Archbishop and his company, who, with a worshipful band and winsome joy, bore it to Rochester. Then on the third day came Imma, the lady (Queen Emma), with her royal child, Hardacnute; and then they all with much state and bliss, and songs of praise, bore the holy Archbishop into Canterbury, and there worshipfully brought him into Christ Church (the Cathedral), and there deposited his holy body on the north side of CHRIST'S Altar."

## **S. Sigefrid.**

APOSTLE OF SWEDEN.

A.D. 1002.

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TOWARDS the close of the Anglo-Saxon Era a fresh burst of missionary zeal occurred in our country ; and Englishmen again left our shores in great numbers to carry the Faith to such nations as were still heathen. Holland, indeed, Belgium and Germany afforded now no openings for missionary enterprise. They had become a part of Christendom, but the Scandinavian nations still remained as barbarous and as heathen as ever. Thitherward then our English Missionaries began in great numbers to turn their steps. The story of their labours has unfortunately been most scantily recorded. We are able to give but few particulars. So much, however, is certain, that very great success attended their efforts, so much so that we may safely say that Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, all three, owe their Christianity, in the main, to English Missionaries. Among the noble adventurers who laboured for CHRIST in these countries few did a more famous work than S. Sigefrid, who has always been regarded as the

Apostle of Sweden. The circumstances which led to his Mission were as follows: Olave Scobong, who was King of Sweden about the middle of the tenth century, had established friendly relations with the King of England. Olave was a heathen, but well-disposed to Christianity, and in letters which passed between him and the English King he expressed a desire to know something of the Christian religion, and requested the King to send him a teacher. There seems little doubt that this King was Edred, who reigned 946-955. Edred hailed this request with joy, as affording an opportunity for the re-introduction of Christianity into Sweden, where it had before been preached by S. Anschar,<sup>1</sup> but had long since been forgotten. He discussed the question with his chief men, and all agreed that it was desirable that the King's request should be complied with, but the difficulty was in finding a Missionary for so hazardous an undertaking. When no one else volunteered, Sigefrid, at that time Archdeacon of York, declared his willingness to accept the Mission. His offer was gladly accepted, for he was known to be a man of worth and piety. Sigefrid gathered together a small band of Missionaries, among whom were his three nephews, Unaman, Sunaman, and Wiaman. When all was ready they set sail for Sweden, had a

<sup>1</sup> An interesting account of this Missionary, and of his heroic labours in Denmark and Sweden, is given in Dr. Maclear's *Missionary History of the Middle Ages*, p. 234.

successful voyage, and landed in Wexiow on the 21st June, A.D. 950. Sigefrid erected a cross in token of the Faith he came to teach, and began to preach among the people. The Goths inhabited this part of the country. They were divided into twelve clans, or tribes, and each clan had its own chieftain. Sigefrid invited these chiefs to pay him a visit. They came, and stayed some time with him, enquiring and discussing, and before their visit came to an end they all accepted Christianity and were baptized. When he dismissed them home, he bade them return on the tenth day for their Confirmation. When the day arrived, eleven only re-appeared, and the Missionary feared that the missing chief had lapsed from the Faith; but his fears were groundless, he had suddenly died. He was interred with the rites of Christian burial, and, as a memorial of his Faith, a cross was erected over his grave. The conversion of their chiefs had a great effect, moving the people to accept Christianity, and vast numbers of them were baptized. In the mean time tidings had reached the King of the arrival of the Missionaries, and he sent an invitation to Sigefrid to visit him. Sigefrid left Wexiow in charge of his nephews, and made a journey into the province of Verendia, where the King was staying. Olave received him with great honour, kept him in his Palace, listened heedfully to his teaching, and before long became a convert, and was baptized by S.

Sigefrid. The conversion of the King led to that of the people. Olave's family, his Court, and his army were baptized together with him. The King, in memory of this great event, gave Sigefrid his Palace at Husabakynd to serve for his residence, and built a Church there, which he most amply endowed. Sigefrid stayed a long time in Verendia, preaching, and building up the Church in that province, and as the multitude of the believers increased, he, with the King's sanction, divided this part of Sweden into two Sees, one of which was placed at Upsall, the other at Strengues. Many Churches also were built in various centres of the province, and Clergy ordained to minister in them.

In the mean while, however, whilst he was engaged in these happy labours in Verendia, a re-action in favour of idolatry arose in Wexiow. The heathen part of the population, still in the ascendant, vexed at the conversion of the King, and the rapid progress of Christianity, rose in rebellion. They spent their first fury on the Church in Wexiow, which they wrecked. Taking possession of the town, they maltreated the Christians, and put to death any of the Missionaries who fell into their hands. Among these were Sigefrid's three nephews, whom they beheaded. Their bodies they hid in a dense wood of vast extent, their heads they thrust into a ponderous stone coffer, which was plunged into a lake. When they had completed the wreck of Wexiow, they passed on in a

tumultuous manner through the province, perpetrating the same barbarities on the Christians. These lawless proceedings were, however, not of long duration. The more loyal part of the people rallied round the King, who defeated the rebels in battle, and restored peace to the country.

Sigefrid, as soon as it was possible, hastened back to Wexiow, where a sad spectacle awaited him. The place was in ruins, the bodies of the Christians were lying in the streets. His first care was to give them fitting burial; but the bodies of his nephews could not be found. Their heads at last were discovered. These were enshrined in the Church at Wexiow, and for many centuries regarded with veneration.

The rebel chiefs, by whose orders these Martyrs had been slain, were condemned to capital punishment; but S. Sigefrid saved their lives by earnest intercession in their behalf, and the King consented to commute their sentence to the payment of a vast sum of money. This the King would have bestowed on the Saint, but he absolutely refused to accept it, notwithstanding the losses of his Mission, and the difficulties to be met with in the restoration of his Church.

S. Sigefrid lived to a good old age. He died, A.D. 1002, and was buried in the Church at Wexiow, where his tomb was held in great honour. He was canonized by Pope Hadrian IV., who, himself an Englishman, had in early life been a Missionary, and did much for the conversion of Norway.



**S. Eschill.**

BISHOP AND MARTYR.

ELEVENTH CENTURY.

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ESCHILL was related to S. Sigefrid. His early days were given to study. When S. Sigefrid went out as a Missionary to Sweden, Eschill accompanied him. In Sweden he laboured, with no little success, for the conversion of the heathen, and in time was chosen to be Bishop of Swecia. Here he made many converts. Some of them in their zeal began to cut down the groves attached to the idol temples, and dishonoured the temples themselves. These proceedings caused a ferment among the people. The heathen party arose, expelled the King (Ingon), who was favourable to Christianity, and raised to the throne a chief noted for his cruelty and hatred of the Christians. This was Swain, too well known afterwards in England for his cruelty. He was called in his own country, Blot Swen Victimarius, *popularly*, Bloody Swain.<sup>1</sup> In the course of his triumphal march through

<sup>1</sup> Swain, son of Harold Bloatand (or. Blacktooth), was an apostate from the Faith. Coming into power at the head of the heathen party, he commenced a crusade against Christianity, expelled the Clergy,

the country it came to pass that Swein came to Strengues, where he held a great feast in honour of his idols. The Bishop was at this time at Fors, no great distance off. Grieved over the lapse of many Christians, who in this sad time had fallen away, and reckless of all consequences that might happen to himself, he determined to go and reason with the idolaters. Vesting himself in his episcopal robes, and accompanied by his Clergy and a few others, he went to Strengues, entered the assembly, and standing in their midst, boldly reprov'd them for leaving the Creator to sacrifice to devils. When he could obtain no hearing, and his voice was drowned by the shouts of the idolaters, he began, with unpraised hands, to make earnest prayer to GOD. It happened at this very moment that an awful crash of thunder burst over the place, and a thunderbolt striking the building, extinguished the fires in which the sacrificial victims were being consumed. The idolaters, so far from being impressed by this event, were only the more enraged, for they imagined that the Bishop had caused this catastrophe by magical art. They immediately attacked him—one, Spabudde, was the first to strike him with a stone, another wounded his head with an axe. The blood poured freely down in streams. In this state they dragged him before the

and re-established paganism in Denmark. His atrocities afterwards in England exceeded all that had been committed by his countrymen.— See Dr. Maclear's *Christian Missions in the Middle Ages.*

King, and accused him of having raised the storm by sorcery. Sentence of death was passed on him. He was conveyed to a valley not far off, where he was stoned to death. The Christians obtained possession of his body. They carried it away with the intention of giving it burial in his Church at Fors. It happened, however, that on their way thither they were overtaken by so dense a fog that they could proceed no further. Under these circumstances they buried the body on the spot. The place is called Eschilstone to this day. It is said that a great revulsion of feeling occurred among the people after the Bishop's death. They regretted what they had done, for they knew him to be a man of GOD. Spabudde, who had struck the first blow, was the first to suggest that a Church should be built in his honour over his tomb. This was done. Many of those who had shared in the idol-feast helped to build it. Not a few were converted to Christianity. "Thus blessed Eschill," concludes the old writer, "like Samson of old, did <sup>1</sup> more by his death than in "his life."

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "shew more," etc.

**S. Ulfrid (or Wolfrid).****MARTYR.**

A.D. 1028.

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IN the early part of this century there were many colonies of English Missionaries in Gothia (Sweden), and Norway, "who sowing the Christian Faith, reaped "a great harvest of souls." Some of these Englishmen lost their lives through their zeal. Among this number was S. Ulfrid, a Missionary noted for learning and for the holiness of his life. He laboured first in Germany. Thence he passed on to Sweden, where he preached the Word of GOD with much boldness among the pagans, and great numbers of them were converted by him to Christianity. His death is thus recorded by Adam Bremensis. Entering a vast assemblage of pagans, gathered in honour of their national god, Thor (or Tarstans), he denounced their idolatry. Seizing a hatchet, he cried aloud, "If he be a god, let him save "himself," and so saying struck a great blow at the idol. "His body was stabbed with a thousand "wounds, his soul crowned with a wreath of "martyrdom." The barbarians, after much ill-usage of the body, tossed it into a marsh.

**S. William.**BISHOP OF ROSCHILD.<sup>1</sup>

A.D. 1067.

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OUR King Canute was a zealous promoter of Christianity, not only in this country, but also in Denmark. S. William was his chaplain or secretary. He accompanied him on some occasion into Denmark, and was moved by what he saw there to resign his office with the King to become a Missionary in that country. A man of great learning and of many virtues, he employed his talents with such zeal and success that he won the esteem of the people, and was chosen to be Bishop of Roschild. This city was the residence of the Kings of Denmark. It happened, in course of time, that the crown fell to Sweno III. (Sweno Esthrithius), a nephew of our Canute. Swein, though nominally a Christian, was a Prince of un-disciplined mind, one, who had lived a careless, licentious life; otherwise, he was a man of generous impulses, who also respected good men, and in his heart honoured virtue and religion. Hence it came to

<sup>1</sup> Roschild. Now Roskilde; was formerly the capital of Denmark.

pass that being much in contact with S. William, he became very partial to him, and listened willingly to his suggestions. The Bishop did his best to induce him to change his life, and as a first step to make an honourable matrimonial alliance. In this he was successful; the King consented to marry, but, as it happened, most unfortunately, he selected for his Queen a lady nearly related to himself. This lady was the Princess Gutha, daughter of the King of Sweden. This marriage, of course, could not be sanctioned, for it was within the forbidden degrees. It was denounced by all the neighbouring Bishops, and more especially by S. William, who called upon the King to renounce this unlawful wedlock. The King at first refused, declaring passionately "that he would give up his religion rather than his wife." Eventually, however, his better feelings prevailed, and chiefly through S. William's influence he listened to the voice of reason, and sent the lady back into her own country. To her honour it must be recorded that she bore S. William no ill-will on account of the part which he had taken in this matter, but, on the contrary, continued to hold him in the highest honour and reverence. Returning to her own country, she there clothed herself in widow's weeds, and refusing to marry again, passed the rest of her life in great sanctity, employing herself and her maidens, among other good works, in embroidery of vestments for the service of the Church. One

costly chasuble, on which she had spent extraordinary pains, and which she had adorned with wonderful art, she sent as a present to S. William, for the use of the Cathedral in Roschild. Swein also himself became more attached than before to the Bishop, and tried hard to conform his life and temper to his Christian profession. Nor were these efforts without fruit; a great change was perceptible in his daily life, though, occasionally, in consequence of old habits, he lost his self-control, and was hurried into violent fits of passion. The following anecdote gives a sad instance: The New Year being at hand, the King, according to an old custom, invited his nobles to a great feast on the Eve of the Circumcision. In the course of the feast, whilst they were over their cups, some of the guests amused themselves with ribald jokes at the King's expense, not openly, but among themselves. This unseemly talk was most unhappily retailed to the King, who, inflamed with wine, fell into a fury, and gave orders to his guards to put the culprits to death. This order was carried out in the early morning with the utmost brutality, and most profanely, for the guards slew these nobles in the Church, whither they had gone for the early Service. Their bodies were still lying there when the Bishop entered it to perform the highest Service of the Church. Agitated, as he was, with grief and horror, his pain was still further increased by the tidings that the

King was on his way to the Cathedral, to take part in the Service. He hastened to the door, crosier in hand, and planting himself in the entrance, refused admission to the King, and exclaiming that "he was rather a butcher than a King, bade him repent of his crime." The guard of soldiers, who accompanied the King, unsheathed their swords to avenge this insult on their master, on which William put forth his neck and bade them strike, exclaiming, "he would rather die than see his Church so hideously profaned." But the King's passion had subsided, and he had already begun to regret his rash act. Bidding his guards put up their weapons, he returned to his Palace. Bitterly bewailing what he had done, and reckless of what might be thought or said, he put off his royal robes and clad himself in a penitential garment, and so returned bare-foot to the Cathedral. There he prostrated himself at the entrance, humbly requesting permission to enter. The Bishop was at that time in the middle of the Communion Service, and the choir was engaged in singing the *Gloria in Excelsis*. As soon as the hymn was over, the Bishop stopped the Service, and proceeding to the door of the Cathedral, demanded of the King wherefore he was come. The King replied that he came as a penitent, to acknowledge his sin and the justice of his exclusion, humbly also to ask remission of the sentence laid upon him. William on this, dissolved in tears, hastened to embrace him





**S. WILLIAM FORBIDS ENTRANCE OF THE KING INTO  
ROSCILD CATHEDRAL.**



put off his penitential robes with his own hands, and amid the joyful approbation of the congregation led him to the Altar. There the King, by his own expressed desire, declared publicly in the Church that he bewailed what he had done, and the scandal he had caused to religion, and also his intention to make such amends as lay in his power.

This affair, so far from causing any breach of friendship between the King and the Bishop, led to an increase of intimacy. The King regarded William as his best friend, the two were united in the closest bonds of affection. It was the Bishop's constant prayer to GOD that he might not outlive his royal friend. An old writer, who lived in those parts, tells us that this prayer was to all intents and purposes granted. The story is as follows: The King, who came to a good old age, died away from home at Soderup, in Judkirk. Before he died he bound his servants by a solemn oath not to bury him there, but at Roschild. When, therefore, he was dead, preparations were made for conveying the body into Zealand, and notice was sent to the Bishop of the King's death, and also of the day when the body might be expected in Roschild. William, thus apprised of the death of his beloved King, made immediate preparations for the funeral, and in doing so gave orders that *two graves* should be dug; he then hastened off on horseback to meet the funeral cortège. On the way, as he passed through a wood, he noticed two pines of

singular beauty, in close contiguity to each other. Stopping for a moment, he gave directions that they should be cut down, and that *two coffins* should be made of their wood. When at last he met the funeral, he alighted from his horse, and prostrating himself on the ground, remained there a long time engaged in prayer for the King and himself. As he did not rise his servants at last became uneasy, and came to raise him, but he was dead, he had fallen asleep in the LORD whilst thus engaged in prayer for the departed King. The two were buried on the same day in the sanctuary of Roschild Cathedral, in graves, side by side, contiguous to each other.

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*Canute III.*, a natural son of this King, eventually succeeded to the throne of Denmark, he is reckoned among the Saints. Among other good works, he magnificently completed Roschild Cathedral, which had been commenced by S. William.

**S. Edward.**

CONFESSOR.

A.D. 1066.

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S. EDWARD was born at Islip, in Oxfordshire, he was the son of King Ethelred the Unready. Ethelred had one son, Edmund Ironsides, by Elfleda the Fair, daughter of Earl Ordmer, and by his marriage with Emma, daughter of Richard, Duke of Normandy, he had two sons, Edward and Alfred, and several daughters.

Edward was born in troublous times, about A.D. 1004, when Sweyn, with a Danish army, had obtained a footing in England, which he plundered as he pleased. The feeble Ethelred could make no head against him, and the whole country was in a state of confusion. In their distress Edward's parents took him, then a baby, to the Monastery in Ely. There, having wrapped him up in a mantle, they placed him upon the Altar, invoking GOD'S protection for him, and then left him to the care of the monks. So it came to pass that Edward's infancy and early childhood were spent in a religious house. This may account for the peculiar turn of his mind in after years. The lessons

which he learned in Ely left an indelible mark upon his character. He was naturally of a religious turn of mind, so his stay in Ely was a very happy one. The monks used to tell in after years of the interest which he took, as a child, in singing psalms and hymns with others of his own age. He retained through life an affectionate regard for Ely. In the meantime his mother, Queen Emma, found a refuge with her brother, Duke Richard II., in Normandy; and in 1013, Edward and his brother, Alfred, were also sent there. Edward remained in Normandy many years, in the course of which time great changes occurred in England. First came the sudden death of the tyrant Sweyn, 1016, and shortly afterwards the death of the feeble Ethelred (Edward's father); in the following year that of his half-brother, Edmund Ironsides. Then came the rule of the Danish Kings, commencing with Canute—who married Queen Emma, Edward's mother—but no favour, in consequence, was extended to Alfred and Edward, who remained in exile.

Canute died 1035, and his illegitimate son, Harold Harefoot, obtained the Kingdom. It was in this King's reign that Edward lost his younger brother, Alfred, who ventured into England to visit his mother. He was received, on landing, with hospitality and apparent kindness by Earl Godwin, who betrayed him into the hands of Harold. Harold slew the greater part of his companions, and sent

Alfred himself in chains to Ely, with orders that he should be blinded. His eyes accordingly were put out, and he was then placed in the Monastery; but the shock was too great, and he died shortly afterwards.

Earl Godwin always denied that he was a party to Prince Alfred's death. It may be that he did not know what Harold would do with his prisoner, it may be that he disapproved of what was done; yet, inasmuch as he betrayed the Prince into Harold's hands, he must in some sense be regarded as responsible for the event. The words of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are too explicit to admit of doubt.<sup>1</sup> But to continue. Harold's own death occurred not

1 ACCOUNT OF ALFRED'S DEATH GIVEN IN THE  
"ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE."

"A.D. 1036. This year Alfred, the innocent Etheling, son of King Ethelred, came in hither, and would go to his mother, who sat at Winchester; but that neither Godwin, the Earl, nor the other men who had great power, would allow, because the cry then was greatly in favour of Harold, though that was unjust.

" But Godwin him then let,  
" And him in bonds set,  
" And his companions he dispersed,  
" And some divers ways slew,  
" Some they for money sold,  
" Some cruelly slaughtered,  
" Some did they blind.  
" Some did they mutilate,  
" Some did they scalp,  
" Nor was a bloodier deed  
" Done in this land  
" Since the Danes came."

very long after this atrocity, and his half-brother, Hardicanute, succeeded him. Hardicanute, it will be remembered, was also Edward's half-brother, and so now Edward ventured into England, and was staying in his brother's Court when Hardicanute's brief reign came suddenly to an end. He was at a banquet given by one of his Earls, Osgod Clapa, at Lambeth. In the midst of the conviviality, "as the King stood "at his drink he suddenly fell to the earth with a "terrible convulsion, and then they who were there "nigh took hold of him, and he after that never "spoke one word, and he died on the 6th before the "ides of June."<sup>1</sup> This most sudden and unexpected event brought the rule of the Danish Kings to an end. There was no Danish Prince with any title or claim, and there was much discussion what was to be done. Earl Godwin was at this time the most powerful man in England, and he declared himself in favour of Edward. The people who had groaned so long under an alien rule, were rejoiced to have a King of their own nation, and welcomed his nomination with exceeding delight. Only the Danes who had settled in England were reluctant, but unable to propose a leader of their own, they made no opposition. And so it came to pass that one who had been all his life a friendless exile found himself suddenly on the throne of a great nation, which was only too glad to welcome him as its King.

<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, A. D. 1042.



This wonderful revolution in Edward's fortunes occurred in the year 1042, when he was about 38 years old. He was consecrated at Winchester by Edsin, Archbishop of Canterbury, on April 3rd, A.D. 1043, and presently afterwards letters of congratulation and friendly messages of peace poured in from the Continent, with royal presents from the great powers of Europe. The Emperor of Germany, the King of France, and divers others, among whom, according to some writers, was even the King of Denmark. But though Edward was thus enthroned he took little part in the government, for which, indeed, he had no talent. The whole power in the state was monopolized by the great Earls of the Kingdom, above all, by Godwin. This famous Earl was endowed with all those worldly qualities which Edward lacked, and was eminently qualified for the position which he assumed, and, except when his own private interests were concerned, he ruled the country well and justly. So public concerns did not suffer much from the incapacity of the King, who had every unworldly virtue, but was a child in matters of state. In the meantime his position gave him great opportunities for various good works, such as his soul delighted in, for the mitigation of the hardships from which his subjects suffered. Among these may be mentioned the abolition of a most burdensome tax, called the Dane-gelt. This tax, which had been paid for

thirty-eight years, had originated in a voluntary collection given by the people to assist their King in his defence of the country against the Danes; but in process of time it had become a heavy annual tax, enforced with great rigour. It had been collected as usual by one of Edward's Ministers, who, thinking to do him a pleasure, took him into the treasury in order that he might feast his eyes (as the Thane expected) with the sight of the vast heaps of treasure lying there. Edward shuddered, we are told, when he saw them, and declaring that he would not touch a single jot of so cruel an exaction, gave orders that the money should be returned to the owners, with strict injunctions that this tax should never be collected again.

Brought up in a Monastery, and imbued with its religion, Edward had no wish for marriage, and would gladly have remained without a Queen, but in this matter he was not left altogether to his own choice. Pressure was put upon him by his nobles, more especially by Earl Godwin. He yielded to their wishes, and accepted as his Queen, Eadgith (or Edith), the daughter of Earl Godwin, and made her partner of his throne, but not of his bed. By a mutual covenant they lived together as brother and sister. This lady, though the daughter of Earl Godwin, was most virtuous and pious, beauteous in her form, and of a most sweet and amiable disposition. She fell in with Edward's

ways, and devoted herself to give him pleasure. Thus happy in the esteem of his people, and free from all worldly desires, the gentle King lived in a Palace as a citizen of another world. In the midst of all this happiness, however, Edward had to bear a daily cross. Earl Godwin sat at his table, and was associated with his every day life, and this was a pain to him. It was not that he bore ill his assumption, and almost monopoly, of the grandeur of state (for this he had not the slightest care). His distress was that he knew the Earl to have been the cause of his brother's death. In consequence of this, even whilst he recognised that he had helped to place him on the throne, he felt towards him a very strong repugnance, yet had to endure, as best he could, his constant attendance on him. Moreover the Earl had many sons, whose boisterous and rude manners, even in the King's presence, disturbed his serenity. With such surroundings, so distasteful to him, Edward, unfortunately, fell back on the society of the friends he had made in France. His mother, it will be remembered, was a French Princess, and he himself had lived so long abroad that he seemed to his subjects almost a Frenchman. The refinement of the French and their courteous manners were more congenial to his mind than the semi-barbarous manners of the English. He loved, therefore, to have Norman visitors at his Court, and they naturally flocked where they were so well received. The King

gave them appointments about his person, and filled vacant Sees and Abbacies with French ecclesiastics. The consequences of this unwise proceeding were very serious. In a short time a jealousy sprang up among the English against the French, and the country became divided into two factions, the Court-party and the National-party, regarding each other with feelings of mutual animosity. This unhappy state of things was further aggravated by the haughty conduct of some of the French Churchmen. Chief among these was Robert (or Rodbert)<sup>1</sup> to whom Edward was much attached. He had made his acquaintance, and had formed a friendship with him during his exile in Normandy. This led to his inviting him into England, where, before long, he made him Bishop of London. This Robert, so the English writers say, used his great influence with the King to poison his mind still more against Godwin, and to foment the discord which, for a time, disturbed King Edward's reign. The circumstances which led to an open breach between the two parties were as follows: In the year 1048 Edsin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, died, and Edward, ignoring the prejudices of the whole country, insisted on making Robert, Primate of all England. It happened at this time, when there was a smouldering fire of disapprobation in the country, and of jealousy against the French, that Edward's brother-in-law, Eustace, Count

<sup>1</sup> Robert had been Abbat of Jumierges, in Normandy.

of Bologne, came into England to pay him a visit. This Earl on his return home, with great insolence, armed his retainers (when nearing Dover), and forcibly quartered them on the townsmen. A quarrel arose in consequence, which ended in a free fight in the streets, and many were killed on both sides. The French had the worst of it, being fewer in number, though well-armed. Eustace and such of his party as escaped rode back to the King, complaining bitterly of the treatment which they had received. Edward ordered Earl Godwin to proceed to Dover, and to chastise those who were guilty. Godwin, under pretext of doing so, raised an army, but as soon as he was at the head of it, he put himself into open opposition to the King, and demanded the expulsion of Earl Eustace from the Kingdom. Fortunately for Edward there were in the Kingdom two powerful Earls independent of either faction—Siward, Earl of Northumbria, and Leofric, the famous Earl of Mercia, the noblest men of their day. These Earls, as loyal subjects of their King, came with an army to his assistance at Gloucester. Thither also came Earl Godwin with his forces, and for some days the two armies faced each other. But Godwin's men, though hot against the French, were slow to fight against their King. They began to desert and slip away in increasing numbers. Before long the Earl found himself without an army. Afraid to trust to the King's mercy, he fled out of the

country, escaping with two of his sons into Flanders. In the meantime Harold and Leofwin found a refuge in Ireland.

The Queen shared the disgrace of her family. She was sent to the Nunnery at Wherwell (where she had been educated), to live in seclusion under the Abbess, who was King Edward's sister.

And now for a time the French faction governed England, and William of Normandy paid Edward a visit. "Landing with a gallant train of knights, he had a kind reception, visited several of the royal villas, and was dismissed with magnificent presents." Whether William at this time entertained any hope of gaining England for himself may be a question, but it is certain that Edward had no thoughts of him as his heir. The desire of his heart was that his nephew Edward, Edmund Ironside's son, should succeed to the throne. Accordingly, this Edward, at the first fitting opportunity, was invited into England. His arrival was hailed with joy by the whole nation, and he was accepted as the Etheling, or future King. Unfortunately he died soon after his arrival. His death cost England dear, for it left her at the mercy of every adventurer. But to return. The domination of the French faction in England was most unpopular, and could not last long. Earl Godwin, well aware that the sympathies of the common people were with himself, returned in 1052 without leave, and was welcomed by the men of

Kent. Harold presently joined him from Ireland. Passing up the Thames with constantly increasing numbers, they reached London at the head of a vast armament. Edward's forces were also there, and a battle seemed imminent. At the last moment it was averted by the interposition of Bishop Stigand, by whose mediation a reconciliation was effected between the King and Earl Godwin. Godwin and his sons were restored to their honours, and the most obnoxious of the Frenchmen were banished.<sup>1</sup>

It does not appear that Earl Godwin abused the power which he now obtained. On the contrary, his conduct was marked by moderation. He was, however, shortly after this removed from this earthly scene. His death occurred at Winchester during Eastertide. He was dining with the King, on the occasion of the festival, when he was suddenly seized with an illness, of which he died before the week was over. Earl Godwin was a self-made man. A most able ruler of men and statesman, but ambitious and worldly-minded, he was wholly unscrupulous in the building up of his own estate. There is no need to believe a hundredth part of the

<sup>1</sup> The following passage in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* shews the state of feeling in England:—"And then they outlawed all the Frenchmen, who before had instituted unjust laws and counselled ill counsel in the land (except so many as they agreed on who were true to him and to all people), and Bishop Robert, and Bishop Ulf, with difficulty, escaped with the Frenchmen who came with them, and thus got over sea."—*A. S. C.*, A.D. 1052.

charges laid against him by the *Norman* writers, but the witness of his own countrymen may be depended on. From these we learn that there was much wresting of the law by him in his own favour. "He did too "little penance," writes the Anglo-Saxon Chronicler, "for the property of GOD, which he held, belonging "to many holy places;" and *Malmesbury*, commenting on the iniquity of the judges which disgraced the Law Courts at this period, attributes it "to "the insolence of Earl Godwin and his sons." Among many Abbeys ruined in this way were Berkley Abbey, in Gloucestershire, and Stayning, in Sussex. "Suppressed," Bishop Tanner writes, "by "the villainy of Earl Godwin." The tenor of Edward's life was thenceforth more calm and peaceable, and the remainder of his reign was spent in great tranquillity. Godwin's dignities, indeed, were mostly given to his sons, Harold and Tostig, but there was no antagonism between these Earls and the King. On the contrary, Edward became partial to them, and liked to have them about him. Their turbulent brother, Sweyn, the most profane of the family, never returned to England. Repenting of his crimes, he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem,<sup>†</sup> and died on his return homewards, at Constantinople, Edward now believed that he had found an opportunity for fulfilling a vow which he had made in

<sup>†</sup> Swein is said to have walked bare-foot from Flanders to Palestine.



Normandy. There, in his exile, a helpless fugitive, hopeless of human aid and succour, he had bound himself by a solemn vow, that if GOD would restore him to the Kingdom of his fathers, he would dedicate himself to His service, and make a solemn pilgrimage to Rome. Remembering this vow, and the country being now in perfect peace, he began to make preparations for his journey. It was necessary, however, that he should obtain the consent of his Witan. He assembled his nobles accordingly, but found them unanimous in opposition to his leaving England. Edward, in this difficulty, wrote to inform the Pope of his vow, and of the hindrances which he met in fulfilling it. The Pope, considering the difficulties of the case, absolved Edward from his vow on these conditions—First, that he should give to the poor the treasures which he had provided for the expenses of his journey, and, secondly, that he should build an Abbey (or restore an old one) in honour of S. Peter, which he should also amply endow for the maintenance of its Community. Edward faithfully fulfilled the conditions thus enjoined, and the main result was the building of Westminster Abbey, which became at once, and has since remained through so many centuries, one of our grandest national foundations. This most famous Abbey was built on, or contiguous to, the site of a small ancient Monastery believed to have been founded by King Ethelbert when Christianity was first introduced into England. It was

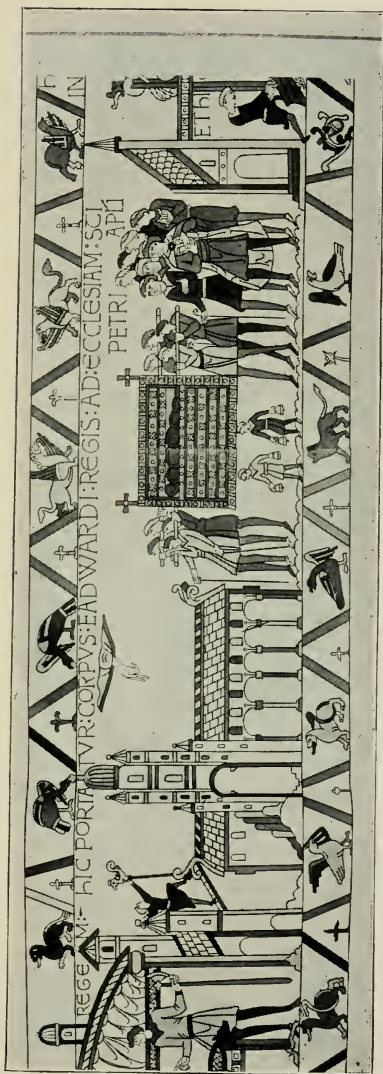
dedicated to S. Peter, and, if a curious old tradition current among the people might be believed, that Apostle had himself performed the ceremony of its consecration. (See Appendix.) Edward took the greatest interest in the building of his new Abbey, and spared no expense. Skilled workmen were brought from the Continent. It was a grand building, with an apsidal termination. In the centre was a great tower, and it was flanked with two more towers at its west end. It was built in the Norman style, anticipating that massive style of architecture which became so common in this country after his death. The building went rapidly on during the year 1065, and it seemed a certainty that it would be ready for consecration at the end of the year. All this gave Edward the greatest happiness, but, unfortunately, in the autumn of that year troubles occurred in the North of England, which greatly disturbed him. These were connected with Tostig, now Earl of Northumbria, who had made himself intensely hated by his rapacity, and the severity of his rule. The Earl was away at the time (and indeed was in Edward's Court), when his people rose in rebellion. They slew his retainers, plundered his Palace and the houses of his friends, and came southwards in a tumultuous body, slaying and plundering as they went. They penetrated even to Northampton.

There the King sent Harold, who was universally popular, to satisfy their just grievances, and to prevail upon them to return home quietly. But they would not be pacified on any other terms than the expulsion of Tostig from the Kingdom. Harold, either because he could not, or (as some thought) *would* not (for there was not much love between the two brothers), failed to pacify them. Eventually the King, though sorely against his will, was constrained to banish Tostig from the Kingdom, on which the rioters returned quietly home. But the harass, the solicitude, the vexation told heavily on the King's health, which was already failing, and no doubt shortened his days. However, he lived long enough to see the new Minster completed. As Christmas approached, invitations on a wide scale were sent throughout the country, to his Earls, Thanes, and other chief men, and grand preparations were made for their reception, and for the festivities customary on such occasions. Edward, who usually resided at Islip, came to town before Christmas to take part in the joyful solemnities, which were fixed for "Childermass" (December 28th). But it was not so to be. He was feeble enough when he arrived in town, and on the eve of Christmas-day was seized with a fever, which prostrated his strength and obliged him to keep his bed. There becoming rapidly worse, he fell into a swoon, or trance, in which he lay like one dead for two days. At the

end of that time he revived, and recovering the use of his speech, recounted to all present a remarkable dream, or vision, which he had seen in the course of his trance. (See Appendix.) This done, he comforted his sorrowing Queen with tender words of affection, and charged Harold with the care of her, and also with the regency of the Kingdom. Then all worldly matters having been arranged he received the Holy Eucharist, and commending himself to the prayers of all present, passed peacefully away on the eve of twelfth day, 1066.

Such was the end of the last of our Anglo-Saxon Kings. His biographer tells us that the look of his body after death seemed to tell of its future resurrection, so great was its comeliness. The complexion of the face was a rosy hue, whilst the beard was as white as any lily. The body had the appearance of one asleep, not of one dead. He was buried on the following day (January 6), in his new Abbey of Westminster, in accordance with his own commands.

S. Edward, though possessed of none of those qualities which challenge the admiration of the world, and who was only conspicuous for his piety, was wonderfully appreciated by his people, who loved him whilst living, and bitterly mourned his death. An old writer, *Malmesbury*, thus aptly describes his character: "From the simplicity of his manners he "was little calculated to govern, but devoted to GOD,



FUNERAL OF KING EDWARD, CONFESSOR.



“and in consequence directed by Him . . . for while  
“he continued to reign, there was no foreign war, all  
“was calm and peaceable . . ., which is the more an  
“object of wonder, because he conducted himself so  
“mildly that he would not even utter a word of re-  
“proach to the meanest person, for he knew not how  
“to be angry. In the exaction of taxes he was spar-  
“ing, in eating and drinking free from the voluptuous-  
“ness which his state allowed. On the more solemn  
“festivals, though dressed in robes interwoven with  
“gold, which the Queen had most splendidly em-  
“broidered, yet still he had such forbearance as to be  
“sufficiently majestic without being haughty. . . .  
“There was one earthly enjoyment in which he  
“chiefly delighted, which was hunting with fleet  
“hounds, whose opening in the woods he used with  
“pleasure to encourage, and again with pouncing of  
“birds whose nature is to prey on their kindred  
“species. In these exercises, after hearing Divine  
“Service in the morning, he employed himself whole  
“days. In other respects he was a man by choice  
“devoted to GOD, and lived the life of an angel in the  
“administration of his Kingdom. To the poor, and  
“to strangers, more especially foreigners, and men of  
“religious Orders, he was kind in invitations, munifi-  
“cent in his presents, constantly exciting the monks  
“of his own country to imitate their holiness. He  
“was of becoming stature, his beard and hair milk-  
“white, his countenance florid, fair throughout his

“whole person, and his form of admirable pro-  
“portion.”

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APPENDIX.

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Many interesting stories and legends, connected with S. Edward and his reign, have come down to us. Though not strictly historical, they throw great light on Edward's character, and upon the times in which he lived.

We give a few of the most interesting.

1. Queen Emma and the ploughshares.

The judgment by Ordeal, so common in the Middle Ages, was regarded as an appeal to GOD, and so was called “The Great Judgment,” or “The Divine Tribunal.” It was exercised in various ways. The most common were :

(1) By touching or holding hot iron.

(2) By plunging the arm into boiling water, or by walking barefoot unhurt over red-hot ploughshares.

(3) Or again by cold water. If the suspected person, when thrown into the water, did not sink, he was held to be guilty. “The water “had rejected him.”

(4) By partaking of the Holy Eucharist, or of a small piece of barley-bread or cheese which was called “The Corsned.” This is the ordeal to which Earl Godwin is said to have submitted.

(5) The Normans introduced another form of ordeal. This was by mortal combat between the accused and the accuser. This outlasted the others.

The following account of Queen Emma's trial by ordeal of the ploughshares is taken from Harpsfield. There is no cotemporary mention of it, so that it cannot be regarded as certain. It seems, however, not improbable, for it is in full accordance with the spirit of the age and also with the general tenor of the history. In any case it will give a good idea how these trials were conducted. It is only necessary further to add that Queen Emma, the King's mother, lived at this time at Winchester, and that a scandal had been raised against her by her enemies, in connection with Ailwin, the Bishop of that See. “Many “and grievous crimes,” writes Harpsfield, “had been laid to the



“charge of Queen Emma, which her enemies reported and exaggerated  
“to the King. Chief among her enemies was the Norman Bishop of  
“London, Robert, who was in the King’s confidence, and who at this  
“time by reason of the illness of the Archbishop, administered the  
“See of Canterbury as his Vicar. This Robert, by his daily invectives  
“so worked upon the innocent simplicity of the King, that at last he  
“consented that his mother should be put upon her trial, which trial  
“was to be conducted by Robert and the other Bishops. Hereupon  
“Robert summoned a council at Winchester to make arrangements for  
“it. The Queen in the meantime was confined in Wherwell Abbey,  
“and Bishop Ailwin was imprisoned in Winchester. The possessions  
“of both were taken from them. As for the Queen, she constantly  
“protested her innocence, and declared herself willing to submit to any  
“trial in proof of it. All the Bishops were satisfied, except Robert ;  
“but he, becoming more inflamed than ever, heaped charge upon  
“charge against her. However, finally, he added, ‘If with bare feet  
“‘she shall pass unharmed over nine burning ploughshares (four for  
“‘her own guilt, and five for her complicity with Bishop Ailwin),  
“‘then, but not till then, will I believe her innocent.’ Upon this the  
“Bishops, though sore against their will, consented that she should be  
“subjected to this trial. When the King had fixed the day, crowds of  
“people of both sexes, and all ages (anxious to see the spectacle),  
“flowed from all parts into Winchester in such numbers that the city  
“could not contain them. The Queen had been brought over-night  
“to Winchester. On her arrival she was taken to the Church of S.  
“Swithun (the Cathedral), where she spent long time in fasting,  
“watching, and prayer. On the following morning (the usual pre-  
“paratory ceremonies having been fulfilled), she was led by two  
“Bishops, one on each side, who wept as they brought her in. Thus,  
“with feet and legs bare to the knee, she was conducted to the part  
“of the Church where the burning ploughshares were laid. The  
“people, when they saw her, filled the Church with their mournful  
“cries to GOD and to S. Swithun to help her. When all was ready,  
“the Queen, with eyes raised to heaven, committing her cause to  
“GOD, proceeded on her course, and passed safely over the plough-  
“shares. When this was accomplished, and the Bishops were about to  
“leave the Church, she said to them, ‘When shall we come to the  
“‘ploughshares?’ The Bishops, dissolved in tears of joy, informed  
“her that she had already passed over them. On which looking back she  
“discovered that she had fulfilled her purgation, and returned humble  
“thanks to GOD and to S. Swithun. As for the people they testified

“ their joy by their shouts and exclamations. Forthwith, bare-footed  
 “ as she was, she was conducted to the King, her son, that he might  
 “ know the manifest proofs of her innocence. When the King beheld  
 “ her in such a plight, he was much distressed, and with many sighs  
 “ and tears, begged her pardon. He also restored to her and to the  
 “ Bishop all their possessions. Nay, so ashamed was he of his former  
 “ suspicions, that he insisted on receiving *the discipline* on his naked  
 “ back at their hands. Furthermore, out of penance, he bestowed on  
 “ the Church of Winchester the Isle of Portland with other possessions.  
 “ The Queen also, and Bishop Ailwin, gave each of them nine manors  
 “ to the Church of Winchester, according to the number of ploughshares  
 “ which the Queen had passed over.”

2. The Lady Eadgith, otherwise, Edith, Editha, Egitha, *Edward's Queen.*

Historians vie with each other in singing her praises, and in telling her varied accomplishments.

The following passage is from Ingulph, who gives his personal experience thus: “ To him (Edward), was given in marriage the  
 “ daughter of Earl Godwin, Egitha by name, a young lady of most  
 “ remarkable beauty, extremely well-versed in literature, a maiden of  
 “ exemplary purity of life and manners, and of most holy humility ;  
 “ while in no degree did she partake of the barbarous disposition of  
 “ her father and brothers, but was meek and modest, trustworthy and  
 “ honourable, and an enemy to no one. It was for this reason that the  
 “ following verse was composed in reference to her :<sup>1</sup> *Sicut Spina*  
 “ *Rosam genuit Godwinus Egitham.* Frequently have I seen her when  
 “ in my boyhood I used to go to visit my father, who was employed  
 “ about the Court, and often, when I met her as I was coming from  
 “ school, did she question me about my studies and my verses, and  
 “ most readily passing from the solidities of grammar to the brighter  
 “ studies of logic, in which she was particularly skilful, she would  
 “ catch me with the subtle threads of her arguments. She would  
 “ always present me with three or four pieces of money, which were  
 “ counted out to me by her handmaiden, and then send me to the  
 “ royal larder to refresh myself.”—*Ingulph's Chronicle*, p. 125.

3. Earl Godwin's death.

One of the most popular “ beliefs ” in the time of the Norman sway was that Earl Godwin met his death by being choked by a piece of

<sup>1</sup> As the rose comes of a briar so Egitha of Godwin.

bread which he took at the King's table, after solemnly averring his innocence of the death of Prince Alfred.

It is thus told by *Henry of Huntingdon*, "In the twelfth year of Edward's reign, when the King was at Winchester, where he often resided, and was sitting at table with his father-in-law, Godwin (who had conspired against him), by his side, the Earl said to him, 'Sir King, I have been often accused of harbouring traitorous designs against you, but, as GOD in heaven is just and true, may this morsel of bread choke me, if in thought I have ever been false to you.' But GOD, Who is just and true, heard the words of the traitor, for the bread stuck in his throat and choked him, so that death presently followed, the foretaste of death which is eternal."—*H. Huntingdon*, p. 204.

William of Malmesbury tells the same story, but with greater prudence warns his readers that he does not vouch for the truth of it. As time went on the story became amplified with further details. The following is taken from a translation of a French MS. rendered into English by H. R. Luard, and published in his *Lives of King Edward, Confessor*: "One day at Eastertide the King sat at dinner on a dais with his Counts and Barons, among whom was Earl Godwin. It happened that an attendant, who was serving the wine, slipped as he mounted the dais, and would certainly have fallen to the ground had he not adroitly stayed with his other foot the one that was slipping. Earl Godwin, noticing this, said to the King, 'So one brother helps another in the hour of peril.' 'Yes,' replied the King, 'and so might my brother have helped me, if you, Earl, had permitted him.' The Earl was cut to the heart by this reproach, and changing colour as one conscious of guilt, replied, 'Ah, King, you grieve me sorely in thus charging me with the death of your brother, Alfred, of which I am innocent, and may I be choked with this morsel of bread, which I here take, if I am guilty of it.' The King replied, 'So be it. I here give my blessing to this bread.'" "The Earl then attempted to swallow it, but it stuck like a stick in his throat; his eyes seemed to be starting out of his head; his complexion turned black, and then pale, and he fell down dead on the floor."

It is interesting to compare this story with the historical account given at the time of the occurrence in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, in which it is thrice recorded. The following gives most particulars: A.D. 1053. "In this year was the King at Winchester at Easter, and Godwin, the Earl, with him, and Harold, the Earl, his son, and

“Tostig. Then on the second day of Easter sat he with the King at the feast. Then suddenly sank he down by the footstool, deprived of speech, and of all his power, and he was then carried into the King’s chamber, and they thought it would pass over, but he continued thus speechless and powerless until the *Thursday*, and then resigned his life, and he lies there within the old Minster.”

In another account it says expressly, “that *he fell ill* as he sat with the King at Winchester.”

#### 4. The King’s disregard of money.

The remission of the Dane-gelt is thus told by Ingulph.

“The most pious King Edward, moved with pity for the poor, remitted for ever to all England a most grievous tribute, known by the name of Dane-gelt. Some say that this most holy King on one occasion, when his chamberlains had brought this Dane-gelt after its collection into his chamber, and had brought him to see such a vast heap of treasure, was on the first sight thereof seized with a shuddering, and protested that he beheld the devil dancing on the pile of money, and exulting with excessive joy. He consequently gave orders to restore it immediately to its former owners, and would not so much as touch a single jot of such a cruel exaction, but remitted the same thenceforth for ever.”—*Ingulph*, p. 130.

The following anecdote is taken from Alured of Reydal.

“As King Edward, on a time, lay waking on his bed, his chamberlain taking money out of one of the King’s coffers, left the same coffer open after him, and went his way about the King’s business, which thing being espied of a young fellow that was wont to wait at the King’s table, to bear away empty vessels, he came to the coffer, thinking the King had been asleep, and thrust a great quantity of money into his bosom, and going away laid it where he thought best, and coming again did the like; but when he came again the third time, and that the King knew, as was thought, that the chamberlain was at hand, and willing the thief to avoid his danger. “Thou art importunate,” said he, “if thou wilt believe me, take that thou hast, and get thee hence, for, by GOD’s mother! if Hugoline come” (for so was the chamberlain named), “he will not leave thee one penny!” Whereupon the young fellow ran away, and was neither uttered nor pursued by the King. And, behold, when the chamberlain came and perceived much money to be gone through negligence, he was in such sorrow that his sighs and other noises that he made bewrayed him. Whereupon the King rising,





LEGEND OF THE RING.

“and seeming not to know the matter, asked ‘What he ailed to be so ‘troubled,’ which, when the chamberlain had told, ‘Hold thy ‘peace,’ said the King, ‘haply he that hath taken it hath more need ‘than we have of it. Let him have it. That which remaineth is ‘‘enough for us.’”—As rendered by Stow.

#### 5. The Legend of the Ring.

It happened on a certain day that a Church in London was to be consecrated to S. John the Evangelist, and the King was present at the ceremony. Whilst he was there, a man in the crowd begged an alms of him for S. John’s sake. The King searched for coin but could find none, he called also for his almoner, but that officer was not to be found. The beggar in the meantime continued his importunities. On which the King, unable otherwise to relieve him, pulled off his finger a favourite ring of great value and gave it him, after which the beggar disappeared in the crowd.

Not long after this it chanced that two English palmers, who were on a pilgrimage to the holy Sepulchre, lost their way in Palestine, and strayed into the wilderness, where there were no sign of man or of human habitation; the sun began to set, and darkness supervening, involved them in much perplexity and apprehension of danger. Suddenly, however, a bright light was perceptible, and a band of youths were seen approaching, who, with lighted tapers, were escorting a venerable old man with hoary locks. This old man, when he came up saluted them and enquired their religion, the name also of their country, and of their King. One of the pilgrims replied, “We are Christians, and we are come from England to expiate our “sins at the holy Sepulchre, and also to visit the holy places in which “the LORD JESUS lived and died. The name of our saintly King is “Edward. We have lost our way, and know not where we are “going.”

The old man cheerfully replied, “Follow me, and I will take you to a “good hostelry, where—for King Edward’s sake—you shall be well “taken care of. For I myself will be your host.” He forthwith conducted them into a city, and to a hostelry where they found everything prepared for them—an excellent table, and comfortable beds, of which they were glad after their fatiguing journey to take advantage. On the following morning, when they were about to depart, and were bidding goodbye to their host, he said to them, “Know that I am S. “John the Evangelist. For love of your King I have assisted you, “and now assure you of a prosperous journey home. As soon as you “are arrived in England, go to the King and tell him you have come

“from me. In pledge of the truth of my words I give you this ring, which he will recognise, for he gave it to me when, under the guise of a beggar, I pleaded with him for an alms on the day when a Church was consecrated in my honour. Bid him also know that the time is shortly at hand when he must leave this earthly scene for a Kingdom in heaven.”

The story continues that the pilgrims had a good journey home, and went without delay to the King, to whom they told their adventures and gave the ring, which he recognised as the one he had given to the beggar. The King died the same year.

6. Consecration of Thorney (Westminster Abbey) by S. Peter.

This curious old legend is thus told in a French MS. *Life of S. Edward*, translated by Luard.

King Ethelbert of old built a Church in London (S. Paul's), and attached to it an excellent Bishop, Mellitus, who erected an Abbey on some waste ground to the west of the city, then called Thorney, from the shrubs and thorns which abounded in it. A day was fixed for the Consecration of this Abbey, and crowds of country-people, anxious to see such a novel ceremony, came in, and abode in the streets all night. In the course of it, a man of strange appearance was seen on the opposite side of the river, who presently called for a boat, offering no slight remuneration. A fisherman gladly responded, and ferried him over the Thames. As soon as he was landed, the stranger went straight to the new Abbey, which he was seen to enter. Presently, afterwards, the fisherman noticed a brilliant light in the sky over that quarter, and a sweet smell of incense invaded his nostrils. This so entranced his attention that he remained like one fixed to the spot. After a time his fare returned, and enquired of him what luck he had had that night, and on his replying that he had done no fishing since he left him, bade him cast his nets into the river, which he did, and presently caught a vast draught of fishes, most of which were salmon. The stranger, selecting one of these, ordered the fisherman to carry it to Bishop Mellitus, “and tell him,” he continued, “that it is a present from S. Peter the Apostle, and that no further Consecration of the Church is necessary, seeing that I myself in my own person have dedicated it to GOD.” When the fisherman had recovered from his astonishment, he found that the stranger had vanished. Taking the salmon, he went as he was told, and met Bishop Mellitus on his way to the Church, to whom he presented the salmon, and gave his message. On hearing it, the Bishop hastened into the Church, and there found everything in accordance with the tenor of it. The walls



had been marked with twelve crosses, and sprinkled with holy water, within and without. The alphabet might be seen distinctly traced in two places on the pavement.<sup>1</sup> Traces of the oil which had been used might be noticed here and there, and (most remarkable of all!) the remains of the candles which had been used were still alight in the sockets of the candlesticks.

Doubts now vanished from the Bishop's mind. He presently announced to the assembled people that all due rites had been accomplished, and assuring them that no further ceremony was needed, dismissed them to their homes.

#### 7. Miracles wrought by Edward.

Edward was credited with numerous miracles, wrought, it was believed, by him in behalf of the blind, and those who were suffering from scrofula. These cures were usually obtained by the patient moistening the part affected in water, which had been used by the King in his ablutions. Several blind men thus regained their sight. The fame of this spread abroad, and, as a natural consequence, his palace was besieged by numerous afflicted persons, especially by the blind, who came (we are told) led by others, but did not require a guide on their return.

Another class of unfortunates, who were benefited by this means, and by his touch, were those who were suffering from scrofula. Edward was believed not only to have power to heal this complaint himself, but also to be privileged to pass on this healing power to his successors on the throne. So for many centuries it was considered a part of the King's prerogative to be able to cure sufferers from scrofula. This remarkable belief continued in vogue even in the 18th century.<sup>2</sup> The ceremony was performed in Church, and a special Service was arranged for it.

Edward, we are told, exercised this gift before he came to the throne, whilst he was an exile in Normandy. We give one example of the numerous cures recorded. The following account is gathered from a French MS. translated by Luard.

A young and beautiful lady was afflicted by a very cruel disease, which tainted and darkened her complexion. The seat of the complaint was in her neck, where it showed itself by scrofulous swellings, which caused great pain in her throat. Her face, also, was

<sup>1</sup> See Picard's *Ceremonies Religienses*, fol i. p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Johnson, when a child, was "touched for the evil" by Queen Anne. Queen Elizabeth was credited with many cures.

so disfigured that she was ashamed to shew herself abroad, fearing the derision of her acquaintances, all the more so because she had been noted for her beauty, whereas now, through leprosy, she had become a loathsome spectacle. Even her husband had lost his love for her. All this made her so miserable that she longed for death. The physicians, on whom she had spent much money, could give her no relief. Forlorn of human succour, she earnestly prayed to GOD to take her to Himself. One night, when she had fallen into a light slumber, she seemed to hear a voice which bade her go to the great palace at Westminster, and there beg King Edward, for the love of CHRIST, to moisten the sores on her neck and face with the water in which he had washed his hands, for by this means she would obtain relief and health.

No sooner was she awakened than she arranged for her journey, and, arriving at the palace, obtained admittance to the King's presence, to whom she related her dream. The King granted her request, and with the water in which he had lately washed his hands bathed her sores and foul swellings, which presently, by the mercy of GOD, began to abate. Nor was it long before the disfigurements vanished and the pain ceased.

All who witnessed what had happened were loud in returning thanks to GOD, with hearty prayer that He would long keep and preserve to them their good King Edward.—See Luard, p. 252.

## **S. Wulstan.**

**BISHOP OF WORCESTER.**

A.D. 1095.

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S. WULSTAN was born in Warwickshire. His parents, Athelstan and Ulfiva, lived at Long Itchington, which is about five miles from the modern town of Leamington. Here they held a farm of S. Oswald, who was Bishop of Worcester, 962-992. They were of slender circumstances, but none the less took pains to procure their son a good education. Wulstan was sent first to Evesham, where he obtained the rudiments of learning, and then to Peterborough. There was an excellent school in the old Abbey. Its master, Evernius, was noted for his various talents, and Wulstan profited greatly under his instructions. Evernius lent him one or two books which he had transcribed with his own pen, and beautifully illustrated with fine pictorial art. The boy, as no doubt his tutor hoped, was delighted with the pictures, and so led on to study the contents, he read the books again and again with increasing interest. So fond did he become of them that the loss of them was the great sorrow of his early life.

It happened that King Canute and Queen Emma paid a visit to Peterborough Abbey, and Evernius, wishing to ingratiate himself, made a present of them to the royal guests. The child, inconsolable at the loss of his books, retired into his bedroom, where he cried himself to sleep. In his sleep, we are told, a bright form appeared to him in a dream, and bade him dry his tears. "The books would certainly be his again." This dream, strangely enough, came true. In the meantime they had served their purpose, for they had inspired Wulstan with a love of study. When he left Peterborough to return home he had already resolved to devote himself to religion, and to seek Orders in the Church.

It is said that on one occasion he nearly forgot his resolution. It was springtide, and the youth of the neighbourhood had assembled on the common to compete in athletic sports, which were as popular in Anglo-Saxon days as they are now. Wulstan was there, he excelled in running, leaping, and wrestling, and as, from to time, he surpassed all competitors, the air rang with the loud plaudits of the spectators. It was in this time of excitement that he was joined by a young girl of his acquaintance, who made herself very agreeable; Wulstan yielded to the fascination, and passages of love were exchanged between them. It was but for a moment. Suddenly he remembered how inconsistent was this levity with the profession which he had chosen, and the vow of celibacy

which he contemplated. In a moment he left the common, and happening on his way to pass through a coppice, which abounded in briars and thorns, threw himself into the midst of their thickest tangle. There he remained a long time in prayer and self-reproach. Old writers tell us that this victory over self had a wonderful effect in steeling his mind against temptations for the time to come, so much so, that he was never again molested by them.

Not long after his return home his parents, partly on account of the slenderness of their resources, partly in order to prepare themselves for death, resolved to separate. Athelstan became a monk in the Worcester Monastery, his wife entered a Nunnery in the same city, and thus they ended their days in great devotion. Wulstan, in the meantime, found a home in the Palace of the Bishop of Worcester (Brightege). The Bishop's Palace, in these days, among its other uses, supplied the place of the Theological Colleges of our own day. Therein candidates for Ordination were trained under the Bishop's eye, and he thus became well acquainted with their character and talents. Wulstan remained some years with the Bishop. His pleasing manners and modest behaviour soon brought him into favour with his companions (even those who were most unamiable), and he also won the affection of the Bishop, who loved him as his own son. As soon as Wulstan's age allowed of it, he ordained him, and

made him Priest of the parish of Hawkesbury.<sup>1</sup> In this parochial cure Wulstan laboured diligently for a few years. The following anecdote belongs to this time of his life: "He was then," *Malmesbury* writes, "in the prime of life and health, not given to luxury, but enjoying the good things of life, like other people, when they came in his way. One day his servants had provided a goose for dinner; it turned out a splendid bird, and as it was being roasted in the kitchen, the whole house was filled with the appetising smell. The young Priest was in the Oratory, engaged in his devotion, and as the Chapel formed part of the house the smell invaded the sanctuary and disturbed the devotions of the Priest. Indignant with himself, and anxious to be free for the time to come from such annoyances, he made a vow that he would never thenceforth indulge in meat that could stir the appetite, or any rich and savoury food. Accordingly, as soon as the Service was over he left home without his dinner, under plea of a sudden call, and from this time to the end of his life adhered to his resolution, living principally on bread and vegetables; and as he enjoyed good health to a great age, he does not seem to have suffered in consequence."

Sober, modest, grave, yet cheerful, Wulstan made an excellent parish Priest; the Bishop accordingly

<sup>1</sup> This would appear to be Hawkesbury (not far from Upton) in Gloucestershire.

offered him more important Cures. These, however, he declined, and when his patron became more urgent, imparted to him his reason for doing so : it was the great desire of his heart to retire from the world and enter some religious house. The Venerable Bishop was himself a monk, and so this pleased him well ; he encouraged Wulstan in his purpose, and soon after gave him the religious habit, and placed him in the Monastery in Worcester. This Abbey, which was attached to the Cathedral, was a very ancient foundation, dating from 747. It had been rebuilt by S. Oswald, and under his fostering care had flourished exceedingly, but since his death had decayed. When Wulstan entered it, the Community had dwindled down to twelve, and the finances of the house were scarce adequate even for their support ; for in the late lawless times it had been robbed of the greater part of its endowments. The buildings also were in a dilapidated state. The monks themselves were, most of them, old men, decorous enough in their behaviour, but not noted for their zeal. They gave rather a cold welcome to the new comer, with whom they had little sympathy. However, they were not sorry to have a young member, who did not mind hard work, and they gladly availed themselves of his services. Various offices were accordingly conferred upon him in quick succession. First he was made master of the boys, then precentor, then treasurer of the Church, and

shortly afterwards sacristan. This last office pleased him best, because it gave him free access into the Cathedral. This freedom he valued greatly, and thenceforth most of his time was passed in the Cathedral. Endowed by nature with an iron constitution, he could endure the severest privations without injury to his health, and he passed whole days without taking any food, and whole nights in prayer; when at last nature demanded rest, he would fall asleep on the steps of the Altar, or on a form, with a book for his pillow. There were in Worcester Cathedral at this time eighteen Altars, which served him for stations, and of these he made a nightly round. If he left the Cathedral, which he did occasionally at nightfall, this was only to vary his devotions by making a round of the Churches in Worcester. Thus for many years he lived like one dead to the world, when certain events happened which brought him back to the duties of active life. About the year 1047, Agelwin, the Prior of the Monastery, died. The appointment lay with the Bishop; and the Bishop<sup>1</sup> insisted on Wulstan succeeding to the office. This was the highest in a Monastery, under the Abbat, and as the Bishop was Abbat, and seldom in residence, on account of his

<sup>1</sup> His friend, Bishop Brightege, had died 1038, and had been succeeded by Bishop Living (who was noted for his eloquence). Bishop Living died about 1047 and was replaced by Aldred. It was Aldred who made Wulstan Prior.



Episcopal duties, the Prior in a *Cathedral Monastery*, to all intents and purposes, ruled the house. It soon became apparent that the Bishop had made a wise choice. Under Wulstan's careful administration a wonderful change for the better became apparent in the Abbey, both externally and internally. The buildings were made safe; part of the alienated endowments were recovered; a wholesome, godly discipline was enforced in the house, which soon became filled with a numerous and devout Community—which sought admission in order to be under Wulstan's guidance. It is the more remarkable that our Saint was able to effect this reform, because religion was at this time at a very low ebb in England. There was little piety and devotion.

*Malmesbury*, writing of these times, says, "Such  
"an infernal venality prevailed amongst the Clergy  
"that they would not even baptize a child unless  
"they were paid for it (not even the children of  
"the poor). The consequence was that great  
"numbers of children were unbaptized. Wulstan,  
"much grieved at this, and compassionating the  
"poor, made himself ever ready to do this Christian  
"office for them. He made it his custom to stay  
"in the Cathedral after the Morning Service, or  
"he would pace about in front of the Cathedral, to  
"give everybody an opportunity of addressing him.  
"This soon became known, and the people gladly

“availed themselves of his services; numbers came  
“morning after morning, not only from every part  
“of the city, but also from the villages around, and  
“Wulstan was often engaged nearly the whole  
“morning in this pious work. Moreover, in time  
“it so fell out that this custom, which commenced  
“with the poor, passed on to the rich and great.  
“Wulstan came to be regarded as the baptist of  
“the neighbourhood, and no child was counted  
“properly baptized which was not baptized by  
“him.” The writer adds, “The nobles of the land  
“sought his friendship, and valued it greatly. None  
“more so than the ill-fated Harold, who at this time  
“was in great power, and perhaps already affecting  
“the throne. He had a great veneration for our  
“Saint, and often visited him for advice and counsel;  
“nor would he ever deny him anything; but the  
“common saying was that Harold was much more  
“ready to give than Wulstan to ask.” At this  
time there was little preaching in England.  
Sermons were given on rare occasions; as a  
rule only prelates were expected to preach.  
Wulstan deplored this, believing that the spiritual  
interests of the people required that there should  
be more teaching from the pulpit. In this faith  
he did what lay in his power to supply this  
need in Worcester by preaching in the Cathedral  
every Sunday, and on the Greater Festivals. His  
sermons, we are told, were simple, plain discourses,

but they moved the people wonderfully ; good and bad were attracted to hear him, and crowded congregations awaited him every Sunday. This, however, moved some to jealousy. Suspecting his motives, they supposed him to be desirous of seeking popularity. One of these detractors—Winrick, a French monk—was staying at this time in the Worcester Monastery. He is said to have been a man of superior parts, well-read, eloquent, versatile, and possessed of good address and easy manners. Unfortunately with these good qualities he combined others less pleasing, specially a very irritable temper. Taking umbrage at Wulstan's preaching, he would often say that it seemed to him an act of presumption, "and to be an "intrusion on the Bishop's office, whose prerogative "it was to absolve the people, and to preach the "Gospel. *Silence* and *the cloister* became a monk, "not pulpit oratory and pompous gestures: these "savoured to him more of ambition than of piety." These and such-like inuendos he usually vented in Wulstan's absence ; but one day, in a fit of irritability, he reproached him with them before the whole Community. The Saint calmly replied that he believed that it was a work well-pleasing to GOD to call sinners to repentance, and in that faith he should not desist from preaching, until, at least, he knew some better way of "serving GOD." With such-like words he left the room. Winrick also retired to

his cell, where he passed a fearful night. What really happened there it is not easy to say. Old writers tell us that in an awful dream he was summoned before the presence of a Divine Judge, by whose just verdict he was condemned, and given over to the hands of celestial lictors, who scourged him within an inch of his life. Whether in this way (as some may think probable), or by the scourgings of his own evil conscience, it is certain that before the morning he was brought to a better mind, for no sooner had the light dawned, than he hastened to the cell of the Prior, and having obtained leave to enter, cast himself on the ground, and humbly begged his pardon. After this Wulstan was left in peace to pursue his charitable labours.

Bishop Aldred was an excellent statesman, and as such much employed by King Edward on various embassies abroad. He was sent about this time into Germany on some political matter of importance to the Emperor, Henry III., who had his Court at Cologne. Henry became very partial to him, and when he left loaded him with presents. Among these were the identical books which had been so great a delight to Wulstan in his boyhood. Singularly enough, the Bishop on his return home, though quite unaware of their previous history, selected these books as an appropriate present, and sent them to the Prior. Not long after this the Archbishop of York (Kynsi) died, A.D. 1060, and the

King, with the approbation of the whole country, selected Aldred to be his successor. The Archbishop Elect, according to the custom of the times, proceeded to Rome to receive his pallium from the Pope. It should be mentioned here that Aldred had no intention of resigning Worcester, which he proposed to hold with his Archbishopric. However, when he arrived at Rome he met with a rebuff which he had not expected. For the Pope refused to give him the pallium unless he resigned his Bishopric. Aldred, who had secured King Edward's consent to his retaining it, refused to comply. The Pope adhered to his decision. Aldred also remained inflexible, and at last set out on his journey home without his pallium. He had a large company with him, among which was Earl Tostig, son of Godwin, and other English nobles. They had not proceeded far on their journey, and had only reached Sutroë, when they fell into the hands of banditti, who, not content with robbing them, stripped them so mercilessly that their miserable condition moved all that saw them to compassion. In this predicament they turned their steps back again to Rome. There Earl Tostig sought an interview with the Pope, and with great indignation spoke his mind thus freely: "If he (the Pope) suffered rascally bands of thieves to flout him at his very gates, was it likely he would be much regarded in distant Europe; he was rigorous enough with strangers who came to supplicate him,

“but powerless to restrain those who resisted him. For his part, he (Tostig) was resolved (if the Pope did not grant them reasonable satisfaction) to give his countrymen such an account of Rome as would probably put a stop to the payment of Peter-pence for the time to come.”

“These threats,” we are told, “terrified the Romans.” The Pope called a Council, or Pleanary Synod. In this the captain of the robbers (a Tuscan Count) was “solemnly condemned with a perpetual anathema.” On the other hand, Aldred himself had been brought by his misfortunes to a more reasonable state of mind; he promised the Pope that on his return home he would resign the See of Worcester, and would do his best to obtain the election of the worthiest Priest in the Diocese to be his successor. The Pope, on this, gave him his pallium, and so all went well at last.

When Aldred and his company again left Rome the Pope sent with him two Legates, Cardinal Ermenfrid and another, and he gave them secret instructions to see that the Archbishop did not forget his part of the compact; and it must be confessed that his precautions were not altogether without justification. The party had a good journey, and arrived safely in England. There they were graciously received by the pious King, who kept them with him some time, and then intrusted Aldred (who knew the Italian tongue) with the care of the

Cardinals, charging him to assist them in the affairs they came to transact, and to bring them back to Court after Easter. The Archbishop did as he was desired, took them about the country (wherever they wished to go), and at last (inasmuch as Lent was approaching, when he usually went into retirement) brought them to Worcester, and consigned them to the Prior, bidding him take good care of them and shew them all hospitality. Wulstan, having received this charge, gave them liberal entertainment, but made no difference in his own observance of Lent, nor relaxed the severity of his rule. The Cardinals were much pleased with their visit to Worcester, and were charmed with the admirable regime in the Monastery. They formed also a very high opinion of the Prior. When Lent was over they returned to Court. It happened whilst they were there that the election of a Bishop for Worcester was discussed. In the course of the discussion the Cardinals suggested Wulstan, and the suggestion was received most favourably. Both the Archbishops, Stigand and Aldred, warmly approved. The two principal Earls, Harold and Algar, who had succeeded his famous father, Leofric, spoke loudly in his praise. The King, not a little impressed, became very desirous to see Wulstan, and accordingly messengers were sent off in hot haste to Worcester, with orders to bring the Prior in the King's name to Court. Wulstan came accord-

ingly, but when on his arrival he learned why he had been sent for, he was sore distressed, and absolutely refused to listen to the proposal. In vain the King, the Cardinals, the Archbishops, and the Earls pressed him to accept the vacant See. In his anguish he exclaimed that he would "rather be beheaded than "be made a Bishop." Thus matters were for some time at a deadlock, when it happened that a hermit coming to Court solved the difficulty. This man, who was universally venerated for his holiness, severely rebuked our Saint for his disobedience to the will of GOD, as manifested in this unanimous call from his superiors. This rebuke utterly upset Wulstan. The blow came from an unexpected quarter. He began to fear his own motives, to doubt if he was doing right, and at last, yielding to the rebuke, "he, with many sighs and groans, "submitted to the yoke."

It will be noticed in the foregoing account that Archbishop Aldred joined with the rest in promoting Wulstan's election; and, in so doing, he undoubtedly fulfilled his promise to the Pope to do his best to obtain a worthy successor to himself in the See of Worcester. It is plain, however, from what follows, that this astute Prelate had his own ends in view in furthering Wulstan's election, as the reader will presently see.

The King invested the Bishop Elect with the temporal possessions, and Wulstan was consecrated



not long after, *at York*, by Archbishop Aldred (September 8th, A.D. 1063). This Consecration at York was a somewhat anomalous proceeding, for, as Worcester is a Suffragan See to the Arch-diocese of Canterbury, the Consecration under ordinary circumstances would have been there. The reason why he was consecrated at York was because Archbishop Stigand was under a cloud, and had not obtained his pallium from Rome.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, for all that he was recognised as Archbishop in England, and to him it was that Wulstan made his profession of obedience. Moreover, Aldred was obliged to take an oath in the King's presence that he would not claim from Wulstan any ecclesiastical or civil jurisdiction, either on the plea of his having consecrated him, or because he (Wulstan) had formerly been one of his monks. The Consecration having been completed, the Archbishop informed Wulstan that he himself was called away by urgent business elsewhere, and requested him to take care of his Diocese until his return. The unsuspecting Bishop, though sorry to be detained, did not like to refuse, and so remained in the North, beginning his Episcopal duties by consecrating a new Church, which was dedicated to the Venerable Bede. On this occasion, being moved by his love for that Saint,

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Stigand was elected to Canterbury in the *life-time* of his predecessor, Robert. This French Archbishop had fled the country (see S. Edward Confessor), so that the Arch-See was to all intents and purposes vacant.

he preached with more than usual eloquence and fervour, so that the congregation was much affected. Thenceforth, when ever it was known he was going to preach, the people flocked in crowds to hear him. In the meantime, while he was thus wholly engaged in fulfilling the duties which the Archbishop had left him to discharge, that slippery Prelate had hastened off to Worcester, there to settle, in Wulstan's absence, the temporalities of the two Sees. Now they had been held so long together that there was no little entanglement in their temporalities. Availing himself of this confusion, Aldred managed to arrange matters so well for himself, that when Wulstan afterwards returned to Worcester he found, to his dismay, that nearly all the endowments of his See were lost. Aldred had appropriated nearly all of them for York. Such a clean shave had he made that only seven farms remained for Worcester. Wulstan, we are told, groaned over this iniquity. But what was to be done? Aldred was at this time all-powerful in the Kingdom, and with the King; too able, too clever, too difficult a Prelate to contend with successfully. Moreover, contention would certainly make him an enemy for life. Wulstan, aware of all this, repressed his complaints until at least some favourable opportunity should present itself for the assertion of his claims. This he did the more cheerfully because he was fully persuaded that the versatile Prelate whom he had to contend with was

not without a conscience, and could be won by kindness.

The event justified his belief. He continued on the best of terms with Aldred, and in due time, without any animosity, or appeal to law. the question was re-opened, and an amicable arrangement arrived at. Aldred, of his own accord, restored to Worcester the greater part of the endowments which he had annexed to York ; all, in fact, but twelve farms, which he retained to the day of his death. These were afterwards recovered by Wulstan from his successor.

But to return. It soon became apparent that the choice of Wulstan had been a most happy one. Under his diligent and wise administration a wonderful change for the better began to appear in the Diocese. However, of Wulstan's Episcopate it will be more proper to speak at large later on, because the greater part of it was spent in a new era. Scarcely, indeed, had he been consecrated three years when an event occurred which threw all England into turmoil and confusion. This was no other than the death of the saintly King Edward, who expired on January 5th, 1066. What followed is too well known to need to be repeated here at length. Harold, it will be remembered, ambitiously seized the Crown, and before the year was over paid the penalty of his ambition at Hastings. The principal people in the country then submitted to William, and he was crowned on Midwinter day

in Westminster Abbey, by Archbishop Aldred. There he made a most solemn oath that he would rule the English people, not as a conqueror, but justly and equitably as their legitimate King. The English, however, soon discovered that they had forfeited their rights, and lost their liberty. This led to disturbances in some parts of the country. The Conqueror took advantage of these "Rebellions" to consider himself free from the oath which he had sworn in Westminster Abbey, and he thenceforth ruled the English with a rod of iron.

The easy conquest of England by the Normans is a problem not easy to solve. Old writers attribute it to effeminacy in the people. "The English at "this time," *Malmesbury* writes, "were of abandoned "morals, they had given themselves over to luxury." This, and the long period of peace they had enjoyed, had made them effeminate. "Wulstan," he adds, "laboured in vain to check this luxury. The young "fashionable courtiers turned a deaf ear to his rebuke. "If there was one thing more than another which he "detested, it was the fashion then in vogue with the "courtiers of wearing their hair long with flowing "locks. This he never tired of denouncing. One "of his sayings was long remembered, 'that they who "'wore their hair like women would prove but women "'in the defence of their country.' His custom was "to take a little pocket-knife with him (when on his "travels) to cut the locks of any that would allow him

“to do so. He cut one lock as a pattern, with strict  
“injunctions for the rest to be cut to that length.”  
“The Clergy,” the same writer continues, “had very  
“little learning, they could scarce stammer out the  
“words of the Sacraments, and one who understood  
“grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment.  
“The monks mocked the rule of their Order by fine  
“vestments, and the use of every kind of food. The  
“nobility, given up to luxury and wantonness, went  
“not to Church in the morning, after the manner of  
“Christians, but merely in a careless manner heard  
“Matins and Masses from a hurrying Priest in their  
“chambers, amid the blandishments of their wives.  
“The commonalty, left unprotected, became a prey  
“to the most powerful, who amassed fortunes by  
“seizing on their property, or by selling their persons  
“into foreign countries. Although it be an innate  
“quality in this people to be more inclined to revel-  
“ling than to the accumulation of wealth, there  
“was one custom, repugnant to nature, which they  
“adopted, namely, to sell their female servants. . . .  
“Drinking, in particular, was an universal custom, in  
“which occupation they passed entire nights as well  
“as days. They consumed their whole substance in  
“mean and despicable houses, unlike the Norman and  
“French, who in noble and splendid mansions lived  
“with frugality. The vices attendant on drunken-  
“ness, which enervate the human mind, followed ;  
“hence it arose that engaging William more with

“rashness and precipitate fury than by military skill, “they doomed themselves and their country to “slavery by one, and that an easy, victory. In fine,” he concludes, “the English at that time, wore short “garments, reaching to the mid-knee. They had “their hair cropped, their beards shaven, their arms “laden with golden bracelets, their skin adorned with “punctured designs. They were accustomed to eat “till they became surfeited, and to drink till they “were sick. These latter qualities they imparted to “their conquerors, as to the rest, they adopted their “manners.”

But to return. It was part of William's most determined policy to get rid of every Englishman who was in authority, and to fill his place with one of his Norman followers. Accordingly, under one pretence or another, the English Bishops were deprived of their Sees, and the Abbats of their Abbacies. So undeviatingly was this policy pursued, that no Englishman obtained preferment under his rule. Many of Wulstan's compeers were not only deprived, but also confined for life in prison. It appears, moreover, that there was no intention on the part of the King, or of Archbishop Lanfranc, to spare *him*. On the contrary, an order was issued for his deprivation, on the plea of his slender attainments in learning, and ignorance of French. As it was a pre-determined plan to deprive the English Bishops, we need not attach much weight to this charge.





HIC LACET  
E. L. WARDVS REX  
CONFESSOR.

S. WULSTANVS EPISCOPVS WIGORNIIENSIS  
in Anglia Monachus Benedictinus. Jan. 19.

S. WULSTAN.



*Malmesbury* remarks on it that "though Wulstan " was not a proficient in profane literature, yet in "all learning which befitted his office, and in the "rules of ecclesiastical discipline he was extremely "well versed." However, be this as it may, a Council was called at Westminster, and Wulstan was cited to appear, there to deliver up to the King and the Archbishop the insignia of his office. And how did he escape? How came it to pass that, doomed as he was to disgrace, he not only retained his dignity, but was also received into the King's confidence and friendship? The result of this day's proceedings was so strange and unexpected that we can scarcely wonder that it was believed of old to have been due to miraculous intervention. Here is the old story, as given by William of Malmesbury. On the day in question, he tells us, Wulstan appeared before the Council assembled in Westminster Abbey, and was there ordered by Archbishop Lanfranc to resign the insignia of his See. The man of GOD stood up, calm and undisturbed, and expressed his willingness to resign an office of which he never thought himself worthy. He would therefore gladly give up his Pastoral Staff; but to whom? Not to Archbishop Lanfranc, who had not given it him, but to the King (Edward) from whom he had received it. So saying he proceeded to the tomb of the holy Confessor, and invoking him as a witness of the truth of his words, affixed the staff into the recumbent stone

which covered his remains. This done he divested himself of his Pontifical robes, and took his place among the monks, as one of their rank. Immediate orders were now given for the removal of the staff; but (wonderful to relate!) it could not be removed. Apparently it had penetrated into the stone, in which it remained fixed. After many fruitless attempts by others, the Archbishop ordered Gundulf (Bishop of Rochester) to remove it, and he did his best, but with no better success. The astonished Bishops, the Archbishop, the King himself crowded round the monument, lost in admiration and surprise! All recognised the Divine interference, and Lanfranc, throwing himself at Wulstan's feet, exclaimed, "Brother! we have had your simplicity in derision, "but GOD has made your righteousness as clear as "the light. Take back your Bishopric, of which we "in our ignorance would have deprived you. It is "GOD, rather than ourselves, Who restores it to you."

Such is the old mediæval story, which we need not stop to discuss, content to know that so far at least it is incontestably true that Wulstan was not deprived of his Bishopric, nay, was thenceforth treated as a friend by both the King and the Archbishop.<sup>1</sup> His

<sup>1</sup> It seems most highly probable that S. Wulstan's escape from the fate of his brother Bishops was due to his friend, Cardinal Ermenfrid, who, it may be remembered, had himself suggested his election. Ermenfrid was at this time in England, at *William's Court*, and as Papal Legate was employed by William *ostensibly* for the reformation of the English Clergy, but *really* in pursuit of his policy of getting rid of the native Bishops.

troubles, however, were not yet at an end. Within a very few years from this time he nearly lost his Bishopric, under the following circumstances: In the year 1070, Archbishop Aldred (happily it may be for himself) died, and the King immediately filled the Arch-See of York with a French Churchman, Thomas of Bayeux. Thomas, it is said, had many good qualities, but he was a man of an exceedingly litigious temper. This had already brought him, more than once, into contention with Archbishop Lanfranc, and indeed he was seldom out of the Law Courts. The occasion of his strife with Wulstan was this. When Archbishop Aldred died, Wulstan thought it proper to plead for the restoration to Worcester of the twelve estates which had been alienated by Aldred to York. The new Archbishop responded by a counter plea, that the See of Worcester belonged by right to the Arch-see of York, and therefore to himself. This groundless plea might have been easily disposed of under ordinary circumstances, but was then more difficult because the Normans were little acquainted with the affairs of the English Church, and Thomas was able to countenance his plea by shewing that three successive Archbishops of York had held Worcester with their own See. The case was first tried in an English Court. Here it was decided against Thomas, upon which he appealed to Rome, and there, we are told, nothing but Lanfranc's presence saved Wulstan's

cause. The Pope (Alexander), a former pupil of Lanfranc, but a friend also of Thomas, not wishing to offend either Archbishop, ordered the Cause to be settled in an extraordinary Council in England. This Council was summoned by the King, and met at Pedrida, in Somersetshire, "near the river Parret." Here Wulstan was cited to defend his cause. It was well known that Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, the King's half-brother, had warmly espoused the cause of his countryman, Thomas, and had formed a coalition of the Norman nobles in his favour. It pleased GOD, however, to deliver Wulstan out of the toils of this confederation, and judgment was given in his favour. The following interesting account of the proceedings is taken from *Malmesbury*: "The pious "simplicity of S. Wulstan," he writes, "and his noble "confidence in GOD demand our praise and admiration, for when the case was about to be tried, and "his party was retired to consider more carefully "what answer they should make, he tranquilly "reminded them that it was time for them to sing "the Office for the sixth hour. His companions "suggested the necessity of first expediting the "business in hand, and of deferring the Office till "after the suit was decided: they would only make "themselves ridiculous by spending their time in "prayer at such a juncture; the King and the "nobles would laugh at them! 'Nay,' replied "Wulstan; 'let us first do our duty to GOD, and

“‘afterwards settle the disputes of men.’ Having then first sung the Office, he proceeded at once to the Council Chamber, without devising any subterfuge, or attempt to disguise the truth. There he gave his benediction to a monk, who was to be his counsel, a man of little eloquence, but somewhat acquainted with the Norman language, and the event of it was that he not only obtained his cause, but was humbly entreated by the Archbishop of York to visit those parts of his province which he himself, through dread of enemies, or ignorance of the language, had refrained from approaching.”<sup>1</sup> We learn elsewhere, from the same author, that *the King* had taken no little interest in the question, and had been at great pains to learn the rights of the case. It was no doubt due to him that Bishop Odo’s machinations were defeated. William also, at this time, ordered Archbishop Thomas to restore to Worcester all the estates which had been alienated to York, and with royal munificence made some amends to the Archbishop for his apparent loss. After this, Wulstan escaped serious molestations from the Normans, and was left in peace to pursue his useful labours. Among them none were more noteworthy and attended with happier success than his efforts for the abolition of slavery, the practice

<sup>1</sup> The visitation of the *Diocese of Chester* was committed to Wulstan. He also assisted Thomas, the Archbishop of York, in the Consecration of a Bishop for the Orcades.

of which was still common in this country. The condition of our agricultural labourers had always hitherto been a kind of serfdom. The labourers were a part of the estate, and could not leave it at will ; they were regarded as the property of the owner, and were liable to be sold in the slave-market for bondage, either at home or abroad. The profits which accrued to the merchants, and others engaged in this traffic, were very great, and this made them callous to every other consideration. The following graphic account of these sales is taken from *Malmesbury* :—" There is," he writes, " a seaside town, Bristol "by name, whence there is a good passage for " Ireland and its barbarous traffic. Thither, for the " sake of merchandise, the Bristol merchants often " sailed. Wulstan weaned these men from an inveterate custom, which neither the love of GOD, nor " the fear of King William, could induce them to " give up. They bought men in every part of " England with the view of selling them at a better " price in Ireland. There, in Bristol, you might see, " and groan to see, young persons of either sex, of fine " form, and ripe age, tied with ropes, and exposed " daily for sale. Nor were these men (more cruel " than sea-monsters ! O horrid wickedness !) ashamed " to give up their nearest relations—nay, their own " children—to slavery. This odious and inveterate " custom they had derived from their ancestors. The " young women were made mothers, and then carried

“to market, that so they might bring a better price. “Wulstan, knowing the obstinacy of these merchants, “made a practice of visiting Bristol from time to “time, where he would stay occasionally two months “together, preaching every LORD’S Day upon the sub- “ject, by which practice, in process of time, he made “so great an impression on their minds that they “abandoned that wicked trade, and set an example “to England to do the same.” Nay, such zealous converts did they become, that they expelled from the city, and put out the eyes of an obstinate slave-dealer, who would not give up the trade. “In “which matter,” our author naively remarks, “I “approve their zeal, but reprobate the act.” Not long after this the sale of slaves was made illegal by order of King William. *Malmesbury* hints that he had hitherto winked at the practice on account of the large fees from it, which helped to fill his treasury, and he divides the credit of this great reform between the King, who disannulled it, Archbishop Lanfranc, who persuaded him to do so, and S. Wulstan, who prepared the way for it by weaning the minds of the people from it.

It may not be amiss to give here some account of the personal appearance and habit of life of our Saint. In stature he was about the middle height, his limbs admirably proportioned, except that his nose was rather too long for the rest of his features. His constitution, as already mentioned,

was of the strongest and healthiest, not at all affected by the severities which he practised. He retained his health and vigour to a good old age. A serene benevolence beamed in his countenance, alluring everyone to love and reverence him. A great simplicity in manner and general demeanour laid him open to the shafts of wit, and occasionally of ridicule, which he took in good part, or with some amusing retort. In his clothes he did not affect the squalor and meanness in which the religion of the day usually dressed itself, but contented himself with avoiding anything approaching to finery. One of the rules which he made for himself was never to dine in private; so, when in residence, he either took his meals with the monks in the refectory, or with the knights and soldiers whom the King had quartered on the monastery, for King William, under pretext of providing for the safety of the religious houses, had taken occasion to place companies of soldiers in all the most important Abbeys. In this policy he had a double object, for he thus provided good quarters for his troops, and also was able to keep in check any seeds of sedition among the monks, to which they were the more inclined because their lives had been made miserable by the alien Abbats, who domineered over them. But though this arrangement may have suited the King, it might have been thought a very uncomfortable one for the other parties concerned—



for the monks, to have bands of soldiers quartered on them, to the soldiers, to be quartered in the precincts of religion! As a matter of fact, however, it turned out much better than might have been expected. The monks and the soldiers agreed very well together, and in some instances a very friendly and cordial intimacy sprang up between them. This was notably the case at Ely, and also at Worcester. Wulstan took the greatest care of these unbidden guests, provided handsomely for them, and lived with them on the happiest and most cordial terms.

His diocesan duties took him much away from Worcester, but when he was in residence, he made himself one of the monks, sharing with them the Cathedral duty, which was taken in turns by such of the fraternity as were Priests. He was generally the first in Church at the midnight Office, or, if perchance he found a Priest there, waiting to celebrate, but in need of an assistant, he would cheerfully undertake that office for him. Some thought that he demeaned himself too much, and did not sufficiently support his Episcopal dignity. If taxed on this score he would reply, "I am your *Bishop*, indeed, and therefore am bound to be your *servant*. It is my LORD'S command!" Indeed his whole daily life and conduct seemed to be framed in accordance with this precept. For the same reason he took no notice of personal sleights or of

ridicule, only in matters which concerned religion was he strict and particular. He could rebuke, if need required it, but even his rebukes were so conveyed that it was difficult to resent them. If a monk was negligent, and absented himself at the early *Matin Service*, after it was completed, and the rest had gone back to their cells, Wulstan would go to the offender, cause him to rise, take him with him to Church, bid him say the Office, and himself make the responses for him. Nothing that concerned religion seemed to him unimportant. A chorister's crumpled surplice, or one put on awry, would not escape his notice, nor did he think it beneath him to put it right with his own hand.

The following anecdote shews the gross indignities with which he was at times treated by some, who knew that they could do it with impunity. It happened once, when he was travelling South to attend the King's Court at Christmas,<sup>1</sup> that he passed the night at Merlow (Marlow?). The weather was wintry and stormy, snow and rain were falling fast. Moreover the Church was a long way off, and the roads so muddy that it was bad walking in them even by day. Wulstan, however, declared his intention of going as usual to *Matins*. His clerks, not relishing the idea, did their best to dissuade him,

<sup>1</sup> William held Court with great magnificence three times in the year: during Christmas-tide at Gloucester; in the Easter season at Winchester; and at Pentecost in Westminster. All the principal persons in the Realm were cited to attend these Courts.

but failed to shake his determination. "He should go himself, but did not require them to accompany him, only one at least to act as a guide." On this a clerk, named Frewen, undertook to be the Bishop's guide, and taking him by the hand led him purposely into a sludge of mire, where he sank up to his knees in mud. In his efforts to extricate himself the Bishop lost one of his shoes. Conscious of the trick played upon him, and also of the clerk's object (which was to make him return to the inn), he quietly pursued his way to the Church (where he paid his devotions), and it was only after his return home, when he sent someone to search for his shoe, that it became known how he had been treated; but not even by a word did he call to account the malicious clerk. *Malmesbury* adds that this was no solitary instance, though a very gross one, of the way in which some persons trespassed on his forbearance. "Not," he continues, "because he did not understand their meaning, or because he was insensible to pain, but as a matter of Christian patience he inured himself to bear these trials, and so complete was his self-control, that he could never be drawn into an expression of temper."

The visitations of his Diocese were made on horseback, and were very laborious, but he did not in consequence relax his usual devotional exercises. He travelled in company with a troop of Clergy and monks, and his custom was, as soon as he had

mounted, to commence the Psalter. The monks and clerks, who rode beside him, took part in this exercise, chanting the alternate verses, and prompting the Bishop's memory, when it seemed to fail. His chamberlain accompanied him on these occasions with an immense purse, from which he defrayed the wants of those who required help. His Archdeacons preceded him to announce beforehand his approaching visit. One consequence of this was that his route was beset with crowds of people, who came, some on account of their spiritual necessities, some to seek counsel and advice, others for their temporal needs. The Bishop received them all kindly, and never seemed to mind the labour of those interviews, however wearisome. The Confirmation work alone was exceedingly heavy, so much so that at times he was engaged from break of day to sunset. Those who came to see it were astonished as they noticed the old Bishop wearing out eight clerks in succession, who waited on him with the Chrism, and who succumbed to the toil, whilst he exhibited no signs of fatigue. By means of these constant visitations Wulstan became intimately acquainted with the condition and wants of his Diocese. One of these was a great need of more Churches. Numerous villages and hamlets had never hitherto had a Church of their own, and many of the existing Churches were in a ruinous state. Wulstan built a large number himself, and urged this duty on all proprietors of the soil.

Up to this period the Altars in nearly all the Churches were of wood; for these he substituted Altars of stone. His grandest undertaking (which he had the happiness to complete) was the rebuilding of his Cathedral. The edifice which then stood was in a ruinous condition. Wulstan therefore felt bound to rebuild it, but to pull it down grieved him sore, for it was associated with the memories of departed Saints, of S. Oswald, in particular, who had built it. Accordingly on the day when the old building was unroofed, he was seen, we are told, in the Cathedral yard, sad, dejected, and with eyes suffused with tears. Those who were with him, not understanding the cause of his sorrow, bade him rejoice on such an occasion, but they could not make him dry his tears. None the less, he did his utmost for his new Cathedral, and no doubt it was as fine a building as the architecture of that age made possible.

Wulstan's Cathedral has, of course, long ago perished. The present Cathedral dates about A.D. 1218, and is the work of Bishop Sylvester. It seems certain, however, that there are yet remains of S. Wulstan's building. The crypt of the present Cathedral answers architecturally with the date of his time, and may safely be regarded as his work. Moreover, the funds from which the present Cathedral was built were mainly supplied from offerings made at his shrine, and from the patronage of King John,

whose attachment to Worcester was greatly due to his veneration for S. Wulstan. It may fairly, therefore, be said that few, if any, contributed more to the present Cathedral than S. Wulstan.

His latter days were, on the whole, calm and peaceful. There occurred occasional disquietudes from the neighbouring Norman lords. The Abbat of Evesham, also, vexed him from time to time with litigious lawsuits, and imposed upon his forbearance. Such vexations he bore with the greater equanimity from experience of more serious troubles in his earlier life. The most disturbing trial of his latter days occurred A.D. 1088, at the death of the conqueror. William, it will he remembered, left England to his second son, and this led to a civil war, for Robert was not content with Normandy, and an important party among the nobles favoured his pretensions.

In the strife Wulstan continued his allegiance to the conqueror by adhering to William Rufus, and the new King had such perfect confidence in his loyalty that he confided the Castle at Worcester to his trust. In the meantime large armaments in Robert's interests had gathered in the Midlands. They seized the City of Bristol, and plundered it. Bath also was taken, and given to the spoil. A vast body of men came from Wales against Worcester, vowing that they would burn it, and its new Cathedral (which had only been completed that very year). Wulstan was spared this misery. He

had with him in the fort a small force of trained soldiers. These, issuing forth in the night, fell suddenly on the undisciplined invaders, and routed them with great loss. Henry of Huntingdon gives the following account of this affray:—"They were preparing to assault the Cathedral and Castle, when Wulstan, the venerable Bishop, in his deep necessity, implored the aid of his greatest friend, even GOD the most high, by whose help, whilst the Bishop lay prostrate in prayer before the altar, a small party of soldiers, who sallied forth against the enemy, was able to slay, or capture five thousand of them." The troubles connected with this civil war, though sore at the time, were over before the year was concluded.

It now only remains to tell a few details of his private life, and perseverance in good works even to the end. In the administration of his Diocese S. Wulstan was a strict disciplinarian. He dealt severely with such of the Clergy as neglected their flocks, or whose lives were not in accordance with their profession. On the same principle he was hard on the married Clergy. In this he cannot fairly be blamed, for he was but carrying out the law. Otherwise, when duty did not require it, he was most compassionate to all, sympathizing with his fellow-men, even in their faults and failings. With none more so than with those who sought him for their spiritual necessities. *Malmesbury* says, "He

“welcomed with joy and kind encouragement any  
“who came to him to confess their sins, and would  
“listen to their confessions with the tenderest sym-  
“pathy, shewing no signs of repugnance, or contempt,  
“but as one who compassionated their misery (not  
“horrified at their disclosures). The consequence of  
“this was that people came to him from all parts of  
“England, and what they dared not tell to anyone  
“else, they did not blush to confess to him. They  
“seemed not ashamed to tell him what they were  
“ashamed and sad to have done. The Bishop by  
“his kindness encouraged this confidence, bidding  
“them earnestly not to despair, and shewing them  
“how to avoid sin for the future, and how to wipe  
“out their present stains.” Nor was it a less  
remarkable feature in his character that to none  
was he more kind and intimate than with those  
with whose sins and penitence he had become  
acquainted.

In accordance with the custom of these times, he had in his palace a number of youths and boys, sons of noble and rich parents, entrusted to him for their education. Of these he took great care, using his influence to the uttermost to train them in good ways. It was part of his discipline to accustom these young nobles to wait and attend on the poor. They were expected to lay tables for them, to serve up dinner, bring water for the washing of their hands, etc. If any of these boys, conscious of high



birth, shewed symptoms of pride, or disdain, even by a look, he would by no means pass it over. "He had rather be offended in other ways than by seeing the poor slighted. It was the LORD'S command that we do service to them, and that command must be obeyed." With these and such-like words he would humble them, and lead them to feel a reverence for the poor. Boys of a fair countenance attracted him greatly. He would gently stroke their heads, and say, "How beautiful must the Creator be, whose creatures are so fair." His charities to the poor abounded more and more the older he grew. His biographer gives the following account of his observance of Lent, and in particular of Maundy Thursday, which was a great institution in these early times:— "It was his custom," he writes, "to wash the feet and hands of a few poor folk every day in Lent, after which he gave them food. This he did in the night-time, to avoid publicity. When thus engaged, if he noticed any one of these poor people to be suffering from the King's Evil, he would wipe his feet with special care, and would lovingly kiss the sores, and the very ulcers in them." The whole day of the LORD'S Supper (Maundy Thursday) was spent in a round of pious duties from early dawn to nightfall. None of these seemed to give him greater pleasure than the Service which was connected with the reconciliation of penitents. So gracious and kind was his manner towards them, "that when they

“looked upon him,” his biographer says, “they could scarce believe that they were not looking at an angel of GOD.” He made a point of always dining on this day with these reconciled penitents. On his last Maundy Thursday these duties were performed with such zeal and care that what he did on former years seemed nothing. Doubtless he had a presentiment that it was for the last time. All the servants were struck with his extraordinary earnestness. He had given an order to his bailiffs that they should provide him, each from his own farm, one suit of apparel, shoes for ten men, and food for a hundred. Moreover, he had directed his chamberlain to buy stores of the same, that what the farms failed to supply might be provided by the palace. Three times on that day was the great Hall filled so full of poor people that there was scarce passage through their long and serried ranks.

The din of so large a crowd filled the whole Palace, whilst the monks and clerks busied themselves with washing the feet of the guests. Wulstan, in the meantime, sat in the midst of them, supported on his Episcopal chair. The immense fatigue which he had already undergone had exhausted his strength ; if he had not the power to wash their feet, he would at least join in the proceedings by his presence. His mind was revolving all this time how it would be possible to supply so great a crowd of people, so that none should go away empty. And

now, not only once but twice, had that spacious Hall been emptied of its guests; all had gone away equipped with new clothes, appetites satisfied, hearts gladdened with gifts of money and of shoes. The Hall had been filled a third time, when a monk whispered into the Bishop's ear that the money and clothes were all gone, that the food was running short, and that the master of the Hall and chamberlains refused any further supply. "Was it of any use to wash the feet of these poor people when they had nothing to give them afterwards?" "Yea," replied the Bishop, "let the LORD'S command be fulfilled; His goodness will supply what is wanting. My servants will not aid me now in what I wish—they will be willing enough when I am gone." Scarce in his grief had he uttered these words, when, lo, three messengers entered the Hall, almost, for haste, treading on each other's heels. The first announced to the Bishop a gift of money, the second that of a palfrey, the third a present of oxen. The Bishop, raising his eyes and hands to heaven, thanked GOD for this providential supply, the monks also could scarce restrain their tears for joy. All returned thanks to GOD. The horse and the bullocks were forthwith sold, and with the money thus received, and the gift of silver, all difficulties vanished, and an abundant supply was found for the remaining guests. The Bishop had given orders to his attendants to provide a feast for the ensuing Easter Day, as he intended to entertain

some *worthy* guests. His chamberlain, misunderstanding his meaning, sent invitations to a number of rich persons in the neighbourhood. When the Paschal Feast had arrived, the Hall was filled again with a crowd of poor people, and the Bishop declared his intention of dining with them. The master of the Hall, in extreme vexation, remonstrated with him for leaving his proper guests "to dine," as he expressed it, with a "lot of paupers." Wulstan, ignoring the man's insolence, quietly reminded him of the words of the LORD, how He had said it was better far to feast the poor than the rich ; adding, that for his own part, he would far sooner dine with the poor than with the King of England. "Nor did he say this," continues his biographer, "from want of experience, "for the King (the conqueror) would often have "him with his guests, and treat him with great "honour. As did also the nobles, who would "frequently invite him to their tables and listen "with respect to his counsels. Yea, even those who "did wrong themselves, yet, as it were, honouring "in others what was lacking in themselves, held him "in respect. Nor was this the case only in England ; "his reputation spread wide abroad. The Kings "of Ireland greatly cultivated his friendship, the "King of Scotland, Malcolm, with his revered "Queen, Margaret, commended themselves to his "prayers." Letters to the same purport are still extant, addressed to him by the Patriarch of

Jerusalem, the Pope of Rome, and other foreign Prelates.

It is time, however, that we proceed to relate the details of his sad but glorious death, which occurred shortly after the events just now narrated. At Whitsuntide, in the same year, he was struck with a serious malady, which affected the use of his limbs, and confined him to his bed. He forthwith sent to Robert, Bishop of Hereford, a very dear friend, to ask him to visit him without delay. On his arrival, he made a confession to him of his sins and shortcomings, and insisted on receiving *the discipline*, a scourging, i.e., on his naked back. From this time he lingered a few months, sometimes better, sometimes worse, till the beginning of the New Year; a slow fever was consuming his vitals, and bringing him gradually to his end. The decay of his bodily vigour seemed only to increase that of his soul; so by degrees he was matured for heaven.

After the festival of the Circumcision the Bishop of Hereford paid him a second visit, in company with two of Wulstan's principal Abbats, Serlo of Gloucester and Gerald of Tewkesbury. This was to enable him to make a few necessary arrangements for his Diocese. These completed, he bade them a final farewell. Thenceforward his malady increased, and hastened his journey heavenwards. His sickness did not interfere with his devotions. Seated, rather than lying on his couch, he fixed his

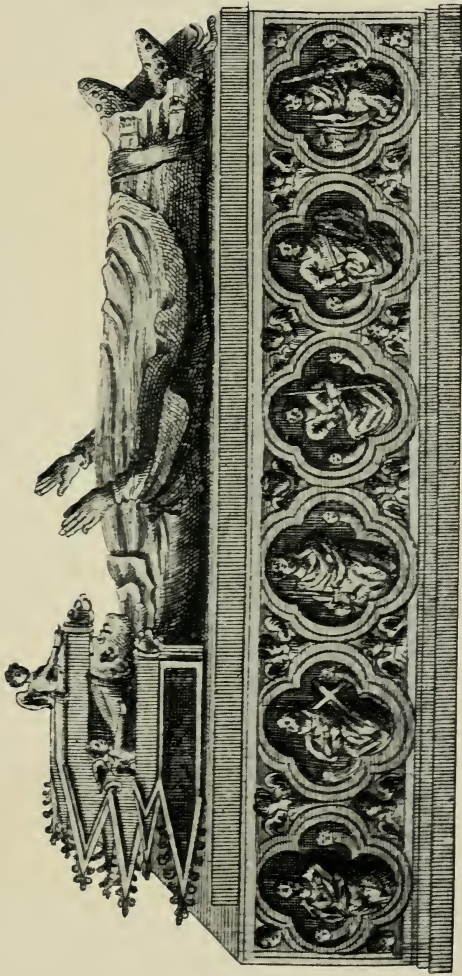
eyes on the Altar, and listened with his ears to psalmody. His couch was purposely so arranged that he could see without difficulty into the Oratory. Eight days before his death he received Extreme Unction from the hands of Thomas, the Prior, and daily afterwards fortified himself with the Viaticum. He breathed his last on the 19th of January, 1095, in the 87th year of his age, and the 34th of his Episcopate. "People say," writes *Malmesbury*, "that he had a foreknowledge of his longevity, which he often alluded to. Once in particular, when the monks were all assembled with him in the chapter-house, deep in conference together, it so happened that the Bishop slumbered, and his head fell back upon his shoulder. The alarmed monks thought that he was dead, and raised a loud clamour with their lamentations, which woke the Bishop up, and he enquired the cause of the noise. On being informed, he soothed their fears. 'Trust me,' he said, 'my old crazy body will last yet some time, and will bring me to a good old age, and when I am gone I shall be with you, in some sense, still, nor need you fear any of the evils you apprehend if only you are faithful and true to GOD.'" After his death his body was washed, and all who beheld it were struck with the colour, which was of a fine white and ruddy look. The nose, which in lifetime was somewhat prominent and red, became white and proportionate with his other features. His

Episcopal ring, which would occasionally drop off when he was alive, could not now be detached from his finger, and was buried with him. The body was placed on a bier, and borne in solemn procession to the Cathedral. There it was placed in front of the Altar, the Clergy seating themselves around it; and there through that night, and the following day and succeeding night, they remained engaged in prayer and intercession to GOD.

Wulstan's beloved friend, the Bishop of Hereford, was at this time at Court with the King. The night that Wulstan died he dreamed that he saw him. But, Oh! how changed! He seemed of a rosy hue and bright heavenly light; he held his Pastoral Staff in his hand, and thus he seemed to say, "Brother Robert, hasten to Worcester. It is my wish that you perform my funeral rites. Commit my body to the ground, my soul to GOD." Robert, in his sleep, seemed to answer, "My lord, my beloved friend! Do you bid me to bury you? I never saw you look so well these five years past." "Be that as it may," replied Wulstan, "it is the Will of GOD, and you must do it. Disregard not my words, but hasten to Worcester." The Bishop, awaking from his sleep, went to the King, informed him of his dream, and requested permission to leave Court, which was granted him. He then came full speed to Worcester, his long friendship spurring him on. Divine providence favoured his desires, he arrived in Worcester

in time to perform the funeral rites, which took place on the Sunday after his death. Speaking of them, his biographer says: "His remains were then interred amid  
"the universal lamentations of the people, who sobbed  
"aloud, so that the vaulted roofs of the Cathedral re-  
"echoed with the noise." "Nor was this an ordinary  
"or simulated grief—but a real sorrow of the heart.  
"All deplored the ruin of religion, the misery of the  
"country in this man's death. Nor would it be easy  
"to say who had the justest cause of grief, the Clergy  
"or laity, the old or the young, the rich or the poor.  
"His body was consigned to the grave, but his  
"memory lives fresh in the hearts of his people. You  
"could scarce find a city or a religious house in which  
"the memory of the departed Bishop was not lovingly  
"preserved. Not content with a yearly festival, a  
"weekly one is usually observed—by the Clergy with  
"prayers and Masses, by the Laity with largesses and  
"most abundant alms." In about a hundred years  
from the date of his death he was Canonized, after an official enquiry made by certain Commissioners, among whom were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Ely, and other Prelates. We need not investigate the grounds of his canonization. Few will doubt the justice of the decision—for would it be easy to find a man more full of the love of GOD and of his fellow-men? We see in S. Wulstan a notable example of one who, from his earliest days, endeavoured to live a life of daily self-denial and of





OLD TOMB OF S. WULSTAN.



severe self-discipline. There is a prejudice in our own days against asceticism—not perhaps altogether without some excuse—for must it not be admitted that it has sometimes been practised under forbidding aspects?

Doubtless examples of asceticism may be met with too nearly allied to that of the fakirs in India, which counts pain and suffering in itself a virtue; and again it has been seen at times combined with harshness of temper and a sour severity from which we all naturally shrink. Certainly also it is true that some pious Christians in their zeal have practised it indiscreetly to the injury of their health. Hence, perhaps, the wide-spread prejudice in our own day against a discipline which CHRIST Himself and all his Saints practised, and which may truly be said to be of the very essence of Christianity. Those who study the lives of the Saints will see that this spiritual exercise is not necessarily associated with any of the unpleasing draw-backs alluded to above. We find holy men using it discreetly as a means to an end, for conquering self, and for bringing the body into subjection to the spirit. How free was the asceticism which S. Wulstan practised from the taint of spiritual pride and from hardness of temper. What deep humility possessed his soul! What tender love for others! What sympathy for them in their cares and sorrows! It is plain, also, from his ripe old age and vigorous health to the last, that he did not over-tax

his bodily strength. There is little danger, in the present day, of anyone attempting to rival S. Wulstan in asceticism. Nor is it indeed desirable to attempt it. But it is a grave question, whether we should not all of us be the better for more daily self-denial. Is it not folly to expect the blessings of our religion if we neglect the condition on which they depend? How plain are the words of CHRIST, "If any will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." And, again, to whom are His best promises given? Are they not to those who have forsaken that which was naturally dearest to them? In Wulstan we may see how these promises were fulfilled. Certainly in pure sincerity of heart he resigned all worldly happiness in order that he might the better follow CHRIST. And what was the result? A life of singular happiness, peace, and joy. Blessed in himself a thousand-fold, he became a blessing to all among whom he lived—above all to his most unhappy countrymen, groaning under the rule of the Norman Conqueror.

## **S. Walstan.**

A.D. 1016.

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S. WALSTAN was a serf, or agricultural labourer, who lived and died in the neighbourhood of Norwich. After his death he was popularly regarded as a saint, and it became a custom with mowers and other labouring men, to meet together at his grave on the anniversary of his death for a religious Service. His body was enshrined in the Church of his native village, and the Church itself was dedicated to him. His festival was very popular, and multitudes of people used to come to it from every part of England, and even from the Continent.

His acts have little (if any) historical worth, but they are interesting as a legend, and as such we give a portion of them.

### LEGEND.

S. Walstan, beloved of GOD, was born in the South of England, in the village of Bawburg (Baber). His parents, Benedict and Blida, were of the royal lineage. The child, from his earliest days shewed great tokens of piety, serving GOD, even in his infancy, to the best of his power, with great humility and simplicity of mind. He was scarce twelve years old when, drawn by divine inspiration, and the

teaching of the Gospel, he sought and obtained leave of his parents to repudiate any title he might possess to the royal succession. Moreover, in order that he might be more free for prayer and other exercises of devotion, he left the place of his birth, and betook himself to the North of England. There, in order to practice himself in servitude and holy obedience, he bound himself in service to a certain husbandman in the village of Taverham. . . . Being full of the grace of GOD, he often gave away to those who were poorer than himself part of the victuals which he received for his service, and even a part of his garments. Accordingly, it happened one day, when a poor man was begging an alms, that, having nothing else in hand, he gave him his shoes, bidding him never to tell it to any one. However, it came to the ears of his mistress. This malicious woman, under pretence of a great need, ordered the holy man to go to a wood not far off and bring her thence a load of thorns. But Almighty GOD did not desert His servant on this occasion, but was miraculously present with him, so that he went among the thorns and brambles without being hurt by them. He trod upon them as upon roses, which breathed forth their sweetest scent and fragrance. Having loaded the wagon with the assistance of his master, he brought it home to his wicked mistress. When the woman saw him thus unhurt, with the load of brambles at her door, she was filled with a sense of shame, and, falling humbly at S. Walstan's feet, begged his pardon amid a flood of tears.

His master, seeing the divine grace so strongly manifested in him, conceived a great affection for him, and, having no child of his own, would have made him his heir. This he one day declared publicly before many witnesses. The Saint, who was present, absolutely refused consent to such a proposal, but made one request, that, for the sake of his past services, his master would give him the calf of a certain cow which was expected soon to calve. This request his master readily granted. When, a short time afterwards, the cow calved, she gave birth to two bull calves, which thus became the property of the Saint. He took the greatest care of them, nourishing them as best he was able. This, however, he did, not for the sake of earthly gain, but in furtherance of the Divine Will—for it had been revealed to him that his body would be conveyed to the place of its sepulture by these calves, as came to pass in due time. One Friday morning, as he was mowing with others in a meadow, he received a divine intimation that his end was approaching. His first act (after cheerfully resigning himself to the Divine Will) was to go to his Priest, to whom he made a contrite confession, and from whom he received the Sacrament of the Body and *the Blood* of CHRIST, and also

Extreme Unction, after which he returned to his work. The following day, when he was mowing in the same meadow, at three o'clock in the afternoon, he suddenly threw away his scythe, exclaiming that it was time to give over work, for he could hear the bells in heaven chiming to "worship." His fellow-labourers wondering at what he meant, he said to one of them, "Place your foot on mine, and you will see the heavens opened, and the angels of GOD clanging "celestial bells!"

S. Walstan died in the same meadow on the following Monday, as he was at work with his companions. Before he died he declared his will, which was as follows: His soul he commended to Almighty GOD, to the Virgin Mary, and all Saints; and his body he willed should be decently laid upon a wagon, which, without a driver, should be borne by his two oxen whithersoever the Divine Will ordained.

Accordingly, a little time after his death, some good men placed his body on a wagon, and yoked his oxen to it. They went off straight to the wood of Costerhaye, and thence took the straight road to the village of Baber. Arrived there, they stopped at the place where now his "body rests, and would go no further."

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It would appear from this that the Church was built over his remains. It was dedicated to S. Mary and S. Walstan. His body lay in the north aisle until the sixteenth century, when, by order of King Henry VIII., this part of the Church was pulled down.

## S. Cuthman.

DATE UNCERTAIN.

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S. CUTHMAN is another saint of humble life. He was born of pious parents in the South of England. His father was a small farmer, and Cuthman's first employment was to tend his father's sheep. These he took out daily to pasture, remaining with them (meal-times excepted) during the whole of the day. In process of time his father died, and his aged mother was left to his care, "whose grief," we are told, "he softened, not so much by words, as by the "services of a most devoted love." He became the staff of her old age, the light of her eyes ; his only care being to supply her needs. They lived for some years on the goods bequeathed them by the father, but when these were spent they began to be in want. Their difficulties were much increased by the state of his mother's health ; she was hopelessly paralyzed, and had lost the entire use of her limbs. Under these circumstances, unable to find any other means of subsistence for his mother and himself, Cuthman was reduced to a life of mendicancy. He laid his



mother on a wooden truck (which had a wheel attached to it underneath); this he pushed before him, and so journeyed about the country, supplying his mother's needs by begging. After many years thus spent in bitter endurance of cold, hunger, and fatigue, he came at last to a place now called Steyning (in Sussex). Here his truck broke down, so that he was unable to proceed any further. His first care was to build a hut in which his mother might find shelter. This accomplished, he spent his leisure time (when not engaged in the care of his mother) in erecting a little wooden Church, for there was none in the place. GOD blessed his pious design; he made no little progress. He chose for his site a lovely spot, lying at the foot of a shady hill, covered at that time with shrubs and brushwood, and watered by a sparkling stream. The people in the neighbourhood interested themselves in his design, and assisted him generously. And so in time all difficulties were overcome, and the Church was consecrated.

This was the humble origin of Steyning Church, which became in process of time a Church of importance, with its Dean and Canons.

Cuthman lived many years after the consecration of the Church, of which he became the custos or warden. He was held in much reverence for his piety, and after his death was regarded as a saint.

## S. Margaret of Scotland.

QUEEN.

A.D. 1093.

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S. MARGARET was the elder sister of Edgar Etheling, rightful heir to the Crown of England at the death of the Confessor. They, with another sister, Christina, were the children of Prince Edward. This Edward was the son of Edmund Ironsides, at whose death he was deported from England by Canute, and lived in banishment during that monarch's reign, but was invited back into England, A.D. 1057, by Edward the Confessor, who intended to leave him the Crown of England.

Edward was received by the people with great rejoicings, but unfortunately died the same year. His children were young—Edgar Etheling scarce more than a boy—at the Confessor's death, and so it came to pass that his claims were overlooked and ignored by the people. After the battle of Hastings and Harold's death, many of the English lords bethought themselves of the true and rightful heir, but it was then too late, and Edgar himself, with

the chief men of the country, swore fealty to the Conqueror. William kept Edgar with him at Court, under pretence of friendship, but it was not long before the Prince perceived that his best chance lay in flight. He fled, therefore, at the first opportunity, with his mother, Agatha,<sup>1</sup> and his two sisters, into Scotland, where he was hospitably received by King Malcolm. This Malcolm was the son of that King Duncan, with whom Shakespeare has made us all familiar. Malcolm, it may be remembered, escaped into England, at his father's death, and received much kindness from the Confessor. Assisted by his troops, he defeated Macbeth, and gained his paternal crown. Thus he was predisposed—apart from political motives—to shew kindness to these English exiles, who were so nearly related to his benefactor. Nor was it long before other and tenderer motives began to be felt. The Princess Margaret won his esteem and love, and he desired greatly to have her for his Queen. But for this the exiles were not prepared. Malcolm's life had been a very rude one; in England he was chiefly notorious for the cruelties he had perpetrated in his raids on this side the border. Margaret shrank from such a marriage; she had no ambition to become a Queen, no desire to marry; and when pushed to do so, replied "that

<sup>1</sup> This Princess was a daughter of the Emperor Henry III. Christina, her younger daughter, became eventually a nun in Romsey Abbey.

“she would neither have him (Malcolm) nor any other person, if GOD would permit her to serve Him with her carnal heart.” The King, though baffled for the time, yet continued, as opportunities allowed, to urge his suit, and the position of the exiles became embarrassed. They made more than one attempt to escape out of Scotland. Once, when Malcolm had gone on a raid into England, they fled in a ship that was sailing to the Continent, but a sudden storm in the course of their passage drove them back on the English coast. They landed near Wearmouth, where, as it happened, Malcolm was encamped with his army, and they were fain to go back to Scotland under his protection.

At another time they tried with no better success to pass over to Cologne ; they were driven back into the Frith of Forth.

Malcolm in no way resented this treatment of himself, but continued to shew the exiles hospitality, and at the same time also to urge his suit. At last, won partly by his forbearance, and partly overcome by the difficulties of their position, the family yielded. Margaret’s scruples were overruled, and Malcolm became her husband. Thus a marriage was brought about which proved to be one of infinite service to all concerned. The old English chronicler says of it, “The prescient Creator knew long before what He would do with her, namely, that she should increase the glory of GOD in this land, lead the King

“out of the wrong into the right path, bring him and his people into a better way, and suppress all the bad customs which the nation formerly followed.”

One of Margaret's first acts after her marriage was to cause a noble Church to be built on the spot where her nuptials were celebrated, to stand as a memorial of her faith, where also prayers might be for ever offered for the King and herself. This Church she enriched with divers ornaments, and with vessels of purest gold. She excelled in needlework and embroidery, and she taught and encouraged the daughters of the nobles to employ themselves in such work. Her private chambers soon became storehouses of Church robes and vestments, some of exquisite beauty. In these rooms only her own sex was, as a rule, admitted. On all State occasions, when she appeared in public, she went in costly apparel such as became a Queen, in deference to what was due to the royal dignity, though it was repugnant to her own feelings.

Moreover, in order to do honour to the nobles and the courtiers who frequented the Palace, she caused the reception-hall and chambers to be handsomely decked with all manner of furniture and ornamental decoration. The nobles soon began to follow her example. To make it easier for them she encouraged merchants to come by sea and land into Scotland. These merchants introduced abundance of wares hitherto unknown in that country. Thus she estab-

lished most happy relations between herself and the nobles, among whom she exercised an unconscious refining influence. But most of all was this the case with the King, whose admiration of her was equal to his love, and both unbounded. Not only was he willing to carry out her suggestions, so that good laws were passed and religion advanced in the nation, but a wonderful change was soon perceptible in himself. From Margaret he learned habits of prayer and earnestness of worship; he followed also her example in works of righteousness and almsgiving, "so that men marvelled at the change." The Queen had a large family by him,<sup>1</sup> and, as might have been expected, was most careful of their education, striving with all her power to train them up in pious ways. From their earliest childhood she instilled into their hearts the love of GOD. "O, my children," she

<sup>1</sup> Margaret's children were as follows:—

1. Edmund. This Prince devoted himself to religion.
2. Edward, slain with his father at Alnick.
3. Edgar, King of Scotland.
4. Alexander, King of Scotland.
5. David, King of Scotland.
6. Matilda, married to King Henry I.
7. Mary, married to Count Eustace of Bologne.

There was also another son, Ethelred, who died in his infancy.

The most noted of Margaret's children was her youngest son, David, who reigned over Scotland twenty-nine years. This admirable King, "who surpassed all his predecessors in prudence and justice," was sometimes reckoned among the saints. He founded and endowed four bishoprics (Ross, Brechin, Dunkeld, and Dumblane), and fourteen grand abbeys, among which were Kelso, Melrose (rebuilt), Holyrood House, Jedburgh, Newbottle, Kinloss, and Drayburgh.

would cry, "fear the LORD, 'for they that fear the "LORD lack nothing,' so shall you prosper in this world, and enjoy eternal happiness with the saints hereafter." She also made it her daily prayer and intercession to GOD that her children might know and love their Creator in the days of their youth.

By the blessing of GOD her prayers were answered ; her children grew up an excellent, united family, devout in their religion, fond of each other. Three of them in succession sat upon the throne of Scotland ; one became Queen of England.

Whilst thus engaged with so many and such anxious duties, Margaret was very careful not to neglect her own spiritual life, which she strove to regulate in accordance with the precepts of Holy Writ. The Bible she had loved and studied from her youth, and she never neglected to read it. Moreover, for the better understanding of it, she encouraged those who were learned to stay at Court, in order that she might converse and confer with them on points of difficulty. Her biographer adds, however, that few of them knew more of the Bible than she herself, and that many felt, when they left her, that they had learned more than they had taught. So fearful, however, was she of herself lest the world should gain her heart, that she took especial precautions against this danger, calling in the aid of others, whom she believed to be trustworthy, whom she charged to reprove her if they saw aught

culpable; and if they failed to do so she would complain of it and call them negligent. "Let the righteous smite me friendly and reprove me, but let not the oil of sinners (i.e., their flattery) anoint my head,"<sup>1</sup> was one of her favourite texts.

There were at this time in Scotland many customs contrary to rectitude in faith and morals, which had become inveterate by long use; these the Queen laboured incessantly to abolish. The King did not oppose, countenancing her efforts with a silent support. Councils were held from time to time for discussion. In these Councils the Queen took an active part, contending daily with the nobles, who defended the old customs. The King on these occasions would often act as interpreter, for though he had had little education, he could speak the English language as well as his own. In this way not a few scandalous customs were abolished. (See Appendix.)

In her private life Margaret was above all noteworthy for her charity to the poor, in whose behalf she lavished her means with unstinted generosity. In consequence of this, orphans, widows, and other distressed persons came to her as to a mother. She supplied their wants to the utmost extent of her means; when these failed she would even borrow from her attendants, nor did these, we are told, ever

<sup>1</sup> This is the old translation (in the vulgate) of the passage rendered by us, "Let not their precious balms break my head."



deny her, for they knew well that she would not forget to repay them, and perhaps with interest. When all other means failed, as would occasionally happen, she ventured, when hard pressed, to take something from the King's privy purse. Malcolm took these "pious thefts" in good part, pretending not to notice them; or he would catch hold of her hand with the money in it, and amuse himself with her embarrassment.

Margaret's charity was not confined to the poor. There were many exiles at this time in Scotland—English prisoners, who had been captured in border-raids, and reduced to slavery. For these the Queen felt a most tender compassion. In their behalf she employed officers whom she could trust to travel about the country, who should report to her where they discovered any English slaves, and which of them were suffering the cruellest bondage; these she hastened to redeem and to restore to liberty.

Many Churches in Scotland were enriched by her munificence; above all, S. Andrew's, where she usually paid her devotions. This Church was then crowded on Sundays by country people, who, having no place of worship of their own, flocked to it from many miles around. For their accommodation Margaret caused houses of reception to be built, in which the travellers might rest from the fatigue of their journey and find refreshment; she also appointed attendants to wait upon them.

Thus, careful for others, she took, alas! too little care of herself, so that there are but too good grounds for believing that she injured her health by the austerities which she practised, to which she had inured herself to that degree that she seemed "rather to taste food than to eat it." It was one of her customs to keep *two* Lents in the course of the year, the first, as usual, before Easter, the other, which also lasted forty days, before Christmas. During these seasons she rose at midnight to take part in the Matins Service. The days were spent in works of mercy and exercises of devotion; she washed the feet of the poor, relieved the indigent, saw to the needs of her pensioners, and with her own hands fed a number of little orphan children, whom she had adopted, and who were too young to feed themselves. Nor did she break her own fast till three o'clock in the afternoon.

Whether on account of these austerities, or from some other cause, her health permanently gave way. She contracted an infirmity, accompanied with sharp internal pain. Thus invalided, she was obliged, though most unwillingly, to relax her rule of life. In the meantime, she applied herself more diligently than ever to sacred reading and prayer.

Assured that her end was approaching, she set herself in earnest to prepare for it, and, as a first step (much practised in those days), made a solemn confession of her whole life to her spiritual adviser.

When she bade him a last farewell, she enjoined him always to remember her in his prayers, and also exacted a solemn promise "that he would be a father to her children, and would admonish and rebuke them if their conduct deserved it." Soon after this she was seized with a sharper attack of illness, from which she never rallied.

It pleased GOD to refine and purify this most pious lady with accumulated affliction in her latter end. She lost both her husband and her son Edward before she died. The story of their death is a sad one. When William Rufus came to the Throne, under difficult circumstances, from the pretensions of his brother Robert, he conciliated the Scotch by making great promises to Edgar Etheling, which promises he afterwards entirely failed to keep. Malcolm, in the interests of his brother-in-law, hotly resented this perfidy, and resorted to hostilities. Contrary to the Queen's entreaties, he made a raid into the North of England, which he ravaged with great fury. The Norman chieftains, taken by surprise, and unable to cope with him in battle, resorted to a base stratagem. They sent messengers to treat for peace, and when Malcolm entertained them, invited him to come, with a few of his chiefs, to Alnick Castle, in which they were themselves shut up. The King, having no suspicion of their designs, came, with his son Edward and a few others, to the castle walls. Whilst they were conversing on the terms of peace, the Normans

suddenly protruded from the windows murderous weapons of great length, with which they mortally wounded the King and his son. The Scotch army, learning these tidings, fled in dismay to Scotland, losing great numbers in their flight. The first to bring these appalling tidings home was one of Margaret's sons, Prince Edgar, who arrived on the fourth day after his father's death. In the early morning of that day, Margaret had felt so much better that she had gone to her Oratory, where she received what proved to be her last Communion. She was scarce in her bed again when her pains and sickness returned with redoubled force. Believing herself to be dying, she bade her priest commend her soul to CHRIST. When the solemn Service was over, and whilst she was lying, calmly expecting death, her son Edgar entered the room. She recognised him, and, summoning all her strength, enquired what news he brought of his father and brother. Edgar, fearing that the shock might kill her, replied evasively that "they were well," but his look and his manner betrayed him. The Queen adjured him to tell her the whole truth. Thus compelled, Edgar related the sad account. The dying Saint, wonderfully supported by GOD in this terrible hour, resigned herself to His Will. Acknowledging herself worthy of all punishment, she humbly prayed to GOD that her soul might be cleansed and purified by this suffering. Whilst she was thus engaged in

prayer, her deliverance came, and she passed calmly away.<sup>1</sup>

Those who were present noticed that her countenance after death bore the appearance of perfect peace, and whereas of late it had been deadly pale, it now was suffused with colour, so that she lay like one asleep.

Her funeral was a hasty one, so great was the confusion that pervaded the Kingdom. Dressed in her queenly robes, she was conveyed to Dunfermline, and there buried in the Church which she had built. Her body was laid in front of the Altar, on the spot where, in her lifetime, she had loved to pray.

She was canonized in the thirteenth century, and the 10th of June became her festival.

There is an especial interest attached to the life of this Saint, inasmuch as she represents the virtues and sanctity of married life. S. Margaret evidences how possible it is to be a saint of GOD, though "clad in "soft clothing" and living in the world.

Doubtless, if she had followed the bent of her own mind she would have secluded herself from the storms and the harass of life in the haven of some

<sup>1</sup> S. Margaret had in her hand when she died a cross, which she used much in her devotions. It was of pure gold, and of wonderful workmanship, opening and shutting as required. A portion of our LORD'S cross was believed to have been inserted in it. She brought it with her into Scotland, and left it as an heirloom to her sons. The youngest of them, King David, built for its reception a splendid Church, near the city, which was called from it, S. Cross.

religious house, but she gave up her own inclinations, and resigned herself to live that life which seemed marked out for her by GOD, and in doing so she found her true vocation. No saint in a cloister could have served GOD with a truer fidelity, or closer devotion, than that with which she served Him in her married life. Not coveting the dignity of her position, she adorned it by her virtues, and turned to the best account the opportunities for good which she found in it. It will have been seen in the above memoir what a wonderful influence she exercised on those amongst whom she lived. The King, her husband, "worshipped her." Her children "rose up "and called her blessed." The rude nobles of the North held her in reverence. Her humility, her tenderness, her consideration for others, won their hearts, and conciliated those who might otherwise have opposed her. Thus she lived in the world, but "not of the world," and we see in her character an exemplification of that purity of soul which earthly bliss and the cares of married life neither could taint nor dim, and which we may well believe to have been not less dear to GOD because it was exhibited and preserved in a palace.

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## APPENDIX.

An account of the proceedings at one of these Conferences has been preserved. We give a summary of it :

The Queen enquired of the nobles why they did not commence the observance of Lent on Ash Wednesday, but on the following Monday. The nobles replied that the Lent fast was one of six weeks, and that was exactly the time from the Monday on which they began their fast to Easter Day. But the Queen reminded them that the Sundays in Lent were not observed as fasts, therefore their Lent was one of only thirty-six days ; four more days, therefore, were required, which were gained by commencing on Ash Wednesday. To this the nobles could make no reply.

The Queen next enquired why they did not come to the Sacrament on Easter Day. The nobles replied that they were afraid to do so, because S. Paul had warned them that they who eat that Sacrament and drink it unworthily, eat and drink judgment to themselves. Therefore, as they were conscious that they were not free from sin, they thought it safest to abstain. "What?" replied the Queen, "are none that have sinned to eat of that Bread?—then must no one partake of it, for all have sinned. And why then did our LORD command His disciples to communicate? It is not those who have sinned, but impenitent sinners, who have need to fear S. Paul's warning." The nobles, we are told, convinced by the Queen, began henceforth to conform themselves to the rules of their religion.

The third point of controversy was the observance of the LORD'S Day. The Scots hitherto had paid no attention to this, but had done their ordinary work on Sundays as on other days of the week. The Queen reproved them for this, shewing from Scripture and from the precepts of the Church that Christians were bound to do honour to that day, and to abstain from their ordinary work. In this matter, we are told, the Queen was most successful, for the Scots henceforth began to reverence the LORD'S Day, "so that no one would carry any burden on it, or compel another to do so."

Among other questions considered in this Conference was that of unlawful marriages, especially marriage with a step-mother or with a deceased brother's wife. The Queen shewed that both of these "were execrable, and to be avoided by the faithful as death itself."

Other barbarous customs were abolished by her influence ; among those was one called *Marchetta Mulierum*, a custom disgraceful to any civilized country.

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