

THE SAINTS AND  
MISSIONARIES OF THE  
ANGLO-SAXON ERA.

*D. C. O. ADAMS.*







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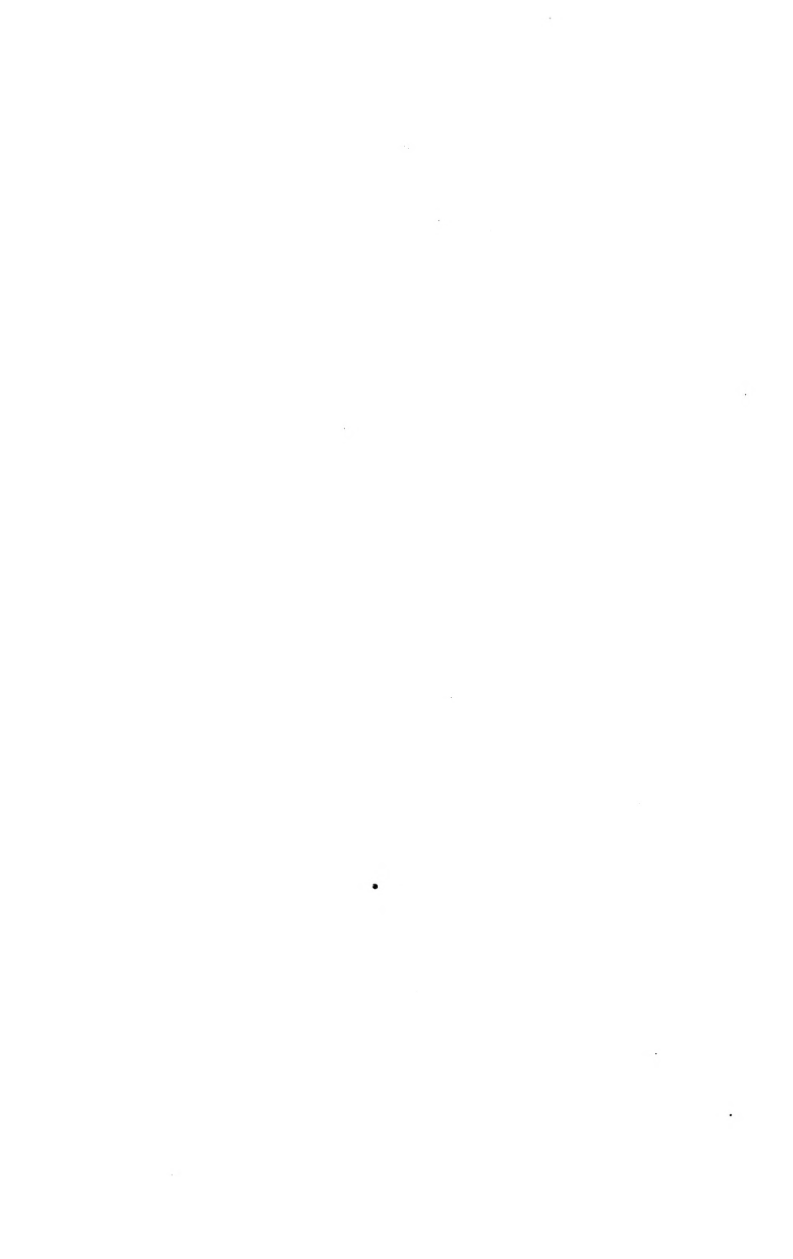
*FIRST SERIES.*

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

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THE following pages are the fruit of the study of many years, carried on with deepest interest in the subject, and with greatest care, by one who in early days was hindered by ill-health from fulfilling his active ministry, and thus gave himself to this study, trusting that it might be a real help to furthering the Church's life. We all owe to Professor Bright, far above others who have written on this subject, most graphic pictures of the Anglo-Saxon Church. But his object did not extend to the details of the lives of the Saints of that period, further than in illustrating the main points of the history, and very touching accounts he thus gave. The author of this volume has given himself the task of exhibiting the inner lives and characteristic qualities of all the more distinguished members of the Church of that age, as well as the circumstances of the times in which they acted : on both these questions he has dwelt with very considerable fulness.

We cannot well understand the being of the Church of England without knowing the facts of its early history, its foundations, the efforts, the failures, and the successes which marked its progress, as it

worked its way amidst and against its heathen surroundings.

The object of this work is not controversial. It is written rather in the firm hope that GOD, in His own good time, and in His own good way, may so guide the future as to re-unite the Church's divided members. Yet, though not written with any controversial view, these pages will shew how careful the English Church was in her earlier days to maintain her own proper national rights, while yet reverencing the claims of authority due to the Catholic Communion at large, and this with special regard to Rome, from whence she had received such great benefits.

It is hoped that this volume, while awakening interest in our early history, will enable many to see how far back our annals reach, and how deep the roots that have been laid, as well as under what difficulties so many of highest and purest faith have been GOD'S chosen instruments in building up the Catholic Communion in our land.

That GOD'S blessing may rest on his friend's work is the earnest desire of the undersigned.

T. T. CARTER.

CLEWER,

*April 2nd, 1897.*



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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MANY years ago (as mentioned in Mr. Carter's Preface), having been disabled from active work by an affection of the voice, I found more leisure for reading than falls to the lot of most of the Clergy; and thinking it a good plan to confine oneself to a particular subject, I chose the study of our Anglo-Saxon times, more especially with the view of becoming better acquainted with the acts and doings of our early English Saints, of whom I then knew little, but wished to know more. Nor did the study disappoint my expectations, but increased my love and veneration for them. However, after many years, my voice regained its power, I became involved in active work, and my books were necessarily laid aside, until a serious illness, which threatened at the time to be fatal, once more restored me to them. It has since been my endeavour to turn to some account my earlier studies, with the hope of interesting others in a subject which so greatly interested myself.

*Why are we not all better acquainted with our early English Saints. We may well ask why?*

It cannot be doubted that there is a great prejudice in the English mind against anything approaching to Hagiology ; most Englishmen neither read, nor wish to read, the lives of the Saints, not even those of their own country and nation ; if we come to sift this prejudice to the bottom, we shall find that (apart from the supposed miracles which are not to their taste) it arises from a vague idea floating in their mind that they were Roman Catholic Saints, with whom we are not concerned ; and no doubt there is an element of truth in this common prejudice ; true the English Church of the present day is not in full accord on all points with the Præ-reformation Church. But are we therefore another Church, a different Church ? Our enemies say so. But we believe from our hearts—we know—that (whatever changes were made at the Reformation) our Church is the same identical Church which was planted in this country by Augustine, Aidan, and their brother Missionaries. But if so, *then we have concern* with the wise, the good, the holy men, the worthies, the Saints, who adorned our Church in its early days ; *they are our heritage*, a very rich and precious heritage, which it is folly to neglect, which can only be neglected to our own loss.

As for the miracles with which old writers loved to embellish their pages, they, as a rule, form no part of the lives of the Saints ; may we not rather regard them, for the most part, as an adventitious growth, as

the lovely mosses and Lichens, which adorn (some think, disfigure) the fruit-trees in our orchards? In any case, the trees are not grown for their sake, but for their own rich fruit ; it is for that we plant them. The glory of the Saints was not the miracles attributed to them, but their holy lives, the brightness of their faith, the purity of their love, their wonderful self-denial and perfect devotion to GOD. It has been well said that there is no miracle so great as a holy life ! The lives of these English Saints, who were the first-fruits to CHRIST in our Church and nation, are replete with miracles of that kind, and, as such, may well be studied with advantage by us all.

With regard to the order in which they are given, it has been thought best, with a view to their historic interest, to arrange them chronologically (rather than in accord with the dates of the festivals), and for the same reason, contemporaries of each Province are grouped together.

It only remains to add that in writing these pages recourse has been had, in the main, to old writers—to Bede, of course, above all ; the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle ; Original Biographies of the Saints ; William of Malmesbury, and his contemporaries, etc. ; not much has been taken from modern authors. Free use has, however, been made of Dr. Giles' Translation of Bede ; and the author is indebted to the late Canon Moberley, and also to the Rev. C.

Plummer, whose edition of *Bede*, lately published, is full of valuable information.

In concluding this Preface, the author begs to tend his grateful thanks to Canon Carter, of Clewer, for constant encouragement given in the course of this work, and also for the pains taken, at the cost of his own valuable time, to improve the letter-press of these pages.

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# The Kingdom of Kent.



## S. Augustine.

FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

CIRCA 604. MAY 26.

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WHEN the Anglo-Saxon tribes<sup>1</sup> wrested this country from the old inhabitants (the British) they made a clean sweep of Christianity wherever they established their sway. How far and to what extent Christianity had prevailed before their arrival is somewhat uncertain. Geoffrey of Monmouth, indeed, tells us that there were 24 Bishoprics in the land, but his book is fabulous and apocryphal. However, we know for certain that Britain was represented by Bishops in several Councils on the Continent in the 4th century;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Jutes, the Saxons, the Angles, etc. The *Jutes* settled themselves in Kent, and a part of Hants. The *Saxons*, in Sussex, Essex, and Wessex. The *Angles*, in Northumbria, East Anglia, and the Midlands. As in time they all became one nation, their names merged in the general name of English, which word is so used in these pages in contradistinction to the *British*, who inhabited the country before the arrival of the English, and were displaced by them.

<sup>2</sup> Three Bishops from Britain were present at the Council of Arles, A.D. 314. Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelfius (Colonia Londinensium). *British* Bishops were also in the Council of *Sardico*, 347; also in the Council of *Ariminum* in Italy, 351. An old

and as Christianity was in a flourishing state in Wales in the 5th century, there is good reason for believing that it was so (until it was rooted out by the English) in the rest of the country before their arrival. Be this, however, as it may, all had been changed by the arrival of the English, who, exterminating the vanquished race, and destroying their Churches, had erected Temples all over England, in which they worshipped their national gods.

So matters had remained for 150 years and more. It would appear however that the national superstition had, in some degree, lost its hold on the mind of the English people, either because it was a religion which would not bear transplanting, or because the common sense of the English revolted against its extreme unreasonableness. Certainly the people in this country were ripe for something better, when it pleased GOD to inspire a memorable person in Rome with an enthusiastic desire for their conversion.

*Gregory* (for of him of course we speak) was undoubtedly the *fons et origo* of Christianity in *England*, and we take it for granted that our readers will wish to know something of him. Descended from illustrious ancestors, he in early life had figured in Rome as

writer, Sulpitius Severus, speaking of this Council, at which 400 Bishops were present, tells us that the Emperor supplied the Bishops with rations. Many of them, however, declined his generosity. "Only three Bishops from Britain, from poverty of their own resources, lived at the public cost."

Chief Minister of State (Prætor), but even then, when engaged in the affairs of this world, his devout mind was bent on GOD'S service, and happening to become acquainted with the disciples of S. Benedict, in their abbey on Mount Casino, and influenced by them, he fully resolved to resign his high position, devote his wealth to Church purposes, and embrace a life of poverty. It was at this time that, among other religious houses built and endowed from his enormous wealth, he founded the abbey of S. Andrew's, on the Cœlian Hill, whence issued in course of time his missionaries into England. In this abbey he became a monk, and after a few years spent in Constantinople, whither he had been sent on an embassy by the Pope, he returned to be its Abbot. He was not allowed long to enjoy the peace and calm of this holy retreat. The then Bishop of Rome obliged him to accept certain offices and dignities, and these once more made his circumstances affluent, but this made no difference in the manner of his life. Whatsoever his wealth might be, "he diligently took care to distribute it on behalf "of the poor," above all, in the liberation of slaves, and for the evangelisation of the heathen. Such was the man of whom Bede tells the following story, which though familiar to most of us, must not be omitted here.

"It is reported," he says, "that on a certain day, "some merchants having lately arrived in Rome, "much merchandise was exposed for sale in the

“market-place, and great numbers of people went  
“thither, and among them Gregory, who noticed  
“among the merchandise some boys for sale, of fair  
“complexion, beautiful countenance, and remarkably  
“fine hair. This led him to enquire from what  
“country, or part of the world they were brought ; and  
“he was answered that they came from the island of  
“Britain, where the inhabitants were of similar form.  
“Gregory enquired again whether the islanders there  
“were Christians, or still under Pagan error, and was  
“answered that they were Pagans. On this he sighed  
“deeply, saying: ‘Alas ! how grievous that the Prince  
“of Darkness should be possessed of men of so  
“beautiful a countenance, and that beings with such  
“fair faces should have minds within destitute of  
“grace.’ He further enquired what was the name of  
“their nation, and was told that they were called  
“Angles. ‘Rightly so,’ said he, ‘for they have  
“‘Angels’ faces, and it is meet that they should be  
“‘united in companionship with the Angels in heaven.’  
“He then further asked what was the name of the  
“Province from which they were brought, and was in-  
“formed that it was called *Deira*. ‘Right again,’ said  
“he, ‘for they are called from the wrath of GOD (*De*  
“*irâ Dei*) to share the mercy of CHRIST. And what,’  
“he continued, ‘is the name of the King of that  
“‘Province?’ They told him ‘Ælla.’ ‘Yes,’ he  
“replied, allusively, ‘Alleluia. It is fitting that the  
“‘praise of GOD be sung in those parts.’”



WILSON





Such is the story as given by Bede, and we may gather from it with certainty that it occurred either before, or in the year 588, because in that year King Ælla died. Gregory at the time was one of the seven deacons who attend upon the Pope. No one was more loved and honoured in Italy. Under such circumstances every worldly motive would have detained him at home, but without the slightest regard to such considerations "he repaired, we are told, to the Bishop of the Roman See, and entreated him to send some Ministers of the Word into Britain to the nation of English, by whom it might be converted to CHRIST, declaring himself ready to undertake the work (GOD helping him) if the Apostolic Pope should approve and sanction it." The Pope gave his consent, and Gregory prepared to go, and set out on his journey. In the meantime the tidings had spread in Rome and caused no little consternation. The times were just then critical in Italy, nor was there a man in Rome on whom the citizens relied so greatly as on Gregory ; all felt that he could not be spared. To satisfy the general discontent the Pope revoked his permission, and recalled Gregory. So matters remained until the death of Pope Pelagius A.D. 590, when Gregory himself was chosen to fill the Apostolic See. "This he gloriously governed for more than thirteen years." Amidst all the weighty matters which then required his attention he never forgot his desire for the conversion of England. Since,

however, it was impossible for him to leave Rome, he spent his energies in taking such means as lay in his power for providing a sufficient number of missionaries. These were trained in S. Andrew's, his old monastery, on the Cœlian Hill ; and Augustine, whom he had made Abbot of it in his own stead, was entrusted with the delicate, difficult, and important task of training them. Many of these young men, no doubt, were drawn from the number of those whom he had redeemed from slavery. These were not necessarily of low origin. Persons of all classes, at times of high birth, found their way into the slave-market, through the greed of their relations or piratical violence. A very old English writer, Ethelwerd, who lived before the conquest, tells us in his history that among the Missionaries sent into England were some of the boys whose distress in the market-place had first interested Gregory in our country.<sup>1</sup>

With these introductory remarks we now proceed to tell the fortunes of the enterprise which Gregory had so much at heart. When all was ready the Missionaries were despatched from Rome, and Augustine, who had trained them, was selected by Gregory to be the leader of them. They left Rome in the year 596 ; they were nearly forty in number ; and as they travelled on foot their journey was slow and tedious. They had scarcely made their toilsome way over the Alps when, either because the winter had

<sup>1</sup> See Ethelwerd's *Chronicle*, chap. 1.

set in, or for some other reason, they halted in the South of France. It is interesting to know that they were entertained here in the celebrated Abbey of Lerins, in the Isle of S. Honorat,<sup>1</sup> close by the modern town of Cannes. It was probably whilst they were here that the most disquieting rumours reached them. The English were painted in the blackest colours. They heard, not without trepidation, that the nation they were going to convert was as fierce as it was barbarous, and most inhospitable to strangers. Bred up in the cloister's shade (as most of the Missionaries were) they would have been thankful to have returned to its peaceful life of devotion.

The more they thought of the task they had undertaken, the more hopeless it seemed; "so, after consulting together, they commissioned Augustine, their leader, to return to Rome to inform Gregory of the tidings they had heard, and to obtain his permission for their return 'from so dangerous, so toilsome, so uncertain a journey.'" Gregory's answer to their request is still extant, and is very admirable; it is delightful to see how this good Father-in-GOD soothed their fears, upheld their

<sup>1</sup> This little isle, anciently called Lero, now takes the name of the Saint who made it famous. S. Honorat, who had lived a hermit's life on the Esterelles, came to live on this islet, circa A.D. 410, where he built a Monastery, whose Monks evangelised the Southern Coasts of France. Among the famous Saints nurtured in it may be mentioned S. Patrick, S. Germanus, S. Lupus, and S. Vincent of Lerins. Its Monks at one time might be counted by thousands.

fainting minds, and imparted to them some of his own Christian boldness. The purport of his letter was as follows :—“ Gregory, servant of the servants of  
“ our GOD, to the servants of our LORD; forasmuch  
“ as it would have been better not to have begun a  
“ good work than to give up one already begun, it  
“ behoves you, my most beloved sons, to fulfil to the  
“ utmost of your power the good work which, with the  
“ help of GOD, you have undertaken. Let not the  
“ fatigue of the journey, nor the tales of evil men  
“ deter or affright you; but with all diligence, and  
“ with all zeal, perform that which, in the Name of  
“ GOD, you have begun; assuring yourselves of this,  
“ that the greater the labour, the more ample also will  
“ be your reward. Wherefore give all obedience to  
“ Augustine, your leader (whom we also make your  
“ Abbot), seeing it will turn to your own spiritual  
“ benefit whatsoever you do in obedience to him.  
“ May GOD Almighty protect you with His grace,  
“ and grant that I may see the fruit of your labours  
“ in the Eternal Country, for though I am unable to  
“ share your labours, yet inasmuch as my will is to  
“ do so, I shall partake of the joy of your reward.  
“ May GOD keep you in His safe custody, my dearest  
“ sons.”

This affectionate letter had the desired effect. The Missionaries took fresh courage, and proceeded without further delay on their journey. Their route through France is said to have been as follows :—

They went from Lerins to Aix, from thence to Arles, and so through Vienne to Chalon and Sens; thence to Tours, and so through Anjou to the Coast. No incidents of this journey are recorded by Bede; we know, however, from other sources, that the Missionaries met with very great kindness from Brunehaut, the Queen Regent of France,<sup>1</sup> who, understanding the object of their journey, gave them a most kind reception, and facilitated in every way their passage into England. She also supplied them with some French clerks who understood English, to act as their interpreters.

On the other hand, if the following curious old legend is true, they met with rough treatment elsewhere. In the Province of Maine and Loire, through which they went, there is a little town now called Pons de Cè. It is reported that on their arrival here, the country-people, noticing the strange appearance and dress of the Missionaries, and conceiving no high opinion of them from their mode of travelling, treated them with the utmost rudeness, and expelled them out of the town; the women joining in the sport behaved worse than the men, and pursued them for some distance, howling, hooting, jeering. Augustine is said to have been obliged to use his Pastoral Staff

<sup>1</sup> Brunehaut (or Brunhild), widow of King Sigebert. This lady was the grandmother of Theodoric and Theodobert, who also showed attention to the Missionaries. This latter Prince, who was King of Austrasia, was father of the Princess Emma, who later on married Edbald, King of Kent. (See *S. Laurence*).

in self-defence. The story is of somewhat late origin and, moreover, is so garnished with mediæval embellishments, that it is difficult to know how much of it is true. What is certain is, that in this town a Church was afterwards built in honour of S. Augustine, and, according to a very ancient tradition, it was built in reparation for the treatment which he had received there on his journey to England.

But to return, the Missionaries had a safe passage over the Channel, and landed in Thanet, at a place called Ebbsfleet, the identical spot where the English under Hengist first landed in Britain. This must have been early in the year 597.

Our readers will not need to be reminded that the period of Augustine's arrival was that of the Heptarchy. When the country was divided into a number of little kingdoms independent of each other, but which found a bond of union for themselves against their common enemy, the British, in the election of a chief, paramount over the rest, who was called "The Bretwalda." When Augustine landed, Ethelbert, the King of Kent—who had signalled himself by his valour, wisdom, and other good qualities—had long held this high office, and in virtue of it was Suzerain-King of all England south of the Humber.

Augustine's first step, on landing in Thanet, was to send a message to this King to acquaint him of the arrival from Rome of himself and his brother-Missionaries, and "to signify that they brought a

“joyful message for himself, which, if taken advantage of, would prove of immense benefit to him, both here and hereafter.” It is probable that Ethelbert, who had married a Christian Princess, Bertha, daughter of Caribert,<sup>1</sup> King of Paris, was not altogether unprepared for these tidings. In any case he returned a friendly answer. The Missionaries were bidden to stay for the present where they were until they heard from him again, in the meantime due provision would be made for their wants. Not many days after the King came into Thanet, and arrangements were made for a conference with the Missionaries in *the open air*. This was a special provision, Bede tells us, against arts of magic, which, according to an ancient superstition, were believed to have less power in the open air than when practised inside a house. “But the “Missionaries,” he adds, “came, furnished not with “magical, but divine virtue.” They arrived in procession, bearing aloft for a Standard a silver Cross, and a picture of our LORD and SAVIOUR painted on a tablet; and as they came they chanted Litanies to the LORD in behalf of themselves and of those whose salvation they had come to seek. At the King’s command they sat down, and Augustine preached the Word of Life to him and the nobles who accompanied him. Unfortunately S. Augustine’s discourse on this very interesting occasion is not preserved. It is certain, however, that it made a very favorable

<sup>1</sup> By his wife, Ingoberba.

impression, for at its conclusion, the King spoke as follows:—"Your words and promises are very fair, " but they are new and uncertain, wherefore I cannot " rely upon them, and forsake that religion which, " with all the English Nation, I have for so long a " time observed. However, as you are strangers, and " have come among us from so great a distance to " impart to us that which you believe to be true and " excellent, we will in no wise molest you, but on the " contrary, will shew you hospitality by providing for " your maintenance. Nor will we forbid you from " preaching, and making as many converts as you are " able to the Faith of your Religion."

Ethelbert also at this time gave them permission to reside in the royal city of Canterbury, which was the Capitol of his Dominions. Thither then the Missionaries removed from Thanet and went to live in that part of Canterbury which was formerly called "The Stable-gate" (the exact spot is not known, but it was in the present Parish of S. Alphege). It is reported that as they drew nigh to this city, bearing aloft their Cross, and the image of the Great King, our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, they sang in sweet harmony this Litany—"We pray Thee, O " LORD, of Thy great mercy, that Thine anger and " Thy fury may be turned away from this city and " from Thy Holy House; for we have sinned. Alleluia."

It has been asserted by some that the Missionaries sent by Gregory into England were men of no mental



calibre, and of little missionary power. Be this as it may, it is plain that they were good and holy men, whose daily life was one of self-sacrifice and prayer. Now if it be so, as is alleged, that they were wanting in those other shining talents, which make a *gifted Missionary*, is it not the more remarkable that their ministrations in England were attended with great success? And may we not conclude that holiness of life and devotion to GOD contribute more, in the long run, than anything else to missionary success?

Bede certainly ascribes the success of Augustine's Missionaries to the wonderful impression which their manner of life made on the English. "As soon," he writes, "as they were in possession of their new mansion they began to live in accordance with the rules of the Primitive Church, being instant in prayer, in fasts and vigils, shewing great contempt for the things of this world, contenting themselves with the bare necessaries of life, conforming their own lives in accordance with the truths they taught, ready to suffer, nay, if needful to die, in behalf of the truths which they preached." And presently after he adds, "they soon began to make some converts, who were drawn to them by the admiration they felt for the holy innocence of their lives, and the sweetness of the heavenly doctrine which they taught." There was at this time, on the East side of the city of Canterbury, a little Church, dedicated to S. Martin, built in the time when this

country was occupied by the Romans. This Church had escaped destruction in the reign of heathenism, which had succeeded their departure and the advent of the English into Britain. When the Princess Bertha married Ethelbert, and a Church was needed for her devotions, it had been appropriated to her use, and here Bishop Luidhard, who accompanied her, had held his Services until the arrival of Augustine. This Church was now made over to him, and here the Missionaries first began to hold their Services, to meet for their own devotions, and to preach to the people. Their converts increased more and more in number; nay, it was not very long before the King himself gave in his adhesion, and was baptized by S. Augustine in S. Martin's Church. This important event took place before the close of the year in which the Missionaries arrived.<sup>1</sup> And now the success they met with before seemed as nothing compared with that which followed. "Great numbers flocked daily "to hear the Word, and forsaking their heathen "rites, believed in CHRIST, and associated themselves "together in the unity of the Church." It was characteristic of the times—and more especially of the English Nation—for the people to follow their leaders, with implicit trust, withersoever they led them, whether, as in this case, to their own incalculable benefit, or, as at other times, to their ruin! Hence-

<sup>1</sup> It is generally accepted that it took place on the Eve of Whit-Sunday, June 10th, 597.

forth, therefore, after the conversion of the King, the work of the Missionaries was comparatively easy, or rather, to speak more accurately, their difficulties were changed ; the converts came in such crowds that there were not teachers enough to instruct them. Some idea of the wonderful " draught of fishes " caught in their spiritual nets may be gathered from the fact recorded by Gregory, who mentions in one of his letters, that on Christmas Day, A.D. 597, the Missionaries baptized 10,000 *Men* in the River Swale, besides an " infinite number of women and children."

Whatever we may think of the value of these wholesale conversions, and no doubt a certain amount must be discounted from their reputed value, it is certain that no undue influence was used to procure them ; the King indeed encouraged those who joined the Church " as fellow-citizens with himself of the Heavenly Kingdom ;" but everybody was allowed freedom ; no compulsion of any kind was used. " For," as Bede expresses it, " he had learned that the " service of CHRIST ought to be voluntary." In the meantime the King greatly assisted the Missionaries by giving them sites of land for Churches where needed ; now also, with the view of providing the Missionaries with better accommodation, he gave them " a settled residence<sup>1</sup> in his Metropolis of Canter-

<sup>1</sup> Some old writers say that Ethelbert gave up his own Palace to the Missionaries and retired to Reculver.

“bury, with such possessions of different kinds as “were necessary for their subsistence.”

The conversion of the English being thus happily begun, Augustine thought it time<sup>1</sup> to carry out the instructions which Gregory had given him at his departure from Rome. Accordingly he crossed over to France and travelled to Arles.<sup>2</sup> Here he was consecrated “Archbishop of the English Nation” by Virgilius, Archbishop of Arles. He made no stay in France, but returned expeditiously to Canterbury. His next step was to send the joyful tidings to Gregory, and to ask for his advice and counsel in the difficult work before him. Two Missionaries were selected for this pleasant office, “Lawrence the Priest,” who afterwards succeeded himself as Archbishop of Canterbury, and “Peter the Monk,” who eventually became first Abbot of the famous monastery which we now call “S. Augustine’s.” It is difficult to imagine a purer joy than that which filled Gregory’s heart when he heard of the success of his mission. With saintly zeal he began at once to consider how he could forward this good beginning, and whatever his mind suggested he forthwith carried out. It was obvious that the mission would require to be

<sup>1</sup> The exact date of S. Augustine’s Consecration is not given by Bede, but it seems certain, from one of Gregory’s letters, that it took place *before* Christmas, A.D. 597.

<sup>2</sup> The Missionaries, it may be remembered, passed through Arles in their journey to England, and no doubt were entertained by the Archbishop. Arles was early made a Metropolis, and the Archbishop was at this time Apostolic-Vicar in France.

strengthened in numbers to be equal to the needs of the new Church ; Gregory's first care, therefore, was to gather together another company of Missionaries. In the meantime, as that could not be done at once (it took more than three years before they were ready to start), he busied himself in providing stores of ecclesiastical furniture, such especially as could not be obtained in England, sacred vessels, Church ornaments, vestments for the Clergy, relics of the Apostles and Martyrs, and a good supply of books.<sup>1</sup> All this store, with unsparing liberality, he provided at his own cost. At the same time he occupied himself in penning letters to such persons as he judged likely to be able to help the Missionaries. Many of these letters are still extant, all affectionate in tone, and full of wise counsels. Augustine had sent by Lawrence a number of questions on matters about which he desired advice ; Gregory gave great attention also to these, and sent him particular answers to them all. When all was ready, i.e., about A.D. 601, this second batch of Missionaries was despatched from Rome, with Mellitus for their leader. Mellitus was of noble extraction. It is probable that the Missionaries who accompanied him were of a higher social grade than those who came with S. Augustine. Not

<sup>1</sup> There are good reasons for believing that two of the books sent by Gregory to S. Augustine are still in existence. They are copies of the Gospels. One of these is preserved in Corpus College, Cambridge, and the other in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

a few of them distinguished themselves in the work they came to do, amongst whom may be mentioned besides Mellitus himself, Paulinus, Justus, and Rufinianus. Gregory sent by these Missionaries a Pall<sup>1</sup> for S. Augustine, giving him jurisdiction over the whole Church in England. With regard to the new Episcopate to be consecrated for the English Church, his counsel was that twelve Sees should be created for the South of England. These were to be subject to Augustine's jurisdiction, but after his death they were to be subject to the Bishop of London. Augustine was also instructed to consecrate a Bishop for York, in anticipation of the conversion of the North of England, in which case that Bishop was to become the Metropolitan of the North, with power to create twelve more Sees, which were to be subject to himself, but, under any circumstances, Augustine was to retain for life the rule of the Church in England. Much of Gregory's scheme was never carried out; circumstances did not allow of it, but we may admire it as a thoughtful, well-digested scheme. With equal consideration he gave his counsel on the somewhat doubtful point, what was best to be done with the numerous idolatrous Temples which then abounded in England? His first idea seems to have been that to destroy them was the safest plan (for we find him counselling King Ethelbert "to *overthrow the structures* "of the Temples; " on second thoughts, however, he

<sup>1</sup> The Pall was the distinctive mark of Metropolitan authority.

changed his mind, for in a later letter sent to Mellitus (whilst he was on his journey to England), we find him counselling that the *Idols only* should be destroyed, and that the Temples themselves "should be purified, "cleansed, and converted from the worship of devils "to the service of the true GOD." On the same principle he advised, in another passage in the same letter, that Church festivals should be established in lieu of the old heathen festivities,<sup>1</sup> when the people were accustomed to slay oxen in sacrifice to the idols and to feast themselves. This counsel of Gregory was no doubt the origin of our village "wakes." All these matters are the more interesting as shewing what an important part Gregory took in the laying of the foundations of the English Church.

Augustine's first care after his return to Canterbury was to consolidate the Church in that City, which had become the head-quarters of his mission. With this view he, by the King's advice, began two very important works. One of these was to provide him-

<sup>1</sup> "Because they have been used," he writes, "to slaughter many "oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged "for them on this account, as that on the day of dedication, or the "nativities of the holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited, they "may build themselves huts of the boughed trees about those Churches, "which have been turned to that use for Temples, and celebrate the "solemnity with religious feasting; and no more offer beasts to the "devil, but kill cattle to the praise of GOD in their eating, and give "thanks to the Giver of all good things for their sustenance."—*Bede* I. Chap. 30.

self with a Cathedral; the other, to build a large abbey which might serve as a home for the increased number of his Missionaries. In both these undertakings he received great assistance from the King. There was at this time in Canterbury another small British Church besides S. Martin's; "it was on the site of the present Cathedral," and was then in ruins. This Church Ethelbert made over to Augustine, and here he commenced his Cathedral, dedicating it to the SAVIOUR (Christ Church), with a residence close by for himself. At the same time he laid the foundations of his new abbey to the Eastward of the city, "but outside of it." Close by stood the old Idol-Temple in which Ethelbert had been accustomed to worship. This was now converted into a Church and dedicated to S. Pancras (some ruins of it remain to this present day). Moreover, also by the advice of the King, Augustine began here another Church which was dedicated "to the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul." This Church was built purposely outside the City walls, in order that it might be a burying-place for Ethelbert and his successors, and for the Archbishops of Canterbury, as the law at that time did not allow that bodies should be buried inside the walls of a city. Here then it was that, in process of time, Queen Bertha was buried, and King Ethelbert himself, and Augustine (who, however, did not live to see it completed), and



many of his successors. The abbey<sup>1</sup> itself, which was in connection with this Church and shared its name, afterwards came to be called after its Founder, and was the origin of our present "S. Augustine's."

Augustine, finding his efforts so far crowned with success, began now to turn his thoughts towards those Christian communities which were in these Islands before his arrival. Hitherto these Christians had held aloof, and refused to have any communion with him. Before, however, we proceed further, it may be well to mention who these Christians were, and what were the points of difference which kept them asunder from the Italian Missionaries. First of all, then, it should be remembered that in England, properly so called, i.e., in those parts of our country which were inhabited by the English people, heathenism reigned supreme. No Christians were to be found, only a ruined Church here and there, as in Canterbury, testified to the Faith which had once flourished in Britain. On the other hand, the whole of Wales was Christian; and, if we may judge by the number of Saints which adorned the Welsh Church at this period it must have been strong and flourishing. The Church in Ireland also was famous at this time for its zeal and learning. In addition to the Welsh and Irish Christians there were strong colonies of Christians in the West of Scot-

<sup>1</sup> There is still standing in S. Augustine's Abbey a piece of wall, part of the Mediæval Cloisters, which is generally thought to be part of the original building of SS. Peter and Paul.

land. The Northern Picts had been converted some time before by S. Ninian, and more lately the Southern Picts had received the Faith from S. Columba, and his noble Missionaries. All these communities—the Welsh, Irish, and Scotch were in communion with one another, but all alike refused to hold communion with the Italian Missionaries. The reasons for this refusal were very different from what we might have expected. It was no matter of doctrine, no Christian principle of any moment which kept them asunder. The controversy which raised such bitter strife, and which it took two centuries to conclude, turned mainly on the observance of Easter Day, or to speak more exactly, on the right calculation of the day on which that Festival ought to be observed. The Celtic communities adhered still to a cycle of 84 years which had once been the rule of the Roman Church, but a more accurate cycle had been found, one of 19 years, which, in consequence of its accuracy, had come into general use on the Continent. This was the main point of dispute. There were other minor questions, especially with regard to the shape of the tonsure, and under-lying those minor matters, a much more serious question, to wit, Augustine's claim on their obedience, as against their own claim of independence. This, however, was kept much in the background. The controversy turned almost entirely on the observance of Easter. It was unfortunate that these zealous Celtic Christians took up a position

which could not be maintained. It was old-fashioned folly to adhere to an imperfect calculation when a better one had been found and received by the rest of the Church; the only result was that it prejudiced their juster claims, and gave the triumph to the Italian party (as will be seen in the life of S. Wilfrid.) With these prefatory remarks we now return to our story. It was, then, soon after his return from the Continent that Augustine, with King Ethelbert's co-operation, invited the chief Doctors and Bishops of the Welsh Christians to a Conference, nor did they refuse to meet him. The exact date of the Conference is not known. It was probably about A.D. 602, nor is the place of their meeting certain. Bede says that it was on the borders of the Wiccii and West Saxons, and was known in his day by the name of "Augustine's Oak." Aust,<sup>1</sup> in Gloucestershire, is the reputed place (though others believe it to have been Cricklade in Wilts). At this meeting Augustine endeavoured "by brotherly admonition to persuade the British Christians to preserve Catholic Unity, and to assist him in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles" (i.e., to the English). He soon found that his audience were in no humour to acquiesce. Wedded to their own customs, and hating the English too bitterly to wish even their conversion, they justified their own traditions. There was much disputation, little or no

<sup>1</sup> *Aust* is situate on the river Avon, just above its confluence with the Severn.

agreement. All that Augustine could obtain from them (and this is said to have been extorted by a miracle which he wrought on a blind man) was that they would meet him again at a second Conference, when the matter might be discussed in the presence of a larger and more influential meeting. They met accordingly a second time, and at this meeting, Bede tells us, "Seven British Bishops, and many of their "most learned Doctors were present." There was at this time a very famous monastery in Wales at Banchor,<sup>1</sup> in Flintshire, over which the Abbot Dinoth presided, and many of their best teachers came from thence. It is said that before the meeting took place the Welsh party, feeling somewhat uncertain in their minds whether they were justified in their opposition to Augustine, determined to consult a venerable hermit of their own nation, much revered for his holiness and wisdom. The hermit, on hearing their difficulties, gave his advice as follows, "that if the new "teacher was a man of GOD they should accede to his "requests." "But, how," his visitors demanded, "shall we be able to know for certain whether "he be a man of GOD or not?" To this the hermit answered, "that the best test of a man of "GOD was *humility*, for our LORD had com- "manded, 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn "of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' So," he continued, "if this new teacher is meek and

<sup>1</sup> *Bangor-is-Coed*, about twelve miles South of Chester.

“lowly of heart it is to be believed that he has taken upon him the yoke of CHRIST ; but if he is proud and haughty, he is not of GOD, and you need not regard his words.” “But,” his visitors replied again, “how shall we know if he is indeed meek and lowly of heart ?” “Contrive,” replied the hermit, “that he shall arrive first at the meeting, and be guided by the way in which he receives you. If he shews you proper respect, and rises at your entrance, listen with attention to what he proposes ; but if he shews you no respect on your arrival, shew also no respect to him.” The Welsh Christians acted on this advice ; they came purposely late to the meeting. Augustine unfortunately did not rise at their entrance<sup>1</sup> (it is impossible to suppose that any disrespect was intended). This unhappy incident so prejudiced their minds against him that it proved a bar to any agreement. The terms which Augustine proposed on this occasion seem moderate enough, and shew a desire on his part to conciliate. The following compromise was offered by him, that if the British would comply with him in three points, they should have perfect liberty in other matters to follow their own traditions. The three points he demanded were : first, that they should keep Easter on the right day : secondly, that they should administer Baptism according to the custom of the

<sup>1</sup>Henry of Huntingdon says, “that he sat according to the Roman custom.” It is noticeable that he *sat* when preaching before King Ethelbert and his nobles.

Roman Church ;<sup>1</sup> and, thirdly, that they should join with him in converting the English. Certainly in two out of these three points the Welsh might have yielded with advantage to themselves.

In their mood at that time if an angel from heaven had addressed them, they would not have listened. Full of resentment at the supposed slight, they received Augustine's proffers with a clamorous refusal, declaring that they would do none of these things, nor receive him as their Archbishop. On this the man of GOD, Augustine, is said, in a threatening manner, to have told them "that seeing they would "not join in unity with their brethren, they should be "warred on by their enemies, and since they would "not preach the way of life to the English nation, "they would at their hands undergo the vengeance "of death." These words of Augustine were long remembered, and were deemed prophetic, under the following remarkable circumstances. Some years after this meeting an awful catastrophe occurred in one of those wars which were so frequent between the Welsh and the English. This was no less than the massacre of a great number of the monks of Banchor, and the destruction of their wonderful abbey. The magnitude of this monastery may be gathered by Bede's account of it. He says "that it was divided

<sup>1</sup> With respect to administration of Baptism it is not known for certain wherein the difference lay. It was probably in the *trine immersion*, customary in the Roman Church.

“into seven departments, with a ruler over each, and “that none of these departments contained less than “300 monks, who all lived by the work of their own “hands.” The population of this abbey, therefore, was that of a city. The sad story of its destruction is as follows: The English King of Northumbria at the time was Ethelfrid, a mighty warrior, who seldom left his neighbours at peace, least of all the Welsh. In one of his wars with them he invaded their country with a numerous army. The Welsh, with such forces as they could raise, met him somewhere near the city of Chester.<sup>1</sup> The two armies were drawn up in battle array, but before the fight commenced the English King observed a body of men, strangely habited, in a place by themselves, not far from the Welsh army, and his curiosity being aroused, he enquired who they were, and what they came to do? He was informed that they were the Priests of the British nation, and that they were come to pray for the success of their party. “If that be the case,” replied the heathen King, “though they do not bear arms, yet they fight “against us. For they oppose us by their prayers.” Thus saying, he ordered the first attack to be made upon them. A body of soldiers had been told off by the Welsh Commander to guard the monks, but these fled basely at the first attack, and the defenceless monks were butchered at will. Bede puts the number of those who were slain at 1,200. These

<sup>1</sup> Battle of Chester, *circa* 613-616.

monks came from the Banchor monastery which was situate not far off. Moreover, in the course of his campaign, the English King penetrating further into Wales came to Banchor, and made an utter ruin of that most famous abbey. There were in old times those, who saw in this sad story the clearest evidence of Augustine's prophetic powers. There have not been wanting others, especially in later days, who, in the spirit of detraction, have taken occasion from it to load his memory with infamy, insinuating that he persuaded King Ethelfrid to slaughter these monks, and so brought about by his own machinations the completion of his "prophecy."<sup>1</sup> This at least, is an unjust and groundless calumny. It is conceded by the best historians, as indeed Bede himself tells us, that Augustine had been some years in his grave before this tragedy occurred. But so it usually happens ; if one age exalts too high, another loves to detract and belittle. "One extravagance, by the law of reaction, leads on to the one opposed to it."

It will have been seen that Augustine's efforts to conciliate the British Christians met with no success ; on the other hand, his work among the English throve apace. The year 604 witnessed two important results. Sabert, King of Essex, a nephew of King Ethelbert, became a convert. This led to the introduction of Christianity into Essex, of which

<sup>1</sup> *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, whose "history" of England is a *tissue of fables* from beginning to end, originated the idea.



province, London, then, as now, the most important town in England, was the Metropolis. Mellitus was consecrated by Augustine Bishop of this little kingdom, and Ethelbert built him a Church in London. It was dedicated to S. Paul, and was the origin of our present famous Cathedral. It is interesting to know that it was here that King Sabert and the little band of Christian converts used to meet for their devotions. In the course of the same year the Church in Kent was strengthened by an additional See. Ethelbert built a Cathedral in Rochester, which was dedicated to S. Andrew, and Justus was made the Bishop of it.

Not long after this Augustine was taken to his rest ; no particulars are given of his death, not even the date of the year.<sup>1</sup> Bede only tells us, “ after this “ the beloved of GOD, Father Augustine died, and his “ body was deposited without the city walls, close by “ the Church of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, since “ that Church was not yet completed, but as soon as “ it was consecrated the body was brought in and “ decently buried in the North Porch thereof.”

On Augustine's tomb was inscribed this epitaph—  
“ Here rests the Lord Augustine, first Archbishop of  
“ Canterbury, who being sent hither formerly by the  
“ blessed Gregory, Bishop of the Roman Church, and  
“ upheld by GOD in the working of miracles, convert-  
“ ed King Ædilbert and his nation from the worship  
“ of idols to the Faith of CHRIST, and having fulfilled

<sup>1</sup> The date was either 604 or 605—probably the former.

“the days of his ministry in peace, died on the 7th day before the Calends of June (May 26th), in the reign of the same King.”

It is the custom of our day to speak slightingly of S. Augustine, and to call his work a failure. We venture to believe that the older estimate was, on the whole, more just. True, the Church may possibly have on her roll more distinguished Missionaries than this Saint; doubtless, again, it would be a great mistake to suppose that the English Nation was converted by him. How could that be, when his mission life in England was but a space of seven or eight years? But is it not a wonder that in so short a time he, by the grace of GOD, accomplished so much? Few unbiassed persons will hesitate to allow that he amply fulfilled the high trust committed to him by Gregory, or deny that he laid the foundations of the English Church ably and well. But if this be so, not without reason was accorded to him of old the illustrious title of “Apostle of the English Nation.” Still has he a claim on our veneration, on the veneration at least of all Englishmen who love Christianity, and who believe it to be the greatest boon which can be given to a Nation.

**S. Luidhard.****BISHOP.**

CIRCA 596. FEBRUARY 4.

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SOME writers say that he had been Bishop of Senlis in France, near Paris, but his name does not appear in the catalogue of the Bishops of that See. It seems probable that he was consecrated Bishop for his office when he accompanied the Princess Bertha into England "to preserve her Faith." How well he prepared the way for S. Augustine will have been seen in the life of that Saint. He is said to have died 596; if so, he was dead before the arrival of the Missionaries. His memory was held in great veneration in Canterbury, and his relics were exposed on the High Altar in S. Augustine's Abbey (near to those of S. Ethelbert), and were, of olden times, carried in a golden chest round Canterbury on Rogation Day.

**S. Ethelbert, alias Egelberth,  
or Aethelbriht.**

KING.

A.D. 616. FEBRUARY 24.

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THIS famous King was the son of Ermenric, King of Kent, and was fourth in descent from Hengist, who introduced the English into the South of Britain, and became first King of Kent. Early historians say that Hengist drew his origin, and not remotely so, from Woden, the great hero-god of the Scandinavian nations. Ethelbert succeeded his father on the throne, A.D. 565, at a very early age, when he was about 16 years old. With youthful rashness he ventured on a war with Ceawlin, the old and experienced King of Wessex, who, for his martial qualities, had been chosen Bretwalda of the English Kings. As might be expected he paid the penalty of his rashness, he was defeated in more than one battle. In one of these which took place at Wibbandune (supposed to be *Wimbledon*), he lost two of his best chiefs, and was himself driven back into Kent. However, his spirit

was unbroken, and it was not long before fortune favoured him with a better chance of success. Ceawlin, elevated by his victories, pushed on his conquests, and shortly afterwards annexed to his own dominions the kingdom of Sussex. This caused him to become an object of apprehension to the neighbouring Kings, who sought safety by combining together against him, and Ethelbert, the young King of Kent, was chosen leader of their united forces. Moreover, he conducted this war with such valour and prudence that its issue was most successful. The old tyrant, Ceawlin, was defeated, and finding refuge in flight, died in exile, unable to bear the disgrace of his defeat. In his place Ethelbert was chosen Bretwalda. In this capacity he either obtained or, as seems more likely, had conceded to him a suzerainty over all England South of the Humber. Ethelbert had now reached the height of his ambition, and under ordinary circumstances it is probable he would have attained to no more ; but greater things were in store for him. Led, we may believe, by Providence, he at this time sought a matrimonial alliance with a French Princess, by name, Bertha (the daughter of King Caribert of Paris), a pious and devout Christian lady. This marriage was agreed to, but only on the condition that the Princess and the people who accompanied her were allowed the full freedom of their religion ; and Ethelbert making no objection to this, Bertha arrived in England, and with her Bishop Luidhard,

who was sent with her "to preserve her Faith." There can be no doubt that the virtues of his Queen, and the piety and excellence of Bishop Luidhard, had a very happy effect on the mind of King Ethelbert, and predisposed him to give a kind reception to Augustine and his Missionaries.

*Malmesbury*, writing of this marriage, says—"And now by this connection with the Franks the (Kentish) Nation, hitherto savage and wedded to its own customs, began daily to divest itself of its rustic propensities, and incline to gentle manners. To this was added the very exemplary life of Bishop Luidhard, who had come over with the Queen, by which, though silently, he allured the King to the knowledge of CHRIST our LORD. Hence it arose that his mind already softened, easily yielded to the preaching of our blessed Augustine."

There is no need to repeat here the story of King Ethelbert's conversion, which has been fully given already in the life of S. Augustine. It may suffice to say that the manner of it must needs commend itself to the approval of all good men. Moreover, with moderation, unusual in the age in which he lived, Ethelbert, after his conversion, never sought to coerce his people from their old superstition, but contented himself with drawing them as best he could by his own example to adopt the Christian Faith. In this course he was most successful, for besides establishing it on a firm basis in his own

kingdom, he had the satisfaction of imparting it to the King of Essex, not to speak of his partial success with the King of East Anglia, who was baptized at his Court, though he afterwards fell away from the Faith.

To King Ethelbert's munificence are due not only the foundations of Canterbury Cathedral and of S. Augustine's Abbey, but also of the See of Rochester, as well as of S. Paul's Cathedral, in London. To these must be added, according to a most ancient tradition, the original foundation of Westminster Abbey.<sup>1</sup> Among his other good deeds may be mentioned his wise care to provide a Code of Law for his people. In him we see the portrait of a brave, wise, and devout King, of whom the English may well be proud, and who is justly entitled to our veneration. He died Feb. 24th, A.D. 616, nineteen years after his conversion to the Faith.

<sup>1</sup> The site was then called *Thorney*.

## **S. Peter of Canterbury.**

ABBOT.

CIRCA 607. JANUARY 1.

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THIS Saint was another distinguished member of the Missionary band who came with S. Augustine into England. He was selected by that Prelate to accompany Laurence to Rome when he wished to convey to Gregory the glad tidings of the conversion of King Ethelbert and his people. He was also chosen to be the first Abbot of the important monastery of SS. Peter and Paul (S. Augustine's). His career of usefulness was brought abruptly to a close, for having been sent on an embassy into France, he was shipwrecked and drowned in the passage of the Channel. This catastrophe happened in the bay of the sea which was then called Amfleet, probably Ambleteuse, where is now a small sea-port village, about two miles north of Boulogne. The body was washed upon the shore and, Bede tells us, that "it was privately buried by "the inhabitants of the place; but Almighty GOD," he continues, "to shew how deserving a man he was,



‘caused a light to be seen over his grave every night, ‘till the neighbours who saw it, perceiving that he “had been a holy man that was buried there, enquiring who, and from whence he came, carried away “the body and interred it in the Church of S. Mary “in the city of Bologne, with the honour due to so “great a person.”

A curious old story has come down to us on the authority of *Scotland*, Abbot of S. Augustine’s, who lived at the time of the Conquest, and who heard the same on some occasion when he was staying at Boulogne. A certain Sacristan of the Church there, knowing nothing of S. Peter, grudged him his place of honour in it, and took upon himself to thrust his coffin out of the Church into some out-of-the-way part of the cemetery. It happened that that very night he was seized with a sudden illness of which he died. None doubted, when they heard the circumstances, that it was a judgment on him; and S. Peter’s body was taken up from its place in the cemetery, and re-translated with great honour into the Church of Boulogne.—See *Mabillon*, VI. B. 760.

## **S. Laurence.**

ARCHBISHOP.

A.D. 619. FEBRUARY 2.

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AMONG the Missionaries sent by Gregory for the conversion of the English people, S. Laurence was one of the most eminent. On this account he was selected by S. Augustine, in company with S. Peter, to convey to Gregory the glad tidings of the conversion of King Ethelbert and of his people. Later on, "In order that the state of the Church of England, still so weak, might run no risk at his decease, he ordained Laurence in his life time to be his coadjutor whilst he lived, and to succeed him in the See of Canterbury after his death." Thus Laurence became the second Archbishop of Canterbury; and Bede tells us "that he laboured indefatigably, both by frequent exhortation and example of piety, to raise to perfection the foundations of the Church which had been so nobly laid." The circumstances of the times, however, did not admit of much onward progress. The utmost

skill was required to enable the Missionaries to hold their own. Seldom, perhaps, was there a more critical time for the English Church than that in which Laurence was called to preside at the helm. The progress of the Church had been too rapid to be lasting. The change from one faith to another—though from a false to a true one—had been too sudden. In the nature of things a reaction in favour of the old religion was to be looked for. It came in Laurence's time, and, from one cause or another, with a violence which threatened the very existence of the mission. But this is to anticipate. For some years all things went well, though much progress was not made. Augustine's early death proved a great blow to the mission, and this was aggravated by the death of Pope Gregory, its founder. This happened on March 12th, A.D. 605. Gregory had never ceased to take the liveliest interest in its welfare, cherishing the mission with the love of a father, nor can we estimate the loss which it suffered by his death. However Laurence had the satisfaction of seeing the Cathedral in Canterbury completed and dedicated. He also consecrated the Church and abbey without the walls. This was dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul.

In the year A.D. 616, however, an event occurred which changed the whole aspect of affairs, and plunged the Missionaries into a sea of troubles. This was no other than the death of King Ethelbert, whose Queen,

Bertha, had died some years before. Ethelbert had been the mainstay of the mission for 19 years; the loss of so pious, so noble, so munificent a Prince must have been a most serious loss to the Missionaries under any circumstances; but this loss was greatly aggravated by the conduct of his son and successor, King Edbald, who immediately took to wife, his stepmother, the young Queen, whom Ethelbert had married in his old age. This marriage, of course, brought him at once into collision with the Archbishop and the Missionaries. They refused to sanction such a union; on which, Edbald forthwith repudiated Christianity, and declared himself in favour of his ancestral religion, which allowed such marriages. The revolt of the King from Christianity had an immediate effect on his people, on the courtiers, and that numerous class whose Christianity was more nominal than real. "Many," Bede tells us, "returned to their former uncleanness, who before this had submitted, either for favour, or through fear of the King, to the laws of faith and chastity." The Missionaries soon began to feel the consequences. Their Services were no longer thronged. Many of their converts fell away, and they found themselves exposed to indignities which none had dared to offer in the reign of Ethelbert. To make matters worse, the Province of Essex, also, at this time repudiated Christianity altogether. Sabert, its pious Christian King, died about the same time as his uncle Ethel-

bert, and his three sons immediately declaring themselves in favour of the old superstition, the Province, which had only lately received the Faith, relapsed with them, and Mellitus, their Bishop, was driven out of Essex. (See *Life of S. Mellitus.*) Mellitus took shelter for a time in Canterbury. The Missionaries at this time were so disheartened that they began to despair. "They took sad counsel together;" and Bede tells us, "they came unanimously to the conclusion that it would be better for them all to return to their own country, where they might serve GOD in freedom, than to continue, without any advantage, among barbarians who had revolted from the Faith." During this panic some of them, Mellitus and Justus among the number, left England, and retired into France. Even the Archbishop himself prepared to follow them. And now, apparently, the great Church enterprise which Gregory had inaugurated trembled in the balance, and seemed likely to prove a total failure. By the mercy of GOD this catastrophe was averted, but how it came to be averted is not so easy to say, unless we believe the old traditional story which is given us by Bede. Circumstances attach so great an interest to this story that we make no apology for giving it in full, as it is related by Bede. "Laurence, being about to follow Mellitus and Justus, and to quit Britain, ordered his bed to be laid the night before in the Church of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul . . . Wherein having laid himself to

“ take some rest, after he had poured out many prayers  
“ and tears to GOD for the state of the Church, he fell  
“ asleep. In the dead of the night the blessed prince  
“ of the Apostles appeared to him, and scourging him  
“ a long time with Apostolical severity, asked of  
“ him, why he would forsake the flock which he had  
“ committed to him? or to what shepherds he would  
“ commit CHRIST’S sheep that were in the midst of  
“ wolves?” ‘Have you,’ said he, ‘forgotten my  
“ example, who, for the sake of those little ones whom  
“ CHRIST recommended to me in token of His affec-  
“ tion underwent at the hands of infidels, and enemies  
“ of CHRIST, bonds, stripes, imprisonment, afflictions,  
“ and lastly, the death of the Cross, that I might at last  
“ be crowned with Him?’ Laurence, the servant of  
“ CHRIST, being excited by these words and stripes,  
“ the very next morning repaired to the King, and  
“ taking off his garment, showed the scars of the  
“ stripes which he had received. The King, astonished,  
“ asked, ‘who had presumed to give such stripes to  
“ so great a man?’ And was much affrighted when  
“ he heard that the Bishop had suffered so much at  
“ the hands of the Apostle of CHRIST for his salva-  
“ tion. Abjuring the worship of idols, and renounc-  
“ ing his unlawful marriage he embraced the Faith of  
“ CHRIST, and being baptised promoted the affairs of  
“ the Church to the utmost of his power.”

This curious old legend is historical, *so far* as it records the sudden conversion of King Edbald, who

most unexpectedly at this time renounced idolatry, repudiated his unlawful union, and put himself under Christian teaching. The question remains, what brought about this sudden change? To solve the difficulty modern writers suggest that the Archbishop made use of a pious fraud, and won the King to the Faith by a religious artifice. Possibly, no doubt, instances may be found of deceit practised by men who professed religion, but it seems scarcely reasonable to attribute such deception to good and holy men. Moreover, it is still more improbable that if they stooped to deception they would have been able to retain, as these Missionaries did, the permanent respect and veneration of their converts.

But what other explanation remains, it may be asked, if neither the miracle be believed, nor this interpretation of it? To this question it may be replied that it seems most probable that the King did not wish to lose the Missionaries, whose presence in his Capitol gave a prestige to his little kingdom from their connection with the Continent and with Rome. He himself had relations with the Continent, for very shortly after this affair was settled he married a French Princess, Emma,<sup>1</sup> a descendant of the noble King Sigebert. It may be that the prospect of an honourable marriage with this admirable lady in-

<sup>1</sup> Emma was daughter of Theodobert, King of Austrasia. He and his brother Thierry, who shared his throne, were grandsons of Sigebert and Brunehaut, who received the Missionaries on their way to England.

clined him to yield to the demand of the Missionaries that he should renounce his unlawful union, as, no doubt, to her influence may be traced the change in his own character; certainly, at least, after that date his life and conduct were in full accord with his Christian profession.

According to this view we may believe that Archbishop Laurence, when all was ready for his departure, made a parting effort to recover the King from his folly, and that Edbald, who was a weak, not a wicked King, at the last moment gave way, and repudiated his step-mother. The legend, probably, was the "*popular* explanation of this sudden change." Certainly it was the custom of the day to impute to miraculous intervention whatever happened that the people did not understand. To this cause may be traced the innumerable legends of this period. Many of these legends, no doubt, are exceedingly interesting, and from some of them we may learn much that is edifying, but as it is allowed that they are not historical, it is scarcely fair to make use of them to cast discredit on good and holy men.

But to return. King Edbald from this time lived in perfect amity with the Missionaries, whom he assisted to the best of his power. Laurence lived but a few years after this happy change. In his latter days he made an earnest effort, by his letters, to bring the Irish Christians into conformity with the rest of the Church in the observance of the Easter Festival.



Nor were his efforts altogether in vain. An Irish Archbishop, S. Terenan, was induced by them to come to Canterbury on purpose to discuss the subject, and after due discussion, he accepted the Catholic Easter.

S. Laurence died A.D. 619, and was buried in the Church and monastery of the Holy Apostles, Peter and Paul (S. Augustine's). His grave was close by that of his predecessor, S. Augustine.

**S. Justus.**

ARCHBISHOP.

CIRCA 630. NOVEMBER 10.

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JUSTUS accompanied Mellitus to England, A.D. 601. Three years later Augustine consecrated him Bishop. "He was ordained," Bede tells us, "for the city of Rochester (Durobreui) in Kent, which city the English call Hrofescaestre from one who was formerly a chief in it, called 'Hrōf.' In this city King Ethelbert built a Church, dedicated to S. Andrew the Apostle; he also gave great gifts to it as he had done to the Church in Canterbury; he also added lands and possessions for the maintenance of those who were associated with the Bishop."

In the year 616, on the occasion of King Ethelbert's death, Justus suffered with the other Missionaries, and was driven out of Rochester, when "he came to Canterbury to consult with his brother Bishops what was best to be done." In accordance with the advice then given him he, in company with Mellitus, retired into France for a season. He was

soon recalled, and received back again into Rochester without any opposition. Here he ruled the Church with great care and labour till A.D. 624, when, on the occasion of the death of Mellitus, he became the fourth Archbishop of Canterbury. His first act was to consecrate Romanus, a brother-Missionary, to be Bishop in his stead at Rochester. The Bishop of Rome (Boniface V.) hearing of his elevation to the See of Canterbury, sent him the Pall, and with it a complimentary letter. In it he congratulates him on the success which had attended his labours, and assures him of his belief that the Italian mission in Kent was destined to bring about the salvation of the people in that kingdom, and "also of the "nations neighbouring it round about." Nor was it long before this assurance was in some degree verified, for in the following year an event occurred which led to the introduction of the Faith into the North of England. This was the marriage of the Kentish Princess, Ethelberga, with Edwin, the powerful King of Northumbria. Archbishop Justus consecrated Paulinus, one of the Missionaries, to accompany the Princess, and to be Regionary Bishop in the North of England. It will be seen elsewhere that this was a very happy selection, and that the conversion of King Edwin, and of a great portion of his people, was mainly due, under GOD, to the zeal and labours of S. Paulinus.

The Archiepiscopate of S. Justus was a very brief

one, "he was taken up into the heavenly kingdom," Nov. 8, circa 627.<sup>1</sup> His body was buried in S. Augustine's Abbey by the side of his friends and fellow-labourers, SS. Augustine, Laurence, and Mellitus.

<sup>1</sup> Bede mentions only *the day of his death* (Nov. 8th); the *Saxon Chronicle* places it in 627; but Dr. Smith in 630.

**S. Honorius.**

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

A.D. 653-4. SEPTEMBER 30.

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HONORIUS was a Roman by birth. He was a "pupil of the blessed Gregory," and he is said to have had "a wonderful knowledge in ecclesiastical matters, and to have been especially skilled in "Church music." When Archbishop Justus died, A.D. 630, he was chosen to be his successor, and was consecrated fifth Archbishop of Canterbury by Archbishop Paulinus, in Blecca's Church in Lincoln. Honorius was the last of Gregory's Missionaries who held the See of Canterbury. His successor was an Englishman, Frithona, who assumed the name of Deusdedit. Honorius ruled the Church in Kent well and ably for more than twenty years, in the course of which, by the aid of King Erconbert, many relics of idolatry were abolished. The period of his Archiepiscopate, A.D. 630-650, was an uneventful one in Kent, but a most eventful one in the rest of the country. The Christian Religion made strides, and

became firmly settled in the East and West, in the North, and in the Midlands of England. Honorius' body was interred in the monastic Church of S. Peter and S. Paul at Canterbury.

**S. Erconbert.**

KING.

A.D. 664. JULY 14.

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ERCONBERT was a grandson of the famous King Ethelbert. On the death of his father, King Edbald, A.D. 640, he succeeded to the throne of Kent, which kingdom he ruled ably and well for twenty-four years. He was a good, pious, holy Prince, and the Church in Kent was greatly strengthened spiritually in his reign. Hitherto many relics of idolatry, and of the old superstition, survived among the people. These were now taken away. Erconbert, Bede tells us, "was the first of the English Kings that of his supreme authority commanded the idols throughout his whole kingdom to be forsaken and destroyed, and the fast of the forty days before Easter to be observed."

He married the Princess Sexburga, eldest daughter of Annas, King of East Anglia (whose daughters, four in number, are all reckoned among the Saints. By her he had a son, Egbert, who succeeded him on the

throne of Kent, and a daughter, Ercangota, who is reckoned among the Saints.

Erconbert died of pestilence, July 14th, 664, the same day as Archbishop Deusdedit, and his body was interred in the monastic Church of S. Peter and S. Paul at Canterbury.



**S. Eanswid, or Eanswyth.**

ABBESS.

CIRCA 640. AUGUST 31.

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S. EANSWYTH was the daughter of Edbald, King of Kent, and consequently granddaughter of the famous Ethelbert. This lady from her cradle was devoted to religion, and no persuasions of the King, her father, who was naturally anxious to engage his daughter in some good matrimonial alliance, could induce her to listen to him. When the King found her inflexible in her resolution, he not only gave her permission to retire from the Court, but also assisted her to the best of his power. With this view he built for her a large nunnery at "Folcastan" (Folkstone), which place she had chosen "on account of its remoteness "from people."

S. Eanswyth became Abbess of this nunnery, where she served GOD in great holiness of life till her death, which is supposed to have occurred about 640.

Her nunnery was built 20 perches off the sea

cliffs, but the inroads of the sea have long since swallowed it up.

In the reign of Henry VIII., when the famous Antiquary, Leland, lived, some of its ruins were still visible. Writing of "Folcastan," he says, "Hard upon the shore in the Castle yard there be great ruins of a solemn old Nunnery. In the walls thereof, in divers places, appear great and long British bricks, also in the yard a great trunk of squared stone. The Castle yard hath been a place of great burial. Where the sea hath worne the bank, bones appear, half-sticking out. There is S. Eanswid buried." Her Church, like so many others of this date, was dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul.

## **S. Ercangota.**

7TH CENTURY. FEBRUARY 23.

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THIS Princess, as became her parentage, was a most virtuous virgin. She early devoted herself to GOD in a monastery in France, which had been "built by the "most noble Abbess Fara, at a place called Brie," for at that time there were few religious houses in England. There she lived in much holiness of life till her death. She was much venerated in France, and many wonderful works and miracles were attributed to her. In our own Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle*, A.D. 640, she is spoken of as "a holy woman and wondrous "person." With the exception of the account of her death given by Bede (III. 8) her acts have perished.



# The Kingdom of Northumbria.



## S. Edwin.

A.D. 633. OCTOBER 12.

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IN the early history of the English Church there is no page more interesting than that which tells of the introduction and establishment of Christianity in the North of England. The saintly Historian to whom we are indebted for nearly all we know of it was a native of Northumbria, and has supplied us with an abundance of information which his residence in those parts enabled him to collect. Northumbria (speaking broadly) contained the English Counties north of the Humber, i.e., Yorkshire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Durham, and Northumberland, and in addition to this a large portion of Southern Scotland, which was then reckoned a part of England, reaching to the Frith of Forth.<sup>1</sup> In extent of territory, therefore, it was the largest kingdom of the Heptarchy. This extensive kingdom, however, was not unfrequently divided into two independent Provinces. When this was the case,

<sup>1</sup> The extent of this large kingdom varied from time to time. In it also were several Provinces in which the Welsh for a long time retained their independence.

the northern half was called Bernicia, the more southern, Deira. The river Tweed divided them. When Gregory planned his mission to England, Bernicia was held by an aged King, Athelric ; Deira was ruled by Alla. It was Alla's name, it may be remembered, which suggested to Gregory the idea that Alleluia must be sung in England. Alla was the father of Edwin, the subject of our present memoir. He himself died A.D. 588, before the Missionaries from Rome reached our shores, but it is a most interesting fact that it was the son of this Alla who became the first Christian King in the North of England, and was the means of introducing Christianity into those parts. Edwin's adventures were very remarkable. When his father died he was a child, but three years old. The neighbouring Province of Bernicia, of which Athelric was King, was really governed by his son, Ethelfrid, a warrior of the first rank. Ethelfrid had married Acca, Edwin's sister, but that seemed no reason to him why he should not put Edwin to death, and seize his kingdom. He had no difficulty in carrying out this latter project, but he failed to lay hands on Edwin who was concealed, and though he used every means in his power to discover his hiding-place he was never able to do so. Where Edwin found shelter during most of his exile is not told us by Bede. Some Welsh writers assert that it was in North Wales, in the Court of King Cadvan, but this seems very uncertain. What Bede tells us is,



“that for many years,whilst suffering persecution from “Ethelfrid, he wandered through divers places and “kingdoms.” This state of things went on till Edwin had reached the age of 30. He had grown up into a comely, powerful man, possessed of those attractive qualities which win general favour. It so happened that at this time he found a temporary refuge at the Court of Redwald, King of East Anglia. He did not long, however, enjoy this shelter before it reached the ears of Ethelfrid, who was still seeking an opportunity of seizing him. Ambassadors were forthwith sent by him to Redwald, offering a great reward for Edwin’s death, or betrayal. Of this message and offer the East Anglian King took no notice, but it was not long before another Embassy arrived from the North, and soon after a third, each with offers of larger sums of money, and, at the same time, with threats of war if the message was refused. The East Anglian King felt himself in a great difficulty ; his mind revolted from such a breach of hospitality towards his guest, whilst on the other hand, Northumbria was a far more powerful kingdom than his own, and Ethelfrid the greatest warrior of the age. He was much troubled,and wavered long between the claims of honour and the dictates of self-interest but at last determined to give up his friend. In the meantime Edwin had been made aware of his danger. Some one (it is believed to have been the Queen herself) had sent a friend to him who roused him from

his sleep, and urged him to flee whilst he was yet at liberty to do so, promising to conduct him to a place of safety where he would be out of reach of his enemies. Edwin, however, refused to fly, either, as Bede says, "because he was worne out with miseries" and weary of life, or, it may be, trusting in what the Queen could do for him. If it was perilous for him to remain it was also perilous to fly; he resolved to abide by his fate. It was midnight, and still the King and his Witan sat in Council. Edwin had risen from his bed, and gone out for fresh air into the court outside the Palace. There he seated himself on a stone, and brooded in silent anguish over his misfortunes. He had not long been seated when he was startled by the approach of a man, strange in habit and appearance, such as he had never seen before. The stranger, addressing him, enquired, "How "it was that he was keeping sad watch there when all "the world was fast asleep?" To this Edwin returned an evasive reply, when the stranger added, "Do not "think that I am ignorant of the reason of your sad "vigil, I know who you are, the cause of your anxiety, "and the dangers you dread. But, tell me, what "would you give to him, who should free you from "these sorrows, and persuade Redwald neither to put "you to death nor deliver you to your enemies?" When Edwin readily promised whatever might be demanded, the stranger enquired, "And what, more- "over, if you should be assured that you would gain

“ your kingdom and surpass in power, not only your  
“ predecessors, but all the English Kings that have  
“ preceded you?” Edwin again promised abundant  
gratitude. The stranger continued, “ And what if  
“ the man who thus predicted your good fortune  
“ should give you counsel for life and happiness  
“ better by far, and more profitable, than ever you  
“ have learned from your ancestors. Will you give  
“ ear then to him, and embrace his saving doctrines?”  
Edwin did not hesitate to promise that he would  
follow the teaching of one, who should do so much for  
him. On this the stranger laid his hand on Edwin’s  
head, saying, “ When this sign shall be given you,  
“ remember this hour and this conversation, and delay  
“ not to fulfil what you have promised.” With these  
words he disappeared. Edwin remained sitting,  
greatly cheered and comforted in his mind by this  
colloquy, and full of wonder who this extraordinary  
stranger should be. Whilst he was pondering in  
thought, the same friend who had roused him from  
sleep and warned him to flee, came from the Palace  
and, with joyful countenance, assured him that the  
danger was over, that he might return to his bed and  
rest in peace, the King had changed his mind, and  
was resolved not to betray him. This happy intelli-  
gence was soon after confirmed. Bede tells us that it  
was the Queen’s influence which had turned the scales.  
Redwald had imparted to her in confidence that he  
was resolving to abandon Edwin, and she had re-

monstrated so warmly with him on the baseness of such an act, and had pleaded so earnestly in Edwin's favour, that the King at the last moment relinquished his purpose, and determined to risk life and kingdom rather than so degrade himself. Edwin was thus saved for the present, but the future was full of peril, both for himself and for Redwald. This brave King after taking council with his Witan, wisely judged that since a war with Ethelfrid was imminent and inevitable, it would be best to take the initiative, and attack the Northumbrian King before he was prepared. Collecting, therefore, an army as quickly as possible he marched northwards, forming his troops into three divisions. He committed the first to his eldest son, Regnhere, the second he himself led, over the third he placed Edwin. Tidings in the meantime reached Ethelfrid, who, though taken unawares, yet with characteristic valour hastened with such forces as he could collect to resist Redwald. The armies met in Nottinghamshire, in the Sherwood Forest, by the river Idle, near the town of Retford.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, owing to the rash valour of the young East Anglian Prince, who was eager to distinguish himself, the first division of Redwald's army moving too quickly ahead became separated from the main body. The experienced old King, seeing his advantage attacked at once, before the other divisions could arrive. The brave Regnhere performed prodigies of

<sup>1</sup> The Idle is a tributary of the Trent.

valour, but was overborne by numbers, and preferring death to flight fell in the midst of the battle, and the greater part of his division shared his fate. In the meantime the rest of the army arrived on the scene of slaughter, and now the face of affairs was changed. The preponderance in numbers was on the side of the East Anglians, and their leader was infuriated by the death of his son. A terrible battle ensued. It was now Ethelfrid's turn to fight against odds, and if valour and experience could have won the day it would have been his. He was defeated. The old warrior threw himself against the thickest ranks of his enemies, and fell in their midst covered with wounds. The Northumbrians, as soon as their leader was dead, threw down their arms and fled. This eventful battle, which made a revolution in the North of England, took place A.D. 617. Redwald, without delay, invaded Northumbria where Ethelfrid had left his sons, Anfrid, Oswald, and Oswy, and others. These three Princes fled into Scotland on Redwald's approach, and the Northumbrians having none to lead them submitted to Redwald without a blow. Redwald did not abuse his power or opportunity. With singular moderation he neither ravaged the country nor took any spoil for himself, but with great magnanimity placed Edwin on the throne, not of Deira only, his rightful inheritance, but of the whole of Northumbria. He returned home, having gained, as his sole reward, the

being chosen Bretwalda of England, in the place of the King whom he had conquered.

Edwin, so shortly before a miserable exile, had now become the head of a powerful kingdom, and he proved more than equal to his position. In a very few years he became chief of the Kings of England ; the Kings of Wales also recognised his supremacy and paid him tribute. It is recorded of him that he was the first English King who invaded the *Mevanian Islands*, i.e., *Anglesey* and *Man*, which he subjected to his rule. On the death of Redwald, A.D. 624, he was formally chosen Bretwalda of England. It was at this time that he was led, we may believe by the providence of GOD, to seek in marriage, Ethelberga,<sup>1</sup> daughter of King Ethelbert of Kent. Ethelbert was at this time dead, and the Princess was living with her brother, King Edbald. The alliance proffered by Edwin was, in a worldly view, most advantageous, but it was at once declined. "It was not lawful," so the answer ran, "to marry a Christian Virgin to a Pagan husband, lest the Faith and the mysteries of the heavenly King should be profaned by her cohabiting with one who was a stranger to the worship of the true GOD." Edwin was not offended by this message ; on the contrary, he sent ambassadors again, by whom he promised "in no manner to act in opposition to the Christian Faith . . . but would give leave to the Princess, and all that accompanied

<sup>1</sup> Otherwise called *Tate*.

“her, men or women, priests or ministers, to follow their faith and worship after the custom of the Christians.” On this understanding the marriage was allowed, and the Princess was sent into Northumbria. Paulinus, one of the Kentish Missionaries, was consecrated Bishop, and with his Clergy followed her to the North. But though Edwin in no way interfered with the Queen’s devotions, he seemed at this time to have no leaning himself to Christianity. Together with his nobles he held fast to their national idolatry. Events, however, after a time happened which favoured Paulinus’ efforts. About a year after his marriage the King nearly lost his life under the following circumstances:—One of the Kings of Wessex, Quichelm,<sup>1</sup> jealous of Edwin’s power, and unable to cope with him in arms, with great baseness employed an assassin named Eumer, to murder him. He sent this man as an ambassador to Edwin’s Court. Edwin received him into his presence and gave him audience. The ruffian, who was privately armed with a two-edged dagger dipped in poison, took an opportunity to strike the blow, and would have succeeded in his object had he not been foiled by the faithful devotion of one of Edwin’s lords, Lilla, who seeing the villainy, and unable otherwise to hinder it, interposed his own body between the miscreant and the King, receiving himself the full force of the weapon. The dagger was driven so home that it passed right

<sup>1</sup> Or Cuichelm.

through his body and slightly wounded the King. The assassin was soon dispatched by those around, but not before he had slain another soldier with the same weapon. On the same eventful day, being Easter Day, the Queen was delivered of her first child, a daughter. The King began to return thanks to his gods, but the Bishop, who was present, took occasion from these events to urge him to give thanks to the true and only GOD, to Whom, in reality, was due both his own escape from assassination, and the happy deliverance of the Queen. Paulinus' words made a great impression. Edwin gave his consent for the child to be baptised; he also promised that if the GOD of the Christians would give him success in the war he was about to wage with Quichelm, he would himself become a Christian. The infant Princess<sup>1</sup> was forthwith baptised by Paulinus with twelve others of Edwin's family. They were the first-fruits of Northumbria. This took place on Whitsunday, A.D. 626.

Edwin was no sooner recovered of his wound than he assembled an army and marched into Wessex, where success everywhere attended his arms. The Saxon Chronicle says "that in this war he slew "five Kings and a great number of people." Whoever these "Kings" or chieftains were it is certain that in their number was not included either Quichelm,

<sup>1</sup> She was named Eanfleda. She grew up and married Oswy, who became King of Bernicia, A.D. 642.



who occasioned the war, or his father, Kynegils. Both these Kings survived to learn a better Faith than they had yet received.<sup>1</sup>

Edwin returned victorious to Northumbria, and from this date, we are expressly told, he ceased to worship idols. However he still hesitated to receive the Sacraments of the Christian Faith. Long time he pondered over the momentous question, learning as much as he could from the Bishop, and taking frequent counsel with the wisest of his Witan. Oftentimes, at this crisis of his history, Bede tells us, "he would sit alone in silent meditation, considering in his mind what was best to be done, and which religion he should follow." About this time he received letters from the Pope (Boniface V.) who, no doubt, had been informed of his leanings to Christianity. Boniface wrote kindly to Edwin and the Queen. To the latter he urged the wife's duty to interest her husband in the Faith, and to use all her influence for his conversion. In his letter to the King he dwelt much on the folly of idolatry, and on the duty of turning from idols to the Living and True GOD. These letters were accompanied by a few presents,<sup>2</sup> small indeed in intrinsic value, but which, no doubt, would be gratifying as coming from Rome. Still, however, Edwin deferred the final decision on a matter which

<sup>1</sup> They were converted to Christianity by S. Birinus.

<sup>2</sup> To the Queen he sent a silver looking-glass and a gilt ivory comb; to Edwin, a shirt with one gold ornament, and a garment of Ancyra.

seemed to him so important. One day, however, when he was thus sitting alone, deep in thought, Paulinus came in, and placing his right hand on his head, enquired in a pointed manner whether he recognised that sign? Edwin, connecting it with the mysterious vision seen in the days of his affliction, was so affected, that with trembling and astonishment he threw himself at the feet of the Bishop. Paulinus reminded him that the promises then made him had all been fulfilled, and bade him not delay any longer to perform the engagements he then made.<sup>1</sup>

From this day may be dated Edwin's conversion. He now fully made up his mind to accept Christianity. Yet for a space his baptism was deferred. This was done in the hope that by conference with his chief friends and counsellors he might gain their consent "to be cleansed on the same occasion with himself in "CHRIST, the Fountain of Life." With this view,

<sup>1</sup> Some writers have conjectured that *Paulinus* himself was the mysterious stranger who conversed with Edwin in the Palace Court, but this seems improbable, for would not Edwin have recognised him? Or, if not, would Paulinus have delayed so long to take advantage of what he knew? It is highly probable that the stranger was *one of the Kentish Missionaries*.

Redwald had been baptised in Kent whilst on a visit to King Ethelbert (though he afterwards fell away from the Faith). Returning home after his baptism, he would probably take with him a Christian teacher, who, no doubt, would be admitted to his counsels. What more natural than that this Missionary should seek to comfort the sad exile, and speak words of hope to him, or that he should turn his thoughts, as far as possible, to Christianity?

besides conferring with them in private, he gathered together a large Council of his chief men, and when they were assembled, enquired of them, one by one, "what they thought of the new religion, and of the Divine worship which was now preached to them?" The first to reply was Coifi, the High Priest of the old superstition; and, strange to relate, he spoke in favour of the new religion, at least, that they should give a patient hearing to its doctrines. "He was not satisfied," he said, "with his own religion. None had served the gods more zealously than himself, but he had derived no benefit from his religion. Wherefore," he continued, "if these new doctrines which are now preached can be shewn to be better and more efficacious, my judgment is that they should be received without delay."

Coifi's unexpected adhesion, no doubt, moved the assembly, and this impression was improved by a thoughtful speech made by one of the nobles. Sharon Turner thus happily translates his speech: "The present life of man, O King, seems to me, if compared with that after-period which is so uncertain to us, to resemble a scene at one of your wintry feasts, as you are sitting with your Ealdermen and Thanes about you, the fire blazing in the centre, and the whole hall cheered by its warmth; and whilst storms of rain and snow are raging without, a little sparrow flies in at one door and passes out at some other entrance. Whilst it is among us it feels not the

“wintry tempest, it enjoys the short comfort and  
“serenity of its transient stay ; but then plunging into  
“the winter from which it had flown, it disappears  
“from our eyes. Such is here the life of man, it acts  
“and thinks before us, but, as of what preceded its  
“appearance among us we are ignorant, so are we  
“of all that that is destined to come afterwards. If  
“then, on this momentous future this new doctrine  
“reveals anything more certain or more reasonable,  
“it is, in my opinion, entitled to our acquiescence.”  
Other nobles followed in the same strain, on which  
Coifi suggested that as they all seemed agreed in  
wishing to know more of the new religion, Paulinus  
should be invited to discourse to them on the GOD  
whom he worshipped. The King approving, Paulinus  
made an address, at the conclusion of which Coifi ex-  
claimed in a loud voice, “I have long felt dissatisfied  
“with the gods, whom we worship, for the more  
“earnest my search the less have I found of truth in  
“them. And now I openly profess my belief that in  
“these new doctrines there appears that truth which  
“may bring us to life and eternal bliss. Wherefore  
“I suggest, O King, that the temples and the altars,  
“which we have venerated with so little benefit  
“should be abjured and given to the fire.” The King  
now, without any further delay, renounced idolatry,  
and publicly professed his faith in Christianity. He  
then demanded of the High Priest who was the  
proper person to desecrate the idols, and the altars,





*W. P. Woodcut*

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and the enclosures in which they were placed? Coifi replied, "*I myself!* For as in my ignorance I have "led others astray by teaching them to worship these "gods, so it befits me, who have now come to a know- "ledge of the truth, to be the first to destroy them." He then requested the King to furnish him with arms, and with a *horse*, that being mounted thereon he might ride forth to destroy the idols. (By the rules of the old religion the High Priest was allowed to ride only on a *mare*, and was strictly forbidden to carry arms.) Coifi straightway mounted the horse, equipped with a sword and lance, and so rode forth in the direction of the idol shrines. (Those who saw him on the road thought he was mad.) On he went till he arrived at the temple, which he immediately desecrated by hurling at it the lance, which he held in his hand. This done, he gave orders to his associates to burn the temple and the idols in the enclosure. Bede tells us that the site of this temple was not far from York, to the East, beyond the river Derwent, and is, no doubt, the present Goodmanham, which takes its name from its connection with the old idolatry.<sup>1</sup> The result of this meeting was the introduction of Christianity throughout the whole Province, the nobles and the people together acquiescing in the change of religion. Edwin himself was publicly

<sup>1</sup> Its old name was Godmundingham. It is in the East Riding of York, near *Market Weighton*. Stukely says, "The Apostle Paulinus "built the Parish Church of Godmundham, where is the font in which "he baptised the heathen priest, Coifi."

baptised not long afterwards, and on the same day his principal nobles and many of inferior degree were baptised with him. This took place on Easter Day, *April 11th*, A.D. 627. Edwin was baptised in a temporary Church of timber, built in York whilst he was preparing himself for that Sacrament. It was dedicated to S. Peter, and was on the site of the present Cathedral, of which it was the origin. This temporary Church served as a Cathedral until a handsome Church of stone could be built. The stone Church was, without delay, commenced by the King. It was square in shape, and was so built as to include within its walls the wooden Oratory.<sup>1</sup> Edwin, however, did not live to see it completed.

Among the more illustrious converts at this time were Edwin's own family. He had two sons now grown up, the fruit of his first marriage with Quenberga, a Mercian Princess,<sup>2</sup> whom he had married during his exile. He had also three children by his second wife, Ethelberga, who were shortly afterwards baptised. Their names were Ethelhun, Etheldritha, and Wuscfreea; "the two first died whilst they were 'yet " " in their white garments,' " and were buried in the Church at York; the third did not live to man's estate. "It is reported," says Bede, "that at this

<sup>1</sup> "Parts of the fabric of Edwin's Church were discovered beneath " the Choir of the present Cathedral during the repairs, found necessary " by the mad act of the incendiary, Jonathan Martin." (See page 57 of *Bede's History*. Note by Dr. Giles.)

<sup>2</sup> Daughter of Cearl, third King of Mercia.



“time there was so much zeal, so earnest a desire for partaking of the washing of Regeneration among the nation of the Northumbrians, that on a certain occasion, when Paulinus was on a visit with the King and Queen at their royal villa at Adgefrin (*Yeverin* in *Glendale*), he was fully engaged for 36 days without any intermission, in catechising and baptising the people, who flocked to him in crowds from the neighbouring villages.” For this purpose he used the river Glen, now called Bowent, or Beaumont. In these early days, as Bede remarks, “there were not Churches or Oratories sufficient in which the people could be baptised, so great was the crowd of converts; the Missionaries, therefore, baptised them in any suitable river.” In Deira the favourite river for this purpose was the Swale, which flows by Catterick, in the North Riding.

Edwin had been slow to accept Christianity, but once satisfied of its truth he embraced it with all his heart. Not content with furthering it in his own kingdom he used his influence wherever possible elsewhere. By his means it was introduced into East Anglia. It was the King of that Province, it will be remembered, who had saved his life, and placed him on the throne. This deep debt of gratitude Edwin, in some sort, repaid by bringing Redwald's son, Erpwald, to the knowledge of the Faith. Erpwald was soon cut off by an assassin, but he laboured to impart the Faith to his people, and his conversion

may be considered the commencement of Christianity in East Anglia. About this time also the Faith was introduced into the Province of Lindsey, in Lincolnshire, by Edwin's exertions. Lindsey was usually included in the kingdom of *Mercia*, but it had fallen under Edwin's sway, and he used the opportunity to send Paulinus as a Missionary among its heathen inhabitants. Paulinus preached to them with great success, (see *Life of S. Paulinus*), and planted Christianity in the Province.

Tidings having reached Rome of Edwin's conversion, Pope Honorius, who had succeeded Boniface, took occasion to send him letters of congratulation; he also at the same time sent two Palls, one for Paulinus, who was to be Metropolitan of York, and the other for Honorius, who had lately become Archbishop of Canterbury. These letters did not reach England till after Edwin's death, when the halcyon days, just now described, came to an untimely end, and were succeeded by an awful storm which convulsed the North of England. A combination had been formed against Edwin by Penda, the heathen King of Mercia, who was jealous of his supremacy, in concert with Cadwallon,<sup>1</sup> the King of North Wales, whose hatred of the English was only equalled by his ferocity. Edwin met their united forces at Hatfield, about seven miles from Doncaster,

<sup>1</sup> Bede calls him *Cædwalla*. We give him his Welsh name, the better to distinguish him from the English King Cadwalla of Wessex.

and there on the level plain a great battle was fought. Edwin was accompanied by his eldest son, the young and brave Prince Osfrid. Osfrid did wonders, but exposing himself too rashly, became surrounded by his foes, and Edwin, coming to his help, lost his own life in the vain attempt to rescue his son. Both were slain. The loss of their leaders struck a panic into the Northumbrian host, and a terrible scene of confusion occurred; no quarter was given, and only a small remnant of his troops escaped to their homes. Thus fell Edwin, one of the most remarkable Kings of the Heptarchy, at the age of 42. Most of his life had been spent in exile, but for "seventeen years he "reigned most gloriously over the nations of the "English and the Britons, in six whereof he was a "servant in the kingdom of CHRIST." We see in Edwin a combination of noble qualities—intelligence and wisdom, valour and prudence in the battle-field, and, above all, the sincerest piety and zeal for religion. History presents us with too few examples of Kings in whom these qualities were united. We may often enough read of heroes without religion, and again, of pious Kings lacking in mental or personal vigour, and may admire, in some degree, the high qualities they exhibit, but we cannot but feel the imperfection that mars their character as a whole. It is the completeness of Edwin's character which wins our admiration. No doubt similar examples may be found here and there in history, and above all in *our Anglo-Saxon*

times, which were peculiarly rich in them. What we have said of Edwin might be said, no doubt, of Ethelbert of Kent, of Oswald of Northumbria, and, markedly, of Alfred the Great, who were all as brave in the field as they were wise in council, and pious and holy in their lives. Nor should mention be omitted of the care these Kings took for the administration of justice among their people. Edwin, equally with Ethelbert before him, and yet more fully, Alfred, in later times, published an excellent Code of Laws, and was exact in enforcing its observance. By this means Edwin checked the great lawlessness that then prevailed. Bede tells us that in his reign "travelling became so safe that a woman "with her new-born babe might pass through the "whole of the island from sea to sea in perfect "security." It is also recorded of him that out of his care for his people he caused drinking vessels of iron to be placed in the public roads at the cross-ways, for the refreshment of travellers, nor did any one dare to misuse or injure them. "His dignity was so great," Bede continues, "throughout his dominions, that his "banners were not only borne before him in battle, "but even in time of peace. When he rode about his "cities, towns, or provinces, with his officers, the "standard-bearer was wont to go before him; also "when he walked along the streets that sort of banner "which the Romans call Tufa, and the English Tuuf, "was in like manner borne before him."

These circuits through his dominions were, it is believed, for the purpose of administration of justice, and the pomp and ceremony purposely observed with the view of adding dignity to his official presence. It is not to be wondered at that Edwin's people wistfully remembered the days of his reign, a period "of the profoundest peace and prosperity." It may be that his tragic death, and the ruin it involved, gave a vividness to their remembrance. The consequences of his death were indeed disastrous. The conquerors following up their advantage, ravaged Northumbria with every form of cruelty. Bede describing it, says, "There was at this time a very great massacre in the Church and nation of Northumbria, for one of the invading chieftains (Penda) was a Pagan, and the other (Cadwallon) a barbarian more cruel than a Pagan, so barbarous in mind and habit, that he spared neither women nor little children, but with the ferocity of a wild beast subjected them to torments and to death. He spent much time in furious raids over that province, resolved, if possible, to exterminate the English, and drive them out of Britain. Nor did he pay any respect to the Christian religion, it being the custom of the Britons to this day not to pay any respect to the faith and religion of the English, nor to correspond with them any more than with Pagans."

Thus terrible were the consequences of Edwin's

death to the infant Church of Northumbria. Its very existence was threatened. At the time there seemed no prospect of safety except in flight. The Queen and Edwin's children escaped in a ship, and Paulinus, to whose care she had been intrusted, thought it his duty to accompany her. In the meantime the scattered members of the flock were not left without a shepherd: James the Deacon, "a holy ecclesiastic," who came with Paulinus into the North, remaining at his post, did a noble part by the flock of CHRIST, seeking those that were lost, strengthening the weak, and gathering together those that had been "scattered "in the dark and cloudy day." He lived to a great age, and is sometimes reckoned among the Saints. Bede gives us the following notice of this faithful servant of CHRIST:—"He (James) continuing long "after in his Church at York, by teaching and baptis- "ing rescued much prey from the power of the old "enemy of mankind. From him the village where he "mostly resided, near Cataract, has its name to this "day.<sup>1</sup> He was extraordinarily skilful in singing, "and when the province was afterwards restored to "peace, and the number of the faithful increased, he "began to teach many of the Church to sing, accord- "ing to the custom of the Romans or of the "Cantuarrians, And being old and full of days, as "the Scripture says, he went the way of his fore- "fathers."

<sup>1</sup> Now called Akeburgh, near Richmond.

## NOTES.

1. Among the Churches built by Edwin was one at *Campodunum* (uncertain whether *Doncaster* or *Almondbury*). This Church and the town itself were burnt down by the Pagans at Edwin's death. His successors did not rebuild *Campodunum*, but built themselves a country seat in the country called *Loidis* (*Leeds*). The Altar of Edwin's Church being of stone escaped the fire, and was long preserved in a monastery situate in *Elmeta Wood*. This famous wood was of immense size, 600 hydes in magnitude, and was in the West Riding. It had been held by the Welsh till Edwin's time, who took it from them.

2. Queen *Ethelberga*, after her return to Kent, built a monastery at *Lyminge*, where she took the veil, being, as it is said, the first English woman to do so ; there also she ended her days. *Lyminge* is between *Canterbury* and *Folkstone*. Here may still be seen the foundations of an ancient Romanesque Church, in which her supposed burial-place is pointed out. She is, by some old authors, reckoned among the Saints.

3. Edwin's head was taken to *York*, and was there buried in the Cathedral, in the Porch dedicated to *S. Gregory*. His body was buried in *Lindisfarne*.

## **S. Paulinus.**

FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

A.D. 644. OCTOBER 10.

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THIS distinguished Missionary was one of the second company despatched by Gregory into England, who with Mellitus, their leader, arrived there A.D. 601. He remained in Canterbury till 625, when, on occasion of Edwin's marriage with the Princess Ethelburga, he was selected to accompany her, and was consecrated Bishop by Archbishop Justus before he left Kent. The office and high trust committed to him was to see that "the Princess and her company were in no way corrupted in their own religion by living in the midst of Pagans ; and also by every means in his power to win, if possible, the King and his people from their idolatry. Accordingly without any delay on his arrival he laboured much . . . by means of preaching, to gain, if it were possible, some few of the Pagans to the Faith and to grace, but though he laboured much in the Word, yet, as the Apostle saith, 'the god of this world had blinded the minds of the infidels lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST should shine unto them.'" It is interest-



ing to read of these unsuccessful efforts and disappointments in connection with the wonderful success which after a time crowned his labours.

The account of Edwin's conversion, and of that of his people, has been given in the life of that Saint. There it will be seen how the Northumbrians threw away their idols "to the moles and to the bats," and put themselves under Christian instruction. Edwin's first act after his conversion was to give Paulinus a See in York, and to build him a Cathedral there. This wonderful movement in favour of Christianity was not confined to Deira, where Edwin usually resided, but was also felt in the more Northern Province of Bernicia, and spread beyond Northumbria into Lincolnshire, which was at that time wholly Pagan. The mission into Lindsey was undertaken by Paulinus, at King Edwin's instance, and was a very successful one. Bede gives the following account of it:—"Paulinus also preached the Word to the "Province of Lindsey, which is the first on the South "side of the river Humber, stretching out as far as "the sea; and he first converted the governor of the "city of Lincoln, whose name was Blecca, with his "whole family. He likewise built in that city a stone "Church of beautiful workmanship."<sup>1</sup> The walls of this Church were still standing in Bede's time. A certain Abbot, named Deda, informed the historian

<sup>1</sup> It is believed that *S. Paul's Church*, Lincoln, now represents this Church, and that *S. Paul's* is a corruption of *S. Paulinus' Church*.

that he once had some conversation with a very old man who was one of Paulinus' converts. This man told him "that he had himself been baptised by the "Bishop Paulinus in the presence of King Edwin, "with a great number of the people, in the river "Trent, near the city, which in the English tongue is "called Tiovulfingacester,<sup>1</sup> and he was also wont to "describe the person of the same Paulinus, that he "was tall of stature, a little stooping, his hair black, "his visage meagre, his nose slender and aquiline, "his aspect both venerable and majestic. He had "also with him in the ministry James the Deacon, a "man of zeal and great fame in CHRIST'S Church, "who lived even to our days."

About this time Archbishop Justus died in Kent, and was succeeded by another of the Italian Missionaries, Honorius. Honorius came to Lincoln and was there consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury by Paulinus in Blecca's Church. S. Paulinus continued his successful labours in Northumbria for six years after King Edwin's conversion, when the death of that King, and the ruin that ensued, changed the whole state of affairs (see *Edwin*). In this crisis he thought it his duty to take charge of the widowed Queen, who had been entrusted to his care when he left Canterbury. "The affairs of the Northumbrians," Bede says, "being in confusion by reason of this "disaster, without any prospect except in flight,

<sup>1</sup> Supposed to be *Southwell*.

“ Paulinus, taking with him Queen Ethelberga, whom  
“ he had before brought thither, returned into Kent  
“ by sea. . . . He came thither under the conduct of  
“ Bassus, a most valiant soldier of King Edwin, hav-  
“ ing with him Eanfleda, the daughter, and Wuscfrea,  
“ the son of Edwin, as also Iffi, the son of Osfrid, his  
“ son. . . . He also brought with him many rich  
“ goods of King Edwin, among which were a large  
“ golden Cross, and a golden Chalice, dedicated to the  
“ use of the Altar, which are still preserved and shown  
“ in the Church of Canterbury.”

Edbald, Queen Ethelberga's brother, was still reigning in Kent, and Honorius, whom Paulinus had consecrated, was Archbishop of Canterbury. From both of them the fugitives received a most kind and honourable reception. It happened that at this time the Church of Rochester had no Bishop, for Romanus, the Prelate thereof, having been sent on an embassy to Rome had been drowned in the Italian sea. The King and also the Archbishop joined in requesting Paulinus to undertake the charge of that See, which he did. Paulinus held the See of Rochester for a space of nineteen years, till the day of his death, A.D. 644, “ when he departed to heaven with the  
“ glorious fruits of his labours.” He died on the  
10th day of October, “ and was buried in the Sacristy  
“ of the Church of the blessed Apostle, Andrew,  
“ which King Ethelbert had built from the foundation  
“ in the said city of Rochester.”

**S. Oswald.**

KING.

A.D. 642. AUGUST 5.

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ON King Edwin's death, A.D. 633, the sons of King Ethelfrid, who had found a refuge in Scotland during Edwin's reign, returned at once into Northumbria, and the eldest, Anfrid, was chosen to succeed him in the Province of Bernicia. The lower Province, Deira, at the same time placed another Prince on its throne, Osric, a cousin of King Edwin. Thus, the forces of the Northumbrians were disunited at a time when it was of the utmost consequence that they should act together, for the armies which had conquered and slain King Edwin (see *Edwin's Life*) marched into Northumbria and ravaged it at will. These two Princes, Anfrid and Osric, were both professedly Christians, but they were scarcely seated on their respective thrones before they renounced the Faith, and apostatised to idolatry. What led them to this is not stated, but it was probably done with the view of securing themselves on the throne. They

reaped little advantage by their apostacy, for within the year they were both slain ; “ cut off,” as Bede expresses it, “ by the righteous judgment of GOD.” Both were put to death by the Welsh King, Cadwallon. The horrors of this year were so great, and the apostacy of the two Kings so scandalous, that the Chroniclers of Northumbria, Bede tells us, were ashamed to give any history of this period ; they omitted the names of Osric and Anfrid in the catalogues of their Kings, and counted the year 633, in which these events took place, as part of the reign of King Oswald who succeeded them. Oswald was brother of Anfrid, both were sons of the fierce King Ethelfrid, who, it will be remembered, slew the monks of Bangor.<sup>1</sup>

Oswald and his brothers during their exile in Scotland had come into contact with the disciples of S. Columba, who some years previously had planted his noble colony of Missionaries in Iona. The elder brother, as has been seen, had only nominally accepted the Faith, but Oswald had received it in his inmost heart. How critical affairs were in Northumbria when Oswald was called to the Government will have been seen. Three Kings—Edwin, Anfrid, and Osric—had fallen in their attempts to cope with the victorious Cadwallon, and their troops had been either slain or scattered. Undaunted by this the young

<sup>1</sup> Ethelfrid was grandson of the great chieftain Ida, who founded the kingdom of Northumbria, and was its first King. Ida traced his descent to Woden, the great hero-God of the North of Europe.

Prince Oswald gathered without delay such forces as he was able. Fortunately for him the Mercian King, Penda, had by this time returned home with his spoil, so Oswald moved in search of Cadwallon whom he found with such an army as he boasted nothing could withstand, at a place then called Denisbrook, supposed to be Dilston. The Welsh relying on their superior numbers, and their previous victories, spent the night preceding the battle in easy confidence. Not so the English. The odds were fearfully against them, and they were naturally anxious, nevertheless they determined to sell their lives dearly. Moreover the courage and the faith of their youthful leader inspired them with hope. By his order the greater part of that night was spent in prayer. Bede tells us that in his day (about a hundred years after the battle) men pointed out to those who visited the scene of the conflict the very spot where Oswald knelt in humble prayer to GOD, beseeching Him to assist his worshippers in their great distress, where also he caused the sign of the Holy Cross to be raised. "It is further reported," Bede adds, "that the Cross being "made in haste, and the hole dug into which it was to "be fixed, the King held the Cross with his two hands "whilst the earth was shovelled in to make it fast. "When it was secured he cried with a loud voice to his "army, 'Let us now kneel together, and unite in "prayer to the Almighty, the True and Living GOD, "to deliver us from yonder proud and cruel enemy.



OSWALD ERECTS A GREAT CROSS  
ON THE BATTLEFIELD.





“ He knows that we have taken up arms justly for the  
“ lives of our people.’ All did as they were bidden,  
“ after which, as twilight came on, without waiting for  
“ the attack they fell upon the enemy, and, as their  
“ faith deserved, won a glorious victory.”<sup>1</sup> Malmes-  
bury speaking of this battle, says, “ They met with  
“ such fury on both sides that it may be truly said no  
“ day was ever more disastrous to the Britons (the  
“ Welsh), or more joyful to the Angles, so completely  
“ was one party routed with all its forces as never to  
“ have hope of recovering again.” Cadwallon, the last  
famous King of the Welsh (who believed “ himself  
“ born for the extermination of the English ”), fell in  
this battle, and with him perished the last faint hopes  
of the Welsh of recovering Britain from their Saxon  
conquerors. From this dream they were now rudely  
awakened. Cadwallon’s soldiers, after he had fallen,  
made no attempt at a rally, but fled, as many as were  
able, to their own country.

<sup>1</sup> The two armies, it would appear, approached each other about eight miles to the north of Hexham, where the Roman wall runs across the country. Oswald, it is believed, drew up his little army with the wall at its back. In front was “ a plateau which presented “ the appearance of a vast fortified camp.” It was on a mount of this plateau that a Chapel was afterwards erected on the spot where Oswald set up the famous Cross to be the standard of his men. The battle probably began not far from this, but, according to old traditions, it was won two miles off at a place called Halydene (Hallington ?). Cadwallon defeated, and retreating with haste, was overtaken eight miles from the battle-field and killed at a little beck called Dennisesburn, which is believed to be Rowley Water, or a tributary of it.—Gathered from C. Plummer’s *Notes on Bede’s History*.

Oswald found himself in quiet possession of the North of England with no rival to dispute his claim in either Province. It so happened, fortunately, that he united in his own person a title to both Bernicia and Deira—to the former, as eldest brother of the late King, Anfrid, to the latter, by his mother, Acca, sister of King Edwin. Oswald was Edwin's nephew, and as Edwin's children had fled into Kent there remained in Northumbria no nearer heir than himself. He was, therefore, chosen King of both these Provinces, which thus again, as in Edwin's reign, became united into one kingdom; such was Oswald's prudence in administering the kingdom that he succeeded to a great extent in overcoming the jealousies existing between these Provinces, and moulded his subjects into a united people. He was soon chosen Bretwalda of the English nation, and his suzerainty was recognised not only by the English, but, as Edwin's was, by the Welsh, the Picts, and the Scots. This cannot, however, be said to have been sought by him; his one ambition was to be a father to his people, and, above all, to bring them to a knowledge of that Faith which he had learned to value above all worldly treasures. Scarcely was he seated on the throne ere he began to consider what steps he might best take to win his people to Christianity. Having received the Faith from the Scots, he naturally turned to his Scottish teachers. Accordingly he wrote to the authorities in Iona and requested that a Bishop

might be sent him, "one who by his learning and "ministry might be able to instruct the English under "his rule, and impart to them the Sacraments." His request was gladly complied with; a Bishop was sent, who however did not prove a success. He returned to Iona, and was replaced by S. Aidan, an admirable Missionary, who by his virtues and preaching established the Faith in the hearts of the English people (see *Life of S. Aidan*). Oswald gave him a See in Lindisfarne, which Aidan probably preferred to York,<sup>1</sup> and assisted his efforts in every way. "It was a delightful sight," says Bede, "to see "the King acting as interpreter to his Earls and chief "Ministers, when the Bishop, who did not thoroughly "understand the English tongue, was preaching the "heavenly word to his people." Oswald also munificently endowed the mission with lands where they might build Churches, and religious houses "in which "the English, both young and old, might be taught "the rules of the religious life." In addition to this he completed the fine Church of stone in York which had been begun by King Edwin, on the site of the present Cathedral, though in his time, owing to Bishop Aidan preferring Lindisfarne, it was not used as a Cathedral.

Thus happily under these favourable circumstances the Church, which had never been entirely eradicated,

<sup>1</sup> The Celtic Christians as a rule chose islands, or other secluded spots, for their Sees, with a view to greater privacy.

was restored in Northumbria. Tended with such loving care, it grew and spread everywhere, bearing abundant fruit. No province in the Heptarchy was so fruitful in famous Churchmen and Saints as the Province of Northumbria. Nor need we wonder when we consider the character of those who founded and tended it. Oswald's influence was not confined to his own Province. To him, no doubt, was largely due the conversion of Kynegils, King of Wessex. Oswald, it so happened, was staying on a visit at the Court of this King when the Missionary, Birinus, arrived in these quarters. Kynegils was persuaded to give him a hearing, and soon became a convert to Christianity. Oswald was present at his baptism, and indeed became his Godfather, and the two Kings united together in giving Birinus a See at Dorchester. Thus Oswald assisted materially in the introduction of Christianity into the West of England.

Oswald's reign was not a long one: under his peaceful rule *eight* happy years were granted to the Church and people of Northumbria, then another terrible revolution destroyed all this peace and happiness. Penda, the same ruthless King who had slain Edwin, and four or five other Christian Kings, invaded Northumbria again. What stirred him to this war is not certain. Hating Christianity as he did, it seems scarcely probable that he undertook this war in the interests of idolatry. Oswald was Bretwalda, and as such took precedence of the other English Kings, a

pre-eminence to which Penda disdained to yield, and which he probably coveted for himself.<sup>1</sup> Some jealousy of this kind was most probably his motive. Success, as usual, attended his arms. The two armies met at a place then called Maserfield, supposed to be Oswestry, in Shropshire (others believe it to be Winwick, in Lancashire). Here a great battle was fought, in which the Mercians were again victorious, and Oswald was slain. So perished nobly in behalf of his country a man who combined in his character, in a singular manner, the qualities which form a Saint and which adorn a King. What prowess Oswald displayed in the field can never be forgotten, and how, in his country's greatest need, he rescued her from under the heels of her oppressor. He had also while on the throne secured to Northumbria the blessings of a wise and just government. So much was this felt at the time that the nations outside Northumbria placed themselves under his protection, acknowledging him to be their Suzerain. "Yet though raised to such a height of royal dignity, wonderful to relate," says Bede, "he always continued humble, affable, and generous to the poor and needy."

Oswald lived a life of prayer in the midst of his official duties. Such was his love of it that he would

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that though Penda gained so many victories he was never chosen Bretwalda. If this, therefore, was his aim, he failed to obtain it.

often continue in prayer from the hour of Lauds <sup>1</sup> till day-break, and from his habit of prayer and thanksgiving, wherever he might be, his hands were usually in a posture of prayer. It is said that he finished his life in prayer, for when he saw himself surrounded by his enemies, and that there was no escape from death, he prayed to GOD for the souls of his men and army, so that it passed into a proverb among the English : “ LORD, have mercy upon their souls, as Oswald said, “ when he fell to the ground.”

Oswald’s charity was commensurate with his devotion, he was most compassionate to those who were in want. The following anecdote is given by Bede :— “ It was Eastertide, and the King had sat down to “ dinner with Bishop Aidan among his guests. A silver “ dish full of dainties was placed on the board, and “ grace was about to be said, when a Minister, “ employed by the King to relieve the poor, entered “ the room and informed the King that a great crowd “ of famished people were sitting in the street in front “ of the palace, begging an alms of the King. Oswald, “ without any attention to his own wants, ordered the “ meat set before him to be carried to the poor, and “ the dish to be cut in pieces and divided among “ them.” The historian proceeds, “ at which sight the “ Bishop who sat by him, much taken with such an

<sup>1</sup> *Lauds* were sung soon after midnight, and the *Matins* Service was usually combined with it, after which the Monks went to bed again and rested till day-break (about six). Oswald spent frequently the whole night in prayer as S. Cuthbert was also accustomed to do.

“act of piety, laid hold of his right hand and said, “‘May this hand never perish;’ which fell out according to his prayer, for his arm and hand, being cut off from his body when he was slain in battle, remain entire and uncorrupted to this day, and are kept in a silver case as revered relics in S. Peter’s Church, in the royal city which has taken its name from Bebba, one of its former Queens (Bamborough).”

The barbarian who conquered on the field of Maserfield had caused his body to be mutilated; his head, his hands and arms were struck off and set upon stakes. This was done, of course, with the view of exposing him to the utmost dishonour, but it led eventually to a wider diffusion of the reverence attached to his memory. For at the end of a year it came to pass that affairs in the North becoming more settled, the government of the country fell into the hands of Prince Oswy, his half-brother. Oswy immediately caused his brother’s remains to be brought with the utmost reverence from Maserfield, and thrice fortunate were those Churches regarded who obtained any portion of them. The head he bestowed on the Church in Lindisfarne, where it remained until the Danish inroads, when for security it was carried inland with S. Cuthbert’s body, and eventually enshrined in his coffin in Durham Cathedral. His hands and arms, as already recorded, were given to Bamborough, where they remained still uncorrupted, as Malmesbury relates, in the twelfth century. The

other remains of S. Oswald's body came into the possession of his niece, Osthrida, Queen of Mercia, and were deposited by her in the noble abbey of Bardney, in Lincolnshire, then lately founded by her husband, King Ethelred. She and this King caused his bones to be enshrined and placed with great honour in the Church of that abbey, "and that there  
"might be a perpetual memorial of the royal person  
"of this holy man, they hung up over his monument  
"his banner made of gold and purple."

Numerous miracles began immediately to be reported in connection with S. Oswald's remains. Bede fills many pages of his history with them; they are chiefly interesting in the testimony they bear to the universal belief in his saintliness. We must not dwell on them, but we give the following passage from Bede, which exemplifies the pious belief (if we are not to call it credulity) of the age in which he lived.

Speaking of Oswald he writes—"How great his faith was towards  
"GOD, and how remarkable his devotion, has been made evident by  
"miracles since his death; for in the place where he was killed by the  
"Pagans, fighting for his country, infirm men and cattle are healed to  
"this day. Whereupon many took up the very dust of the place where  
"his body fell, and putting it into water did much good with it to their  
"friends who were sick. This custom came so much into use that the  
"earth being carried away by degrees there remained a hole as deep  
"as the height of a man. Nor is it to be wondered that the sick should  
"be healed in the place where he died, for whilst he lived he never  
"ceased to provide for the poor and infirm, and to bestow alms upon  
"them and assist them."

The popular veneration of King Oswald as a Saint which thus began in his own Province, rapidly spread into the rest of England, and from thence beyond the sea into Ireland and the Continent. There it spread itself widely in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, France, &c. Traces of it may be found even in Italy and Spain. Mention of him was made in Missals and Breviaries, Churches dedicated to him, and Festivals held in his honour, places also are named after him. This popular veneration of S. Oswald continued even to comparatively modern



times (see Plummer's *Bede Notes*, III. 14). The like is not recorded of any other of our English Saints.

In these early times canonisation was not preceded by a special enquiry, nor was it the result of a judicial determination. *Vox Populi* in its best sense was regarded as *Vox Dei*, and though, no doubt, mistakes were occasionally made, and the popular veneration was misdirected, it usually, if not always, happened that this misdirected enthusiasm was brief and evanescent, unable to endure the test of time. The old system had at all events one virtue, that its mistakes were easily corrected.

## **S. Aidan.**

**BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE.**

A.D. 651. AUGUST 31.

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AIDAN was brought up in the celebrated monastery of Iona. This monastery had been founded by S. Columba, an Irishman of royal lineage, who early devoted himself to the religious life. After founding many monasteries in his own country he, through the vehemence of his temper, became involved in a religious suit-at-law, which led to a warfare between some Irish clans in which much blood was shed. Columba, in a fit of remorse and penitence, determined to expatriate himself, and spend the remainder of his life for CHRIST'S sake among strangers. He left Ireland accordingly about 563, and landed on the West Coast of Scotland, with the view of preaching the Faith to the northern Picts. This people was separated by a vast mountain range, called the Mounth, from the southern Picts, who were already Christians, having been converted many years before by S. Ninian. The northern Picts however were yet

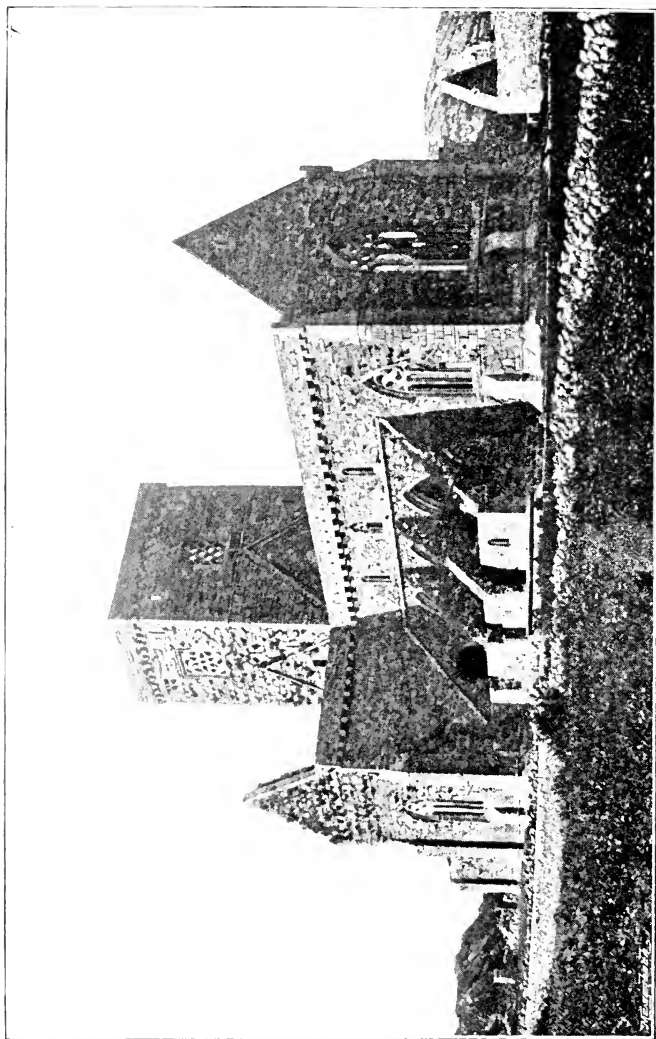
idolaters. Columba landing among them had great success, their King, Bridius, and the whole nation were converted. Columba took up his residence in a small island given him by the King, then called Hii, where he built a monastery for himself and his disciples. From it sounded forth the Word of Faith in all the regions round about, and it became the headquarters of religion in the West of Scotland. Columba died A.D. 597, but the excellent discipline which he had established in Iona flourished long after his death; his successors "were eminent for their continence, "their love of GOD, and for the holiness of their life." How greatly the English Church was indebted to S. Columba's Missionaries is plain from the history of those times; they were, no doubt, the main instruments under GOD by whom the English in the north of our country were won from idolatry, and through whom they learned to love CHRIST and holiness.

The circumstances which led to Aidan's coming into England were as follows:—Oswald, it will be remembered, was no sooner left undisturbed on the throne of Northumbria than he took measures for the conversion of his people. Sending accordingly to Iona, where he had himself received the Faith, he requested that an able Bishop might be sent him. His request was complied with, and one of the monks, Corman, was consecrated Missionary-Bishop, and sent into Northumbria. Corman, however, proved unfitted for his task. The rough ways and manners of the

English offended him. He was of too severe a temper and habit of mind to bear patiently with them. They on the other hand did not care to listen to him. Disgusted with his want of success he returned to Iona, reporting that "Nothing could be effected with the English who were an unteachable race, harsh in temper, and barbarous in their manners." This report caused grief to the whole community, and a great Council was called to consider what could be done. All were anxious for the conversion of the English, and were grieved at the failure of the brother who had been sent. In the course of the debate one of the monks, addressing Cormac, spake as follows: "It appears to me, brother, that you have been more severe with your unlearned hearers than you should have been, and did not at first give them the milk of more easy doctrine, till being by degrees nourished with the Word of GOD they should be capable of greater perfection, and be able to practice GOD'S sublimer precepts." These words made a great impression on the meeting, and the feeling prevailed that one who took so just a view of the difficulty was the most likely man to be able to cope with it. In fine they all came to the conclusion that *Aidan*—for it was he who had spoken—was the "most fitting man to be sent, judging him to be endowed with the grace of discretion which is the mother of all virtues."

Without delay, therefore, *Aidan* was consecrated and sent into England, where he soon displayed not





**IONA CATHEDRAL, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.**

the virtue of discretion only, but all other good qualities necessary in a Missionary.

Aidan arrived in England about A.D. 635, and was joyfully received by King Oswald, who placed him at his own request in the little "island" of Lindisfarne, which he selected for retirement and devotion. Here Aidan built a small monastery for himself and his followers, and commenced at once his Missionary labours in which he received great assistance from the King, who not only listened humbly and willingly to his admonitions, but took much and diligent care to build and extend the Church of CHRIST in his kingdom. Aidan was quickly followed by many others of his own nation eager to assist him in his work. For their accommodation he caused sufficient buildings to be erected in Lindisfarne. "These buildings," Bede tells us, "were not much better than wooden sheds, for his monks contented themselves with the barest necessaries." Their spiritual work in the meantime was prosecuted with the utmost vigour. They preached the word of GOD with great devotion, and such of them as had "received Priest's Orders ministered the grace of baptism to such as believed." Churches were built in different places to which the people joyfully flocked to hear the Word of GOD, "and by the royal munificence sites and endowments were provided for religious houses." To S. Aidan's monastery in Lindisfarne (or Holy Island, as it came to be called), all the

Churches in Bernicia, from the Tyne to the Tweed, traced their origin, as well as also some of those in Deira from the Tyne to the Humber.

One of the Bishop's first cares after his arrival was to open a school, or training institution, for boys, who might be brought up with himself, and educated after his own model. Twelve English boys were at once intrusted to him. Among others were Cedd, Chad, and Eata, who became distinguished bishops in their day, and are now venerated by the Church as Saints.

Bede gives the following account of the private life of S. Aidan. "Neither seeking or loving anything  
"of this world he delighted in distributing among the  
"poor whatsoever was given him by the King, or rich  
"men of the world (see *Life of S. Oswin*). He was  
"wont to traverse both town and country on foot,  
"never on horse-back, unless compelled by some  
"urgent necessity, and wherever in his way he saw  
"any, either rich or poor, he invited them, if infidels,  
"to embrace the Faith ; or if they were believers, he  
"stirred them up by words and actions to alms and  
"good works. His course of life," he continues, "was  
"so different from the slothfulness of our times that  
"all those who bore him company—whether they were  
"shorn monks or laymen—were religiously employed  
"reading the Scriptures, or learning Psalms. This  
"was the daily employment of himself, and all that  
"were with him wheresoever he went. And if it  
"happened that he was invited to eat with the King,



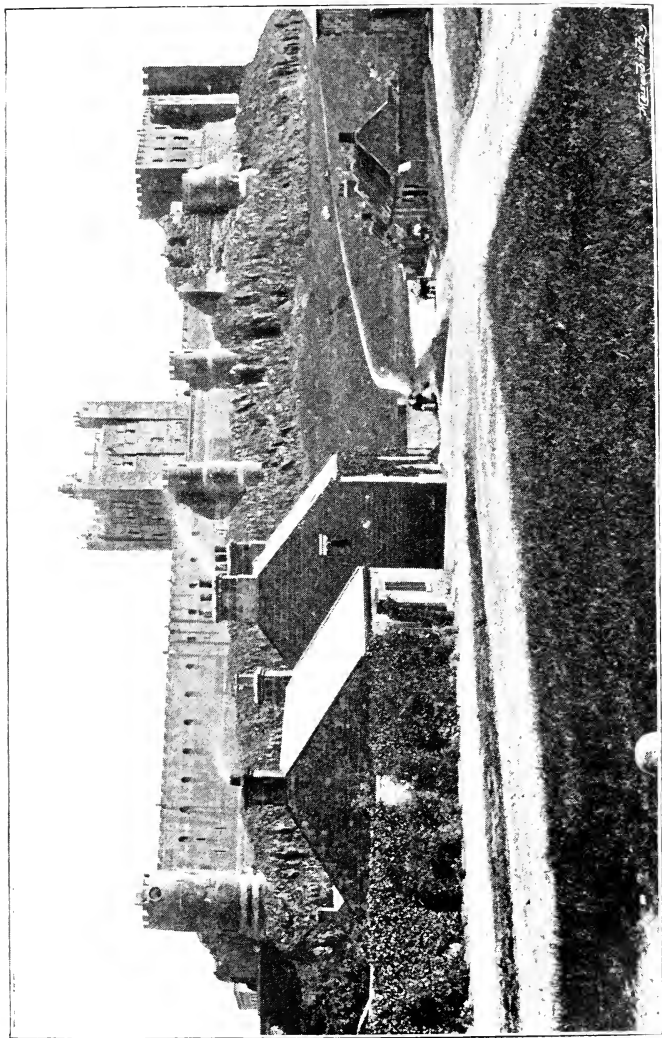
“he went with one or two clerks, and having taken a small repast made haste to be gone with them either to read or write.” Bede adds, “that many religious people—both men and women—were stirred by his example to keep Fast on Wednesdays and Fridays till three o’clock in the afternoon throughout the year, except during the fifty days of Easter.”

S. Aidan’s care for the poor has been already mentioned: there was another class of men that needed and greatly commanded his sympathy, these were the *slaves*, who were common enough at this time in England. To their benefit he devoted a share of the money and presents given him by the King and nobles. Not a few of these freed-men, whom he had ransomed from slavery, afterwards became his disciples. Aidan taught and instructed them, and if he found them suitable for it, advanced them to the Order of the Priesthood. Bede calls Aidan “a man of singular meekness, piety, and devotion,” but when the occasion required it he could be stern. “Never through fear or reverence did he forbear to reprove the rich if they offended, but corrected them with severe reproof.”

S. Aidan’s example had a wonderful effect upon the English, and not a few, both men and women, were stirred by it to devote themselves wholly to the service of CHRIST. Conscious of the importance of guiding this zeal aright he took great pains to secure good and wise Superiors. It was entirely due to him

that the famous Abbess, S. Hilda, at the time on her way to France, was induced to return and devote herself to the service of the English Church.

Aidan's happy labours were, however, sadly disturbed when he had been in England about seven years by the disaster at Maserfield, which occurred A.D. 642, when the saintly King who had brought him from Scotland was slain, and the country of Northumbria was given up to the barbarities of the Mercian conqueror. "At that time," Bede tells us, "the most reverend Bishop Aidan was residing in the isle of Farne, which is nearly two miles from the city (Bamborough), for thither he was wont often to retire that he might be undisturbed in his prayers. Whilst he was there, Penda, pursuing his conquest with ruthless cruelty, ravaged the country far and wide, and came to Bamborough, the royal city, where was a castle on the coast, so strong and so well defended that he failed to effect an entrance into it. Not brooking to be disappointed he caused a number of the villages nigh at hand to be destroyed, and from their ruins collected a vast heap of planks, beams, wattle, and rubbish, which he heaped together to an immense height against Bamborough; and when the wind blew towards the town set it on fire, designing to burn the whole town down. All this was visible in the island of Farne. The miserable spectacle distressed Aidan greatly. When he saw the flames of fire and the smoke carried by the boisterous



**BAMBOROUGH CASTLE.**

By permission of Messrs. G. W. Wilson and Co., Aberdeen.



“wind above the city walls, he, it is said, interceded with GOD in behalf of the doomed city, and with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, exclaimed, “Behold, LORD, how great mischief Penda does!” Whilst he was thus praying the wind, suddenly changing, turned from the city, and drove back the flames upon those who had kindled them.” Bam-borough was saved, for Penda, finding the siege too troublesome, soon after left the neighbourhood and returned home. No one can be surprised that its escape was believed to have been due to S. Aidan’s prayers.

After Oswald’s death Northumbria became again divided into two kingdoms; Oswy became King of Bernicia, Oswin of Deira. Oswin, who is numbered among the Saints (see *S. Oswin*), was a Prince of blameless life and of the sincerest faith, who looked up to S. Aidan as a father who loved him as his own son. This intimacy of Christian love and friendship shed much light and happiness on the latter years of S. Aidan’s life, which were spent in troublous times. Politically, the North of England was in a most unhappy condition. There were fears from without, of Penda’s return, and divisions within, from the jealousy of King Oswy, who hated Oswin and eventually caused him to be put to death. S. Aidan died about the same time, A.D. 651, saddened, no doubt, by these events, but faithful unto death in the prosecution of his work, which seems to have been unaffected by the

strife between the two provinces. So greatly was he revered and beloved by all that not even the acrimony of religious controversy stirred men against him. The difference in the observance of Easter Day was keenly felt, by none more acutely than by the sacred Historian of those times, who, as he tells us himself, "detested" the uncatholic traditions in vogue among the Scots; his admiration, therefore, of Bishop Aidan is the more remarkable. He seems to take a particular pleasure in enumerating, one by one, his many virtues, "his love of peace and charity, his "continnence and humility, his mind superior to anger "and avarice, despising pride and vain glory, his "industry in keeping and teaching the heavenly "Commandments, his diligence in reading and watch- "ing, his authority, becoming a Priest in reprov- "ing the haughty and powerful, and, at the same time, "his tenderness in comforting the afflicted and re- "lieving or defending the poor." . . . "For which "reason" he tell us, "he was deservedly beloved by "all, even by those who differed in opinion concern- "ing Easter; and he was held in veneration, not "only by indifferent persons, but even by the "Bishops, Honorius of Canterbury, and Felix of "the East Angles."

S. Aidan had completed sixteen years in the Episcopate when he was taken out of this world. It happened when he was seized with his last illness that he was staying "in the Royal Vill not far from the

“city, Bamborough; for having a Church and chamber  
“there he was wont often to turn thither and make  
“some stay, and thence to make excursions in different  
“directions for the sake of preaching, which he also  
“was in the habit of doing in the other country-houses  
“of the King, for he had no possessions of his own  
“besides the Church and the fields adjoining. When  
“he fell sick they set up for him a tent on the  
“Western side of the Church, so it came to pass that  
“he breathed his last whilst resting on a buttress  
“which had been placed against the outer wall for  
“support of the Church. He died on the 31st of  
“August, A.D. 651. His body was carried thence into  
“the island of Lindisfarne, and buried in the cemetery  
“belonging to the monastery; but when, after a  
“short time, a larger Church was built . . . his  
“bones were translated there and buried to the right  
“of the Altar with the veneration due to so great a  
“Prelate.”

The discipline introduced by S. Aidan was strict and ascetic; neither beer nor wine was allowed in his monastery, but milk only, and this continued to be the custom in Lindisfarne till about A.D. 738, when King Ceolwulph obtained a license for the monks to drink wine or beer.

Not many years elapsed after Aidan's death before the controversy about Easter broke out into open flame. It was settled at last, by the Synod at Whitby, against the Scots, and proved the occasion of their

departure from England. Unable or unwilling to conform they left Northumbria in a body and returned home. Bede's testimony to their worth, and to their admirable influence on the English people, will prove a fitting conclusion to this memoir of S. Aidan, who was the founder and moving spirit of the mission. "The whole solicitude of these teachers," he says, "was to serve GOD, not the world ; their whole care was that of the heart, not of the belly. In consequence of this the religious habit was greatly venerated at that time, so that wheresoever a Clerk or Monk came he was joyfully received by all as the servant of GOD ; and if he was met on the way when journeying, they ran to him with joy, bending their heads that they might be signed by his hand, or blessed by his mouth ; and they also listened diligently to his exhortations. Moreover, on the LORD'S Day they flocked eagerly to Church or to the monasteries, not for food for their bodies, but in order to hear the word of GOD ; and if it chanced that any Priest came into a village, the people of the place presently congregated together, and desired to hear from him the word of Life ; for the Priests and other Clergy were not used to go into the villages for any other cause, but either for preaching, or baptising, or visiting the sick, or to speak briefly, for ' the cure of 'souls.' Yea, so free were they of the plague of covetousness that they would not even receive lands



“and possessions for the building of monasteries,  
“except when compelled by the nobles, which custom  
“was observed in the Churches of Northumbria for  
“some time afterwards.”

## **S. Oswin.**

KING.

A.D. 651. AUGUST 20.

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OSWIN was related to King Edwin, and on the death of King Oswald, A.D. 642, was chosen King of Deira, the lower half of the Northumbrian Province. He was the son of that King Osric who apostatised from the Christian Faith, and was soon after slain by King Cadwallon (see *Life of S. Oswald*). Yet though sprung from such an origin, Oswin was remarkable for the purity of his life, and the sincerity of his faith—“graceful in appearance, tall of stature, pleasant in conversation, he was also most bountiful to all his subjects, both small and great.” In consequence of these good qualities he was much beloved by his people, and came into such esteem that persons of rank came from various parts of the kingdom to live in Deira, and to tender to him their services. Above all, he was beloved by S. Aidan, whom Oswin looked up to with the affection of a son. Seven years of peace and prosperity were granted to this amiable and guileless Prince ; but in the year 651 war was declared

against him by Oswy, King of Bernicia, "who could not be at peace with him . . . and who, no doubt, aspired to rule the whole Province."

Oswin, Bede tells us, "gathered what forces he was able at Wilfare's Dun, near Catterick, but they were vastly inferior to the invading army. When he saw that he could not cope successfully with the hostile army, and that the only result of a battle would be the slaughter of his own soldiers, he refused to allow them to fight for him. After taking a sad farewell he dismissed them to their homes, and went himself into hiding, with one faithful soldier named Tondhere. It was not long before Oswy discovered the place of his retreat. A treacherous friend, the Earl Hunwald, in whose castle Oswin lay concealed, and in whom he reposed the utmost confidence, betrayed him to Oswy, who unscrupulously put him to death, and did not even spare the faithful Tondhere." S. Oswin was slain at Gilling, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and his body was buried in Tynemouth. King Oswy some years later, by way of penance, caused an abbey to be built over the spot where Oswin was put to death, and richly endowed it. The religious of this house were bound by their rules to offer up daily prayers to GOD for the soul of the King who had been slain, and in behalf of the King who had put him to death.

Oswinthorpe, near Leeds, no doubt takes its name from this Prince.

His bones were discovered at Tynemouth in the year A.D. 1065, by Earl Tostig, 415 years after his death. Count Waltheof gave his relics to the monks of Jarrow, but they were after a time placed in Tynemouth. There are no remains of the abbey at Gilling where he was slain.

**S. Finan.****BISHOP.**

A.D. 661. FEBRUARY 17.



FINAN was one of S. Aidan's Missionaries, and was chosen to succeed him. He ruled the See of Lindisfarne well and ably for ten years. In the course of his Episcopate he built a Church in Lindisfarne to serve for his Cathedral. "Nevertheless," Bede adds, "he built it not of stone, but of hewn oak, and covered "it with reeds."<sup>1</sup> In the year 653 a Mercian Prince, Peada, eldest son of the notable Penda, came into Northumbria on a visit to King Oswy, whose daughter he desired to espouse. The Midlands of England were at this time entirely Pagan. The Princess was refused him unless he was willing to become a Christian. Peada was persuaded by his friend, Alchfrid, Oswy's eldest son, to attend the Services of the Church, and to listen to Bishop Finan's teaching. "When he heard the preaching of truth, the

<sup>1</sup> A succeeding Bishop, Eadbert, took off the thatch and covered the Church roof and walls with plates of lead.

“promise of the heavenly kingdom, and the hope of resurrection and future immortality, he declared that he would willingly become a Christian, even though he should be refused the virgin.” What important consequences ensued from the conversion of Prince Peada will be seen elsewhere. Here it is sufficient to record that he was baptized by Bishop Finan, with all his “earls and soldiers and their servants that came along with him, at a noted village belonging to the King, called ‘At-the-Wall’” (Walton, about eight miles from Newcastle).

Finan, brought up in Iona, was a zealous upholder of the Scotch traditions, and could by no means be persuaded to make any change in the observance of Easter. He died A.D. 661, three years before the great Synod at Whitby, where this important controversy was discussed and settled. He was succeeded by Bishop Colman, who abandoned the mission in England and returned with his companions to Scotland.

# The Kingdom of Essex.





## **S. Mellitus.**

ARCHBISHOP.

A.D. 624. APRIL 24.

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MELLITUS was the leader of the second band of Missionaries sent by Gregory for the conversion of the English. They were despatched from Rome A.D. 601, to strengthen the hands of Augustine, and to enable him to take advantage of the remarkable movement towards Christianity occasioned by King Ethelbert's conversion. Arriving in England they took up their quarters in Canterbury with their brother-Missionaries who had preceded them. Here Mellitus remained till A.D. 604, when on the occasion of the conversion of Sabert, King of Essex, he was chosen to be first Bishop of that Province. He had his See in London, then the Capitol of the Kingdom of Essex, and here a Church was built for him by King Ethelbert. It was dedicated to S. Paul, and was on the site of our present Cathedral. Here Mellitus and his first converts were accustomed to meet for their devotions. Mellitus was favourably received in Essex,

and apparently no opposition was raised to the introduction of the new religion, the people acquiescing in the change with a questionable readiness. About this time Mellitus made a journey to Rome to confer with the Pope "on the necessary affairs of the English Church." What these affairs were we are not told. They probably had reference to matters of monastic discipline, for the Pope (Boniface V.) took occasion at this time to assemble a Synod of the Bishops of Italy, "to draw up rules for the life of the Monks," and he invited Mellitus to take his seat among them, that they might have the benefit of his experience, "and that he might convey to the Churches of the English whatsoever was decreed to be observed by them."

Mellitus soon returned to Essex, and all went well till the year A.D. 616, when, as already mentioned in the Life of S. Laurence, a violent reaction in favour of heathenism occurred in Kent. It soon spread to Essex, King Sabert happening to die at that time, and, as the Church had been so lately introduced, it proved more serious. At the head of the reactionary movement were Sabert's three sons, heirs to the kingdom, which they had divided amongst themselves. Bede tells us, "They at once commenced to practise their idolatrous worship, which in some degree they appear to have intermitted in their father's life-time; they also gave free license to their people to worship idols." It seems that for some little time they con-

tented themselves with this, and did not interfere with Mellitus, or prohibit Christian worship ; but it was not long before they proceeded to greater lengths, and banished the Bishop. When these Princes saw the Bishop giving the Eucharist to the people during the Celebration of the solemn Service of the Mass in the Church, they are reported to have said to him in their barbarous folly, "Why do not you give to us that fine white bread which you used to give our father, Saba (for so they called him), and which you still give the people in the Church?" Mellitus answered them, "If you are willing to be washed in that fount of salvation in which your father was washed, you may also be partakers of that holy bread of which he partook ; but if you despise the laver of life you cannot be partakers of the Bread of Life." They answered, "We will not enter into that laver, for we do not know that we have any need of it, but we wish to eat of that bread." When they had been often and earnestly admonished by him that this could never be, that any one should share in the most holy oblation who had not first undergone that holy cleansing ; being filled with fury they said to him at last, "If you will not grant us this little matter that we ask of you, you shall no longer remain in our kingdom." Thus they expelled him, and ordered him to depart with his companions out of their kingdom. Mellitus, thus driven out of Essex, returned to Canterbury, where he found his brother-

Missionaries in no less trouble. The Missionaries were at this time so discouraged that they doubted if there was any use in remaining in England. Mellitus and Justus passed over the Channel, and awaited in France the turn of events. As it happened, the sudden conversion of King Edbald shortly after this arrested the catastrophe. The Missionaries received kind letters from him, requesting them to return and resume their ministrations. They returned accordingly, and Justus was welcomed in Kent; but when Mellitus would have gone into Essex he was forbidden to enter it. The three young Kings who had cast him out were indeed now dead, having perished with their army in a war waged with the nation of the Gewissœ (Wessex); but "the people (of Essex) having been "once seduced to wickedness could not be brought "back, or recalled to the simplicity of the faith and "love which is in CHRIST, though their misleaders had been destroyed." In this perverseness the Londoners, we are told, took the chief part, for they would not receive back Bishop Mellitus, "preferring "rather the worship of their idolatrous high priests." King Edbald was not able to give any assistance in this difficulty. Mellitus, therefore, under these circumstances, rejoined the mission in Canterbury. In the year 619 Archbishop Laurence died, and Mellitus was chosen to succeed him, and so became the third Archbishop of Canterbury, "which See he "governed," Bede tells us, "with great care and

“labour.” In the course of his short Archiepiscopate he had the satisfaction of consecrating the Church of S. Mary,<sup>1</sup> built and completed by King Edbald. He was, however, now old in years, and “laboured under “an infirmity of the body, i.e., the gout, but his mind “was sound, cheerfully passing over all earthly “things, and always aspiring to love, seek, and “attain to those which are heavenly. He was “noble by birth,” Bede tells us, “but much nobler “in mind.” Of this he gives the following example:—“It happened on a certain time that the “city of Canterbury, being by carelessness set on fire, “was in danger of being consumed by the spreading “conflagration. Water was thrown over the fire in vain ; “a considerable part of the city was already destroyed, “and the fierce flames were advancing towards the “Bishop’s palace, when he, confiding in the Divine “assistance where human aid failed, ordered himself “to be carried towards the raging fire that was spread- “ing on every side. The Church of the four crowned “Martyrs<sup>2</sup> was in the place where the fire raged most. “The Bishop being carried there by his servants, sick “as he was, he averted the danger by prayer, which a “number of strong men had not been able to perform “with much labour. Immediately the wind, which

<sup>1</sup> This Church was attached to “S. Augustine’s Abbey.”

<sup>2</sup> The names of these Martyrs are said to have been Severus, Severianus, Victorianus, and Carpophorus. They suffered in the Diocletian Persecution.

“blowing from the South had spread the conflagration through the city, turning to the North prevented the destruction of those places that had lain in its way, and then ceasing entirely the flames were immediately extinguished. This Archbishop,” he continues, “having ruled the Church five years departed to heaven, in the reign of King Edbald, and was buried with his predecessors in the monastery and Church which we have so often mentioned of the most blessed Prince of the Apostles, in the year of our LORD’S Incarnation, 624, on the 24th day of April.”

**S. Cedd.****BISHOP.**

A.D. 664. JANUARY 7.



CEDD was the elder brother of S. Chad, and with him was trained up in the traditions of the Scottish Church under the holy guidance of S. Aidan, of whom they proved most worthy disciples. It happened in the year A.D. 653 that Peada, eldest son of the heathen King Penda (of Mercia) was converted to Christianity whilst on a visit with Oswy, King of Northumbria. This zealous Prince, when he was returning home to his little kingdom in the Midlands, made request for some teachers to be given him, "who should instruct and baptise his people." Four Priests were given him, one of whom was Cedd, who accompanied the Prince into Mercia, which was at that time wholly heathen. When they arrived in the Province "they preached the Word," we are told, "and were willingly listened to, and many, both of the nobility and of the common sort, renouncing the abominations of idolatry, were baptised daily." The old barbarian, Penda, the Prince's father, whose hatred of Christianity

was most bitter, was yet alive ; he did not however interfere, nor obstruct the preaching of the Missionaries, or the conversion of the people, but only expressed profound contempt for such as adopted the new religion and did not live in accordance with their profession. Thus Cedd was a pioneer of Christianity in the Midlands of England, but his stay in those parts was short. He was called elsewhere. The same year which witnessed the conversion of Peada, witnessed also another very important conversion, to wit, that of Sigebert, King of Essex, who was led to embrace Christianity through the zeal of King Oswy, in whose court he was staying in the North.<sup>1</sup> Sigebert, filled with the same zeal which animated Peada, made earnest request for some teachers to accompany him into Essex. The task to be undertaken was a most delicate and difficult one, for the East Saxons, it may be remembered, had once received Christianity and afterwards rejected it, and had shewn an inveterate repugnance to embrace it again. In this rebellion against the Faith the Londoners were the chief opponents, who obstinately clung to the old idolatry. It was for this difficult task that Cedd was selected. King Oswy recalled him from Mercia and sent him with another Priest to accompany Sigebert into Essex. Cedd's missionary operations were as successful in Essex as they had

<sup>1</sup> It seems highly probable that Peada and Sigebert were baptised together.—See Plummer's *Bede*.



been in Mercia. He seems scarcely to have had a fixed See, and to have avoided London, but "travelled about the country everywhere, and soon gathered a numerous Church to the LORD." It happened on some occasion that he returned to Lindisfarne, on a visit to S. Finan who was still Bishop there. Finan, hearing the glad tidings of the conversions in Essex, and wishing to provide for the needs of the infant Church, caused Cedd to be consecrated Bishop of the East Saxons. The ceremony was performed in Lindisfarne, whither Finan had invited two other Bishops to assist him. "Cedd, having received the episcopal dignity, returned to his Province, and pursuing the work he had begun with more ample authority, built Churches in several places, and ordained Priests and Deacons to assist him in the work of faith, and in the ministry of baptising." Following the example of S. Aidan he established "Schools of religion," in which he gathered his converts together, and taught them to observe the discipline of the regular life "so far as those rude people were then capable of it." He made no attempt apparently to revive the See of S. Paul's, for which probably the Londoners were not yet ripe. His principal headquarters of religion were at Tila-burg (*Tilbury*), opposite to Gravesend, and at Ithan-<sup>1</sup>chester, a town near Maldon, of which no remains now

<sup>1</sup> It has been identified with Othona, then a Military Station, between Blackwater and Crouch Rivers.

exist. King Sigebert greatly assisted his efforts, but this pious King, who was called *Sigebert the Good*, to distinguish him from other Kings of that name, was before long basely assassinated. Two Earls, who were brothers—his own kinsmen—murdered him, it would seem, in their own house. They gave no reason for the act, except that they hated him because of his too great easiness with his enemies, and ready forgiveness of injuries. Bede, commenting on this, informs us that, though indeed it was the case that the only “crime” laid against him was his obeying with devotion the Evangelic precepts, yet in this innocent death a real offence was also punished. One of these Earls had contracted an unlawful marriage, and the Bishop, unable to correct him, had excommunicated him, and forbidden all Christian people to enter his house or partake of his hospitality. King Sigebert, fearing to offend this powerful lord, had slighted the Bishop’s inhibition, and had taken part in the entertainment in his house.

The King who succeeded him, Suidelm, the son of Sexbald, was not opposed to Christianity, and Cedd had soon the satisfaction of baptising him. This was done at Rendlesham, in Suffolk, which at that time was a country seat of the King of East Anglia, with whom he was staying. Cedd though busily engaged in his diocese, which comprised the whole Kingdom of Essex, paid occasional visits to his old home in Lindisfarne.

There was at this time a certain Prince in Yorkshire, who "enjoyed the name and title of a King," Ethelwald, son of S. Oswald (who formerly ruled over Northumbria). One of Cedd's brothers, Celin, was his Priest and Chaplain. Prince Ethelwald, becoming acquainted with Cedd through his brother, felt a great esteem for him, and, perceiving that he was a wise and good man, "requested him to "accept some land from him on which an abbey "might be built, to which he, the King, might "repair to offer his prayers and heart he Word, "and in which he might be buried when he died." He was the more earnest in his request, because he fully trusted that he should be benefitted by the prayers of those who should serve GOD in it. The Bishop, acceding to the King's request, chose a place for the new abbey in some distant and lofty mountains, "which seemed more suitable for the haunts of "robbers, or the dens of wild beasts, than for the "habitation of men." The place was called Lestingau (Lavingham).<sup>1</sup> Here Cedd, with Prince Ethelwald's assistance, founded an important religious House, establishing in it the rule and traditions of Lindisfarne. One of these customs was to consecrate beforehand by prayers and fasting the *site* on which any abbey or Church was to be built. In accordance with this custom, before the foundation of the new abbey was laid, Cedd took up his abode on the intended

<sup>1</sup> Near Whitby.

site with the intention of passing on it the forty days of Lent in rigid fasting<sup>1</sup> and constant daily prayer. It happened that he was obliged to leave, when there were yet ten days before Easter, the King requiring his presence at court ; on which his brother, Cynebil, at his request, took his place, and piously fulfilled the completion of his religious work. In the year 664 the famous Synod was held at Whitby, in which the Easter controversy was settled. Cedd was present at it, and acted as interpreter for both parties, which office he discharged most carefully. When it was decided against the Scots he accepted the decision of the meeting, and conformed to the Catholic observance of Easter, which thenceforth prevailed throughout England.

The same year, A.D. 664, he was seized by a pestilence which was ravaging England, and of which he died.<sup>2</sup> He was at Lastingham when he was taken ill, and was buried there, first of all in the open-air, but afterwards in the Abbey-Church, which was built of stone, and was dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

<sup>1</sup> During this time "he ate nothing till the evening of each day (except on Sundays) according to the usual custom (in Lindisfarne), "and when evening was come took only a little bread, a hen's egg, "and a little milk and water."

<sup>2</sup> We read repeatedly in early English History of attacks of the plague. The worst of all was the visitation of 664. Bishop Juda in Lindisfarne was carried off by it. Bishop Cedd, in Essex, Archbishop Deusdedit (Canterbury), Erconbert, King of Kent, and others innumerable. It was called the yellow plague probably from the colour of its victims.

When the tidings of the death of their beloved Bishop reached Essex his disciples in Essex were filled with grief, and were the more inconsolable because of his burial in Northumbria. The pestilence was still raging in those parts, but regardless of this thirty of his devoted followers set out together from Essex determined, "either to live, if it pleased GOD, near the "body of their beloved father, or to die and be buried "by him." They were lovingly received by their brethren and fellow-soldiers in CHRIST in Lastingham, but they all took the complaint and died of it, except one, a little boy, who recovered when he was at the point of death. This boy grew up and became a useful Priest in the Church of Northumbria.

**S. Erconwald.****BISHOP OF LONDON.**

CIRCA 694.    APRIL 30.

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S. ERCONWALD was of noble, if not royal origin, and was residing in Essex when S. Mellitus was sent as a Missionary Bishop to preach in that Province. Erconwald was one of his first converts, and although that fickle Province afterwards relapsed into heathenism, he held fast his faith, and continued to the end of his life to dedicate his energies and his wealth in the service of GOD. Two important religious houses were founded by him, one at Chertsey (Ceortesei) and the other at Barking. In the building and endowment of the former he was greatly assisted by Frithwald, Viceroy, and Earl of Surrey, under King Wulfhere. Over this he presided himself, establishing an admirable discipline among the members of his community. Over the abbey at Barking he placed his sister Ethelberga, a noble lady, worthy in all respects of such a brother.

The Province of Essex had been left without a

Bishop by the death of S. Cedd, who was carried off by the pestilence, A.D. 664. When Archbishop Theodore arrived in the country, by King Sebbi's influence, Erconwald was appointed to succeed Cedd, and was consecrated by Theodore as Bishop of London.

Before Erconwald died he had the satisfaction of procuring a reconciliation between the two great Prelates, Theodore and Wilfrid. This took place in his own palace in London.

The date of Bishop Erconwald's death is not exactly known. It is believed to have happened April 30th, A.D. 694. He was buried in S. Paul's Cathedral.

His abbey at Chertsey was destroyed by the Danes, who burnt it to the ground, with its ninety members and its Abbot Boccia. It was rebuilt by King Edgar and Bishop Ethelwald, and dedicated to S. Peter.

**S. Ethelberga.**

ABBESS.

CIRCA 670. OCTOBER 11.

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THIS lady was S. Erconwald's sister. Emulating her brother's zeal, she early dedicated herself to GOD, and became, by his wish, abbess of the great monastery of Barking—a double one, for men and women. By her admirable example and excellent teaching she led those committed to her trust to a great height of virtue and perfection. This became evident in a severe trial-time which befell this Province. The fearful plague which ravaged England in A.D. 664 was especially fatal in Essex, and made great havoc in the community at Barking. Too many Christians in the neighbourhood at this time disgraced their profession through mere timidity and fear of death, and forsaking the Church resorted to charms and heathen arts. In the midst of these defalcations the members of S. Ethelberga's Community were conspicuous for their Christian courage, their cheerfulness in suffering,



and the joyful alacrity with which they met their death.

S. Ethelberga herself survived this mortality, but was called, it would appear, soon after to receive her heavenly crown.

**S. Sebbi.**

KING.

A.D. 693. AUGUST 29.

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SEBBI, King of Essex, was a grandson of Sabert, the first Christian King of that Province. His father, Seward, was one of the three barbarous Princes who, re-establishing Paganism, banished Bishop Mellitus out of Essex. That Province, after remaining in obstinate rebellion against Christianity for some time, was recovered from its error by S. Cedd and King Sigebert before Sebbi came to the throne. When Suidelm died (before A.D. 664) this little kingdom was divided between Sebbi and his cousin Sighere, each having his own share. They were not altogether independent Kings, but were subject to the King of Mercia. Their reign was remarkable as witnessing a second revolt from Christianity in Essex. No Province, it will be remembered, received the Faith more easily than Essex, and none in the long run proved more unsatisfactory, or gave greater trouble to the Missionaries.

Sebbi and Sighere had not been long crowned when the terrible pestilence of A.D. 664 invaded the Province, and caused a fearful mortality. In this crisis it soon became apparent what little hold Christianity had, as yet, on the minds of the people. The conduct of the Kings at this juncture was in striking contrast. Sighere at once reverted to Paganism, and his people followed him. "They forsook the Sacraments of the Christian Faith, and began to restore the idol Temples which had been deserted, and to worship the idols, as hoping thus to be preserved from the plague by them." In this apostasy were included, not the lower classes or ignorant people only, but also the nobles, misled by the example of the King. Whilst this was going on in one half of Essex, the other presented an example of faith and devotion. King Sebbi, whose piety was as sincere as his life was pure, "not only preserved his own faith, but that of his people." Nor was it very long before he had the satisfaction of seeing the idolatrous people in the adjoining half of the Province returning from their folly. The effects of a panic are usually not lasting. Moreover the wise policy of Wulfhere, King of Mercia, in this crisis was very helpful. Wulfhere, a zealous Christian, heard with much indignation of this outbreak of heathenism in Essex. It is to his great credit that he did not attempt to use his power as Suzerain, and resort to coercion. Setting an example which might well have

been followed by rulers in later times, he resorted to the more Christian method of winning back the people. Bishop Cedd was now dead, having been carried off by the plague. Wulfhere therefore sent his own Bishop, Jaruman, a wise and good man, with a staff of Clergy to go into the disaffected parts. Jaruman executed his delicate mission with the utmost discretion and with great success. "Travelling about, far and wide, "over all parts of that Province, he succeeded in "bringing back both people and King to the way of "righteousness, so that leaving and destroying the "idol houses, and the altars which they had made, "they re-opened the Churches, and with joy confessed "the Name of CHRIST, whom they had blasphemed, "desiring even to die in the hope of a joyful resur- "rection rather than to live in the filth of apostasy "among their idols. This being effected, the Priests "and other teachers returned home with joy."

Sebbi had a long reign : in the latter part of it, after Sighere's death, over the whole of Essex. But the cares and the pleasures of royalty were little in accord with the bent of his mind. He longed to be free from them all ; and if he had followed his own wishes he would long ago have resigned the crown, but his Queen was wholly opposed to this, and without her good-will he scrupled to make the change. In the meantime he made use of his position to do what good he was able. "His whole soul," Bede tells us,

“was intent on religious works, on frequent prayer, and holy deeds of almsgiving.” So “this soldier of the Heavenly King passed thirty years on the throne, when he was seized with a serious infirmity of body of which indeed he died.” At this juncture he obtained at last his wife’s consent to a separation. Upon which he sent for the Bishop of London (Waldhere) from whom he received the religious habit, and to whom he gave a large sum of money for the poor, “reserving nothing for himself, but desiring to remain poor in spirit for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.” As his sickness became worse, and he perceived that the day of his death could not be far off, being a man of a royal mind, he began to be in apprehension, lest in the time of his agony and death something unworthy of his person should fall from his lips, or be conveyed by the motions of his other members. Wherefore, sending for the above-named Bishop of London, in which city he then was, he desired of him that only the Bishop himself, and two of his Ministers should be present at his death, which the Bishop most willingly agreed to and promised.” It happened that not long after this “the man of GOD in his sleep beheld a vision which greatly comforted and assured his mind, and on the third day after falling as it were into a slight slumber, without any sense of pain, he gave up the ghost.”

He was buried in a stone coffin “in the Church of the blessed teacher of the Gentiles (S. Paul), by

“ whose admonition he had learned to set his affections on heavenly things.”

King Sebbi's sepulchre in S. Paul's Cathedral was in existence there till A.D. 1666, when it perished with the Church in the Fire of London.

## §. Osith.

VIRGIN.

CIRCA 670. OCTOBER 7.

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[*Note*—The life or *acts* of S. Osith are full of improbabilities and very gross anachronisms. The particulars given in this notice, gathered from Leland and Mabillon, seem fairly reliable.]

S. OSITH (or Osgith) was born at Querendon, near Aylesbury. Her father, Frithwald,<sup>1</sup> was a Sub-ruler, or Viceroy, in the Kingdom of Mercia, and her mother, Wilterberga, is said to have been a daughter of the famous King Penda. She was given by her parents, at an early age, to her aunt Edburga, to be educated by her. Edburga lived at a place, called from her, Edburbery,<sup>2</sup> on the Chiltern Hills. Here Osith was brought up very religiously, and forming acquaintance with some devout ladies, she imbibed from them such a love of religion that she ardently desired to devote herself to it. During this period of her life she had

<sup>1</sup> In the life of Bishop Erconwald we are told that *Earl Frithwald* assisted him greatly in the foundation of his abbey at Chertsey.

<sup>2</sup> In the parish of Aylesbury, about three miles from the town.

a narrow escape from being drowned, for having been sent on an errand by her aunt to carry a book of religion to one of these ladies, in crossing the river she fell into it, and only escaped by a miracle.

On her return home she was sought in marriage by Sighere, King of Essex,<sup>1</sup> and, against her will, was espoused to him, and sent into Essex. Under some pretext or other, however, she managed to delay the fulfilment of her engagement, and one day when the King was absent longer than usual, whilst chasing a remarkably fine deer, she slipped out of the palace and made her way to two Bishops, Acca and Bedwin, to whom she made known the desire of her heart. They forthwith gave her the veil. King Sighere, with remarkable moderation, acquiesced in her determination, and built her a small religious house at a place called Chick, in Essex. This is near Colchester, where the river Coln enters the sea, and is now called after her, S. Osith's. "Here taking to herself sacred virgins, she began to follow out the austere life she had proposed, disciplined them in the observance of good manners . . . and led them by word and example to the contempt of worldly things and the love of heaven."

S. Osith is said to have closed her life as a martyr, having been put to death by some pirates who in-

<sup>1</sup> Sighere was "a King" (he had only *a share* of the kingdom) about A.D. 664. He returned to idolatry for a time, in fear of the plague, but soon recovered his faith.



fested that coast. Her body was not long after translated to Aylesbury, her native town, where it was held in great honour. It appears that there was at this time a nunnery<sup>1</sup> here, either founded by her, or, soon after her death, to her memory. Eventually her relics were re-translated to Chick.

Richard, Bishop of London, circa A.D. 1120, built a Church and monastery in her memory at Chick, and filled it with regular Canons. William of Corbuel, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, was its first Prior.

S. Osith was in great repute as a Saint for many ages, both at Chick and Aylesbury;<sup>2</sup> and numerous miracles are reported to have been worked through her intercession.

The legend of S. Osith is interesting as a story, but worthless historically. We are told that she was the daughter of Frithwald, who flourished 670–690, was educated by S. Modwen (who *lived 200 years later*), was engaged in marriage to King Sighere circa 664, and was barbarously slain at Chick by the Danes, who infested England in the *ninth* century.<sup>3</sup> Part of her early life was spent at Polesworth, in

<sup>1</sup> “This nunnery . . . was where the Personage now is.”—*Leland*.

<sup>2</sup> Leland, speaking of Aylesbury, says, “There is but one Parish Church here, but that is one of the most ancientest in all those quarters.”

<sup>3</sup> It is probable that the acts of two Saints of similar name, but different ages, have been made into one life by some pious writer not well acquainted with the history of his country.

Warwickshire, in S. Edith's Convent ; and it was here that she fell into the river at a place, called from her, Nunpole. She remained, we are told, three days under the water, with her book, but emerged on the fourth day at the bidding of S. Modwen, none the worse for her submersion.

# The Kingdom of Wessex.



## S. Birinus.

BISHOP.

CIRCA 650. DECEMBER 3.

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THIS famous Missionary, who won the West Saxons to the Faith of CHRIST, was in no way connected with Gregory's Mission in Kent, but came independently into England from Italy, moved by his own missionary zeal. The following is the account given us by Bede, which contains almost all we know about him.

“ At this time (A.D. 635) the West Saxons,<sup>†</sup> formerly  
“ called *Gewissæ*, in the reign of Cynegils, embraced  
“ the Faith of CHRIST, at the preaching of Bishop  
“ Birinus, who came into Britain by the advice of Pope  
“ Honorius, having promised in his presence that he  
“ would sow the seed of the holy Faith in the inner  
“ parts beyond the dominion of the English, where no  
“ other teacher had been before him. Hereupon he  
“ received Episcopal Ordination from Asterius, Bishop

<sup>†</sup> They inhabited Devon, Dorset, Hants, Somerset, and Berks, and part of Oxon.

“ of Genoa.<sup>1</sup> But on his arrival in Britain he first  
 “ entered the nation of the Gewissœ, and finding all  
 “ there most confirmed Pagans, he thought it better to  
 “ preach the Word of GOD there than to proceed  
 “ farther to seek for others to preach to. Now as he  
 “ preached in the aforesaid Province, it happened that  
 “ the King himself, having been catechised, was  
 “ baptised together with all his people ; and Oswald,<sup>2</sup>  
 “ the most holy King of the Northumbrians, being  
 “ present received him as he came forth from baptism,  
 “ and by an alliance most pleasing to GOD, first  
 “ adopted him, thus regenerated, for his son, and then  
 “ took his daughter in marriage. The two Kings  
 “ gave to the Bishop the city called Dorcic,<sup>3</sup> there to  
 “ settle his Episcopal See, where, having built and  
 “ consecrated Churches, and by his labour called many  
 “ to the LORD, he departed this life and was buried in  
 “ the same city, but many years later he was translated  
 “ thence to the city of Winchester, and laid in the  
 “ Church of the blessed Apostles, SS. Peter and Paul.”

We learn from the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* that before he died he had the satisfaction of baptising Cuichelm, a son of Kynegils (who shared his father's throne, and also Prince Cuthred, who succeeded his

<sup>1</sup> Asterius was Bishop of *Milan*, but he consecrated Birinus in Genoa.

<sup>2</sup> King Oswald was staying with the King of Wessex (with whose daughter he was seeking a matrimonial alliance) when Birinus entered Wessex. No doubt Oswald greatly assisted his efforts.

<sup>3</sup> Dorchester, near Oxford.

father Cuichelm. Both these Princes were baptised in Dorchester.

The Church in Winchester where his remains were enshrined was the one called the *old Church*, dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, founded, it is said, by Kynegils, and completed after his death by King Kenwalch.

On the very old font in Winchester Cathedral there still remains a representation of King Kynegils' baptism.

**S. Hedda.**

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

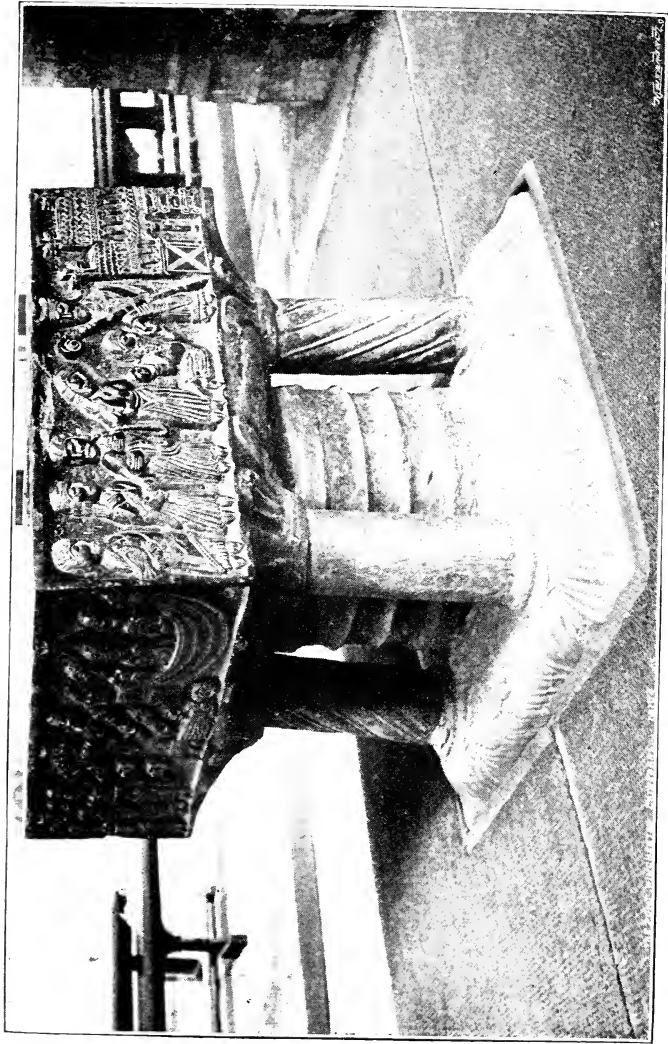
A.D. 705. JULY 7.

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HEDDA was in early manhood a monk in S. Hilda's famous abbey at Whitby, from which so many eminent Clergy and Bishops were drawn for the ministry of the Church. On the death of Leutherius, fourth Bishop of the West Saxons, he was consecrated for that See by Archbishop Theodore in London, in the year 676. The great Kingdom of Wessex had, as yet, but one Bishop, whose See had originally been fixed at Dorchester, near Oxford. Dorchester lying on the very outskirts of the kingdom was, of course, a most unsuitable site, and Winchester, the capital city, had already practically taken its place. Hedda with great prudence translated S. Birinius there, and Winchester thenceforth became the recognised See of Wessex. Kentwin was in his time King of Wessex, and Hedda used his influence with him in behalf of the abbey of Glastonbury, one of the earliest institutions of Christianity in Britain. This had fallen into decay







THE FONT, WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

during the wars of the Saxons and the British. The King, at Hedda's instance, granted the whole "island" of Glastonbury for the endowment of the abbey with many religious privileges.

His successor, Cedwalla, subdued the Kingdom of Sussex, annexing it to his own dominions, and the spiritual supervision of this Province was added to Bishop Hedda's already onerous duties. He had the care of both these kingdoms for twenty-five years. So admirably did he perform his duties, and so acceptable were his ministrations that Archbishop Theodore refrained from making any change in Wessex so long as it was spiritually governed by Hedda. A very remarkable zeal animated the Church and people of the West Saxons at this time. Many of the nobles and rich people seemed to find a pleasure in offering their best to GOD. Two notable instances of this zeal may be seen in Kings Cedwalla and Ina, who successively reigned in Wessex during Hedda's Episcopate. Both these Kings, in the very height of their prosperity, resigned their thrones, "the better to win for themselves an Eternal Crown."

Bede, commenting on this, tells us that this wonderful enthusiasm was not confined to one or two devout persons, but animated many of the English nation, "noble and ignoble, laity and Clergy, men and "women."

After presiding over these large Provinces with

the utmost piety and wisdom till an advanced age—his episcopate lasted nearly thirty years—the holy Bishop departed to the LORD about A.D. 705. His death is thus recorded by Bede (v. 18).

“In the beginning of King Osred’s reign, Haeddi, the Bishop of the West Saxons, migrated to the heavenly life. He was a good man, and a just, and the life he lived, and the doctrine he taught, seemed to proceed rather from the innate love of virtue within him than to have been derived from instructions, etc.”

After S. Hedda’s death the huge Diocese of Wessex was divided into two by the erection of a See at Sherborne, in Dorset, which was filled by S. Aldhelm.

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Some idea of King Ina’s unsparing munificence may be gathered from what Leland tells us of his Chapel at Glastonbury (S. Joseph’s). This Chapel was plated inside with gold and silver. The weight of the silver alone was computed at 2,640 pounds in weight. The Altar was covered with gold. The Chalice, Paten, Thurible, and the covers of the Gospels were all also of gold. The candlesticks were of silver, and of the same metal were images of our LORD, the Virgin Mary, and the twelve Apostles.

**S. Aldhelm.**

ABBOT OF MALMESBURY AND BISHOP OF  
SHERBORNE.

A.D. 709. MAY 25.

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ALDHELM was born of a very noble family in Wessex, and indeed was of the blood-royal—his father, Kenter, being nearly related to King Ina. It so happened that whilst Aldhelm was yet a child, a devout Irishman, Meidulf (*or* Maelduin), who had exiled himself from his native land “in order that he might serve GOD more freely on a foreign shore,” came into Wessex, and took up his residence at a place then called Ingelbourne, now Malmesbury, in the north of Wiltshire. The spot had charms for a hermit’s eye; it was surrounded by woods, and through it ran the clear bright river Avon, which would cheer him by its look, and support him by its produce, and Meidulf came to lead a hermit’s life. But, however, so scanty were his resources that he soon found himself compelled to seek other means of subsistence. For this purpose he opened a school, for which, by his learning,

he was well qualified. The nobles and rich people in the neighbourhood gladly availed themselves of this opportunity of obtaining some education for their children. A large school was formed ; among many scholars sent was Aldhelm, who thus, under Meidulf's care, received all the advantages of religious training combined with that of a superior education, for which the Irish of that day were celebrated. He soon distinguished himself among the other scholars, and having imbibed what his master was able to teach him, obtained leave of his father to go to Canterbury, to continue his studies there in the famous school lately opened (about A.D. 671) by Archbishop Theodore and the Abbot Adrian, in the abbey of SS. Peter and Paul (S. Augustine's). Here Aldhelm became versed in Roman Jurisprudence, Astronomy, Arithmetic, and the rules and metres of Poetry, etc. He became so perfect in the Latin and Greek languages that he could speak and write them as easily as his own mother-tongue.

How long he continued at Canterbury is uncertain. His health obliged him to return home for a time ; after one or two visits he finally left Canterbury about A.D. 675, and arriving in Wessex found his old master, Meidulf, engaged in building at Ingelbourne a little house which might serve as a home for himself and some of his scholars, who had formed themselves into a religious body with him for their head. The idea pleased Aldhelm well, and he threw himself heartily

into the scheme. His father was probably now dead, in any case he was possessed of large means, and of these he made such unsparing use that, in lieu of the little house contemplated by Meidulf, a large and handsome abbey was erected, with a fine Church close by, dedicated, no doubt from Canterbury associations, to SS. Peter and Paul. And so arose the famous abbey of Malmesbury, which place takes its name from Meidulf (Meidulfs-bury), who first planned its erection. Meidulf, however, never acted as its Abbot: he longed to retire into more private life, and at his desire and special request, Aldhelm was chosen first Abbot of Malmesbury. The Church was consecrated before the close of A.D. 675, by Leutherius, Bishop of Wessex, who had already ordained Aldhelm Priest, and who now consecrated him Abbot, granting him at the same time a charter of privileges, with a gift of most valuable land, his own property, contiguous to the abbey.

So great was Aldhelm's reputation for holiness of life, and for learning, that the new monastery began to flourish exceedingly. The favour which the Bishop bore to the place also aided its prosperity. People came from all quarters to Aldhelm, some allured by his sanctity, others by his learning and by his great ability in teaching. Kings and earls in Wessex, and also in Mercia, poured in gifts and donations. By these means Aldhelm procured endowments of land, valuable and close to the abbey. Thus he may be

justly looked upon as the founder of this great abbey, which as it was one of the earliest of the religious houses in the West of England, so it survived till the general overthrow of our religious houses by Henry VIII.

Besides building this great abbey Aldhelm erected two smaller ones, one at Frome, and the other at Bradford (in Somerset), in each of which he congregated a body of religious men, and provided them with Churches in which to worship. The rural population in England was as yet semi-Pagan, neither was the country divided into parishes, Churches were very few in number. The most ready means for evangelising the people was by planting small bodies of devout men in religious houses in various districts. These became centres of teaching, and of religious light to those around them. The country people flocked in to their Services, and the Monks and Clergy not infrequently went out as Missionaries into the rural districts, to visit the sick, to win the more hardened, and convert the Pagans, The following anecdote, preserved by King Aldfrid, shews the interest which Aldhelm took in this missionary work. He tells us that a ballad, composed by Aldhelm, was still in common use among the people even in his time, 300 years and more afterwards, which he composed under the following circumstances. Noticing that the country people, even those who were nominally Christians, paid little heed to religious discourses, and



hurried off quickly from the Church to their homes, he disguised himself as a minstrel, and planting himself on the bridge which led from the town into the country, entertained the passengers by his music and singing. When he had done this two or three times he, by his attractive singing, won great favour. The people crowded to hear him ; by degrees, among the ballads and lighter songs, he mingled more solemn and serious subjects, and so eventually won them to religion. "Whereas," he adds, "if he had proceeded harshly, and used his power of excommunication, he "would have done nothing."

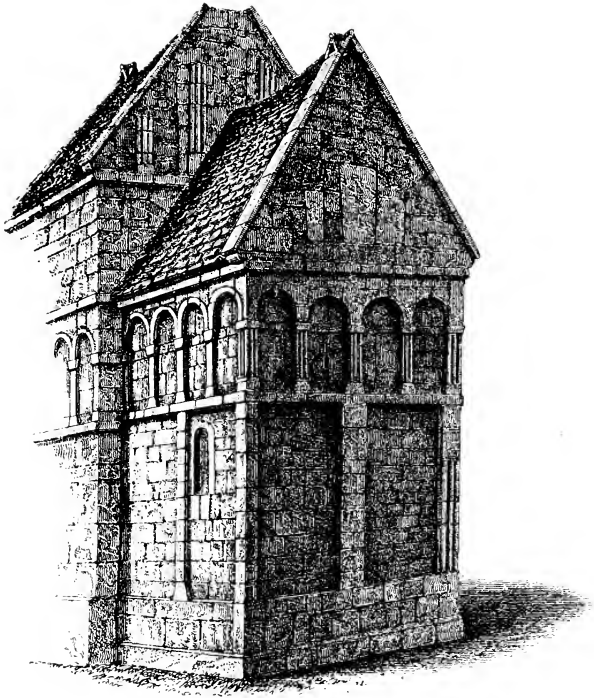
Aldhelm's abbey at Frome, and at Bradford, perished before the Norman Conquest, but his Churches in both these towns were still standing in the beginning of the twelfth century. Moreover, there yet remains in Bradford-on-Avon<sup>1</sup> a small Anglo-Saxon Church, which it is not impossible was the one he built.

When Aldhelm had completed his abbeys, and

<sup>1</sup> In this town an Anglo-Saxon Church may still be seen, which is either the very same Church which was built by S. Aldhelm, or more probably, a later erection on the same site in King Edgar's reign. In any case it is a unique specimen of Anglo-Saxon architecture. This most interesting relic was brought to light about thirty years ago. At some remote period, probably when the present Parish Church was built, becoming secularised, it had been converted into dwellings. The Nave served for one cottage and the Chancel for another. It was so disfigured that it was not known to have been a Church. The Rev. W. H. Jones, late Vicar of Bradford, discovered its real character. A successful appeal for funds was made, and it now stands as it was originally built. It is close to the Parish Church, and consists of a Nave, Aisle, and Porch.

established them on a firm foundation, he began to consider how he might provide for their security after his decease. For this purpose he determined to go to Rome, and having disclosed his plan to Ina, King of Wessex, and to Ethelred, the King of Mercia, it received their cordial approbation. He proceeded accordingly to the sea-coast of Dorset to await a favourable wind. Here being detained, as it happened for some time, he occupied himself in building a little Church for the benefit of the neighbourhood. After this he had a prosperous voyage, and was kindly received by Pope Sergius, who hospitably entertained him, and granted him the charter of privileges which he had come to obtain for his three religious houses. During the time of his stay at Rome Aldhelm let no day pass without singing Mass. The Chasuble which he used was kept as a relic at Malmesbury, and had been seen by the writer of his life. "It was of most delicate texture of the rare purple dye, with figures of peacocks worked on it." He adds, "that the length of it, and also the great size of the bones in his coffin, leave no doubt that he was of large and lofty stature."

Having obtained all he wished, Aldhelm set out on his way home laden with ecclesiastical treasures. Among these was a remarkably beautiful white Altar, the slab of which was one and a half foot in thickness, four feet long, and three hands in breadth. It was conveyed by a camel, and met with no mishap



**SAXON CHURCH OF S. LAWRENCE, BRADFORD-ON-AVON.**

**View from the South-East.**



till they came to the Alps, when the animal tumbled down with it and it was cracked. However, it reached home safe, but the crack remained, a visible token of the difficulty of its conveyance home. It was a present to King Ina, who offered it up to GOD in the Church at Briwiccan.

Aldhelm's return to England was hailed as the signal for universal rejoicings. People crowded from all quarters to meet him, and he was received with all the honour of a religious festival. "Some of the Clergy filled the air with their chants, others carried in procession the holy Rood, others perfumed the way with incense. The laity engaged themselves in dances, and by these and other bodily gestures declared their joy. All united in praising GOD, Who had restored Aldhelm to his native shores." Nor did the two Kings, Ina and Ethelrid, disdain to join in these rejoicings. Aldhelm shewed them the charter of privileges which he had obtained from the Bishop of Rome, which charter they each of them confirmed.<sup>1</sup>

About the year A.D. 705, the venerable Bishop Hedda, who is numbered among the Saints, passed to his rest. Hedda had been sole Bishop of Wessex. His death was thought a favourable opportunity for dividing this immense Diocese. The old See was

<sup>1</sup> It is noticeable that not only King Aldfrid of Northumbria, but also such Kings as Ina of Wessex, and Ethelred of Mercia (who yielded to none in their veneration for Rome) were of opinion that the royal sanction was necessary to give authority to the papal decrees in their kingdoms.

retained at Winchester, and a new See was erected at Sherborne in Dorset.<sup>1</sup> For this Aldhelm was chosen first Bishop. He was now advanced in years, and would gladly have declined the dignity, but finding both Clergy and laity unanimous in their wishes he at last consented. He was conveyed, with great acclamation, to Canterbury to receive consecration there at the hands of Archbishop Brithwald. There he received a hearty welcome from the Archbishop, all the heartier because they had been playmates together when studying in their youth in Canterbury. Aldhelm soon returned home to his Diocese, and applied himself energetically to fulfil his new duties, his first act being to build a handsome Church in Sherborne to serve for his Cathedral. He then proposed to appoint Abbots in room of himself over his three monasteries, but the Monks, with one mouth, declined to have any other Abbot but himself as long as he lived. He acceded to their wishes, but fearing evil consequences for the future, obtained another charter of liberty for them which was signed by King Ina and by Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, at Wimborne. Aldhelm was now very old, but he still persevered in his spiritual labours, giving constant attention to preaching, making frequent visitations of

<sup>1</sup> The larger portion was given to the new See. To Sherborne was apportioned Berks, Wilts, Somerset, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall: only Hampshire, Surrey, and for a time Sussex, remained to the See of Winchester.

his Diocese, and practising austerities as in his youth. He was seized with his last illness at Dultinge, in Somerset, which place he had given to the Monks of Glastonbury. Here at the time was a small wooden Church to which the Saint, at his own request, was carried that he might there breathe his last. The stone on which he leaned when dying was long pointed out to the faithful, and shared the veneration in which he himself was held.

S. Egwin, of Evesham, having learned in some extraordinary way the Saint's decease, hastened with all speed to Dultinge, to superintend the obsequies of his friend. He conveyed his remains to Malmesbury. The body fully vested in episcopal robes was exposed to view. It was followed by a large concourse of people weeping and lamenting for their loss. "Each thought himself the happier the nearer he could get to the bier, the mere sight of which gave some consolation to those who were unable to touch it; the aspect of the inanimate form soothed their grief, the graceful expression of the features, which shewed no symptom of decay, consoled their eyes. It was a famous funeral." At the end of every seven miles a pause was made, and a stone cross raised, and thus the body was brought a journey of fifty miles to Malmesbury. These stone crosses were all standing in the 12th century, his biographer tells us, and were then called "Bishop's Stanes." The body was received at Malmesbury with all veneration and grief

by the assembled community, and after a few days buried in S. Michael's Church, where the Saint had long before prepared a place of sepulture for himself.

He died May 25th, A.D. 709, having been Bishop four years. His exact age is not known, but may be surmised from the fact that he had been Abbot of Malmesbury for 34 years. Aldhelm was the first Englishman who obtained reputation as a scholar for learning and literature. Some of his books are still extant, and have been re-published. They were thought much of in his day. Bede praising him highly, says, he was "most learned in all respects and "wonderful for ecclesiastical and liberal erudition." The famous writer, William, of Malmesbury, who composed his life, panegyrises him as a "man who "was as unsophisticated in religion as he was multifarious in knowledge, whose piety even surpassed "his reputation, and who had so fully imbibed the "liberal arts that he was wonderful in each of them, "and unrivalled in all."

It is nevertheless certain that, however just may have been Aldhelm's reputation as a scholar for the age he lived in, his writings would have little value now, and are only interesting as literary curiosities, exhibiting the style which gave pleasure to a ruder age. Few would appreciate now what Sharon Turner calls the "magnificent exuberance," and the "gorgeous rhetoric" which overflows his prose. "He delighted "in paraphrases, repetitions, new-created words, and



“epithets in profusion, which pall upon the taste of a refined age, though they seem to have given peculiar pleasure to the Anglo-Saxon mind.”

Aldhelm's reputation rests not on his writings, but on the true nobility of his character, and his devotion to GOD. Few, if any, did more in the West of England towards planting the Faith in the heart and affections of the people. His consistent piety, the transparent holiness of his character, joined with the nobility of his birth, and his high social position, all united to give him a wonderful influence which he exercised to the best of his powers for the good of religion. In his own Province the great King Ina, to whom, as before mentioned, he was related, looked upon him as his spiritual father, and was willing to do anything he wished or proposed. Nor was his influence confined to Wessex. Among his friends and correspondents were Aldfrid, the learned King of Northumbria, Prince Arcevil, an Irish Prince, and Geraint, King of Cornwall. To this latter King he dedicated his book on the right observance of Easter, which is said to have brought the Cornish people into conformity with the rest of the Church.

Aldhelm's influence ceased not with his death, his memory was held in extraordinary veneration by succeeding Kings of Wessex, who, recognising their tie of relationship with the Saint, greatly favoured Malmesbury Abbey on his account. Among these special mention may be made of King Ethelwulf,

father of the great Alfred, who was a munificent benefactor to Malmesbury. This King caused a shrine, mostly of pure silver, to be made for S. Aldhelm, and cased it over with crystal, or glass. Passages in S. Aldhelm's life were figured in relief upon it.

The chivalrous King Athelstan had also a great affection for his kinsman, Aldhelm, and was buried, in consequence, by his own desire at Malmesbury.

**S. Cuthburge.**

ABBESS.

CIRCA 720. AUGUST 31.

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S. CUTHBURGE was sister of the illustrious King Ina. She had another brother, Ingils, (from whom our present beloved Queen is descended). Her ancestors from the time of the arrival of the English, had sat upon the throne of Wessex, among whom was the notable King Ceawlin, who for many years held the supremacy of all England, as also did her brother, King Ina.

This lady was given in marriage to Prince Aldfrid, a Northumbrian Prince, who succeeded his half-brother, Egfrid, on the throne of Northumbria, A.D. 685; but her exalted station in the world, and the routine of Court life, were very repugnant to her turn of mind, which was wholly given to religion, and she longed for the time when she might retire from the Court, and dedicate herself to prayer and devotion. Her husband, King Aldfrid, was noted for his learning, and also for his piety. His early life had been spent

in study. It was from a cell in some distant islet,<sup>1</sup> where he lived in privacy immersed in books that he had been suddenly and unexpectedly summoned to rule a mighty and headstrong nation. He obeyed the summons, and discharged his difficult task well. It is certain, however, that his own sympathies drew him to study and devotion; and so it came to pass that he better understood the motives of his pious Queen, when she urged for leave to retire from Court. Making a willing sacrifice, he sanctioned their separation, and Cuthburge, leaving the North of England, became an inmate in Barking nunnery, in Essex, where she lived a life dedicated to GOD under the Abbess Hildelitha. She could not have chosen a retreat more suited to her own mind, or where she could be better initiated in the rules and discipline of the religious life. Here, too, she was able to enjoy the occasional visits of her relative, S. Aldhelm, whose books she had read, and by which she had been greatly influenced. Whilst she was thus gaining experience in Barking, she caused to be erected a large and spacious abbey at Wimburn, in Dorset, which was probably her native place. For here was Badbury Castle, the principal residence of the Kings of Wessex. Wimburn was a place of great importance in Anglo-Saxon times. Leland says of it, "It was a large thing and in price . . . in the time of the Saxon Kings." In the twelfth century it had

<sup>1</sup> Probably *Iona*.

sunk to the level "of a mean village." However, it is now a fair-sized town with a large handsome Norman Church. Here then Cuthburge's abbey was erected. It is said to have been of the usual Anglo-Saxon type, i.e., a double one, with compartments, separated from each other, for men and women. The size of it may be gathered from the fact that on the women's side there was room for 500 virgins. Her brother, King Ina, and her sister, the Princess Cwenburga (who became a member of her community), shared the cost of its erection.

S. Cuthburge was herself the first Abbess and mother, and "soon gathered together a full company "of virgins, dead to earthly desires, and breathing "only aspirations towards heaven."

Of her latter days we know nothing, except that she "established an excellent discipline" in her abbey, which flourished long after her decease. She died probably about A.D. 720. Her abbey became one of the most famous in Anglo-Saxon times. From its walls issued S. Lioba and other admirable ladies, who went abroad as missionaries, and greatly assisted S. Boniface in his work of conversion in Germany.

**S. Eberildis.**

ABBESS.

SEVENTH CENTURY.

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EVERILDIS was an early convert to Christianity in the West of England. Earnestly desiring to devote herself to GOD, she left her home and put herself under the guidance of Bishop Wilfrid, who gave her sufficient land on which to build a monastery. The place was called after her, "Everildisham," or *Everildisham*. Its situation is not known, but it was probably in Sussex, near Selsey. There she led a life of great devotion; the rich people in the neighbourhood entrusted their daughters to her for education, etc. She had at times eighty or more in her convent. She died of a fever on the 9th day of July: the year is not known.

# The Kingdom of East Anglia.





## S. Felix.

BISHOP.

A.D. 647. MARCH 8.

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S. FELIX is called the Apostle of East Anglia; and justly so, for by his exertions and ministry that Province was won from idolatry to CHRIST.

We learn, however, from Bede, that more than one attempt had been made before his time for its conversion. The first was made by King Ethelbert, who was so far successful that he persuaded its King, Redwald, whilst staying with him on a visit in Kent, to accept the Christian Faith. Redwald was baptised in his Court. It is plain, however, that he little understood the doctrines of his new religion. No sooner was he again in his own Province than he lapsed from the Faith, "being seduced by his wife, and certain "perverse teachers, so that his latter state became "worse than the former." It appears that he retained a superstitious belief in the power of CHRIST, and did not altogether cease to honour Him; at the same time continuing the idolatrous worship of his own

gods, " so that, like the ancient Samaritans, he seemed " at the same time to serve CHRIST and the gods " whom he had served before, and in the same Temple " he had an Altar to sacrifice to CHRIST, and another " small one to offer victims to devils."<sup>1</sup>

King Redwald never recovered from this infidelity ; but his son, Erpwald, who succeeded him, was converted, and became a zealous Christian through the influence of King Edwin, whose life had been saved by his father Redwald. Bede tells us that, with Erpwald, " the Province also of the East Anglians " was induced to abandon their idolatrous superstitions, and to receive the Faith and the Sacraments " of CHRIST." But this proved to be only a nominal reception of the Faith. Not long after his baptism Erpwald was slain by a Pagan nobleman (Richbert), probably in some fanatical outbreak in which the Pagan party for a time prevailed, and for three years after this " the Province remained in error."

At the end of this time of confusion, Sigebert,<sup>2</sup> a half-brother of Erpwald, was recalled from France whither he had been banished by Redwald, and placed upon the throne. This Prince had been converted to Christianity during his exile in France. Bede calls him " a most Christian and learned man." As such he made it his first business to plant the Church among

<sup>1</sup> This Temple was standing in the time of King Aldulf (a contemporary of Bede), who testified that he had seen it when a boy.

<sup>2</sup> Sigebert was a *step-son* of King Redwald.

his people. He had contracted an intimate friendship in France with S. Felix, a Burgundian Bishop, by whom, probably, he had been taught the Faith, and no sooner was he on the throne than Felix followed him into England. On his arrival in Kent he sought an interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury (Honorius), to whom he made known the object of his visit to England. The Archbishop greatly encouraged him, and appointed him Bishop of that Province, where also he was welcomed by the King, who gave him his See at Dommoc (Dunwich). Felix spent many years here in evangelical labours among the people of this Province, and with great success. "The pious husbandman reaped therein," Bede tells us, "a large harvest of believers, and delivered that Province from long iniquity and infelicity, bringing it to the faith and works of righteousness, and the gifts of everlasting happiness." In all this he was much assisted by a devout Irish Missionary, S. Fursey, who, for the love of GOD, had exiled himself from Ireland. Fursey, by his eloquent preaching, converted great numbers of the East Anglians (see Life of S. Fursey). King Sigebert also gave zealous help. This King, who was noted for learning, had noticed whilst in France "the good institutions" opened in that country for education, and was very desirous of introducing similar ones in his own Province. It was no easy matter to obtain masters or teachers in England, where little attention was at

present paid to education. However he succeeded in obtaining a supply from Kent, and soon after “a school was set up for the instruction of his people “in literature”—the first, probably, which had ever been known in those parts.

The death of this zealous King has a touching interest. It is thus told us by Bede: “Sigebert “became so great a lover of the Heavenly Kingdom, “that quitting the affairs of his crown, and committing “the same to his kinsman Egric, who before had a “share in the Government, he went himself into a “monastery<sup>1</sup> which he had built, and having received “the tonsure applied himself to gain a heavenly “throne. Some time after this it happened that the “nation of the Mercians, under King Penda, made war “on the East Anglians, who finding themselves inferior in martial affairs to their enemy, entreated “Sigebert to go with them to battle to encourage the “soldiers. He refused, upon which they drew him, “against his will, out of the monastery, hoping that “the soldiers would be less disposed to flee in the “presence of him who had once been a notable and “brave commander. But he, still keeping in mind his “profession, whilst in the midst of a royal army would “carry nothing in his hand but a wand, and was killed “with King Egric.”

After a time peace was restored and the Govern-

<sup>1</sup> This monastery is said to have been on the site of the present Bury S. Edmunds. It was formerly called Bedericsworth.

ment fell into the hands of "Anna, the son of Eric, of the blood-royal, a good man, and father of an excellent family of children." Under his rule it remained unmolested for a season. In the meantime Felix finished his days in peace. He died circa 647, after a pontificate of seventeen years. Felix was buried at Dunwich, which was formerly a considerable town, with five Parish Churches and many religious houses. It remained for a long time the principal See of East Anglia. It is now a mere village, the old town with its Churches having long ago been swallowed up by the sea. The body of the Saint was taken to Seham (or Soham) in Cambridgeshire, where he had founded a monastery. The monastery was destroyed by Hinguar and Hubba A.D. 870, and S. Felix's remains were again translated, this time to Ramsey Abbey.

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The popular modern watering town, Felixstowe, has its name from this Saint. The plant called the "flixweed," said to be common in the Eastern counties, and used medicinally in certain complaints, is also named after S. Felix, being a corruption of "S. Felix Weed."

## **S. Fursey.**

CIRCA 650. JANUARY 16.

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S. FURSEY was an Irishman of royal extraction (his father, Fintan, is said to have been a King). With precocious piety, Fursey, "from his boyhood, applied "himself enthusiastically to sacred reading and the "following monastic discipline—carefully practising "in his own life all that he learned ought to be done." As he grew older "he built a monastery wherein he "might more freely indulge his heavenly studies." Thus devoted to the life of the cloister, he was none the less filled with holy zeal for the souls of men, and gave great attention to preaching, and being gifted with marvellous eloquence, crowds of people were drawn to hear, and followed him wherever he went to preach. Either dreading this popularity, or moved with the love of holy pilgrimage, he before long resolved to leave his own country and people in order "to live to our LORD a stranger in some other land," wherever an opportunity might offer. Accordingly he left Ireland and came into England. There his

steps led him into East Anglia, where King Sigebert was busily engaged in propagating the Faith among his people. Here, as might be expected, he received a warm welcome, and without delay joining in the work, he resumed his employment of preaching the Gospel.

The like success attended his preaching here as in his own country. Numbers of unbelievers were converted by "the efficacy of his discourse, and the example of his virtue, and those who had already believed were confirmed by his faith and love." During his stay in East Anglia he built a monastery on some ground which had been given him by King Sigebert. "This monastery was pleasantly situated in the woods, with the sea not far off. It was built within an area of a castle, which in the English language is called Cnob-heresburg, i.e., Cnobher's town" (Burgh-Castle).

Fursey was subject to periodical attacks of illness: he would lie for many hours like one dead. In these trances he beheld extraordinary visions; some of these are recorded by Bede (III. 19), who tells us, however, that Fursey seldom spoke of them himself, "being only anxious to persuade others to the practice of virtue by his example and preaching."

Finding in these serious illnesses a warning to prepare himself for his latter end, "he became desirous to rid himself of all business of this world, and even of the monastery itself, in order that he might finish

“his days as a hermit. Accordingly he sent for his  
“brother, Fullan, and two Priests, Gobban and Dicull,  
“in whose hands he left his monastery and the care  
“of souls, and forthwith repaired to another of his  
“brothers, whose name was Ultan,<sup>1</sup> who after a long  
“monastic probation, had also adopted the life of an  
“anchoret; with him he lived a whole year in  
“continence and prayer, and laboured daily with his  
“hands. Afterwards seeing the Province in confusion  
“by the irruption of the Pagans,<sup>2</sup> and presaging that  
“the monasteries would be also in danger, he left all  
“things in order, and sailed over into France, and  
“being there honourably entertained by Clovis  
“(Clovis II.),<sup>3</sup> King of the Franks, or by the patrician,  
“Erconwald, he built a monastery in the place called  
“Latiniacum (Lagny), and falling sick not long after  
“departed this life. The same Erconwald took his  
“body and deposited it in the porch of a Church he  
“was building in his town of Perrone, till the Church  
“itself should be dedicated. This happened twenty-  
“seven days after, and the body being taken up from  
“the Porch to be re-buried near the Altar, was found  
“as entire as if he had just then died.” The body

<sup>1</sup> He also is reckoned among the Saints.

<sup>2</sup> The allusion is to King Penda of Mercia, who with his army of Pagans invaded East Anglia, A.D. 644. It was in this war that King Sigebert and also King Egric was slain.—See life of S. Felix.

<sup>3</sup> This King reigned over France from A.D. 638—660. He married S. Bathildes (see life of that Saint). Erconwald was his Mayor of the Palace.



was taken up again four years later to place it in a Chapel built on purpose for it, and was found still free from corruption.

S. Fursey's relics are preserved in a Collegiate Church, dedicated to his honour, at Perrone, the head however is retained at Lagny near Paris.

**S. Botolph.**

ABBOT.

CIRCA 670. JUNE 17.

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FEW, if any, of our early English Saints attained to such celebrity as S. Botolph; and that not only in England (where the number of Churches dedicated to his memory testify to his popularity),<sup>1</sup> but also on the Continent, where he is equally famous in Germany and Denmark. In the latter country three days, called from him "Bodelmes," are or were observed as festivals in his honour every year, on which days no agricultural labours were allowed. This is somewhat remarkable, because so very little is known for certain about this Saint, and what little we do know, however much it may testify to his goodness and piety, has nothing in it very remarkable to catch the eye, and so to lift him into popular esteem.

So far as we can see (it being no easy matter to disentangle what is true from the mass of fable that has been written about him) he was a native of Lincoln-

<sup>1</sup> Four Churches in London alone, numerous Churches in the country.

shire. S. Paulinus, it may be remembered, brought the Faith into Lindsey, A.D. 628, and made many converts in Lincoln and its neighbourhood. Botolph probably was one of them, at all events he was a very early convert to Christianity in East Anglia, and a very earnest one. Some writers assert that in his zeal he lived after his conversion a hermit's life. But this was scarcely his vocation. He was a man formed by nature to guide and influence others, and his own aspirations were to build a Church, and to gather a community of devout men with whom he might live and serve GOD. But in order to teach others he knew well the first thing is to learn one's own lesson.

There were at this time in England no Schools of Divinity, and scant means of gaining ecclesiastical knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Therefore earnest men who sought such went either into Ireland or into France. Botolph went into the latter country and became a member of some good religious community there. How long he stayed there is not certain, only we know that he commenced his "minster" in Lincolnshire in the year 654. It is not likely that he began to build immediately on his return; it is more likely that (in

<sup>1</sup> Bede (in Book III., Chapter 8) tells us that as there were at this time "but few monasteries being built in the country of the Angles, many were wont, for the sake of monastic conversation, to repair to the monasteries of the Franks, or Gauls, and they also sent their daughters there, to be instructed and delivered to the Heavenly Bridegroom, especially in the monasteries of *Brie*, of *Chelles*, and *Andelys*."

accordance with the Danish legend) a few years intervened. "There were," Capgrave tells us, "in the monastery (in France) two sisters of King Ethelmund,<sup>1</sup> who gave him letters to their brother, in which they requested the King to give Botolph a piece of ground for him to build a monastery on, in some barren spot, where he might gather a band of brothers who would serve GOD, and pray for the temporal and eternal good of the King." There is no King Ethelmund known at this period in East Anglia; it is probably a mistake for Annas, the most pious King who held the throne of East Anglia at that time. This would fit in well with what the story tells us. Such a King would no doubt give Botolph a hearty welcome on his return home. He is said to have kept him with him at Court as long as he was able, and when the Saint would needs depart, supplied him with all that he desired. The estate of land granted was, we are told, a desert or solitude, for that was in accordance with Botolph's special request; but according to the Danish account, "it was also a most beautiful spot, enclosed on every side by the streams of a certain river." It was called in those days, *Yceanho*, or *Icannum*. Though so beautiful it had a

<sup>1</sup> Bede tells us that a daughter and a step-daughter of King Annas were in the monastery of *Brie*. There is little doubt, therefore, that *Brie* was the place in France that S. Botolph resorted to, and King Annas was the King who assisted him on his return home. The Danish legend calls him Ethelmund or *Edmund*, that being the only King of East Anglia known on the continent.

very evil name, for it was universally believed to be haunted by evil spirits, and so great a terror of them possessed the country people that no one dared even pass through it. It is an easy thing for us to smile at such vain terrors, but it was no easy matter to do so in the age when Botolph lived, when such belief was universal. We must remember this when we read the following account of Botolph's entry on his new possession—"He went apparently alone, no one daring to accompany him, but strong in courage against those spiritual foes whom he was determined to banish for ever from this place; and great was his triumph. At his approach a dreadful smoke began to exhale from the ground, and the demon uttered fearful clamours, crying out, 'This is our place of old, and we had hoped for ever; why, most cruel Botolph, do you thus disturb us? Have we offended you? Have we disturbed you? Wherefore do you seek to expel us? Driven as we have been from all the world, must we resign this solitude to you?' But blessed Botolph, making the sign of the Cross, put the wicked enemies to flight, and expelled them from the whole region."

Botolph was doubtless assisted by the King in building his minster. He soon gathered a band of devoted men. It was no easy matter to find maintenance for their daily food in this wild place, and at times they were driven hard for maintenance; on one

occasion, we are told, there was but one loaf of bread in the house for the community. "It happened, moreover, on that very day that a poor man knocked at the door and requested an alms for the love of GOD. On this the holy father commanded his disciple to give him somewhat, and he was answered that there was nothing within for the food of the body but only one loaf of bread, upon which he ordered that the loaf should be divided into four parts, and one of them given to the poor man. What more! three other poor men coming and begging, he asked for the other three shares, and when his disciple murmured at this, the holy man said, 'Be not troubled, my son, GOD is able to give us back the whole again.' Scarcely had he finished the words, when lo! four boats laden with meat and drink appeared approaching down the river, whom the Almighty, by means of His faithful servants, had sent to the holy man."

If some of our early English Saints, in their zeal and self-renunciation, approach sometimes to the borders of what is called *fanaticism* by the world, it is quite clear that this extravagance and devotion did not necessarily arise from any want of good sense, but from the intenseness of their faith. Botolph proved an excellent Abbot; he established such an admirable discipline in his house that it soon became famous, and religious men came from other parts of England into East Anglia to become acquainted

with his abbey and learn the good institutes that were practised in it.<sup>1</sup>

It is not unlikely that Botolph founded other abbeys besides the one at Icannum. In the Danish legend he is said to have removed to a convenient site near the river Thames, where, on some ground given him by the King, he built a Church in honour of S. Martin, and resided for a season, after which he removed again into the wilderness and built a Church to SS. Peter and Paul. "After this the man of GOD, Botolph, transmigrated to the LORD, and his disciples laid his body in the grave with great honour."

The date of Botolph's death is not known (it was probably between A.D. 660 and A.D. 670); nor is it even certain where his famous abbey (at Icannum) was, but the evidence preponderates in favour of Boston (Botolph's town). Wherever it was, it was destroyed by the Danish pirates, Hinguar and Hubba, more than 200 years after Botolph's death. His bones lay under the ruins till King Edgar's time, when they were translated with great honour by Bishop Ethelwold to Thorney. At this time there was still an oratory (Sacellum) at Icannum, which was served by one Priest. On the occasion of this translation King Edgar ordered that his relics should

<sup>1</sup> "S. Ceolfrid went into East Anglia for the purpose of seeing the institutes of Abbot Botolph, whom fame had everywhere spread as of a man of singular life and doctrine, and full of the grace of the HOLY SPIRIT, and having received abundant instruction, he shortly returned home."—Bede, *Opera Hist. Miriora*, p. 319.

be divided into three parts. The head was given to Ely, half of the body to Thorney, the remainder the King reserved for himself. This latter portion was afterwards given by King Edward the Confessor to Westminster Abbey.

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NOTE.

Botolph has given his name to other places besides Boston. *Bottle-Claydon* in Bucks, and *Bottle-bridge* in Huntingdonshire, are other instances of the strange forms which his name assumes in popular language.



**S. Etheldrida.<sup>1</sup>**

VIRGIN.

A.D. 679. OCTOBER 17.

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THIS famous Saint was third daughter of King Annas.<sup>2</sup> She was born at Ixning, a little village in Suffolk. Her mother, Hereswith, was sister of the celebrated Saint Hilda, and was herself noted for her piety. S. Audry had two brothers, Jurmin and Adulph. The latter became eventually King of East Anglia. Of her three sisters, SS. Sexberge, Ethelberge, and Withberge, an account is given elsewhere.

Born of excellent and religious parents, and brought up in an atmosphere of piety, this Princess from her

<sup>1</sup> S. Etheldrida's name was soon abbreviated into S. Audry; and, strangely enough, to her we owe the word *tawdry*. More reasons than one are given for the origin of this word. The following, a very old one, seems a very likely one. It was a custom with the poor people at her festival to offer ribands at her shrine. These ribands were, of course, of no great quality. Hence "A S. Audry's riband," or, as they abbreviated it, "a tawdry riband," came to mean a riband of mean value.

<sup>2</sup> Annas was son of Enus, who was a brother of the well-known King Redwald. (See S. Edwin).

earliest days evinced the greatest love of religion, to the study of which she was entirely devoted. When she was yet young she was given in marriage to Tonbert, Prince of the Girvii. This tribe inhabited two Provinces in East Anglia, called from them North and South Girva. In the latter of these was the Isle of Ely, and this so-called isle was given to the Princess as her "morgen," or jointure, on the occasion of her marriage with Prince Tonbert. This territory was computed to contain 600 hydes of land. It was called an island because at that time it was enclosed either with marshes or waters, and it had its name from the great plenty of eels taken in those marshes. S. Etheldrida lived three years with Prince Tonbert, but, by mutual agreement, as brother and sister. Tonbert died A.D. 655, when she retired to Ely Island, which was farmed for her by her faithful steward, or chief minister as he is sometimes called, Owini. Here she remained five years, at the end of which time she was unhappily drawn into a marriage, against her will, with Egfrid,<sup>1</sup> a Northumbrian Prince, and heir to the throne of that important kingdom. Egfrid was then very young, and it is believed that some compact or private agreement was entered into between them before she consented to this marriage. Be this as it may, it is certain that

<sup>1</sup> "She was persuaded to accept Prince Egfrid's proposal by her "uncle, King Ethelwold, who was anxious for the alliance of so great "a Prince."—*Bentham*.

though they passed twelve years together, they during no part of this time lived together as man and wife. The Prince indeed did everything that lay in his power to reconcile her to the duties of married life, and shewed great forbearance, hoping that time would remove her scruples, but its only effect on the mind of the Queen was to intensify her conviction that she was wholly unsuited to her present position. From this, however, there could be no release, unless it was granted her by her husband, who had now become King of Northumbria by the death of his father, King Oswy, A.D. 670. To the obtaining, therefore, this release she passionately devoted herself, and with constant entreaties and abundance of tears pleaded with him for his consent to their separation. The King being greatly attached to her for a long time refused, but at last gave an unwilling compliance to the proposed separation, upon which Etheldrida, with the utmost celerity, withdrew herself from Court, fearing lest he should change his mind. As indeed happened, for scarcely was she gone when the King repented his decision, and, hearing that she had fled, despatched an armed force to bring her back. Either her flight had been too rapid, or the pursuers missed the road she took, for she arrived safely at Coldingham, where was an abbey, over which her Aunt, Ebba<sup>1</sup> presided. Here

<sup>1</sup> Ebba was her aunt by marriage. She was the sister of King Egfrid's father, Oswy.

she found a shelter, and immediately took the veil to secure herself from further trouble from the King. There was reason, however, for fearing that Egfrid might think himself justified, under the circumstances, in using violence to bring her back. The Abbess, therefore, with great prudence advised her not to stay in Coldingham, but to flee as best she was able out of the limits of the Kingdom of Northumbria. She determined to take her advice, and to return to her own home in the Isle of Ely. No time, however, was to be lost, for tidings reached them that the King, accompanied by an army, was on his way to Coldingham. She fled immediately in disguise accompanied by two virgin attendants devoted to her. They were scarce gone when the King arrived, and obtaining knowledge of her route pursued after her. She found her way to *Coldeburg-heved*, a rocky promontory on the sea not far off, where she hid herself, and where the footmarks of her feet, Leland says, "were yet visible on the rock" in his day.<sup>1</sup> The King would certainly have caught her here had he not been "prevented by a sudden and unusual inundation of the sea, which surrounded the hill, and continued in that state several days without returning to its usual channel. The King, amazed, interpreted this as an interposition of heaven in St. Audrey's favour, and concluding it was not the will of heaven he should have her back again, left her to

<sup>1</sup> Time of Henry VIII.

“pursue her journey, and returned back to York.” The Queen and her attendants, as soon as they were able, quitted the place and passed over the Humber to Wintringham, and thence continued their journey on foot in the habit of pilgrims not by the direct road, but by bye-ways and lanes to avoid the danger of pursuers, and at last after a difficult and hazardous journey arrived safely at Ely.<sup>1</sup> Here a joyous welcome awaited them, and they were received with the greatest honour by King Adulph, her brother, and by her own people.

She had scarcely recovered from the fatigue of her journey when she entered upon plans for building a Church and an abbey in which she and her proposed

<sup>1</sup> Many wonders, we are told, accompanied S. Audry's flight from Northumbria. Some of these are full of local interest. In answer to her prayers a fountain of water burst forth from the rock where she was lying concealed from the King at Coldeburgh-head surrounded by the sea, and with the King's army awaiting to seize her as soon as the inundation had ebbed away. At Altham, or Hatton, a village in the marshes, she stayed a few days and rewarded the villagers (who received her kindly) by building for them a Church to the LORD. “Thence she passed on by bye-ways and lanes to avoid pursuers. It happened that being one day tired with the length of her journey and heat of the weather, and having found a commodious spot of ground, the Queen found herself disposed to rest, and laid herself down to sleep, whilst her two faithful attendants watched by her; on awaking she observed that the pilgrim's staff which she had fixed in the ground by her side had all the appearance of vegetable life in it, and found it had taken root in the earth, and had put forth leaves and shoots. Her staff thus miraculously planted, became afterwards one of the tallest and most flourishing trees in the country, and the place is to this day called Etheldrida-Stow, and a Church is there built in honour of the holy Queen.”

community might serve God. There was at this time at Cratendon, about a mile from the present city of Ely, an old Church then in ruins, said to have been founded by King Ethelbert, and her first design was to repair this Church and to build her monastery there, but she abandoned this for a more commodious site near the river, and here she began her foundation A.D. 673. In the expenses she was largely helped by the King, her brother, who defrayed a great part of them. She also received valuable assistance from S. Wilfrid, who having been banished from Northumbria came to Ely, and is said to have planned the buildings and directed the work. Her foundation, according to the custom of the times, was a double monastery—that is, had compartments, separate from each other, for men and women. Its rules have not come down to us, except that obedience, the love of GOD'S worship, and strict observance of awful and devout behaviour in the House of GOD were its principal rules. Her community soon became a very numerous one, and for their maintenance she settled on them the whole Isle of Ely. The inhabitants of Cratendon, wishing to be near her, deserted their own town to live by her abbey, and this became the beginning of the present city of Ely.

Here then S. Audry, having at last found her true vocation, “began by works and example of a heavenly “life to be a virgin-mother of very many virgins “dedicated to GOD. Her life and example had a won-

“derful effect on others, and gained many converts. . . .  
“Persons of the noblest families, and matrons of high  
“rank put themselves under her direction (being  
“desirous to learn her discipline), or brought their  
“children to be educated and devoted to religion  
“in her monastery;” among the former may be  
mentioned Queen Sexberga, Queen Ermenilda,  
and the Princess Wereburge. Beloved by others  
she was unsparing of herself, and practised many  
austerities in use at that time for the subjugation of  
the flesh. It is reported of her, writes Bede, “that  
“from the time of her entering the monastery she  
“never wore linen, but only woollen garments, and  
“would rarely use a hot bath, unless just before any  
“of the great festivals, as Easter, Whitsuntide, and  
“the Epiphany, and then she did it last of all, after  
“having, with the assistance of those about her, first  
“washed the other servants of GOD there present.  
“Besides she did seldom eat but once a day, except-  
“ing on the great solemnities, or some other urgent  
“cause, unless some considerable distemper obliged  
“her. From the time of Matins she continued in  
“Church at prayer till it was day.” It is note-  
worthy that these austerities did not breed in her  
mind any sourness or severity. With the practice  
of them she combined a wonderful sweetness of  
temper, and such a pleasing manner as drew every-  
body to love her.

S. Audry's life as Abbess was not a long one. She

had not passed many years in these congenial labours when she was seized with an epidemic which snatched away several of her community, and at last proved fatal to herself. "Thus she was taken to our LORD, "in the midst of her flock, seven years after she had "been made Abbess, and was buried among them, in "such a manner as she had died, i.e., in a *wooden* coffin."<sup>1</sup>

She was succeeded in the office of Abbess by her sister, Sexberga, who had been wife to Erconbert, King of Kent, "who, when her sister had been buried "sixteen years thought fit to take up her bones in "order to put them into a new coffin, and translate "them into the Church; accordingly a stone coffin "was ordered to be provided," (no easy matter in those days in the Isle of Ely, in which there were no quarries of stone). "The brethren took ship to search "for stone elsewhere, and came to a small abandoned "city not far from thence, which is called in the "language of the English, <sup>2</sup>*Granta Chester*, and "presently near the city walls they found a white "marble coffin most beautifully wrought, and neatly "covered with a lid of the same sort of stone. Con- "cluding, therefore, that GOD had prospered their "journey, they returned thanks to Him, and carried it "to the monastery." When her grave was opened

<sup>1</sup> Persons of quality were at this time buried in *stone* coffins.

<sup>2</sup> *Granta Chester*, not far from Cambridge, was as the name implies, an old Roman town. The coffin found was no doubt a Roman relic.



the body of the Saint was found as free from corruption as if she had died and been buried that very day. Among those who were present at the translation of her body was her physician, Cynefrid, who had attended her in her last illness. "Cynefrid," Bede tell us, "was wont to relate that in her sickness she had a "very great swelling under the jaw, and I was ordered "to lay open that swelling, and let out the noxious "matter in it, which I did, and she seemed to be "somewhat more easy for two days, so that many "thought she might recover from her distemper, but "the third day, the former pains returning, she was "soon snatched out of the world, and exchanged all "pain and death for everlasting life and health. And "when so many years after her bones were to be "taken out of the grave, a pavilion being spread "over it, all the congregation of brothers were on "the one side, and of sisters on the other, standing "about it singing, and the Abbess with a few being "gone to take up and wash the bones, on a sudden "we heard the Abbess within loudly cry out, 'Glory " 'be to the Name of the LORD!' Not long after they "called me in, opening the door of the pavilion, where "I found the body of the holy virgin taken out of the "grave and laid on a bed as if it had been asleep. "Then taking off the veil from the face they also "shewed the incision which I had made healed up, "so that to my great astonishment, instead of the "open gaping wound with which she had been buried,

“there then appeared only an extraordinary slender  
“scar. Besides all the linen clothes in which the  
“body had been buried appeared entire, and as fresh  
“as if they had that very day been wrapped about her  
“chaste limbs.”

It is reported that when she was much troubled with the aforesaid swelling and pain in her jaw she was much pleased with that sort of distemper, and wont to say, “I know that I deservedly bear the  
“weight of my sickness on my neck, for I remember  
“when I was very young I bore there the needless  
“weight of jewels, and, therefore, I believe the Divine  
“goodness would have me endure the pain in my  
“neck, that I may be absolved from the guilt of my  
“needless levity, having now instead of gold and  
“precious stones a red swelling and burning on my  
“neck.”

Few of our early English Saints were held in greater veneration by our forefathers than S. Audry, and if a life of the sincerest piety, and of most loving devotion to GOD be regarded as worthy of honour, we need not believe that they erred in their judgment. It is true indeed that there are occasional passages in her life which we might feel inclined to deprecate, and which have laid her open to the charge of fanaticism at the hand of modern writers. If, however, we bear in mind the age in which she lived, and the maxims with which she was imbued, and that in these matters she was led by a religious adviser (S.

Wilfrid) who encouraged her in all she did, and taught her it was the course most pleasing to GOD, we shall hesitate to endorse this hasty opinion. The following summary of her life, and estimate of her character, taken from Bentham, will, we think, approve itself to the mind of the thoughtful reader as a more just and truer view of the case. He gives, we may believe, in the main the right explanation of the anomalous course which the Saint pursued in the matter of the duties of her married life.

“The character of S. Audry,” he writes, “was as eminent for her piety as illustrious by her birth. Naturally of a grave, serious turn of mind, for humility, meekness, and contempt of the world, she had few equals. She was zealous in promoting holiness of life and manners, which seem to be the end which she always had in view. If the means which she used to this end were not the best adapted to it, or in all points agreeable to true religion, if she set too high a value on the merit of virginity, and thought it the sum of perfection, as she may indeed be said to have carried that virtue to excess, . . . it was owing to the prevailing notions of religion in the time in which she lived, and the monastic rules she had been taught. But bating the mistaken notions in which she had been bred, and her peculiar manner of thinking, we cannot but admire her resolution, constancy, and perseverance in what she judged to be right and agreeable to her opinion of religious

“duties, though it appear to be wrong-founded, and, therefore, not a pattern fit for imitation. The gaieties and splendour of a Court were never agreeable to one of her temper and disposition, who was constant at her devotions, and passionately devoted to religion and the promoting piety in others. Whilst she resided in the Northumbrian Court, she affected the life of a recluse, seldom appeared abroad or in public, but spent much of her time in conversation with persons of both sexes eminent for their piety and virtue, among whom Wilfrid, Bishop of York, and S. Cuthbert, whilst yet an anchorite, before he was made Bishop, were the chief. And when she became Queen, by accession of Prince Egfrid to the throne of Northumbria, and she could no longer with decency continue there without making her appearance frequently in public, she laid hold of the occasion for quitting her station, and by her importunity obtained the King’s leave of retiring to a monastery. After she was made Abbess of Ely she led a severe mortified life herself, and would often tell those under her care, and remind them that the fashion of this world passeth away, and that that only was to be accounted life, which was purchased by submitting to temporal inconveniences. As she was a strict observer herself of awful behaviour and reverence in the House of GOD, so was she a severe exactor of it in others, and made that one of the standing rules in her

“monastery. Temperance, as well in eating as in  
“drinking, was at all times another conspicuous part  
“of her character. She had learned to be content  
“with a little herself, and disposed of her abundance  
“to the relief of others. She gave all her possessions  
“to religious uses. Her jointure from King Egfrid  
“was Hexham, and that and the territory belonging  
“to it she gave, with the King’s consent, to Wilfrid,  
“and a bishopric was founded there in her life-time.  
“Her other ‘morgen,’ the Isle of Ely, was settled on  
“the monastery there. In her last sickness, when  
“sensible of her approaching end, she was calm and  
“composed, and retained her memory and under-  
“standing to the last, and expired in the very act of  
“her calling, in the presence of her flock, and whilst  
“she was instructing them how to live, and by her  
“example taught them also how to die.”

S. Audry’s monastery in Ely flourished exceedingly till the time of the Danes, when it shared the fate of the other religious houses. The monastery was burnt, and the nuns and monks slain A.D. 870. Burrhed,<sup>1</sup> King of Mercia, took advantage of the troubles of the times (most, if not all, of the religious houses being in ruins) to confiscate their lands and appropriate them to himself, giving away some to his soldiers and retaining others in his own

<sup>1</sup> Burrhed ruled Mercia from A.D. 851 to A.D. 874, when he was driven out of Mercia.

possession, and so the revenues of Peterborough, Peakirk, Bardney, and Ely, came to the Crown. In the meantime certain clerks came and patched up the ruins of Ely and lived in them. These Clergy were generally married, and lived in the monastery with their wives and children. The head of the clerks was called an Arch-priest. Thus matters continued till the time of King Edgar, circa 957-977, when the monastery was splendidly restored by the noble Bishop Ethelwold. Ely became an Episcopal See in the reign of Henry I.

**S. Owen or Owini.**

SEVENTH CENTURY. MARCH 4.

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OWEN was S. Audry's Chief Minister, or confidential steward of her affairs. His mistress' example took such effect on him that he was moved by it to renounce the world, and to join himself to S. Chad, in whose monastery at Lastingham, in the north of England, he became a monk. He is reckoned among the Saints, and was held in special veneration in the Isle of Ely, where, no doubt, he was buried; for some years ago a portion of his monument was found there with this inscription, "*Lucem tuam Owini da Deus et requiem.*"

Bede gives the following account of his entrance into Lastingham, and mode of life there: "Owini "was a monk of great merit, having forsaken "the world with the pure intention of obtaining the "heavenly reward, worthy in all respects to have the "secrets of our LORD revealed to him, and worthy to "have credit given him by his hearers to what he

“said, for he came with Queen Etheldrid from the  
 “Province of the East Angles, and was her Prime  
 “Minister and Governor of her family; as the  
 “fervor of his faith increased, resolving to renounce  
 “the world he did not go about it slothfully,  
 “but so fully forsook the things of this world, that,  
 “quitting all he had, clad in a plain garment, and  
 “carrying an axe and hatchet in his hand, he came  
 “to the monastery of the most reverend Prelate  
 “(Chad), called Lestingau, denoting that he did not  
 “go to the monastery to live idle, as some do, but  
 “to labour, which he also confirmed by practice.  
 “For as he was less capable of meditations on the  
 “Holy Scriptures, he the more earnestly applied  
 “himself to the labour of his hands. In short,  
 “he was received by the Bishop into the house  
 “and there entertained with the brethren, and  
 “whilst they were engaged within reading, he was  
 “without doing such things as were necessary.”—  
*Bede* iv. 3.<sup>1</sup>

*Winford*, in the Isle of Ely, is supposed to be a corruption of *Owensworth*, i.e., *Owini-prædium*.

Amongst others who were greatly moved by S. Audry's example was the Priest Huna, who buried her, and who seems to have been her private Chaplain. After her death he became an anchorite, retiring to

<sup>1</sup> It appears from the same chapter in *Bede* that Owini accompanied S. Chad to Lichfield, and was with that Saint there at the time of his death.



a little islet in the marshes of Ely, called from him Huneia, where he lived a solitary life, and after his death was buried. His relics were removed to Thorney.

**S. Sexberge.**

ABBESS.

A.D. 699. JULY 6.

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S. SEXBERGE was the eldest daughter of King Annas, who reigned over East Anglia from A.D. 644 to 654. Thus she was the sister of the famous S. Etheldrida. She was given in marriage to Erconbert, King of Kent, a most pious Prince, who greatly promoted Christianity in that Province. By her marriage with Erconbert she had two sons, Egbert and Lothaire, who both became Kings of Kent in succession to each other. She had also two daughters, Ercengota and Ermenild, who are reckoned among the Saints.

On the death of her husband, King Erconbert, she is said to have ruled the kingdom for a while as Regent, until her son Egbert was of age. When she was at last free from secular cares, she turned her thoughts wholly to religion. Among other good works she founded a monastery, or convent, in Sheppy, "where she placed seventy-seven disciples;" which monastery she endowed with large possessions

of land to provide for their maintenance. Out of humility, however, she did not make herself Abbess of her new monastery, "as not thinking it right for "one who had not been in a state of probation to rule "over others." She appointed, therefore, her daughter, Ermenild, who had been a nun in Ely, to be Abbess and repaired herself to her sister's (S. Audry) abbey in Ely, of which she became a member. On her sister's death, A.D. 679, she was made second Abbess of Ely.

S. Sexburge died in a good old age, A.D. 699. This lady may indeed, with truth, be said to have belonged to a holy family,—her three sisters are venerated as Saints ; her husband, and her two daughters ; three, at least, also of her grandchildren are in the Calendar.

**S. Withberge.**

VIRGIN.

SEVENTH CENTURY. MARCH 17.

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THIS Princess was the youngest sister of S. Sexberge, being fourth daughter of King Annas. Very few items have reached us of her life, and they are chiefly interesting in an antiquarian point of view. She was "brought up in Holkham village, where a Church "called after her, Wightburgstow, was afterwards "erected." She was probably still young when her father, King Annas, was slain by the Mercian Pagans, who over-ran East Anglia in A.D. 654. She, during these troubles, retired to Dereham, a small place belonging to her father. Here she lived in pious retirement for some time by herself, after which she founded a monastery at Dereham for virgins, which she presided over till her death. She died and was buried at Dereham. The date of her death is not known for certain, but it would appear that she lived to a great age. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year A.D. 797 there appears this entry, "In this

“same year the body of Wightburga was found at Dereham, all whole and uncorrupted, five-and-fifty years after she had departed from this life.” If this is correct she must have died circa A.D. 743, when she was probably over a hundred years old.

Her memory was held in great store by the people of Dereham, who guarded her tomb with the utmost vigilance. They were outwitted, however, by the monks of Ely, who, in the reign of King Edgar, determined to obtain her relics for Ely, and coming with this object to Dereham, by artifice obtained possession of them, and forcibly carried them off to Ely. This translation took place A.D. 974. In the course of it the coffin was opened, “and the body of S. Withberge was found quite perfect and free from all signs of corruption.” Her monastery at Dereham was destroyed by the Danes. Tanner tells us that her memory was “still preserved in that place by a Chapel-guild light, and by a famous well where she was buried.” “Here also,” says Lelaud, “is Withburge’s Font.”

**S. Edelberga, or Ædilberg.**

ABBESS.

CIRCA A.D. 680. JULY 7.

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THIS lady, who must not be confounded with S. Ethelberga, sister of S. Erconwald, was a daughter of King Annas, and so a sister of S. Audry. Wishing to dedicate herself to GOD, and there being at that time few monasteries in England, she retired to France, and entered the famous abbey of Brie, lately founded by S. Fara. When S. Fara died she succeeded her as Abbess. She was engaged in building a magnificent Church in this monastery when she was carried off by death before she was able to complete it. Her body was buried in this Church. At the end of seven years it was taken up, to translate it into another Church, S. Stephen's, and was found whole and incorrupt.

# The Kingdom of Mercia.





## **S. Ceadda, or Chad.**

BISHOP.

A.D. 672. MARCH 2.

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S. CHAD was a native of Northumbria, one of a holy family of four brothers, who all distinguished themselves in the ministry of the Church. When S. Aidan came into the North of England, and had settled himself in Lindisfarne, one of his first acts was to open a School of Religion there, and twelve boys of the English race were given him by the King "to be instructed in CHRIST." Among these boys were Chad and his brothers Cedd, Celin, and Cynobelin. Brought up under S. Aidan's careful superintendence, they received an admirable education, and at the same time naturally adopted many pious customs in vogue among the Celts, and unfortunately a few which were not in accordance with Catholic usage. It will be seen, however, that later on in their lives, after a decision had been arrived at by the Church, they conformed in these points, whilst remaining otherwise, to the end of their days, loving disciples of the holy Aidan.

After a stay of some years in Lindisfarne Chad retired into Ireland "to perfect himself in religion "and religious knowledge." Two of his school-fellows accompanied him, Egbert and Ethelhun; they were both of noble origin, and it is therefore probable that Chad was of the same rank. Religion at this time so greatly flourished in Ireland that numbers of Englishmen were drawn thither from the North of England, both of the nobility and from the lower ranks, either for the sake of study or a more holy life. "Some of these young men," Bede tells us, "engaged themselves with all earnestness in the monastic life, "whilst others preferred making a circuit of the cells "of the more distinguished teachers, applying themselves freely to reading. The Scotch (i.e., the Irish) "received them all most hospitably, taking care to "supply them with daily food, with books to read, "and with teaching, all without payment." Ethelhun died of the plague in Ireland. Egbert devoted himself to missionary work for the love of CHRIST, and remained abroad in voluntary exile. Chad returned in due time to Northumbria. The date of his return is not quite certain, but he was at home A.D. 664, in which year his elder brother, Cedd, died, and committed to his care the important abbey of Lastingham, of which he became Abbot.

Early in this year a great Synod had been held at Streaneshalch (Whitby) in which the bitter controversy about Easter had been settled. One consequence of

this Synod was the retirement into Scotland of the Missionaries in Lindisfarne with Colman their Bishop. In his place Tuda had been appointed to the See of Lindisfarne, but the plague was as bad in England as in Ireland, and Tuda was carried off by it ; the whole of Northumbria was thus left without a Bishop.

The first to care for the general need was Alchfrid, the zealous King of Deira. He was greatly attached to Wilfrid, who had distinguished himself in the Synod at Whitby. He caused him to be elected, and supplied him with the means of going into France to be there consecrated "Bishop, for himself and his "people." Wilfrid accordingly proceeded to Paris, and was there consecrated with great ceremony ; for some reason, however, he did not return at once, but lingered in France. In the meantime King Oswy, who ruled Bernicia, the greater half of Northumbria, awoke up to his responsibilities, and grieving that his people should be left so long without a Bishop, caused Chad to be appointed to that office, and sent him with his Priest, Eadhed, into Kent, to receive consecration at the hands of Archbishop Deusdedit. Chad accordingly went into Kent, but when he and his companions arrived they found that the Archbishop had died of the plague, and that no one had been yet appointed in his room. To add to the difficulty they also ascertained that the Bishops of London and Rochester had also succumbed to the same dreadful epidemic. In this predicament they

pursued their way to Winchester. Here they were kindly received by its Bishop, Wini, who, complying with King Oswy's request, consecrated Chad Bishop of York. Inasmuch, however, as there was no English Bishop whose assistance he could obtain, he invited two British (i.e., Welsh) Bishops to assist in the ordination. They joined him on this occasion, although there was at this time no inter-communion between the English and the Welsh Churches.

Chad, returning without delay to the North of England, at once set to work in his new diocese, visiting town and country, everywhere preaching the Word of GOD, whether in castles, villages, or cottages. All this missionary work he performed on foot, "for he was a true disciple of his master, S. Aidan, and in all matters laboured to follow in his steps, and in those of his own brother, S. Cedd. Nor was he less attentive in the midst of all these labours to his own spiritual interests, but attended much on ecclesiastical doctrine, on chastity, humility, continence, and reading."

In the meantime Wilfrid returned to England, and learned with much surprise that a Bishop had been consecrated in his absence for the See of York. There was no Archbishop at this time to appeal to, he therefore awaited in silence the advent of the new Archbishop. No sooner, however, had Theodore arrived from Rome than he laid his wrongs before him. Theodore, hearing only one side of the question,

was not a little incensed against Chad, and soon took occasion to cite him before him. Then in public Synod he upbraided him with having thrust himself into another man's See ; and, to make matters worse by means of a consecration which was not canonical. Instead of answering these charges, or excusing himself, Chad meekly replied with great humility, " If you know that I have not duly received Episcopal Ordination, I willingly retire from the office, for I never thought myself worthy of it, but as a matter of obedience undertook it, conscious of my own unworthiness." Having uttered these words he rose from his seat, and was about to retire to one of lower grade, but the Archbishop, who had been greatly affected by his modest reply, would not suffer him to do so. However he assigned the See to Wilfrid, and desired Chad to retire for the present to Lastingham, determining in his own mind to find, as soon as possible, some post of usefulness for so good a man. Accordingly Chad was not left long in Lastingham to enjoy the peaceful retirement of a religious house so congenial to his own spirit. It happened that the same year, Wulfhere, King of Mercia, wrote to Archbishop Theodore, requesting him to supply him and his people with a Bishop, and Theodore at once selected Chad for that office. Having obtained leave of the King of Northumbria for Chad's departure, he sent him into Mercia, having first " completed his ordination after the Catholic manner." Chad's diocese

was co-extensive with the Kingdom of Mercia which embraced all the Midland Counties. The Archbishop, in view of this, laid a strict injunction on him before he left, "that he should ride whenever he had a long journey to undertake, and finding him very unwilling to omit his former pious labour, he himself with his own hands lifted him on the horse; for he thought him a holy man, and therefore obliged him to ride wherever he had need to go."

Chad was received with great joy by King Wulfhere, who immediately gave him large possessions of land (enough for fifty families) in the Province of Lindsey, at a place called *Ad Barve*, supposed to be Barton on the Humber. Here the Bishop built a monastery and settled a religious community. He resided himself at a place called Lyncedfelth (Lichfield), which thenceforth became the Episcopal See. Here he had not only a Church with a monastery attached to it, but also a cell not far off, to which he was in the habit of retiring for his devotions in company with two or three of the brethren. This was at Stow, in the east part of Lichfield.

Chad's government of the Church in Mercia is said by Bede to have been "most glorious;" but it was also most brief, for he had scarcely fulfilled two years and a half, when he was seized by an epidemic, which had already carried off many members of his Church. He was residing in his retreat at Stow when he was taken ill. Bede informs us that he had an

intimation that his end was approaching. One day, when the rest of the brethren were in Church (except S. Chad himself who was in his oratory and a devout monk, Owini, who was working outside), the same Owini heard voices, as of persons singing most sweetly and rejoicing. The voices seemed to pass from heaven into the oratory, and shortly afterwards back again from thence to heaven. When Owini had stood sometime astonished, seriously resolving in his mind what it might be, the Bishop opened the window of the oratory, and making a noise with his hand, as he was often wont to do, ordered him to come into him. He accordingly went hastily in, and the Bishop said to him, "Make haste to the Church and cause the seven brothers to come hither, and do you come with them." When they were come he first admonished them to observe the virtue of peace among themselves and towards all others, and indefatigably to practise the rules of regular discipline, which they had been taught by him or seen him observe. "For," said he, "that Amiable Guest, who was wont to visit our brethren, has vouchsafed also to come to me this day, and to call me out of this world. Return, therefore, to the Church, and speak to the brethren, that they in their prayers recommend my passage to the LORD, and that they be careful to provide for their own departure (the hour whereof is uncertain) by watching, prayer, and good works."

It would appear that this took place before his last illness, which occurred shortly afterwards. He never rallied, but grew worse daily. On the seventh day he prepared for death by receiving the Body and Blood of our LORD, and the same day "his soul "being delivered from the prison of the body, the "Angels, as may justly be believed, attending him, "he departed to the joys of heaven." "It is "no wonder," his biographer adds, "that he joy- "fully beheld the day of his death (or rather the "day of our LORD, which he had always carefully "expected till it came), for notwithstanding his other "graces of continency, humility, teaching, prayer, and "other virtues, he was full of the fear of GOD, and "always mindful of his latter end." <sup>1</sup>

S. Chad died on the 2nd of March, A.D. 672. He was buried, first, outside S. Mary's Church, but after-

<sup>1</sup> Bede mentions a pious custom of S. Chad's which had been told him by Trunhere, one of the Monks who lived with him in his Retreat at Lichfield. Whenever a violent gale of wind arose, Chad, whether reading or working, began to pray and to intercede with GOD. If the gale increased, he would shut his book and, prostrate on the ground, would pray more earnestly; but if the storm grew very fearful, and lightnings and thunderings filled the air with confusion, he would repair to the Church, and remain fixedly engaged in prayer and psalmody until the storm was over. Being asked the reason of this practice, he informed those who asked him that he believed storms were intended to remind us of GOD, Who thunders in heaven to dispel our pride, and to prepare us for the terrors of the Judgment Day. Wherefore prayer and self-abasement seemed at such times our proper duties. Jeremy Taylor has some excellent remarks on this custom of S. Chad in his *Life of Christ*, Discourse XVIII.—Dr. Giles.



wards his body was translated to S. Peter's. His monument in Bede's time was "a wooden one, in shape like a little house, covered, but having a hole in the side. The country people were wont to resort to it, and to carry with them some of the dust of his tomb, which they believed did good in cases of sickness."

His relics were translated to the present Cathedral, A.D. 1148. Originally dedicated to S. Mary and S. Peter, it has long since been re-dedicated to S. Mary and S. Chad.

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#### FURTHER NOTICES OF S. CHAD.

Among other stories told of S. Chad (more or less true), is the following taken from Leland, which tells of the rough treatment which he met with at Alcester:—"In Warwickshire," he writes, "there was a city, called Alencestria, or Alcester; here Chad came to live as a father to his children, but he soon perceived that he had come to beasts, rather than to men, who neither by words, or miracles could be brought to the knowledge of GOD. The man of GOD, cast out with many insults, left his curse behind him. From that time this noble city began to decline. The monastery there was removed elsewhere on account of S. Chad's curse, and now Alcester is but a small town."

Alcester, we learn elsewhere, was a great place for iron works, even in this early age, and large numbers of blacksmiths were employed in them. These men worked in the open air, under sheds, and one day when S. Chad, in the course of his missionary labours, came to preach to them, these men, with one accord, made such a furious clatter with their hammers that not a syllable of his sermon could be heard. The Saint at last was obliged to leave them; and, it is likely enough, shook off the dust of his feet in testimony against them. This seems the most probable explanation of the very old tradition that he left his curse behind him.

## **S. Ermenild.**

QUEEN.

SEVENTH CENTURY. FEBRUARY 13.

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ERMENILD is by some writers included among the English Saints. She was the daughter of Erconbert, King of Kent, and so a great-grand-daughter of the famous Ethelbert. She was married early to Wulfhere, the second son of the heathen Penda. His elder brother, Peada, was basely murdered in his father's life-time, so that Wulfhere became heir to the kingdom, and eventually succeeded his father. He was then a youth about eighteen years old, and probably still a heathen. His marriage with the Lady Ermenild was a most happy one. He soon became a zealous Christian, and the Court of Mercia, which had been in his father's life-time a hot-bed of heathenism, became a school of virtue. How much was due to S. Ermenild is well expressed by an old writer, Brompton, who says, "by her amiability, her sweet entreaties, by her manners and kind offices, she softened the mind of the most indomitable, and

“incited them to the sweet yoke of CHRIST and the  
“reward of everlasting bliss . . . As for King Wulf-  
“here, her husband, he willingly inclined himself to  
“the wishes, prayers, and admonitions of his holy  
“wife, and destroyed the abominable idols out of his  
“dominions.”

The fruit of her marriage with Wulfhere was one son, Kenred, who afterwards succeeded to the kingdom, and a daughter, Wereburge, a famous Saint in Anglo-Saxon times. Ermenild outlived her husband. In her widowhood she entered S. Audry's monastery in Ely, but when her mother, S. Sexberge, had completed her new foundation in Sheppy, she left Ely, by her mother's wishes, and became its Abbess.

**SS. Wulfhad and Ruffin.**

MARTYRS.

SEVENTH CENTURY. JULY 24.

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THESE reputed martyrs are said to have been the sons of King Wulfhere and S. Ermenild, and to have been slain by their father, who was enraged with them for allowing themselves to be baptized by S. Chad without his knowledge. Such is the legend, but no such sons of Wulfhere are mentioned in contemporaneous history. The story is fabulous; if there be any truth in it at all there is certainly great misrepresentation. The legend is not without interest, and is as follows:—

“Wulfhad was much addicted to hunting, and one day pursued a goodly hart, which being hotly pursued, took soil in a fountain, near unto the cell of S. Chad, who espying the hart weary and almost spent, was so compassionate towards him that he covered him with boughs and leaves, conjecturing as if heaven had some design in the access and deportment of the beast. Presently comes Prince Wulfhad, and enquires of S. Chad concerning the hart, who answers that he was not a keeper of beasts but of the souls of men, and that Wulfhere was then as an hart to the waterbrooks, sent by GOD to the fountain of living water. Which Wulfhad hear-

“ing with astonishment entered into further conference  
“with S. Chad in his cell, and was by him baptized ;  
“and returning with joy to his father’s Court he  
“secretly told his brother, Rufine, of all that had  
“passed, persuading him to be baptized also. To  
“which Rufine consenting, Wulfhad brought him to  
“S. Chad, who likewise baptized this other brother.  
“This Christian pair of brothers did oft resort to a  
“private oratory where they performed their devotions.  
“But at length being discovered to their father by the  
“steward, Werbode, who instigated and inflamed the  
“fire of paternal fury against the sons, King Wulfhere,  
“the father, watching the time when his sons were  
“gone to pray, followed them, and entering the  
“oratory slew both his sons with his own hand ; and  
“he and Werebode demolishing the place left the  
“bodies of his sons buried in the rubbish.<sup>1</sup> Queen  
“Ermenild having searched for the bodies of her sons,  
“found them, and giving them burial in one stone  
“coffin, built a *Church of stone* over them in the same  
“place where they were slain.”

This curious old legend was figured in glass in Peterborough Cathedral, and rendered into verse as follows :

King Penda, a Paynim, as writers seyth,  
Had five children of CHRISTE’S Feyth.

<sup>1</sup> Stone, in Staffordshire, is said to be the place where this tragedy occurred.

The noble King Peada, by GOD'S grace,  
Was the first founder of this place.

By Queen Ermenyld had King Wulfhere,  
These two sons that ye see here.

Wulfhad rideth, as he was wont,  
Into the forest the harte to hunt.

Fro' all his men Wulfhad is gone,  
And seeyth himself the harte alone.

The harte brought Wulfhad to a well  
That was beside Seynt Chaddy's cell.

Wulfhad asked of Seynt Chad,  
"Where is the harte that me hath lad?"

"The hart that thither thee hast brought  
"Is sent by CHRIST that thee hath bought."

Wulfhad prayed Chad, that ghostly leech,  
The Feyth of CHRIST him for to teach.

S. Chad teacheth Wulfhad the Feyth,  
And words of baptism over him seyth.

S. Chad devoutly to mass him dight  
And hoseled Wulfhad, CHRISTY'S knight.

Wulfhad wished S. Chad that day  
For his brother, Rufine, to pray.

Wulfhad told his brother Rufine  
That he was christened by Chaddy doctrine.

Rufin to Wulfhad seyde again,  
"Christened also would I be fain."

Wulfhad Rufin to S. Chad leadeth,  
And Chad with love of feyth him feedeth.

Rufin is christened of Seynt Chaddys,  
And Wulfhad, his brother, his godfather is.

Werebode, steward to King Wulfhere,  
Told that his sons christened were.

Toward the Chappel Wulfhere 'gan goe  
By guiding of Werebode, CHRISTY'S foe.

Into the Chappel entered the King,  
And found his sons worshipping.

Wulfhere in woodness his sword outdrew,  
And both his sons anon he slew.

King Wulfhere with Werbode yoo,  
Burying gave his sons two.

Werebode for vengeance his own flesh tare,  
The devil him strangled and to hell bare.

Wulfhere for sorrow anon was sick,  
In bed he lay, a dead-man like.

•  
S. Ermenyld, that blessed Queen,  
Counselled Wulfhere to shrive him clean.

Wulfhere, contrite, hyed him to Chad,  
As Ermenyld him counselled had.

Chad bade Wulfhere for his sin  
Abbeys to build his realm within.

Wulfhere in haste performed than [began.  
Brough (Peterborough) that Peada, his brother,  
Wulfhere endowed with high devotion  
The abbey of Brough with great possessions.



**S. Wereburge.**

VIRGIN.

CIRCA 690. FEBRUARY 3.



THIS Princess was a famous Saint in olden times, and her name is still remembered in the Midlands in connection with Chester Cathedral. She was the daughter of Wulfhere, King of Mercia, who reigned over that Province A.D. 658 to 675. The King, her father, displayed great zeal. Churches were built by him in many places, "and the worship of devils was altogether eradicated out of the Kingdom."

After her father's death, Wereburge renounced the world, and took the religious habit in Ely, where S. Etheldrida, her mother's aunt, was Abbess. We learn from Florence of Worcester that her uncle, Ethelred, who succeeded her father on the throne of Mercia, "made her Abbess over the monasteries of virgins, dedicated to GOD (in Mercia), amongst whom and with whom she lived the monastic life, religiously consulting for their good in all things,

“and so warred a good warfare for CHRIST, the true King, to the end of her life. She departed this world in one of her monasteries called Triccingham (Trentham); and so this blessed virgin went to embrace the nuptials of the Heavenly Bridegroom. But her body was carried to the monastery called Heanberig (Hanbury), as she, whilst living, had given directions, and there honourably buried, it remained free from corruption till the arrival of the Pagans (the Danes), who with cruel slaughter, and tyrannical violence laid waste all parts of England.” We learn elsewhere that the patrimony which she received from her father at his death was his palace and estates at Wedon, in North Hants. She converted this palace into a nunnery, and often resided there.

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It would appear that, in accordance with her office, S. Werebuge resided from time to time in various religious houses which she superintended. Her favourite place of abode was Hanbury. Shaw, in his *Antiquities of Staffordshire*, writes: “Hanbury is a village a little to the north of Needwood Forest. Here, Ethelred, King of Mercia, built a nunnery, which S. Werebuge presided over. She had been betrothed to her cousin, Ceolred, in infancy, according to the custom of those times, but always kept herself a virgin. She was buried in Hanbury. No remains of this house exist now, but human bones were dug up a little to the east of the present Parish Church. The occasion of her translation was the invasion of Mercia by the Danes, about A.D. 884. These merciless pirates penetrated with an army into the Midlands about that time, and after wintering at Rypendon (Repton), attacked Burrhed, the King of Mercia, and put him to flight. This produced a panic in the Midlands. The people of Hanbury, fearing for themselves, fled to Lecester, or as

“ it is now called, Chester, as to a more safe refuge, taking with them  
“ in a shrine the body of the virgin, which was then resolved into  
“ dust.”—(*Ralph of Chester.*)

There was in Chester, of very old times, a nunnery dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul. In this nunnery the remains of S. *Wereburge* were placed. This monastery and Church was well restored by Earl Ethelred and his wife, the Lady Elfreda, King Alfred's daughter, and again, more splendidly, by the famous Earl Leofric, who dedicated the Church to S. *Wereburge*, and when Chester was made an Episcopal See, this Church became the Cathedral.

**S. Alnoth.**

MARTYR.

SEVENTH CENTURY. FEBRUARY 27.

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ALNOTH was of humble origin, for he was born in serfdom — a Northamptonshire peasant. It was his good fortune to have for his mistress the Lady Werebuge, on whose estate at Wedon he was the herdman of her cattle. The Princess, who was often at Wedon, took notice of his conscientious behaviour, and attention to his religious duties, and conceived a great respect for him. Whether out of jealousy on this account, or from hatred of religion, her bailiff disliked Alnoth, and took a pleasure in maltreating him. His position gave him opportunities of doing so, and he used them to that degree, that on one occasion he nearly flayed him alive with the stripes of his merciless whip. All this ill-treatment Alnoth bore patiently, from a sense of religious duty. Eventually he became a hermit, fixing his abode in a wood in the neighbourhood of Wedon, where he was murdered by some robbers. His body was

buried at Stow, one league from Bugbrook. The country people, who greatly revered his holy life, regarded him as a martyr, and the day of his death was observed annually as a religious festival.

## **SS. Kyneburge, Kyneswith, and Tibba.**

SEVENTH CENTURY. MARCH 6.

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KYNEBURGE and Kyneswith, her sister, were daughters of King Penda, and were brought up in heathenism. The elder sister had the good fortune to be given in marriage at a very early age to a noble and earnest Christian, Alchfrid, eldest son of Oswy, King of Northumbria. Through his influence, no doubt, she soon renounced idolatry and became a pious worshipper of the true GOD. It was not long after this that her eldest brother, Peada, was converted to Christianity (not a little through the influence of her husband), and by his means Christianity was introduced into the Midlands.

Prince Alchfrid appears to have died early, before his father's death, A.D. 670. S. Kyneburge took occasion from her husband's decease to retire from the world, and accompanied by her sister, the Princess, Kyneswith, went to live at Castor (not far from Peterborough), where her brother, Wulfhere, then on the

throne of Mercia, built them a nunnery. These Princesses took the liveliest interest in the grand foundation of Medehamstead (Peterborough). To this they contributed with such munificence that they were reckoned among its founders. They were present at its opening, and their names appear among the witnesses, "subscribing to its charter with their fingers on the Cross of CHRIST, and assenting to it "with their tongues." (See Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle*.)

When, some centuries later, the Peterborough Church was re-built, the names of these two Princesses were associated with S. Peter, to whom it had been originally dedicated. It is the present Cathedral of Peterborough, and is still dedicated to S. Peter, S. Kyneburge, and S. Kyneswith.

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These two Saints were buried at Castor, but afterwards translated to Peterborough. When the Danes ravaged Peterborough they pulled their bodies out of their graves and dishonoured them. A monk, named Turgar, afterwards collected their relics, and buried them reverently in Ankarig, to the south of Croyland. When the abbey of Peterborough was re-built, circa 970, their relics were brought back, and re-deposited there. At the same time the relics of S. Tibba were translated to Peterborough, and hence probably arose an old tradition that she was related to them. This appears to be a mistake. S. Tibba's acts have perished.

#### KING PENDA.

A brief memoir of this notable King, who so bitterly opposed Christianity in the interests of heathenism, seems desirable, and we take the opportunity of inserting it when speaking of his saintly daughters. This fierce King was fifty years of age when he came to the throne of Mercia, and over eighty when he fell in battle, yet in spite of his age the whole of his reign was spent in war with his neighbours. Scarce was he seated on the throne be-

fore he ventured on a conflict with Wessex, a kingdom then much more powerful than his own, and in this war he at least held his own. A year or two later, allying himself with the Welsh, he attacked Northumbria, the most potent kingdom of the Heptarchy, with too great success. Edwin, the paragon of his age, was slain, and Northumbria devastated. Nor was this Province allowed to enjoy many years of peace under the rule of the saintly Oswald. In the year 644 Penda returned again, when the like success attended his arms. From the North he retired only to carry his arms into East Anglia, whence he soon returned victorious, having ravaged the Province and slain in battle, Egric, its King, and Sigebert, its former ruler. The King of Wessex, Kenwalch, had married his sister, and had been rash enough to put her away. This drew the lightning-bolt his way! Penda invaded Wessex, and Kenwalch was driven out of his kingdom. The exile found a refuge with Annas, King of East Anglia, and, it may be, in resentment of this the fiery old King promptly invaded East Anglia again, and slew the most excellent King Annas, one of the best men of his times.

But, perhaps, no Province in England excited Penda's animosity so much as that of Northumbria, and his latter years seem to have been spent in periodical invasions of it. Such delight did the ruthless old tyrant take in ravaging it that no amount of treasures, humbly offered him by its King, could buy him off, and he declared his intention of extirpating the whole population. It was in this Province that at last by the just judgment of GOD he, at Winwœd, A.D. 655, met his fate, dying, as he had lived, an inveterate heathen.

In the estimation of his character we must not forget that, as he was born and bred in heathenism, he must not be judged by our rules, and we may, at least, admire his martial qualities. It is certain that he raised the Kingdom of Mercia to a position it had never held before. The scorn which he expressed for unreal Christians, whilst he tolerated those who lived up to their profession, will approve itself to our minds. Again, he was the father of a noble progeny, who distinguished themselves by their Christian piety. Is it not most remarkable that Christianity in the Midlands of England is indebted to none so much as to Penda's children, both sons and daughters? It was introduced, it was fostered, it was established there by their loving aid. The remembrance of this may help to mitigate our aversion to Penda, and incline us to believe that he had elements in his character which, subjected to Christian discipline, might have made him admirable, though by reason of his heathenism he became the pest of his times.



## **S. Rumwald.**

SEVENTH CENTURY.

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S. RUMWALD was a Child-Saint. He appears to have been the son and only child of Prince Alchfrid, of Northumbria, and his wife, the Princess Kyneburge. (See S. Kyneburge.)

Rumwald was born at Sutton, in Northamptonshire, on November 1st, "baptised by Widerin, received by "the Priest Eadwald. He only lived three days." His body was buried at first at Sutton, where a Chapel was erected to his memory. In the second year it was removed to Brackley. "Here was S. "Rumwald's Well," near which, so the story goes, he is said "to have preached within a few days of his "birth." Two years later his body was translated to Buckingham, and we learn from Brown-Willis that "this town, hitherto unknown, first came into "notice from being the place of his sepulchre."

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### NOTE.

It is an interesting question what was the cause of the veneration paid in so many towns to this little child who only lived a few days.

It seems probable that he was the first child born of Christian parents in the Kingdom of Mercia, which kingdom our readers will remember, was still at that time the stronghold of heathenism, under the dreaded Penda. Moreover the child was the grand-child of Penda himself. His baptism, under such circumstances, his early death, and the death soon after of his father, all contributed probably to invest it with interest, and threw a halo round his memory.

# The Kingdom of Kent.

(SECOND PERIOD.)



## S. Atilburge.

VIRGIN.

SEVENTH CENTURY. FEBRUARY 23.

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S. MILBURGE was the elder sister of S. Mildred and S. Milgith. She became a nun at Wenlock, then called Wimmicas, in Shropshire, in which place her uncle, King Wulfhere, built her a monastery, over which she presided. "At this time," writes Cressy, "the Saxon Churches flourished like the Paradise of our LORD, for they were plentifully adorned with lilies of pure virgins, . . . among these lilies none were more illustrious than the three daughters of King Merowald—Milburge, Mildrid, and Milgith. The prestige of honour belonged to S. Milburge for her primogeniture, but she despised all, making a joyful exchange of a palace for a monastery. She died, and was buried at Wenlock." Her abbey was destroyed by the Danes. Wenlock Abbey was restored some centuries later by the famous Leofric, Earl of Mercia. After the Conquest it was again rebuilt by Robert Montgomery, but the tomb of

S. Milburge lay hid under the ruins of the first abbey, until it was accidentally discovered in the twelfth century.

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## NOTE.

The following anecdote, giving an account of the discovery, is given by William of Malmesbury. It illustrates the manners of the times, and the virtues then accredited to the relics of the Saints. “Milburga  
“reposes at Wenlock, formerly well known to the neighbouring  
“inhabitants, but for some time after the arrival of the Normans,  
“through ignorance of the place of her burial, she was neglected.  
“Lately, however, a Convent of Clugniac Monks being established  
“there, while a new Church was being erected, a certain boy running  
“violently along the pavement broke into the hollow of the vault and  
“discovered the body of the virgin, when, a balsamic odour pervading  
“the whole Church, she was taken up, and performed so many  
“miracles that the people flocked thither in great multitudes. Large  
“spreading plains could hardly contain the troops of pilgrims which,  
“rich and poor, came side by side, one common faith impelling all.  
“Nor did the event deceive their expectations, for no one departed  
“without either a perfect cure, or considerable abatement of his  
“malady, and some were even healed of the king’s evil by the merits  
“of this virgin, when medical assistance was unavailing.”—*Malmesbury Kings*, p. 243.

**S. Mildritha, or Mildred.**

ABBESS.

CIRCA 690.

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S. MILDRED was the second daughter of Merowald, King of Mercia, by his wife Ermenberga. Sprung of saintly parents, she and her sisters, Milberge and Milgith, early devoted themselves to a life of piety and religion. They are all three numbered among the Saints.

Mildred's constancy of purpose was put, we are told, to a rude trial in early life. The Queen, her mother, who is often called Domneva, sent her when young into France, to the famous abbey of Chelles, to be there educated, and initiated in the rules of the religious life. Here she was honourably received by the Abbess, Wilcoma, who, however, shamefully abused the trust committed to her charge, for in course of time she introduced to her a near relation of her own, and encouraged him to pay her his addresses. These were most distasteful to the royal virgin, who discouraged them to the best of her

power, but she found herself placed in a great difficulty, for the Abbess gave her no protection, but on the contrary, advocated her kinsman's suit. At last, on one occasion when Mildred refused to listen to her, becoming enraged she struck her to the ground, and "with fierce talons tore a handful of hair from her head." Gentle as the virgin was, she knew also how to be firm and true to herself; moreover, she soon after happily found the means of sending a parcel to her mother. In this parcel was a little Psalter, written with her own hand, some locks of hair which had been torn from her head, and a letter detailing her wrongs, and entreating her mother's assistance to liberate her from her present difficulties. Her mother at once sent off a trusty friend to obtain her release from the monastery, and to bring her home; but when the envoy arrived at Chelles and presented his letter the Abbess positively refused to let the virgin go. Mildred, however, providentially<sup>1</sup> managed somehow to escape out of the monastery, and found her way to the sea-shore, where most happily she found her mother's envoy. A ship was in readiness in the Port, which they entered, and in it returned safely to England. Not long after this Mildred made her religious profession, being consecrated, with sixty-nine others by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the newly founded abbey at Eastry in the island of Thanet. Of this religious house, her

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "by a Key of the LORD's making."



mother, Domneva, was the first Abbess, "where," we are told, "she built up the souls of many, both men and women, and when at last she was allowed to hear "the Voice of the Bridegroom, and to receive from "Him the unfading Crown, she was succeeded in the "rule of the monastery by her illustrious daughter, "the most holy Mildrytha." Over this abbey S. Mildred presided many years, and dying there was buried within its walls.

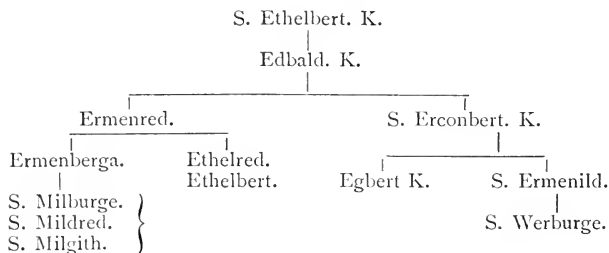
Few of our Anglo-Saxon female Saints were held in greater veneration by our forefathers than S. Mildred. How great this veneration was is witnessed by William of Malmesbury, who lived about five hundred years after her. This writer, speaking of S. Augustine's, Canterbury, says, "Although almost "every corner of that abbey is filled with the "bodies of Saints of great name and merit, any one "of which would be sufficient of itself to irradiate "all England, yet no one is there more revered, "more loved, or more gratefully remembered than "S. Mildred."

This testimony, excessive as it seems, is confirmed by the very large number of old Churches dedicated to her memory. Under these circumstances it is the more to be regretted that the records of her life were either not written at the time she lived,<sup>1</sup> or have perished.

<sup>1</sup> There is no mention of her or of her sisters in Bede's *History*, or in the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle*.

The little that is written above is all we are able to tell our readers of her. In dearth of materials about herself, we give an account of the circumstances which led to the foundation of the abbey at Eastry over which she presided. The story is a sad tale of Anglo-Saxon history, for this famous abbey was founded by King Egbert<sup>1</sup> to atone for the death of his two cousins, Ethelred and Ethelbert (who were venerated as Saints). These unfortunate Princes met their death under the following circumstances:—They were under the tutelage of King Egbert. Strictly speaking they had, at least, according to our ideas, a better title to the Crown than himself, for they were the sons of Prince Ermenred, the elder son of King Edbald. This King, who died A.D. 640, had two sons, Ermenred and Erconbert. For some reason unknown (it is said to have been by the will of the father), the *younger* son, Erconbert, succeeded to the throne of Kent. This, however, caused no breach of affection between the brothers.

<sup>1</sup> GENEALOGY OF THE KINGS OF KENT.



Ermenred lived a peaceable, happy, contented life, and dying early left three children, Ermenberga (the mother of S. Mildred), and two sons, Ethelred and Ethelbert, who were brought up in the palace of the King of Kent, their uncle. Erconbert, this uncle, died A.D. 664, and was succeeded by his son Egbert, who thus became the guardian of his cousins. It may easily be imagined that in those days, when the succession to the Crown was not fixed by any certain rules, these young Princes might easily become objects of jealousy to the reigning King. How far King Egbert was implicated in the crime of their death is uncertain. We only know that these two Princes were basely murdered by a powerful lord, Thunor, who was high in Egbert's favour. This was done secretly, and their bodies were buried beneath the pavement of the royal palace at Eastry, in Thanet. It seems probable that this crime was not committed by the King's order, but that he had given occasion for others to believe that the death of the Princes would not be a cause of grief to him. For some time no one knew what had become of the Princes, but it was not very long before their bodies were discovered, and, if we are to trust the old chronicle, a wonderful intervention of Providence brought the crime to light—a pillar of shining light was seen by many standing over the spot where the bodies lay. In any case the discovery was made, and occasioned the utmost scandal. Everybody was

shocked ; none more so than the King, who, however loudly he might disclaim any share in the crime, knew he was credited with the death of his cousins, and also felt within the smitings of an uneasy conscience.

But what remained to be done? He could not recall the dead to life! He would, at least, do his best to atone to GOD for his share in the crime, and also make what amends he was able to their family. With this object he determined to found a noble abbey near the spot where they had been murdered, endow it richly, and make it over into the hands of their nearest relations. Accordingly, he solemnly invited into Kent their sister, Ermenberga, who had married a Mercian Prince, Merowald, (now probably dead). When Ermenberga arrived in Kent he received her with great honour, and made known to her "that whatsoever she should ask of him, she should receive without delay." It is evident that Ermenberga understood well enough why she had been invited into Kent. She had brought with her, we are told, a favourite tame stag, and, replying to the King, she made request that he would grant her so much land in Thanet as her stag should track over in a given space of time. The King consented, and the stag was let loose, and, as though it was aware of what was going on, set out at good speed on its course. The King, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the assembled nobles followed in its track.

Among the company was the lord who had committed the atrocious murder. Far however from repenting of his crime, he looked with derision on the whole affair, nor could he refrain from reproaching the King for dispossessing himself of so large an amount of valuable land. "Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that a great King like you, who know how to rule a kingdom, should thus suffer yourself to be led at the heels of a brute beast! and——." Scarcely, however, had he uttered these words when the judgment of GOD overtook him. To use the graphic language of the old chronicler: "Struck by the arrow of divine Judgment, he fell from his horse, and immediately the earth opened her mouth and swallowed this most wretched Thunor with his armour and horse. His body, by the King's command, was covered with an immense heap of stones, his soul went down into the lurid fires of the abyss. The spot where this took place was called *Thunorleap*, and still goes by the same name." The word "Thunorleap" seems to give the clue to this wonderful story. It was, no doubt, a *leap* which was the cause of the fatal accident, and, under the circumstances, we cannot wonder that it was looked upon by all as a judgment of Divine vengeance on this wretched man. Whilst this was going on the stag was still pursuing his course, nor did he stop till he had gone over so much land as the Divine Will allowed." This was immense in quantity, but

the King, greatly affected by what had occurred, made no difficulties, but at once granted with due form all he had promised, and so returned home. "But the holy woman, Ermenberga, elect of GOD, caused to be built in Thanet a Church to be dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, in memory of her brothers, and a noble abbey, in which she gathered together a large flock of devoted women, over whom she presided as Abbess till her death, and dying, committed it to her daughter, S. Mildred."

## **S. Milgith.**

VIRGIN.

CIRCA 676.

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S. MILGITH was the youngest sister of S. Mildred. Emulating the virtue of her two elder sisters she at an early age embraced the religious life. In it she became famous "for the holiness of her life, her love "to GOD, and the example of her holy conversation." She gave back her spirit to the Heavenly Bridegroom about the year of Grace A.D. 676.

It seems most probable that she was a member of her mother's monastery in Thanet.

**S. Edburge.**

ABBESS.

SEVENTH CENTURY.

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THIS lady was a relation of S. Mildred, and also a member of her monastery in Thanet. On the occasion of S. Mildred's death she succeeded her as its Abbess. The house flourished exceedingly under the rule of these two Abbesses, and became overcrowded with inmates. In consequence, S. Edburge caused a smaller abbey, or cell (dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul) to be built, a mile to the eastward of the mother-house. Here she translated the body of S. Mildred, which was found perfectly whole and incorrupt. S. Edburge lived to a great age, and is said to have been Abbess for three-score years.

S. Mildred's body was again translated, 300 years later, and enshrined in S. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury.



## **S. Theodore.**

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

A.D. 690. SEPTEMBER 19.

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FEW, if any, of the illustrious men who built up the English Church did more for it than Theodore, the seventh Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a Greek, born, like S. Paul, at Tarsus, in Cilicia, in Asia Minor. Surprise might naturally be felt that one of that nation should become the head of the English Church. The circumstances which led to it were as follows:—The See of Canterbury had become vacant by the death of Archbishop Deusdedit, A.D. 664. This was the year of the great plague which ravaged England, north and south, making havoc in the religious houses, and among the chief Clergy. In this distress all Church life seemed to die out, and no effort was made to fill up even the See of Canterbury, which remained vacant for three years. At the end of that time two of the English Kings, Egbert of Kent, and Oswy of Northumbria, laying to heart the miserable state of the Church, took counsel together

with a view to some remedy. They came to the conclusion that the appointment of a Prelate of high character, who should have *authority over the whole Church in England* would be best. Accordingly they selected an excellent Priest, Wighard, and to ensure his obtaining greater authority sent him to Rome to be there consecrated. The plague, however, was as bad on the Continent as in England. Wighard had scarcely arrived in Rome when he was seized with it and died, and the same fate befell almost all the Clergy who had accompanied him. In this unhappy crisis, Vitalian, the Bishop of Rome, did a good part by the Church in England. He had received the letters which the English Kings had entrusted to Wighard, and he made every effort to find some one of ability who might raise it out of its present depressed state. Bede gives the following interesting account of his efforts:—"There was in the Niridian  
 "monastery, which is not far from the city of Naples,  
 "in Campania, an Abbot called Adrian, by nation an  
 "African, well versed in Holy Writ, experienced in  
 "monastical and ecclesiastical discipline, and ex-  
 "cellently skilled both in the Greek and Latin tongues.  
 "The Pope sending for him, commanded him to  
 "accept the Bishopric and repair into Britain. He  
 "answered that he was unworthy of so great a dignity,  
 "but said he would name another, whose learning  
 "and age were fitted for the episcopal office. The  
 "Pope consenting to this, Adrian first named a

“devout Monk named Andrew, but Andrew, though  
“in other respects worthy, was disabled from under-  
“taking missionary work by bodily infirmity. Then  
“again Adrian was pressed to accept the Bishopric,  
“but he desired a respite for a time to see if he could  
“find another fit to be ordained Bishop. There was  
“at that time in Rome a Monk called Theodore, well  
“known to Adrian, born at Tarsus, in Cilicia, a man  
“well instructed in worldly and Divine literature, as  
“also in Greek and Latin, of known probity of life,  
“and venerable of age, being sixty-six years old.  
“Adrian offered him to the Pope to be ordained  
“Bishop, and prevailed, but upon these conditions,  
“that he should himself conduct him into Britain, and  
“remain there as his fellow-labourer.” Bede tells us  
that in making these conditions the Pope had a  
double object, he was glad to provide Theodore with  
a fellow-traveller well acquainted with the journey  
through France, but was still more anxious to have  
some one he could depend on in England to be a  
check on Theodore, “lest, according to the custom of  
“the Greeks, he should introduce anything contrary to  
“the true Faith into the Church in which he presided.”  
Theodore was not even in Deacon’s Orders when he  
was thus chosen to be Archbishop of Canterbury.  
As a first step he was ordained Sub-Deacon, after  
which a space of four months was allowed for his hair  
to grow that he might receive the orthodox tonsure  
(which was in the shape of a crown), for he had before

“the tonsure of S. Paul, after the manner of the “Eastern people.”<sup>1</sup> He was then consecrated by Pope Vitalian on Sunday, March 26th, A.D. 668, and on the 27th of May was sent with Adrian into Britain. The two Prelates were accompanied by an English nobleman, Biscop Baducing, an experienced traveller. They proceeded by sea to Marseilles, and thence inland to Arles, where a hindrance occurred to their progress. Ebroin, the mayor of the palace, had become acquainted with Theodore’s nationality, and suspicious of the motive of his mission into England, refused permission for the travellers to pass on. It was some time before he was satisfied, in the meantime winter set in with great severity. Theodore, thus delayed, spent part of the time in Paris, where he was hospitably entertained by the Bishop of that city, Agilbert, who had formerly been a Bishop in England. At last, after a very tedious journey, Theodore reached England from Quentavic, in Picardy, arriving in the spring of 669. As for Adrian, he was still detained in France by Ebroin.

It was now nearly five years since the death of Theodore’s predecessor, and the consequences may be imagined. Most of the other Sees in England were without Bishops, Church matters were in a deplorable state, and irregularities of various kinds had crept in. Theodore made it his first business to fill up the gaps in the Episcopate, and to get

<sup>1</sup> The custom of the Greek Church was to shave the whole head.

rid of the disorder which prevailed. For this purpose he made a solemn visitation of the Church, "travelling throughout the whole island, wheresoever the tribes of the English dwelt," and as he went he filled up the vacant Sees. "Putta, a good man, well versed in Church music," was consecrated for the See of Rochester, which had been long without a Bishop; Bisi was made Bishop of Dunwich for East Anglia; and Winchester was filled by Leutherius, an excellent and able Churchman. In the course of this visitation he found the See of York occupied by one Bishop (Chad) and claimed by another (Wilfrid) and having to decide between the two, adjudged it to Wilfrid. Whilst he was thus engaged in infusing new life into the Church he was also taking measures for improving the education of the people. An excellent scholar himself, he had also in Adrian, who was now in England, a man of first-rate ability and consummate learning, who could also devote his whole time and energies to education. He made him Abbot of "S. Augustine's," which post had become vacant by the cession of Benedict Biscop, who held it for two years. This gave Adrian a position in Canterbury admirably suited for the object in view. Here a school of a high order was opened, where an education was given far superior to any yet known in England. The Archbishop took part himself in the didactic teaching; great success attended their labours. They soon gathered a crowd of disciples. "There daily

“flowed from thence,” Bede tells us, “streams of wholesome knowledge to water the hearts of their hearers; they taught them not only the sacred volumes, but also the Arts of Poetry, Astronomy, and of ecclesiastical reckoning.” “There remain to this day,” he adds, “some of their disciples who understood the Latin and Greek languages quite as well as their own.”

Two other matters of great moment, having reference to the Faith and discipline of the Church, pressed heavily on his mind. Various errors and heresies were at this time abroad, more especially in the East, where the Monotholites had drawn great numbers into their sect. Theodore was anxious to ascertain whether this taint in the Faith had affected the English Church, and, in any case, to provide against it for the future; nor less desirous was he of obtaining some remedy for the great irregularities which had crept in among the Monks, the secular Clergy and even the Bishops, who, subject to no discipline, went about the country from one diocese to another at their own will. With an eye to this disorder, he first secured the co-operation of King Egfrid, and then assembled a Synod, representative of the whole Church, at Hertford, where were present the Bishops and the principal Clergy, especially those well acquainted with the Canonical Statutes of the Fathers. The acts of this Synod are given at large by Bede (IV. 5); they have an interest of their own to students of Church history. Here it

must suffice to give a summary of the proceedings, enough to show what the Archbishop had in view, and the masterly way in which he accomplished it.

When all were assembled, and had sat down in order, Theodore thus addressed them—"I beseech you, most beloved brothers, by the fear and love of our Redeemer, that we may all treat in common for our faith that whatsoever has been decreed and defined by the holy and reverend Fathers may be inviolably observed by us all." He then asked them, one by one, whether they were willing to observe the things which had been of old canonically decreed by the Fathers. All the Priests present replied that "they were most willing to observe fully and freely whatsoever had been laid down in the Canons of the holy Fathers." On this Theodore produced a book of the Canons, and publicly shewed them ten chapters (these had reference to the matters which he wished corrected, irregularities in discipline, the observance of Easter, and against unlawful marriages, etc.), and he enquired of them whether they were willing to give their solemn assent to the same? And when they agreed to this also, then he desired all present, each with his own hand, to subscribe to what had been decreed. Thus by his determination and tact he pledged the whole Synod to assist his efforts in the restoration of discipline. Moreover, he took occasion to take the sense of the meeting on another matter which he had greatly at heart, i.e., an increase in the

number of Bishops by a sub-division of the present huge, unmanageable Sees. At his instance the Synod agreed that "as the number of believers increased "more Bishops should be made." Strengthened by this vote he took occasion shortly after to make a first step. It so happened that one of the Bishops present at the Synod, Bisi, of Dunwich, was taken seriously ill, and so disabled from performing his episcopal functions ; Theodore, without delay, divided his See, and consecrated two Bishops for East Anglia, placing one at the old See, Dunwich, for Suffolk, and the other at Elmham, for Norfolk.

From this time Theodore, being more at ease about the discipline of the Church, turned all his thoughts this way, waiting anxiously for further openings elsewhere. He could find none, however, for two or three years. At last to his great satisfaction he received letters from the King of Northumbria, Egfrid, urging him to come to the North with a view to an increase of Bishops in his kingdom. He gladly went, and finding the King as hearty in the matter as himself, lost no time, but without even waiting to consult the Bishop (Wilfrid), who was away from home at the time, he consecrated three new Bishops in York Cathedral, Eata for Hexham, Bosa for York, and Edhed for Sidnacester in Lindsey, which at that time formed part of the Northumbrian Kingdom. It is not the place here to discuss the question how so good a man as Theodore could think himself justified



in disregarding the rights of others, and even the rules of the Church in the zealous pursuit of his reforms. It may be, however, that the special circumstances which led to his appointment, and the exceptional powers committed to him, both by the civil and spiritual authorities, may have led him to think at the time that he was free to act as he pleased for the benefit of the Church. It is certain that afterwards, on mature reflection, he regretted this act. However, to proceed. Hitherto he had met with no opposition. More than one Bishop had been already deprived by him, but they had kissed the rod with which he had smitten them. He had now, however, to deal with a Prelate as able and as determined as himself. Wilfrid soon heard the tidings, and hastening home demanded of the Archbishop and the King, for what cause or crime he had been deprived of his See? and when no cause or crime was alleged, but only the will of the Archbishop, he declared his determination neither to acquiesce in the division of his See, nor acknowledge the right of the Archbishop to deprive him without a just and lawful cause. Upon this the King, without any hesitation, declared him an outlaw, and publicly banished him from Northumbria. Unquelled in spirit Wilfrid announced to the meeting that he should appeal to Rome, and leaving Northumbria not long afterwards set out on his journey there. Perhaps the most remarkable part of

the story is that Theodore, who relied not a little on Papal authority, took no notice of Wilfrid's appeal, except that he sent Proctors to represent himself at Rome, but, in the meantime, without waiting to hear what came of it, he added one or two more Bishops to those already consecrated, reviving the See of Lindisfarne, and placing one at Abercorn, on the Forth, for the Picts. Not very long after he also placed a Bishop at Ripon.

Whilst this was going on in the North of England a more legitimate opening for the pursuit of his policy occurred in the Midlands. Ethelred, King of Mercia, earnestly invited the Archbishop to pay him a visit with a view to an increase of Bishops. Theodore went without delay into Mercia, and found there no difficulty. Sexwulf, Bishop of Lichfield, desired the same, and Osherus, ruler of the Wiccii, the principal nobleman in Worcestershire, was most anxious to have a Bishop in his own city. This led to the creation of the See of Worcester, A.D. 679, to which Tatfrid<sup>1</sup> "a most learned and industrious man,

<sup>1</sup> Tatfrid first Bishop *elect* of Worcester had been educated in S. Hilda's monastery. He was snatched away by an untimely death before he could be ordained, and was replaced by Bosel, who becoming disabled by infirmity of body was succeeded by Oftfor. Oftfor was a Churchman of great note in his day. Taught in S. Hilda's monastery, he had also studied in Kent and at Rome. Coming as a Priest into the Province of the Wiccii, "he continued a long time "preaching the word of Faith, and making himself an example of "good life to all that saw and heard him." This led to his being chosen Bishop of Worcester. He was consecrated by Bishop Wilfrid.

“and of excellent ability” was elected. At the same time Hereford was also made a See, and the See of Leicester was revived. A new Bishop was also consecrated for Sidnacester, which had been recovered to Mercia, whilst Lichfield still remained its principal See. After this the only kingdom of importance which yet remained with one Bishop only was Wessex, and this, for the present, Theodore was content to leave alone on account of his great reverence for Hedda, the admirable Bishop who then held the See of Winchester. On his account he deemed it proper to wait until a vacancy should occur in the natural order of things. The object he had had in view was to all intents and purposes already accomplished. The old régime of one Bishop for one kingdom had been discarded, an immense gain to the Church, and the value of this, we may add, had been increased a hundred-fold by the quality of the men who had been placed in the new Sees. Theodore’s Bishops were noted for their worth and holiness. Six indeed of these Bishops are revered in the Church as Saints—S.S. Chad, Hedda, Erconwald, Eata, John of Beverley, and, most famous of all, Cuthbert, whom Theodore consecrated at York shortly before his own death.

He may now be said to have fulfilled his mission, for he had recovered the Church from its disabled state, and had put its spiritual machinery into good order and activity. The remainder of his life was

spent in ably superintending it. He was now very old, but he retained his vigour to the last. One of the most important acts of his latter days was the convention of the Synod of Hatfield. This was done to give him an opportunity of testing the faith of the English Clergy, for, as before mentioned, many errors were abroad, more especially that of the Monotholite heresy. The proceedings at Hatfield were very satisfactory, the Clergy were found to be sound in the Faith. A memorial of the faith of those present was committed to writing, and a copy of it was sent to Rome by the hands of "John, the Arch-chancellor of S. Peter's," whom the Pope had sent into England, ostensibly to teach Church music, but with private instructions to make enquiry into the Faith of the English Church.<sup>1</sup>

Theodore lived till 690, having presided over the English Church for twenty-two years. Bede says of him, "that he was the first Archbishop whom the "whole of the English nation were willing to obey," and this remark applies as much to the civil as to the spiritual authorities. One reason, no doubt, why he was able to accomplish so much was because he was on such good terms with the civil powers, with whom he never seems to have clashed, and who vied with each other in doing him honour. Kings, hostile to each

<sup>1</sup> John died on his way back, and was buried at Tours, "but the "testimony of the faith of the English nation was carried to Rome, "and most agreeably received by the Apostolic Pope."

other, were at one in veneration for Theodore. Bede gives us a notable example. There was war between Mercia and Northumbria, a furious undecisive battle had been fought by the river Trent, in which battle the brave Prince Elfwin, brother of the Northumbrian King, had been slain. He was the idol of the northern people, and the utmost exasperation prevailed. The two armies were on the point of engaging again with the utmost ferocity when the Archbishop suddenly appeared on the scene, and intervening between the combatants at the risk of his life succeeded in pacifying them. By his wise and kind mediation an arrangement for peace was made, which lasted for a long period between these kingdoms. Thus happily did Theodore at times intervene in matters of State. This gave him great influence among the nobles, etc., which influence he used with the utmost advantage for the benefit of the Church. On his arrival into the country he had found as many Churches as kingdoms, not indeed in opposition to each other, but with scarce any visible bond of union. It was the glory of his policy that he succeeded in welding them into one. This he accomplished, partly by means of Synods in which the several Churches were all represented, partly by obtaining their acceptance of the same standards of Faith, and again by subjugating them all to one uniform code of discipline. Thenceforth the Church in this country assumed the character of a national

Church, even whilst the country was divided still into a number of kingdoms, usually at war with each other.

The latter days of this great Archbishop were spent in much peace and harmony. Bede says, "Never were there happier times since the English came into Britain, for their Kings, being brave men and good Christians, were a terror to all barbarous nations, and the minds of all were bent upon the joys of the heavenly kingdom," etc. Thus Theodore was allowed to see the fruit of his labours. It is certain, however, that whilst he rejoiced over the success which GOD had granted him, certain scruples of conscience somewhat troubled him, and clouded the sunshine of his soul. In the reflection of old age he began to consider how far he had been justified, during the progress of his reforms, in riding roughshod over the rights of individuals. In particular, it troubled his mind to know that Bishop Wilfrid, a devoted son of the Church, to whose banishment he had been a consenting party, was still in exile. Reflections on this subject made him more and more desirous to be reconciled with him. Wilfrid was at this time staying in Sussex. The two had a mutual friend, Erconwald, the saintly Bishop of London, who gladly offered his services. By his intervention an interview was arranged in his palace between these two great Prelates. In this interview a perfect reconciliation was arrived at. Theodore requested

Wilfrid's forgiveness for his tacit connivance with the King (Egfrid) who had banished him from Northumbria, and assured him he would do his best with his royal friends to obtain his recall home; and so faithfully did he carry out his promise that before very long Wilfrid received permission to return to his own country. No better close could be found for so good and holy a life. The Archbishop died not long after, "being old and full of days." He had reached his 89th year.

Bede's testimony to Theodore seems to sum up everything, when he says "The Churches of the English received more spiritual advantage during the time of his pontificate than ever they had done before."

## **S. Adrian, or Hadrian.**

ABBOT.

A.D. 710. JANUARY 9.

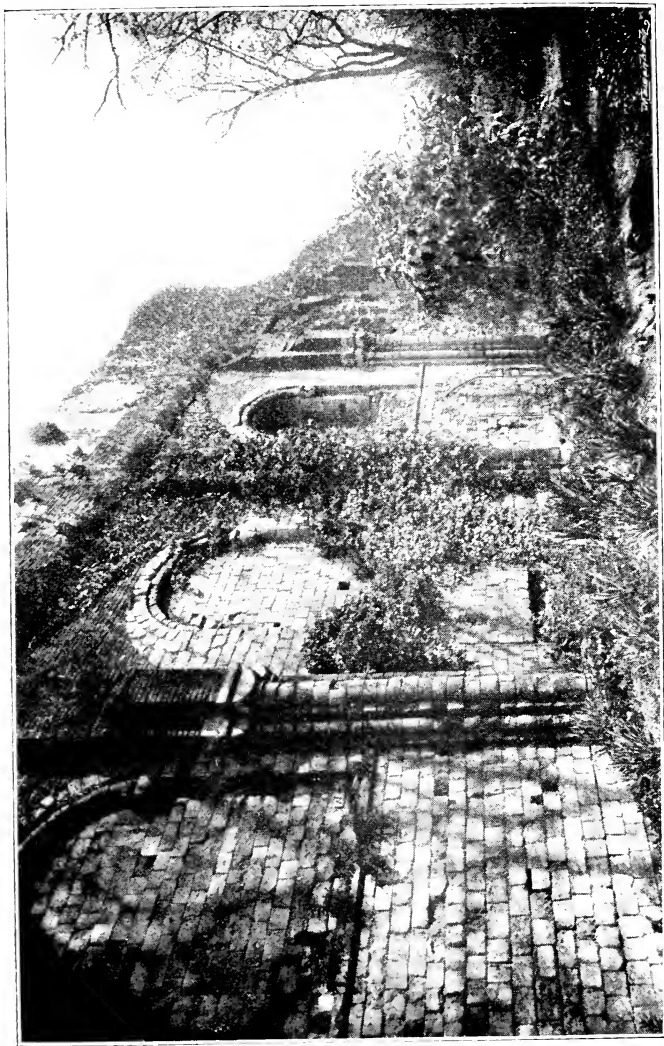
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[Bede's memoir of this Saint is so intertwined with that of S. Theodore that they cannot well be separated from each other. In order, therefore, to avoid repetition only a brief notice of this Saint is given. In the acts of S. Theodore the circumstances which led to his devoted labours in England are told in full.]

THIS Saint was an African by birth, who coming into Italy was made Abbot of a monastery in Campania. Such was his reputation for learning and other attainments that when Vitalian, Bishop of Rome, was seeking for an able Churchman to preside over the English Church, which was then in a very decayed state, he imposed this honourable but difficult task upon him. Summoning him to Rome he bade him "accept of the bishopric (Canterbury), and repair "into Britain." How earnestly, from a sense of humility, Adrian deprecated this preferment, and entreated to be allowed to nominate some one more worthy of the office has been narrated elsewhere. It must suffice to say that his plea was allowed on condition that he was able to find a worthy substitute,







**RUINS, S. AUGUSTINE'S, CANTERBURY.**

By permission of Messrs. Foulton and Son.

and would also be willing to accompany the same into Britain. To this he agreed, and so it came to pass, by the providence of GOD, that Theodore, the great Archbishop, was sent, who so admirably fulfilled his mission, and who rescued the English Church from its low estate. With this great achievement S. Theodore is justly credited, but scarcely less veneration is due to this humble Saint, who declining the preferment and the dignity of the office, willingly shared in the toil and trials of missionary life, and in the exile from Italy and civilisation which it entailed. How ably Theodore was assisted by Adrian is recorded by Bede. He accompanied him, he tells us, everywhere in his visitations after his first arrival. But the principal sphere of his own work was at Canterbury in the great monastery of which he became Abbot.

Adrian was not only a profound scholar, he also excelled in the art of teaching, and this, no doubt, was the main cause of the wonderful success which attended his labours. An education was there given such as the English had never enjoyed before. Adrian's life was prolonged to a great age of which he spent nearly forty years in England. During this long period he continued his unobtrusive, but most successful labours. Contemporary with his latter days was an outburst of literary excellence in the North of England, which had been enriched by the libraries of SS. Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrid,

and also illumined by the genius of Venerable Bede. It would not be too much to say that the foundations of English literature were laid by Adrian in the South of England, and by Bede in the North. These great scholars both proved master builders. How admirable their teaching was, may be seen in the fact that the age of their scholars was reckoned the golden age for Anglo-Saxon letters. England enjoyed at that time so great a reputation on the Continent for learning that when the Emperor Charlemagne desired to revive it in France it was to England that he turned for teachers. S. Adrian died A.D. 710, and was buried in his own monastery, then called S.S. Peter and Paul, inside S. Mary's Church.

## **S. Berthwald, or Brithwald.**

ARCHBISHOP.

A.D. 731. JANUARY 9.

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NEARLY allied to the royal family of Mercia, Berthwald at an early age renounced the world, and became a monk in the monastery of Reculver,<sup>1</sup> in Kent, where King Egbert, imitating the example of his ancestor, S. Ethelbert, had converted his palace into a religious house. Over this abbey Berthwald was appointed Abbot as early as the year 669. When Archbishop Theodore died A.D. 690 some delay occurred in filling up the vacancy, but, eventually, i.e., July 1st, A.D. 692, Berthwald was selected to succeed him. There was no other Archbishop at this time in England, and perhaps for that reason, Berthwald was consecrated in France by Godwin, Archbishop of Lyons. Berthwald presided over the English Church during the long space

<sup>1</sup> *Leland*, writing of Reculver, says "Here was a fayre and great "abbey," and he continues, "one of the fayrest and most ancient "crosses. It stood like a fayre column in the enterynge of the Quire." Images of Kings and Apostles were sculptured on it.

of 37 years, during which time many important councils affecting the interests of the Church were held. Among these the most notable was that held at Baccancelde (supposed to be *Beckenham*), in which Withred, the pious King of Kent, assisted, and confirmed the liberties of the Church in a remarkable declaration, preserved in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which we give as an appendix to this memoir.

Berthwald was a friend and school-fellow of S. Aldhelm, whom he had the pleasure of consecrating first Bishop of Sherbourne. Among other eminent Prelates who owed their perferment or consecration to him may be mentioned—Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, Tobias, the learned Bishop of Rochester, Albinus, Abbot of S.S. Peter and Paul, Canterbury (to whom Bede was much indebted for assistance in his English history), Acca, Bishop of Hexham, etc.

Archbishop Berthwalda was induced to take severe measures against Wilfrid as will be seen in that Prelate's life; after some years, however, a reconciliation took place between them, and he assisted Wilfrid to the best of his power to obtain a part of his possessions in the North. It is a mistake, though the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle itself has caused the error, to call Berthwald the first English born Archbishop. Deusdedit,<sup>1</sup> who preceded Theodore, and

<sup>1</sup> This was his Christian name, his family name was *Frithona*. He governed the See of Canterbury for nine years.

who was, as Bede informs us, a native of Sussex, was the first Archbishop (in England) of English birth.

S. Berthwald was the second, and though, in reputation not to be compared with his predecessor Theodore, yet he stood high in character as “a man “learned in the Scriptures, and well instructed in “ecclesiastical and monastic discipline.” He died of old age, January 13th, A.D. 731, and was buried (as was also S. Theodore) within the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, for the porch, or aisle, in which lay the bodies of the preceding Archbishops, was then full.

At this period England was in high reputation on the Continent for learning and religion, and many foreigners resorted to it for instruction in secular and religious learning. Among whom may be mentioned Bregwin, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who came hither from Saxony. Never, perhaps, also in English history shall we find a period when missionary zeal was more ardent in this country, or when greater results were accomplished by it. Through the whole of this century English men and English women, burning with zeal for the honour of GOD, followed each other's steps to the Continent, a great part of which was still heathen, and to their noble exertions was due, in great measure, under GOD the evangelisation of Holland, Saxony, Denmark, Germany, and even a portion of Sweden and

Norway. Archbishop Berthwald, to the best of his power, fostered, encouraged, and assisted this movement, and is justly entitled to a share in the glory of its great success.

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

QUEEN.

CIRCA 670-680. JANUARY 21.

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THIS pious Queen was the wife of Clovis II., who reigned over France, A.D. 638—A.D. 655. Her history was a very remarkable one. She was stolen from her own country when young, and taken into France, where she was exposed for sale in the slave-market, and was there bought for a small sum by Prince Erchinoald, who at the time was Mayor of the Royal Palace. Her biographer calls her a Saxon, the name by which the English were then usually called,<sup>2</sup> and he tells us that *she was brought over the sea to France*. The general belief, therefore, that she was an English woman seems well grounded, more especially when we consider that when stolen she was a Christian, for Christianity was then flourishing on

<sup>1</sup> Bathildes, *aliter*, Balchildis, Baldhild, Baltechildis, Balthildes, Baltildes, Baudour, Beauteur, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Example: Wilfrid in his appeal at Rome styles himself “an humble Bishop of Saxony.”—See Eddias.

the coast-line of England, but had not yet penetrated into Continental Saxony. Her real name was no doubt *Baldchild*, which the French refined into Bathildes.

Whoever her parents may have been it is evident she had been well brought up. Her behaviour in Prince Erchinoald's service is thus described—"The young girl conducted herself so excellently that her devout and admirable behaviour brought her into favour both with the Prince and all his attendants, for she was of a kindly mind and disposition, discreet and prudent in behaviour, guileless of evil, gentle of tone, and most strictly honest in all things; and inasmuch as she was a Saxon by birth, she possessed by nature a most pleasing and delicate form and comely appearance, being cheerful of countenance but grave in her deportment; and being such she obtained great favour with the Prince, and found grace in his eyes, so that he appointed her to the office of cup-bearer, in which honourable office she had frequently to stand in his presence and minister to him. Yet from her promotion to this dignity she felt no pride or elation, but being grounded in humility, was obedient and amiable to all her fellow-servants, giving due honour and service to the elder ones, . . . all which service she would render in a kind, amiable spirit without a murmur, so that from this admirable behaviour she obtained the good will and word of those with whom she was associated."

It happened that the wife of the Prince died, and it became known in the palace that it was the intention of the Prince to ally himself in marriage with Bathildes. His purpose, however, met with an obstacle where it might least have been expected, i.e., from Bathildes herself, "who had no ambition for earthly state and pomp, and whose wish was to dedicate herself to GOD." This reluctance to matrimony, with a view to more entire devotion, is the more credible, because it is in strict accord with the whole tenour of her life and character. However, not long after this an event occurred by which the course of her future life was determined for her. Clovis II., the young King of France, and who, no doubt, was a constant visitor in the house of his chief minister, demanded her hand in marriage. In such a case no choice was allowed her. The marriage took place A.D. 649, and she became the Queen of France.

Her exalted rank made no alteration in Bathildes, nor did she prove unequal to it, but with great conscientiousness fulfilled her new duties. "To the King she made herself obedient as to her lord, and shewed herself a mother to the Princes; of the poor she had a special care, distributing large sums in alms among them. She took opportunities of drawing the young to religious studies, and, as she had occasion, made humble suggestions to the King in behalf of Churches and of the poor." In these good works, and in the care of her soul, she was greatly

assisted by the Abbot, Genesisius, afterwards Bishop of Lyons, whom the King had appointed to be her private Chaplain.

Bathildes had three sons by King Clovis—Clotaire, Childeric, and Thierry, who all three in succession sat upon the throne of France. Her husband, King Clovis, died A.D. 655, when her children were quite young, and Bathildes was appointed Queen Regent of France in association with her eldest son, Clotaire III. The period was that of the Rois Faineants, when the principal political power lay with the Mayors of the Palace, but sufficient was left to the Queen Regent to enable her to do a vast amount of good for the benefit of the country by the reformation of abuses and enactment of salutary laws. “The pest of “Simony” at this time disgraced the Church in France, and was thenceforth disallowed, or severely punished. A still more dreadful crime, that of *infanticide*, was prevalent. “Many studied rather “for the death of their children than for making “provision for them.” Bathildes took special pains to put a stop to this. Nor was she less careful of that unfortunate class among whom she had been numbered in early life, but did all that lay in her power to ameliorate their condition. Great numbers of these, both boys and girls, especially those of her own nation, she redeemed from slavery with large sums of money. She also used her influence to obtain the enactment of laws which greatly improved the

condition of the slaves, and which made it penal for any Christian person to be sold into slavery. Nor was her influence less felt among the nobles of her Court. "Yea, so great grace was hers," continues her biographer, "that by a wonderful power of persuasion great numbers of people were drawn from the love of the world and placed under the light and easy yoke of CHRIST." It would be difficult to say how many hospitals and religious houses were founded by her. Among the most celebrated was that of Chelles, in the neighbourhood of Paris. Here had been a small convent, built by S. Clotilde, wife of King Clovis. Bathildes formed it into a large foundation, and amply endowed it. Partly perhaps on account of its celebrity, but still more, no doubt, because of its connection with Bathildes, Chelles was in great favour with the English, who had at this time few monasteries of their own, and many were wont to send their daughters to Chelles to be instructed in religion, "or espoused to their Heavenly Bridegroom." Here also the Lady Bathildes herself often repaired for purposes of devotion, and found rest in this retreat from the cares and harass of public life. For men she founded a great monastery at Corbey.

In the meantime her position as Queen Regent was a most painful one for herself, for the powerful Ebroin, Mayor of the Palace, was beyond her control. Blood was as nothing in Ebroin's sight, nor had he the slightest respect for religion. How many of the

Clergy were cruelly put to death by him it would be difficult to say. Among these were several Bishops, S. Leger among the number, some of them men of the purest lives. To add to her distress she was believed by many, inasmuch as she was Queen Regent, to be responsible for these judicial murders. She was thankful, therefore, when her son, Prince Clotaire, became of sufficient age to assume the reins of government, to seize the opportunity of resigning the Regency and of retiring from the world, which had long been her secret desire. She chose Chelles for her future home, and thither she was conducted by some of the elder nobles, "and was "honourably and lovingly received by the nuns and "taken into the number of their flock. Before departing from the Court she sent for some among "the Princes, against whom she had cause of complaint, for they had harboured false suspicions of "her. Freely forgiving them, she requested forgiveness from them for what she had felt in her heart "against them ; and so by the gift of GOD friendship "was most cordially renewed between them."

When once she had adopted the religious habit her former dignity was forgotten. The Abbess, Bertila, she obeyed as her mother, the other virgins she loved as sisters. Even whilst Queen of France there was no office that she would not render to them as to the servants of CHRIST. "Constant in prayer, "with devotion even to tears, she attended much on

“sacred reading. The sick she frequently visited, “grieving sympathetically with their sorrows; for “others, as need required, she would make humble “suggestions to the Abbess.”

S. Bathildes had not been many years in Chelles when she was seized by a painful internal disorder, under which she nearly succumbed at once. By the help of the physicians the violence of the disease was for a time abated, and her life was continued for a time. In this period of sickness “she never ceased “to render thanks to GOD for this chastisement, “giving pious and useful counsels, and a great “example of humility and devotion to the sisters.” When her end seemed to be approaching she was greatly cheered by a beautiful vision which she beheld in a dream, and which she regarded as a notice of her approaching death. “After this she was observed “to be more and more earnest in prayer, with constant “humiliation of heart commending herself to the “LORD JESUS CHRIST. When the time came at last “for her departure, full of holy joy, and supported by “a blessed assurance of the SAVIOUR’S mercy, she “forbade any manifestations of sorrow in her chamber, “and such obedience was paid to her wishes by the “sisters present that no groan or sigh was heard, nor “any sound but the voices of the Priests commending “her most blessed soul to GOD. When she had “made the holy sign with much confidence, as she “was in the act of raising her eyes and hands to

“heaven, she was delivered in peace from the burden  
“of the flesh, and her soul was received into bliss by  
“the holy angels.”

S. Bathildes was buried in Chelles, within the Church of the Holy Cross, which she had built from its foundations. With her was buried in the same grave a little girl, her god-child, of the age of seven years, Radegundes, whom she dearly loved. The child died suddenly just before the Queen expired. Her relics are preserved with those of S. Bathildes, and from the spiritual relationship that existed between them, she is sometimes styled “the little Bathildes.”



# The Kingdom of Northumbria.

(SECOND PERIOD.)



## S. Hilda.

ABBESS.

A.D. 680. NOVEMBER 17.

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S. HILDA, or Hild, as she was sometimes called, was of noble birth. She was the daughter of Hereric, a nephew of King Edwin. Her parents shared the misfortunes of that Prince, who spent so many of his early years in exile whilst the tyrant Ethelfrid occupied the throne of Northumbria. During this time Hereric found refuge amongst the Welsh, who still preserved their independence in a part of the West Riding of Yorkshire then called Elmete. Here, as seems probable, Hilda was born, about the year 614. Her mother, Bertswitha, soon afterwards became a widow, her husband, Hereric, having lost his life by poison. It is recorded by Bede that Bertswitha in her desolateness and deep sorrow had the following remarkable dream: she dreamed that she was searching everywhere for her husband, but unable to find him. Whilst thus fruitlessly occupied she beheld beneath her robe a splendid jewel of such

exceeding lustre that its radiant light spread far and wide illuming the whole country. Though unable at the time to attach any meaning to her dream, she found some comfort in it, and in after years beheld its fulfilment in her daughter, whose bright example became a shining light to all who knew her, and to the whole Church of GOD in this land.

Edwin's misfortunes came to an end A.D. 617, on the death of Ethelfrid, in whose place he became King of Northumbria. His kith and kin partook, of course, of his prosperity. Hilda's mother, with her little girl, returned to Deira, and probably lived in Edwin's palace, certainly at his Court. There, on occasion of his marriage with the Christian Princess Ethelberga, daughter of the famous King Ethelbert, they were brought into personal contact with S. Paulinus, who had accompanied Ethelberga to Northumbria, and no doubt heard him preach; at all events, when at last King Edwin was converted to the Faith, A.D. 627, Hilda's mother and she herself also made their profession, and were baptised with him by Paulinus in the temporary Cathedral of York. Hilda was then about thirteen or fourteen years old. She was naturally of a serious, religious turn of mind, and before her profession lived a very devout life. Bede, speaking of this part of her life, says, "She spent one half of her days "living nobly in the secular habit." At the end

of this time, when she was thirty-three years old, she was much moved by the example of her sister, Hereswith, who had devoted herself to GOD in a religious house in France. Hereswith had married Ethelhere, an East Anglian Prince, brother of Annas, who then occupied the throne of that Province. In her husband's life-time she retired from the world, and passing into France, entered the famous monastery of Chelles,<sup>1</sup> near Paris. This decided Hilda to seek an entrance into the same. With this purpose she left the North of England for East Anglia purposing to cross thence into France. In the meantime, until all was ready, she spent the time on a visit to her relation, King Annas. It happened, most fortunately, that some delay occurred in commencing her journey, and whilst she was still in East Anglia, Bishop Aidan becoming aware of her intention, and grieving at the loss to her own country "of so precious a jewel," sent letters to her urging her return to Northumbria. Moved by his letters and earnest request, Hilda gave up her design, and returning home, devoted herself to work under S. Aidan.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This monastery was founded originally by Queen Clotild, the first Christian Queen of France. It was afterwards so enlarged by S. Bathildes that she was looked upon as the founder of it. It was the original monastery that is spoken of here.

<sup>2</sup> It does not seem clear what became of S. Hilda at King Edwin's death, or how she spent the time between that event (when King Edwin's friends and relations were scattered everywhere) and the date of her journey into East Anglia, a considerable time, for she was

He placed her at first in a small house to the north of the river Wear, and for one year she there led a monastic life in company with a few companions. At the end of this time she was made Abbess of a nunnery at Heruteu (Hartlepool), which had been lately built by a Religious named Heiu, who is reported to have been the first woman in the Province of the Northumbrians who took the profession and habit of a nun. To this she was consecrated by Bishop Aidan. Hilda proved an excellent Abbess, and soon established an admirable rule, ordered in accordance with the counsels of Bishop Aidan, and other holy men, whose love and estimation she won by her piety and wisdom. It was during her stay here that the infant Princess, Elfleda, was entrusted to her charge by King Oswy, in part fulfilment of a vow made before the battle of Winwidfield. Oswy, at the same time, gave endowments of land for twelve royal foundations in various parts of his dominions. One of these

nineteen when her Uncle Edwin was slain, and thirty-three when she retired to King Annas' Court. Of this period of fourteen years we know nothing. The kings who succeeded Edwin belonged to the rival house of Ethelfrid; the political relations between these two houses were hostile. On the other hand, there would exist between King Oswald and Hilda religious ties calculated to unite them in close and holy friendship. It seems most probable that the latter considerations prevailed, and that Hilda spent these years of her early life in proximity to the Court of King Oswald, and as a member of S. Aidan's flock. If so he would have formed his high opinion of her from his own knowledge and experience.

portions of land was at Streaneshalch (our modern Whitby), and Hilda was commissioned to build an abbey on it, and to take charge of it when built, "which work she most diligently fulfilled, "building it up after the same model of regular "life after which she had regulated the former one, "and teaching there the strict observance of justice, "piety, and chastity, and the other virtues, and above "all, of peace and love, so that after the example "of the Primitive Church, there was neither a rich "man there, nor a poor man, they had all things "in common, and no one had anything of his own. "She was of so great prudence that not only "poor people, in their necessities, but kings and "princes also, would seek her at times, and take "counsel of her." The monastery at Whitby, like others of any size in these early times (though the plan was soon relinquished), was a complex or double one, divided into two separate compartments but with a Church in common. One of these compartments was for men, the other for women. Hilda presided over both. In such monasteries it was an invariable custom that an Abbess should be the head. One principal feature in Hilda's rule was the attention she paid to the education of the members of her Society, and their studies in general, above all, to the study of the Holy Scriptures, which was made a part of the daily discipline. Her house, in consequence, became so noted for the learning

of its inmates, that when there was need of a Bishop, or any one to fill a post of authority, men's thoughts turned instinctively to it. Five Bishops, at least, were taken from her house at Whitby, all men of singular merit and sanctity, among whom may be mentioned, Otffor, third Bishop of Worcester, who was celebrated for his learning and whose life was an example to all who saw or knew him. It is noteworthy that S. Hilda, who kept such strict discipline, enjoyed none the less the love and affection of those who were under her rule. They regarded her with the sincerest affection. Nor was this veneration confined to the members of her Society, but was shared by many in the outside world. "All who knew her," says Bede, "called her "Mother, for her singular piety and grace which "had a most happy influence on her Society, and "becoming known abroad moved many that never "saw her to repentance and correction of life."

"When she had passed many years in this monas-  
"tery, it pleased GOD that her holy soul should be  
"tried by a lengthy sickness of body, that after the  
"example of the Apostle, her virtue might be made  
"perfect through weakness, for being struck with a  
"fever she began to suffer from great heat, and for  
"six continuous years she laboured without cessation  
"under this affliction, during the whole of which time  
"she never ceased to give thanks to her Creator, and  
"to teach both in public and private the flock which



“had been committed to her . . . admonishing them  
“by her example not only to serve GOD in health of  
“body, but also faithfully to give thanks to Him  
“continually in adversity and sickness of body. In  
“the seventh year of her illness, the fever seized  
“upon her vital parts, and brought her life to an end.  
“She passed away in the night, about cock-crow,  
“having just received the Viaticum of the most Holy  
“Communion in the presence of the whole community  
“of the Sisters, whom she was exhorting to Christian  
“love among themselves and with all others, when  
“her end coming suddenly she passed with joy from  
“death unto life.” This occurred on the 17th of  
November, A.D. 680, when she was sixty-six years  
old.

Not many of our early English Saints have been more justly famous than this wise, excellent, pious lady who, dedicating herself to GOD in a ripe age, exercised a wonderful influence for good and for the diffusion of religion in the North of England.

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NOTE.

Many persons of note were interred in the Church attached to S. Hilda's Abbey—King Edwin, King Oswy and his Queen, Anflada (Edwin's daughter), S. Hilda, and the Abbess Elfleda who succeeded her, &c. The monastery flourished exceedingly for about 200 years, when it was destroyed by the Danes, who infested the country under Hinguar and Hubba. However, the bodies had been previously removed. Whitby Abbey lay in ruins until after the Norman Conquest, when it was rebuilt by William de Percy, and filled with

Benedictine Monks. However, it never recovered its celebrity, or "shewed any signs," so Malmesbury tells us, "of its former opulence."

The rocky shores in the neighbourhood of Whitby abound in curious petrifications. These in olden times were believed to be venomous creatures turned by S. Hilda into stones. Leland (time of Henry VIII.) writes, "Hilda by her prayers turned serpents into stone." Camden (later) speaking of Whitby says, "Here are found stones resembling "snakes rolled up, the sports of nature, which she, as one observes, "amuses herself with creating when weary of producing realities and "serious productions. You would think they had once been snakes "covered over with a crust of stone. Report ascribes them to the "prayers of S. Hilda, as if changed by her, who in the early Saxon "Church opposed with all her might the tonsure of Priests, and the "celebration of Easter according to the Roman Ritual."

S. Hilda, though baptised by S. Paulinus, yet coming under the influence of S. Aidan was, no doubt, a zealous stickler for the Celtic ceremonial introduced by him, and as such she was no lover of S. Wilfrid, who complains of her hostility to himself. It would appear, however, that she used her good sense in conforming to the Catholic observance of Easter after the decision arrived at in the Whitby Synod.

## S. Cædmon.

CIRCA 680. FEBRUARY II.

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[The following notice of Cædmon (extracted from *Bede*, Book IV. 24) is given here as an episode to the Life of S. Hilda, of whose monastery he became a member. This remarkable man (who is occasionally reckoned among the Saints) was in his youth a lay-brother at Whitby, and his office was to tend the cattle which belonged to the abbey. The Abbess with great sagacity discovered in this illiterate herdsman the makings of a poet, and caused him to be taken into the monastery to be there educated and instructed in the Holy Scriptures. The event shewed her wisdom. Cædmon became the first, if not the only, poet of Anglo-Saxon times, and his writings continued in vogue among religious people so long as that era lasted.]

“THERE was in this Abbess’ monastery a certain  
 “brother particularly remarkable for the grace of  
 “GOD, who was wont to make pious and religious  
 “verses, so that whatever was interpreted to him  
 “out of Scripture he soon after put the same into  
 “poetical expressions of much sweetness and humility  
 “in English, which was his native tongue. By his  
 “verses the minds of many were often excited to  
 “despise the world, and to aspire to heaven. Others,  
 “after him, attempted in the English nation to com-  
 “pose religious poems, but none could ever compare  
 “with him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from  
 “men but from GOD, for which reason he never could

“compose any trivial or vain poem, but only those  
“which relate to religion ; for having lived in a secular  
“habit till he was well advanced in years, he had never  
“learned anything of versifying ; for which reason  
“being sometimes at entertainments when it was  
“agreed that for the sake of mirth that all present  
“should sing in their turns, when he saw the  
“instrument come towards him he rose up from  
“table and returned home. Having done so at  
“a certain time, and gone out of the house where  
“the entertainment was to the stable, where he  
“had to take care of the horses that night, he  
“then composed himself to rest at the proper time.  
“A person appearing to him in his sleep, and saluting  
“him by his name, said, ‘Cœdmon, sing some song  
“‘to me.’ He answered, ‘I cannot sing, for that was  
“‘the reason why I left the entertainment and retired  
“‘to this place, because I could not sing.’ The other  
“who talked to him replied, ‘However, you shall  
“‘sing.’ ‘What shall I sing?’ rejoined he. ‘Sing  
“‘the beginning of created beings,’ said the other.  
“Hereupon he presently began to sing verses to the  
“praise of GOD, which he had never heard. . . .  
“Awaking from his sleep he remembered all that he  
“had sung in his dream, and soon added much more  
“to the same effect in verse worthy of the Deity.

“In the morning he came to the Steward, his  
“superior, and having acquainted him with the gift  
“he had received, was conducted to the Abbess, by

“whom he was ordered, in the presence of many  
“learned men, to tell his dream, and repeat the verses  
“that they might all give their judgment what it was,  
“and whence his verse proceeded. They all concluded  
“that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by  
“our LORD. They expounded to him a passage in  
“Holy Writ, either historical, or doctrinal, ordering  
“him, if he could, to put the same into verse. Having  
“undertaken it he went away, and returning the next  
“morning gave it to them composed in most excellent  
“verse. Whereupon the Abbess embracing the grace  
“of GOD in the man, instructed him to quit the  
“secular habit, and take upon him the monastic  
“life, which being accordingly done, she associated  
“him with the rest of the brethren in her monastery,  
“and ordered that he should be taught the whole  
“series of sacred history. Thus Cædmon, keeping  
“in mind all he heard, and as it were chewing the  
“cud, converted the same into most harmonious  
“verse, and sweetly repeating the same made his  
“masters in their turn his hearers. He sang the  
“creation of the world, the origin of man, . . . with  
“many other histories from Holy Writ; the Incarna-  
“tion, Passion, Resurrection of our LORD, . . . the  
“terror of future judgment, the horror of the pains of  
“hell, and the delights of heaven, besides many more  
“about the Divine benefits and judgments by which he  
“endeavoured to turn away all men from the love of  
“vice, and to excite in them the love of and applica-

“tion to good actions ; for he was a very religious  
 “man, humbly submissive to regular discipline, but  
 “full of zeal against those who behaved themselves  
 “otherwise, for which reason he ended his life  
 “happily. For when the time of his departure drew  
 “near he laboured, for the space of fourteen days,  
 “under a bodily infirmity which seemed to prepare  
 “the way, yet so moderate that he could talk and  
 “walk the whole time. In his neighbourhood was  
 “the house to which those that were sick and  
 “likely shortly to die were carried. He desired the  
 “person that attended him in the evening, as the  
 “night came on in which he was to depart this life,  
 “to make ready a place there for him to take his rest.  
 “This person wondering why he should desire it,  
 “because there was as yet no sign of his dying soon,  
 “did what he had ordered. He accordingly went  
 “there, and conversing pleasantly in a joyful manner  
 “with the rest that were in the house before, when  
 “it was past midnight he asked them whether they  
 “had the Eucharist there? They answered, ‘What  
 “need of the Eucharist, for you are not likely to  
 “die, since you talk so merrily with us as if you  
 “were in perfect health.’ ‘However,’ said he, ‘bring  
 “me the Eucharist.’<sup>1</sup> Having received the same

<sup>1</sup> It appears from this passage that in the Anglo-Saxon Church a part of the consecrated bread was reserved in the Infirmary, to be at hand on any sudden emergency, and that it might be used in such cases without the presence of the Priest. It will be noted also that it was at this time taken in the hand.

“into his hand, he asked, ‘Whether they were all  
“‘in charity with him, and without any enmity or  
“‘rancour?’” They answered that they were all in  
“perfect charity and free from anger; and in their  
“turn asked him whether he was in the same mind  
“towards them? He answered, ‘I am in charity,  
“‘my children, with all the servants of GOD.’ Then  
“strengthening himself with the heavenly Viaticum,  
“he prepared for the entrance into another life, and  
“asked, ‘How near the time was when the brothers  
“‘were to be awakened to sing the nocturnal praises  
“‘of our LORD?’” They answered, ‘It is not far off.’  
“Then he said, ‘Well, let us wait that hour.’ And  
“signing himself with the sign of the cross he laid  
“his head on the pillow, and falling into a slumber  
“ended his life so in silence. Thus it came to pass,”  
Bede adds, “that as he had served GOD with a simple  
“and pure mind, and undisturbed devotion, so he now  
“departed to His presence, leaving the world by a  
“quiet death; and that tongue which had composed  
“so many holy words in praise of the Creator,  
“uttered its last words whilst he was in the act of  
“signing himself with the cross, and recommending  
“himself into His hands, and by what has been here  
“said, he seems to have had fore-knowledge of his  
“death.”

## **S. Boisil.<sup>1</sup>**

PRIOR.

CIRCA 661.

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S. BOISIL was one of those humble Saints who do good work for GOD through their pupils. Every one has heard of S. Cuthbert, few perhaps of S. Boisil, the master mind who trained that great Saint. He was Prior of the famous abbey of Melrose (then called Mailros), famous now even in its ruins, but in his time an obscure religious house in the midst of a dense forest, through which ran the river Tweed. Nevertheless it was to Mailros that Cuthbert turned his steps when he made up his mind to devote himself to religion, thither drawn by his intense desire of having Boisil for his master. Cuthbert received from him both "the knowledge of the Scriptures and "example of good works." Among the good habits which he learned from S. Boisil may be mentioned in

<sup>1</sup> "Boisil's name is perpetuated in the little town of S. Boswell's on "the Tweed, east of Melrose (famous for its sheep-fair), and in the "dedication of the Church at Tweedmouth."—Plummer's *Bede* II. 266.



particular that zeal for missionary labour among the heathen population of the neighbourhood, which forms such a conspicuous feature in the life of that Saint. A most holy friendship united the two in the bonds of Christian love till death parted them.

Boisil died of the plague about A.D. 661. In later times his remains were translated to Durham, and placed near those of his beloved pupil, A.D. 1031.

## **S. Cuthbert.**

**HERMIT, AND BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE.**

A.D. 687. MARCH 20.

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S. CUTHBERT may be regarded as the ideal Saint of the Anglo-Saxon Church; in his character and disposition is displayed all that is noble, loveable, and holy, and if at times we see in his faith the simplicity of a child, we see also evidences of a faith so real, so true, so earnest, and so great, as could only be found in GOD'S most favoured Saints. It is remarkable in the case of one held in universal veneration that we know so little of his birth and parentage. It would be interesting to know whether the intense faith, which was such a leading feature in his character, "dwelt first in his mother," or was implanted in him by the heedful care of some one else. There is a passage in his life which seems to imply that it was due to the influence of a foster-parent. It is certain that from a very tender age, i.e., from the time he was eight years old, he was nurtured by a pious

women, named Kenswith, whom he dearly loved and called his mother. Her house also he considered his home, until he became a Monk in Melrose. From this we may gather that the Church is indebted to her for the careful tending of Cuthbert's early years, and that she sowed the good seed "which fell on "good ground, and brought forth fruit abundantly," even "an hundred-fold."

As Cuthbert's parents are unknown, so also is the place of his birth; we may, however, safely presume that it was in the Border Country, not far from Melrose, on the Scottish side of the border as now defined, but in England as the country was then divided, for the southern parts of Scotland at that time formed part of the English kingdom of Northumbria. All the incidents of Cuthbert's early life, of which several anecdotes are told, are connected with this particular region.

From one of these anecdotes we learn that Cuthbert, as a boy, delighted in sports and games, that he was strong, active, and lively, fond of leaping, racing, and wrestling, in which he so excelled that none of his companions were able to compete with him. A curious story is told, that, on one occasion, when he was playing various pranks with other boys, he was rebuked by a child only three years old for indulging in sports so unworthy of one destined to be a Priest and Bishop in the Church.

It appears from another anecdote that, a few years

later, a great change had occurred in his health. Cuthbert, now a youth, was no longer strong and healthy. A swelling had settled in his knee, threatening to make him a cripple for life. The doctors were unable to do anything for him, and Cuthbert was resigning himself to his fate, when he unexpectedly found a perfect cure from a simple remedy, recommended to him by a passing traveller. After this he soon recovered his strength, and became a soldier in King Egfrid's army. His military life, however, was brief; he only served one campaign, of which we have no details, except only that the soldiers suffered such great privations that it was regarded as a special providence in Cuthbert's case that he obtained a supply of food. There was no standing army, of course, in those days. As soon as the campaign was over Cuthbert returned home to his usual employment. In the meantime, wherever he was and whatsoever his employment, Cuthbert was diligently serving GOD. Seldom do we find a more remarkable instance of early piety. The most pious persons, as a rule, may remember too well the days when they followed their own wills, and also the turning point when they first began to live to GOD. It does not appear to have been so with this Saint. In childhood he believed in GOD with a child's faith, and loved Him with a child's love; and when he had entered on the perilous age of youth he was still humble, modest, temperate. He schooled him-

self in the discipline of CHRIST, and in observance of the rules of the Church.

The following anecdote tells of this time of his life, and is not without interest. The reader will notice how slow he was to avail himself even of a legitimate excuse for relaxing his rule of life. It happened, we are told, that he had occasion to make a journey on a Friday in the early winter. Leaving home very early in the morning he arrived at the first stage about nine o'clock. It was a village, and Cuthbert knew one of the villagers. Going to her house he asked permission to rest awhile, and begged leave to bait his horse. The good woman joyfully acceded, and asked him to let her prepare breakfast for him. This, however, Cuthbert declined, "For," said he, "it is a fast day, and I must not break fast "yet." (It was the custom at this time for religious persons to prolong their fast on Fridays till three o'clock p.m.) His hospitable hostess nevertheless urged him to take some refreshment, because of the length of the journey and the difficulties of obtaining food, telling him that if he did not take the present opportunity he would get nothing to eat the whole day, and perhaps the day after as well. However, with all her kindly intended arguments she failed to persuade him, and he shortly resumed his journey. The day began to wear away, and Cuthbert found, as his hostess had warned him, no signs of human habitation. Seeing he could not arrive at his destin-

ation that same day, and noticing some huts in which shepherds had lived during the summer, but which were now deserted, he entered one of them, and tied his horse with a halter against the wall. There was straw on the floor, which had once formed part of the roof. Cuthbert littered this for his horse to eat, and was about to pass the time in prayer, when suddenly, in the midst of his devotions, he saw the horse raise his head to browse on the roof of the hut, and a cloth bundle fell with the grass on the floor. He went to examine the bundle, and to his great astonishment found wrapped up in the napkin half a new loaf of bread and meat enough for his supper. Cuthbert returned grateful thanks to GOD for this timely supply for his needs. He gave part of the bread to his horse and made his supper of the rest. "From "that day," we are told, "he paid more attention "than ever to the duty of fasting."

At the time of which we are writing Christianity had but lately been introduced into the country. The old Pagan superstition, though no longer the national religion, was still a force and power in the rural districts, which were the last to be evangelised. Here great numbers sympathised with idolatry, and rose up against the new Faith, specially hating the Monks, who had been the chief agents in the conversion of the people. This must be remembered when we read the following story.

There was a monastery on the south bank of the

river Tyne (not far from its mouth). The Monks wanting some timber sent a few of their number to float it down the river in a raft. Whilst they were thus engaged a violent storm arose, which seizing the raft drove it from the shore towards the sea. The Monks on the banks seeing their brethren in great peril did their best to put off a boat for their rescue, but the hurricane overpowered their efforts. Unable to do anything themselves they turned to GOD in prayer, taking their stand on an eminence by the river-bank, whence they could see the raft in the distance and their unfortunate brethren carried off, as it seemed, to destruction. Then kneeling down together they implored the Divine mercy. They were not the only spectators. On the other side of the river a crowd of rough country-people had collected, who came to gaze on the spectacle. Most of them were "lewd fellows of the baser sort." So far were they from sympathising with the distressed Monks that they were amusing themselves over their misfortunes, and making great sport about their helplessness. Cuthbert was also on the bank, and expostulated with them. "What mean you, comrades!" he cried, "in turning into derision those who are in peril of death. Would it not be kinder to say a prayer for them than to amuse yourselves over their misfortune." This appeal to their better feelings only elicited an angry response. "No!" they cried, "we will none of us pray for them. We do

“not wish GOD to spare one of these men, who have taken away our old customs and religion, and introduced another which no one can understand.” Cuthbert made no reply, but kneeling down on the river-bank made earnest prayer to GOD for the imperilled Monks. Now it so happened that at this very time the wind suddenly changed, and blowing from the opposite quarter, drove the raft back towards the shore. Before very long the Monks were enabled to land, and also to unload the timber at a point most suitable for their purpose. Long after Cuthbert’s death this story was told by one of those very men with whom he had expostulated. He added that he and his comrades were much ashamed of themselves afterwards, and had ever since entertained a high opinion of Cuthbert.

The Saint had hitherto followed a worldly calling. It was a very slender thread however which held him to it, and this was snapped shortly after by the following incident. He happened to be engaged in tending sheep with other youths of his own age, and it was his lot to spend many a dark night on the chill sides of the Grampians. On one occasion, his companions being fast asleep and he himself, according to his wont, engaged in prayer, he observed a splendid burst of light in the sky. Gazing upon it he saw, or imagined he saw, a band of angels streaming down towards the earth, and presently afterwards re-ascending to heaven with a bright form in their arms. Much







excited he woke up his companions, and told them what he had seen. Doubtless some great Saint, some one beloved of GOD, had that night been freed from the burden of the flesh, and carried up by the angels into heaven! Now it happened that on this very night the saintly Bishop Aidan died in Lindisfarne. When Cuthbert heard of this it made such an impression on his mind that he finally determined to give up all secular callings and devote himself wholly to GOD.

As soon as he could make arrangements with the owners of the sheep for their future tending he set out on horseback, lance in hand (for so wayfarers were then accustomed to travel) for the monastery of Melrose (Mailros), being drawn thither because of S. Boisil, its Prior, to whom above all others he desired to attach himself. It happened that Boisil was in the court-yard of the monastery when Cuthbert arrived. He gave him a hearty welcome, and so commended him to the Abbot, Eata (who returned home shortly after), that Cuthbert was admitted at once into the novitiate. Cuthbert had now found his true vocation. Austerities were nothing to one who had long since inured himself to endure hardship, and the frequent devotions day and night were a source of perpetual joy to him. Moreover his intimacy with Boisil, who loved him greatly, added much to his happiness. Under his tuition he proved an excellent novice, and became an example to others in every branch of

monastic discipline. This included not only constant reading, watching, and praying, but also daily manual labour. His bodily health and strength proved of great service, enabling him not only to do hard work without fatigue, but also to endure long abstinences without injury to his health. After the example of Samson, and the Nazarites of old, he abstained from everything that could intoxicate, at the same time taking only so much food as was absolutely necessary for his health.

In the course of a few years after Cuthbert's entrance into Melrose the following circumstances took him to Ripon. Alchfrid, King of that part of the country (Deira), was desirous of founding an abbey there, and he commissioned the Bishop (Eata) to build it and form a community of Monks, of whom he made him Abbot. Eata, accordingly went to live at Ripon, taking with him one or two of his Monks (Cuthbert among them) to help him to instruct the new members, and to fashion them on the excellent model in use in Melrose. Cuthbert's office was that of *praepositus hospitum*, i.e., he had the care of the guests. One wintry morning, when snow covered the ground, Cuthbert rising early as usual went to the guest-chamber of the monastery, and found a young man sitting there. Supposing him to be a traveller, he began to pay him the usual attentions, bringing water for his hands and hot water for his feet, which he also himself washed and dried, and as his guest's

feet were very cold he cherished them in his bosom to warm them. Moreover, as the third hour of the day was approaching, he pressed the traveller to stay for breakfast, lest if he went away fasting he should succumb to the cold and fatigue of the journey. The stranger, however, declined, saying, he had a very long journey before him. Cuthbert reiterated his entreaties, and as soon as Tierce was said he laid a table for his guest, and placing some viands before him urged him to partake of them whilst he went to fetch some hot bread fresh from the oven. On his return he found no one in the room. Nor had any one seen the stranger depart. Not a trace or footstep was to be seen in the snow which covered the ground on every side. Moreover, three cakes of the finest quality were lying on the table of the hospice, and an ambrosial fragrance filled the room. The astonished Cuthbert then began to understand that the guest he had entertained was no mortal, but a being "who came, not to be fed, but to feed."

This is the only incident recorded of Cuthbert's life in Ripon, his stay there was very brief owing to the following circumstances. King Alchfrid, the founder, was an ardent admirer of the Kentish customs, while Eata had been brought up by S. Aidan to practise the ritual in use at Iona. It appears that the King demanded of him the introduction of his own ritual, and when Eata demurred, or refused, he dismissed him from Ripon, and put the

monastery into Wilfrid's possession. Thus rudely displaced Bishop Eata returned with his Monks to Melrose. This was about A.D. 661. They had not long returned when the dreadful pestilence, so often alluded to in contemporary biographies, occurred. It was very fatal in Melrose. Cuthbert himself was seized, and it was fully believed he would sink under it. The Monks dreaded to lose one so greatly valued by them, and they determined to pass the whole night together in prayer to GOD for him. Nothing was said of this to Cuthbert, but the following morning some one mentioned it to him. He was greatly affected, and presently cried, "What! have so many good and "holy men thus interceded to GOD for me? It is "impossible that GOD should not hear them! Why "do I lie here any longer! Bring me my staff and "shoes." Straightway getting out of bed, he took a few steps, leaning on his staff, and by degrees his strength returned. He recovered to the great joy of the community. His biographer, however, tells us that there were after-consequences of this attack. He became subject to internal pains from a tumour which settled in one of his legs. Not long after this Cuthbert lost his beloved master, Boisil. This Saint was credited with the gift of prophecy, or rather, with a wonderful insight into the future. Many instances are given of his "predictions" which were verified by the event. Amongst these are mentioned Cuthbert's destination to be a Bishop, and the exact time of his

own death. Observing that Cuthbert was sufficiently recovered to renew his studies, he bade him consider what book they should read together for their last study, for he knew he should not be with him more than one week. They talked the matter over, and chose S. John's Gospel. The manuscript of it was divided into seven parts (or folds). Taking one part for each day's study they finished the Gospel by the end of the week, when Boisil, as he had predicted, was seized with an illness which quickly proved fatal. Similar instances occur in the records of these times of the constant study of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible formed the main part of the studies of the Monks and other devout persons of this age, nor did they give their minds to any other study with the same earnestness.

On Boisil's death Cuthbert was chosen Prior of Melrose, which office he discharged with pious zeal. He also laboured outside the monastery among the country people in the neighbourhood, seeking to win them to the love of GOD. And there was much need we are told of such missionary work. Many who called themselves Christians disgraced their profession by their lives, and others were still really heathens, as appeared when the plague attacked the district. Numbers then forsook the Churches and the Sacraments and returned to their old idolatry, trusting in amulets and other heathen charms as their hope of safety. Cuthbert, deeply grieved at this relapse, went

often among them, at times on horseback, but oftener on foot. He made circuits of the villages, preaching to the people wherever he went, as Boisil had done before him. In this early period, when there were very few Churches in the country, open-air preaching was frequent, and wherever a Priest entered a village or town and gave notice of a Service, the people flocked to hear him. In this mission work no one was able to do so much as Cuthbert. "He "was so skilful a preacher," says Bede, "so fond was "he of enforcing his subject, and such a brightness "appeared in his angelic face, that no man present "presumed to conceal from him the most hidden "secrets of his heart." The most wicked men were attracted to him, and openly confessed their sins in his presence, submitting under his guidance to various acts of penance.

In this mission work Cuthbert chose as a rule the least accessible parts of the country, high up among the mountains, and localities where the greatest poverty and barbarism prevailed. In these out-of-the-way parts he would sometimes stay two or three weeks, sometimes even a whole month, believing that nothing could be done by casual visits. Even whilst engaged in this laborious work he did not relax his austere rule of life. It is difficult to understand how any one could practice such austerities and live! But they do not seem to have injured him. He often passed two, or even three, successive nights in prayer,



not going to bed. His custom on such occasions was to immerse himself for hours in cold water, probably for the purpose of keeping himself awake. How this came to be discovered (for he never spoke of it himself) is told at large in a curious anecdote given in the Life of S. Ebba. An inquisitive Monk, in Coldingham Abbey, where Cuthbert was staying, noticed that he went out generally of an evening, and doubtful what this meant, once followed him, secretly wishing to see where he went, and to his amazement beheld him enter the sea, where he remained immersed until the hour for the first Service in the Chapel drew near. This custom was not confined to S. Cuthbert. Other Saints of this period practised it occasionally. To this day a fountain in Lichfield is pointed out as the place in which S. Chad used to say his prayers, and the same is told of other Saints. Many stories are given in Cuthbert's life to prove his wonderful foresight into the future. It is certain, however, that he never claimed this power. We find him on the contrary disclaiming it. His enthusiastic admirers were too persuaded in their own minds to listen to him. They watched his every word and act, and interpreted the event in accordance with it. The most trifling incident, if he dropped his knife at table, was believed to have a meaning in it, and if anything dreadful was found to have happened at that time, the Saint was believed to have beheld it in the spirit. Some of these stories, however, are intensely

interesting, for they tell of Cuthbert's conduct in trying difficulties. How earnestly he applied to GOD for help, his perfect confidence in the Divine mercy, and his acceptance of the event, whatever it might be, as an answer to his prayers.

One or two instances may be given as examples :— It once happened that Cuthbert and two other Monks were sent from Melrose into the land of the Picts. It was winter time, just after Christmas, but the weather was so fine that expecting a quick return they took no provisions with them. Unfortunately a sudden change in the weather occurred on their arrival. The sea became so rough, the wind so tempestuous that return was impossible. They were left in a waste uninhabited part of the country with nothing to eat. What with cold and hunger their condition was deplorable. So they continued for some days. In the meantime Cuthbert, inured to privation, continued to spend his night in prayer as usual, and as he passed the time by himself on the *seashore* it was probably with the purpose of immersion. In the meantime he kept up the spirits of his distressed companions, constantly encouraging them to put their trust in GOD. The Festival of the Epiphany was nigh at hand, which in those early days of the Church was observed with the utmost joy and festivity. Cuthbert bade them be of good cheer, he did not doubt that GOD would provide something for them on that great day. His cheerful manner, if not his words,

kept up their hope, and great indeed was their joy, and still greater their wonder at Cuthbert's foresight, when true enough, as he had foretold, a godsend came to them on the morning of the Festival of the Epiphany, a fine "dolphin" (or porpoise) had been cast up on the shore by the stormy waves. "See," cried Cuthbert, "the present that GOD has sent you! "I doubt not that it will suffice us till we are able to "return." The fish proved to be excellent, and the half-starved Monks feasted on it till the fourth day, by which time the storm had ceased. Fine weather set in, and they all returned happily home.

On another occasion Cuthbert was out on one of his missionary journeys with a boy for a companion. They were in a wild part of the country, and without provisions. Cuthbert enquired of his young companion if he happened to know of any cottager who for the love of GOD would give them rest and refreshment. The boy knew of none, they were all strangers to him, he doubted if any would help them. "Well then, we must look to some one else," replied Cuthbert, "One Who never fails those who seek His "help: at His bidding, somebody, some creature, aye, "that very bird now flying over our heads (pointing "to a large sea-eagle) might supply our needs!" Scarce were the words uttered, when the bird made a sudden swoop into the river which they were approaching, and presently emerged and settled on the bank. At Cuthbert's bidding the boy ran to it,

and presently returned with a large fish which the eagle had caught. Cuthbert bade the boy take back part. "Our fisherman is probably as hungry as ourselves." They carried the remainder to the nearest village, where some cottager cooked it for them, and there was enough to feast themselves and their host.

This period of Cuthbert's life was apparently a very happy one, he enjoyed the love and veneration of those with whom he lived, and his philanthropic labours outside Melrose were blessed with much success. It may have been from this sense of happiness that Cuthbert felt dissatisfied with himself. "What sacrifice of self had he made when life was so pleasant, and when he enjoyed the daily society of so many good and holy men, who were also like-minded with himself?" Some such thoughts appear to have troubled him, he did not feel satisfied that he had yet given up anything for GOD, and his thoughts turned more and more to a hermitage, believing it possible in solitude to give more undivided attention to prayer than he could at present. Such retirement, however, was at this time out of the question, for his Bishop (Eata) would not listen to such a proposal. It happened just then the Bishop had special need of him for a very difficult task. This was no other than the reformation of the Monks in Lindisfarne. This celebrated community which had been a model of perfection in S. Aidan's time, and in that of his

immediate successors, had changed for the worse. The Bishop himself was their Abbot, but on account of his pastoral duties was seldom resident, and had little influence, the rule of the monastery lay to all intents and purposes with the Prior. The Bishop, therefore, made Cuthbert Prior of Lindisfarne, with the view of bringing his influence to bear upon the community. Cuthbert undertook this office at the Bishop's wish, in the spirit of obedience, though aware that it involved a very painful duty. The Monks, as he expected, resented bitterly any change in their rules, and looked with no friendly eyes on a superior who was sent ostensibly to reform them. On his arrival in Lindisfarne he began to live the same strict life of self-denial which he had lived in Melrose. Here also as before he extended his labours beyond the walls of the monastery, making frequent journeys among the country people, visiting the sick, the poor, and the distressed, doing his best by preaching and example to win the godless and heathen to the Faith. And with them his work was comparatively easy. His real difficulty lay within the walls of the abbey. There a discontented clique opposed a firm and solid resistance to his reforms, and met his suggestions with angry disputations. A chapter of the community was held daily, and the custom was for each member present to give his opinion in turn on any question under discussion. Thus every one had his say, and in their heat some of the Monks entirely

forgot themselves, and flatly contradicted Cuthbert, indulging at times in a torrent of abuse. It was, however, all lost upon him, so great and sweet was his patience. On such occasions, when nothing could be gained by further conference, he would rise and with unruffled look and pleasant manner bring the meeting to an end. And when they met again he would pursue his object without any allusion to what had passed, as if nothing had happened. Indeed he was possessed with such patience that he could endure with equanimity any inflictions, however painful, to mind or body, shewing always the utmost cheerfulness. It was this sweetness of temper which made him so beloved that it was impossible to quarrel with him for any length of time. This rare gift was due, it would appear, partly to a naturally sweet disposition, still more to a habit of constant self-denial—above all, to a never ceasing habit of devotion, so that truly “his life was hid with CHRIST in GOD.” In such sense as the Apostle meant it, Cuthbert certainly “prayed always.” He had long accustomed himself, as already stated, to spend two nights in every three in prayer, and in Lindisfarne, where much of his time was required for official duties, he gained additional leisure for prayer by going to bed once only in four nights,<sup>1</sup>—those inter-

<sup>1</sup> It was a custom in the religious houses at this time for the Monks to take a siesta, or hour's rest, in the middle of the day. Cuthbert, certainly sometimes allowed himself this, and it no doubt helped his vigils by night.

vening were spent in psalmody, prayer, and in manual labour, the latter being used to keep himself awake. With the same object, no doubt, it was his habit to make circuits of Lindisfarne by night, as though on the watch to see that all went well.

Cuthbert, his biographer continues, was possessed with such a spirit of compunction that he could not celebrate the Divine mysteries without a flood of tears. Hence it came to pass that those who were present with him in Church became devout through sympathy, for whilst engaged in lifting up his own heart to the LORD, he lifted others with him. "This he did," we are told, "not by the loudness of his voice, but by the intensity of his devotion, not by the sweetness of his singing, but by his tears and groans." "As a lover of righteousness," the writer adds, "he could rebuke sharply open sinners; but to those who turned from their evil ways he was most gentle and kind, so much so that frequently it came to pass, when penitents were confessing their sins, that out of sympathy he was the first to shed tears, as though declaring by his own example what was due from them."

Cuthbert's biographer closes his account of the Saint with a few words about his mode of dress. It must suffice to say that he simply wore the usual garments of the time. Affecting no singularity, only avoiding squalor, or any approach to hand-

someness. Undyed wool was what he preferred, and from his doing so it became the custom of the Monks in Lindisfarne for a long time to use the same.

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### CUTHBERT IN FARNE.

Cuthbert remained twelve years in Lindisfarne; in the course of this time he did a truly wonderful work, for he even won the love of the Monks who had been so prejudiced against him, but who now began to regard him with unbounded veneration. The Bishop, much pleased and fully satisfied, withdrew his objection and set Cuthbert free, with his full approval, to live that life of solitude which he believed most suitable for his own devotion. There is a little islet in the sea, a few miles from Lindisfarne, Farne by name. It had a very ill-name so that no one had ever dared to live in it; however, in many points it seemed a suitable place for his purpose, and Cuthbert determined to try it. But before taking up his residence there, he thought it prudent to test his power of enduring solitude, and with this view retired into a secluded place not far from the monastery which S. Aidan and his successors had used for devotional purposes in Lent. Being satisfied by this experience he determined, without further delay, to take up his abode in Farne. It was a question still whether it was habitable, and also



whether it was capable of tillage, an important point, for Cuthbert had fully made up his mind not to make himself a burden to others. "If it shall please the Divine Goodness to grant me that I may live in that place by the labour of my hands, I will willingly reside there, but if not, I will, with GOD'S permission, very soon return to you." Bede says, "The place was entirely destitute of water, corn, or trees, and, moreover, being infested by evil spirits, was very ill-suited for human habitation, but it became in all respects habitable at the desire of the man of GOD, for upon his arrival the wicked spirits withdrew." The brethren of Lindisfarne accompanied Cuthbert when he went there, and assisted him to build his cell. The whole enclosure, round in shape, was surrounded by a low wall, enclosing a space of four or five perches in diameter. Within, the floor, which was of rock, was excavated a foot and a half deep, and the stone and debris thus obtained formed the material of the wall, which was so high that a person inside could see nothing but the heavens above him. The foundation stones of this wall were laid by Cuthbert himself, and were, some of them, of such immense size that it was the popular belief that an angel had assisted him to lay them. In this enclosure there were two apartments, one of which served for his oratory, and the other for his cell. These were built of logs of wood, rubble, and clay. In another part of the island, on the

shore by the quay, a good-sized house was built. This was for the convenience of visitors, more especially for the Monks of Lindisfarne, who visited him from time to time, and here, shortly after he came, a fine spring of water was found. Encouraged by this, and desirous of having water within easy reach, Cuthbert begged the brethren to dig a pit in the floor of his mansion, though the ground was hard and stoney, and there seemed little hope of water there; they did as he desired, and the next morning the opening was full of water, and there has been, Bede adds, a spring of fine abundant water ever since. One great difficulty was thus overcome, it has now to be proved whether the islet was capable of tillage. With a view to this he had brought with him various instruments of husbandry, and some wheat for seed; he took care to sow this at the proper time, but alas! as the Spring came on not a stalk or so much as a leaf sprouted up. Much disappointed he determined to try barley, and having obtained a supply from the brethren, sowed it at once, though it was now past the proper season, and to his great joy a plentiful crop immediately sprang up, "affording the man of GOD the means he "so ardently desired of supporting himself by his "own labour."

The legend tells us, however, that in the earlier time of residence in Farne he was terribly plagued with the birds, who threatened to devastate his crop :

two crows in particular were a perpetual annoyance. These birds took it into their heads when they were making their nests in the spring-time to line them with the straw which formed the thatch of the Hospice, the roof of which they nearly stripped. Cuthbert (the story proceeds) grieved at this, in the interest of his guests solemnly banished them from the isle. The birds disappeared for a time, but not long after, when Cuthbert was digging in his field, one of the culprits re-appeared; the bird settled on the ground near him, and with drooping wings, downcast head, and croaking voice, seemed to ask his forgiveness. Such a picture of penitence was irresistible, and the Saint nodded his pardon. The bird seemed to understand, flew off with alacrity, and presently returned with his mate, the two flew joyfully round, making circuits in the air, and as they did so one of them let drop at Cuthbert's feet a large lump of pig's lard, which he accepted as a peace-offering. It turned out very useful to him for greasing his boots and such like services. After this Cuthbert and the birds became great friends, they ceased to molest the man of GOD, and they, or their descendants were roosting still in Farne at the time when his life was written.

All difficulties were now surmounted. Cuthbert was settled in the retreat he had so much desired, and where he also hoped to end his days. It may here be said it would be a very great mistake to

suppose that a hermit's life cut a person off from human intercourse. It did so from the society of his fellow men, but not from intercourse with them. A hermit did not necessarily cease from being of service to others. On the contrary, it is probable that few, if any, of those who lived in the busy world around exercised so much influence for good as the solitary Saint in Farne. To him, as to some skilful physician, came in great numbers those that were sick and sad at heart. From every part of England visitors came to Farne, believing that none could help them so well as Cuthbert. To none of these did he refuse counsel and advice. No one, indeed, was allowed to enter his cell; but there was a little window at which he sat, and through this opening he held conversation with those without. Taught by his own experience, for he had had many spiritual struggles, he knew well how to counsel others. "None," we are told, "went empty away from Farne, "who came to him for spiritual help and comfort."

Cuthbert seldom left his cell, unless by night. Occasionally, however, when the brethren from Lindisfarne came to visit him, he allowed himself to be drawn out of it, and on Christmas and other Great Festivals he would dine with them at the Hospice. It is certain also that on two pressing occasions he left Farne for more than a day. One of these was at the instance of the Bishop, the

other at the urgent entreaty of the Abbess Elfleda,<sup>1</sup> “who adjured him, in the Name of the LORD, to “grant her an interview.” The place where they met was an islet at the mouth of the river Coquet, in Northumberland, whither Cuthbert sailed from Farne, accompanied by some of the Lindisfarne brethren. Bede gives an account of this interview, and of the strange questions which the Abbess asked him. They had reference, some of them, to her brother, King Egfrid, and the probable successor of one “who had “neither sons or brothers.” Cuthbert reminded her that Egfrid had yet a brother living in seclusion in some distant island (alluding, no doubt, to Prince Aldfrid, an illegitimate son of King Oswy, who was at that time studying in Iona). It so happened that not long after this interview King Egfrid was slain by the Picts, and Prince Aldfrid, for want of an heir with better title, was placed upon the throne, and this of course added much to the popular belief in Cuthbert’s supposed prophetic powers.<sup>2</sup> His solitary life in

<sup>1</sup> This Princess was the daughter of King Oswy. She succeeded S. Hilda as Abbess of Whitby.

<sup>2</sup> One point of historic interest has light thrown on it in the account of this interview between Cuthbert and the Abbess Elfleda. It has long been a disputed question whether Prince Alchfrid, the great friend of Wilfrid, and Prince Aldfrid, who succeeded Egfrid, were, or were not, the same person. The close similarity of the names, and the fact that both are spoken of as sons of King Oswy, have led many writers to confound them together. It seems plain, however, that this is an error. Alchfrid was Oswy’s eldest son, and as such had a share of the kingdom (Deira) in his father’s life-time. He probably died before his father, for when King Oswy died the whole of Northumbria was given

Farne was not without its peculiar trials; like hermits in every age, he was troubled at times with spiritual illusions, nocturnal terrors, and similar temptations, which seem generally to beset a life of solitude.

These illusions were regarded of old as the machinations of the Evil One and of his angels, bent on driving the hermit from his little citadel of prayer. Cuthbert, alluding to them, says, "How often have they cast me down to destroy me! What stones have they not hurled at my head! What fantastic terrors have they not raised to drive me from my cell! Yet by the help of the LORD, and in the power of faith, I have passed through these snares as through a spider's web, and am none the worse for them in body or in mind."

However, though such a lover of solitude, he does not seem to have recommended it to others, but rather to have advised the conventual life as the safest for those who wished to devote themselves to religion. Cuthbert lived eight years in this seclusion in which he hoped to remain for life, but it was not so to be. At the end of that time a call came which he dared not disobey.

In the year A.D. 685 a Synod was assembled in the

to his younger brother, Egfrid. Aldfrid, on the other hand, as appears from this conversation, was an illegitimate son of King Oswy, living then in such obscurity that the Abbess Elfreda scarcely knew whom Cuthbert was alluding to when he reminded her that King Egfrid had yet a brother living.

presence of King Egfrid, near the river Alne, at Twyford,<sup>1</sup> in Northumberland. Archbishop Theodore presided. Amongst other business a new Bishop was wanted for Hexham, and the choice of the whole Synod fell on Cuthbert. Letters were accordingly sent to inform him of his election, and to obtain his consent, but though many messengers followed on each other's heels, he could not be persuaded to leave his cell. Eventually the King with some of his nobles, in company with Bishop Trumwin and other ecclesiastics, embarked for Farne. Arriving there they proceeded in a body to Cuthbert's cell, "and there kneeling down together, with tears and entreaties conjured him by our LORD, till they drew him, also in tears, out of his retreat, and forced him to the Synod. There, after much opposition, he was overcome by the unanimous desire of the Synod, and consented to be consecrated Bishop." It is probable that none of the austerities which Cuthbert practised cost him so much pain as this sacrifice of his beloved cell. There is such a thing, Thomas a'Kempis reminds us, as being willing to give up all for CHRIST except our own will, and he intimates that the sacrifice of that is costlier than any other, and the one most pleasing to GOD. It is in such passages of his life as this that we see most clearly the beauty of Cuthbert's character, and the reality of his devotion to GOD.

<sup>1</sup> Twyford has been identified with *Alnmouth*.

## CUTHBERT'S EPISCOPATE.

Some months intervened between Cuthbert's election and consecration. These were spent by him in Farne. The consecration took place in York Cathedral at Eastertide, A.D. 685, in the presence of King Egfrid, Archbishop Theodore and six other Bishops (nearly the whole English Episcopate) were present. It was probably the grandest celebration of the kind ever yet witnessed in England. Cuthbert was consecrated for *Lindisfarne*, not *Hexham*, to which he had been elected, for his old master, Eata, knowing that Lindisfarne would be more agreeable to Cuthbert, willingly resigned that See to him and went himself to Hexham.

King Egfrid took the opportunity of conferring on the Church many munificent endowments, amongst these was the town of "Creic" (Crayke, in Yorkshire) with all the adjoining land for three miles round; here Cuthbert founded a monastery which lasted 200 years. In York also a considerable part<sup>1</sup> of the city was given him by the King. Not content with this Egfrid added the town of Carlisle, then called Lugubalia, or Luel, with a circuit of land fifteen miles round. Here S. Cuthbert founded another monastery, a nunnery, and schools. It was in this city not many months afterwards that he had the sad satisfaction of dedicating to GOD

<sup>1</sup> "The whole space between the Cathedral and the outer gates of the town on the west and south sides."



Ermenberga, the widowed Queen of the King who had taken such a lively interest in himself. King Egfrid was slain before the year was over; he had wantonly invaded the Picts, who had given him no provocation. This people had lately been Christianised, and Cuthbert and Egfrid's chief Thanes laboured, but in vain, to dissuade the King from attacking them. The event of the war was very different from what might have been expected. The Picts, unable to contend openly with him, adroitly drew him on, as they retreated before him, into a narrow gorge among the mountains, whence he could not extricate himself. Here they turned upon him and his army, of which the greater part, together with the King himself, were destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

But to return to Cuthbert's Episcopate. Some perhaps might wonder what sort of a Bishop one, who had been drawn so unwillingly out of an hermitage, and whose heart was in solitude, would make. How could such an one, it might be thought, cope with men and leaven society? Strange as it may appear, the event showed that such a paradox was quite possible. Cuthbert proved himself an admirable Bishop. His Episcopate indeed was very short, because his health broke down, but it most

<sup>1</sup> The Northumbrian Kingdom never recovered from the effects of this disaster. Thenceforth its northern boundary became the Tweed. Its vast domains beyond that river, reaching at times to the Firth of Forth, became a part of Scotland.

fully fulfilled the expectations of his friends. From the time that he made up his mind to accept the office, he gave his whole attention to his new duties. Bede gives the following account of his Episcopate:—

“Following the example of the Apostles he became  
 “an ornament of the episcopal dignity by his virtuous  
 “actions, for he both protected the people committed  
 “to his charge by constant prayer, and excited them  
 “by most wholesome admonitions to heavenly prac-  
 “tices, and what is the greatest help in teaching, he  
 “first shewed in his behaviour what he desired to be  
 “performed by others, for he was much inflamed by  
 “the fire of Divine charity, modest in the virtue of  
 “patience, most diligently intent on devout prayers,  
 “and affable to all that came to him for comfort. He  
 “thought it equivalent to prayers to afford the infirm  
 “brethren the help of his exhortation, well knowing  
 “that He Who said ‘Thou shalt love the LORD thy  
 “‘GOD,’ said likewise, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour  
 “‘as thyself.’” Acting on this principle, though such  
 a lover of solitude and prayer, he became one of the  
 most active of men. Most of his time was now spent  
 in making frequent visitations of his Diocese, in the  
 course of which he not only confirmed those who had  
 been baptized, but also visited the sick, and constantly  
 preached to the people in cottages and villages or on  
 the hill-side.

Many miracles are said to have accompanied this period of Cuthbert’s life: we give one or two as

examples. Miracles or not, they tell better than mere words, the loving care he bestowed on his flock. "It happened," writes Bede, "on a certain occasion "when this holy shepherd was making a circuit of his "Diocese, whilst tending the LORD'S flock, that he "came to a wild place among the mountains, where "large numbers had assembled from the neighbour- "ing villages for Confirmation. In this locality there "was neither Church, nor any house in which the "Bishop and his company could be received. Tents "were, therefore, erected by the wayside, and the "people made booths for themselves with the boughs "which they cut down from the neighbouring wood. "Here the man of GOD spent two days preaching to "the people, who flocked to hear him, and confirming "those who had lately been regenerated in CHRIST. "Whilst he was thus engaged some women suddenly "appeared, bearing on a couch a young man wasted "and worn by some terrible illness. They put him "down at the entrance of the wood, and sent to the "Bishop to ask leave to bring him to him for his "blessing. When this was granted, and he was "brought, Cuthbert, noticing the extremity of his "illness, bade every one leave him alone, and after "some time spent in prayer gave the young man his "blessing, and straightway healed him of an illness "which no skill or medicine of the doctors had been "able to cure. The young man rose that very hour "from his bed, took some food, and presently after-

“wards, with many grateful thanks to GOD, walked  
 “home with the women who had carried him there.  
 “So it came to pass that they who came there in  
 “such great sorrow all returned home with joy.  
 “About the same time a sudden pestilence invaded  
 “this part of the country, causing such mortality that  
 “many large houses full of people were decimated,  
 “and others left without an inhabitant. The most  
 “holy Bishop on this became more diligent than ever  
 “in visiting his Diocese for the purpose of ministering  
 “the Word of GOD, and of comforting the wretched  
 “survivors. Thus engaged he came one day to a  
 “certain village, and having visited all those who  
 “seemed to need his ministry, he enquired of the  
 “Priest who was with him, whether any other needed  
 “to be visited before they passed on elsewhere. On  
 “this the Priest called his attention to a woman stand-  
 “ing afar off; a dead child was lying by her side,  
 “and she had another child that seemed to be dying  
 “in her arms. She stood there in silent sorrow, with  
 “the tears running down her cheeks. Cuthbert went  
 “immediately to her and gave the child his blessing,  
 “and kissing it, said to the mother, ‘Fear not, nor  
 “grieve, for this child will recover and live, nor  
 “will you lose any more of your family by this  
 “pestilence.’ All which” Bede says, “came true, as  
 “the woman and her son, who lived long after, were  
 “wont to testify.”

Scarce, however, had two years been passed in

unsparing devotion to his work, when Cuthbert became conscious that his health and strength were failing. However he made no difference, continuing his labours as before. At the same time he determined to resign his bishopric at the first opportunity, with the view of retiring to Farne, there to prepare himself for his last end.

“There was a certain Priest, venerable for the  
“probity of his life and manners, Herebert by name,  
“who had long been united in the bonds of spiritual  
“friendship with the man of GOD, Cuthbert. This  
“man led a solitary life in an islet of that great lake  
“from which the river Derwent flows, and it was his  
“wont to visit Cuthbert every year to receive from  
“him spiritual counsel. Hearing that Cuthbert was  
“come to the city of Lugabalia (Carlisle) he repaired  
“thither to him, being desirous to be still more and  
“more inflamed in heavenly affections through his  
“wholesome admonitions, whilst they alternately  
“entertained one another with the delights of the  
“celestial life. The Bishop, among other things,  
“said, ‘Brother Herebert, remember at this time  
“to ask me all the questions you wish to have re-  
“solved, and say all you design, for we shall see  
“one another no more in this world, for I am sure  
“that the time of my dissolution is at hand, and I  
“shall speedily put off this tabernacle of the flesh.’  
“Hearing these words, Herbert fell down at his feet,  
“and shedding tears, said with a sigh, ‘I beseech you

“by our LORD, not to forsake me, but that you  
“remember your most faithful companion, and  
“entreat the Supreme Goodness that, as we have  
“served Him together upon earth, so we may  
“depart together to see His bliss in heaven.’ The  
“Bishop applied himself to prayer, and having  
“presently had intimation in the spirit that he had  
“obtained what he had asked of the LORD, he said,  
“Rise, brother, and do not weep, but rejoice, be-  
“cause the Heavenly Goodness has granted that we  
“desired.’” The event, Bede tells us, “proved the  
“truth of this promise and prophecy, for after their  
“parting they no more saw one another in the flesh,  
“but their souls quitting their bodies on the very  
“same day, that is, on the 22nd of March they were  
“immediately again united in spirit, and translated  
“to the heavenly kingdom by the ministry of angels.”  
An islet in Derwentwater is still pointed out as the  
place where the hermit Herebert lived, and is called  
by his name.

Before retiring into private life, Cuthbert made a  
final visitation of his Diocese, when this was accom-  
plished he resigned his See A.D. 686, and went to  
Lindisfarne, where he stayed a short time with the  
Monks, and kept Christmas with them. After this  
he retired to Farne. As he was about to enter the  
ship, an aged Monk, addressing him, said, “When,  
“my Lord Bishop, may we expect to see you here  
“again?” To whom he replied, “When you bring

“my body back to Lindisfarne.” There is no doubt that Cuthbert was well aware that his end was approaching. However a short time was allowed him in Farne of comparative freedom from suffering. This time he passed in much peace and happiness, not sparing himself, but rather increasing his austerities, the better to prepare himself for death. During this interval he received frequent visits from the Lindisfarne brethren, with whom he freely conversed, and whom he occasionally visited at the hospice. At the end of two months a great change occurred, his illness became aggravated, and caused intense suffering terminating only in his death. The following account of this sad time is given us by Herefrid, then Abbot of Lindisfarne, who was with him frequently in the course of it. With this account we shall conclude our memoir of this great Saint.

“A continuous illness of three weeks duration prepared him for, and brought him to his end. It was on a Wednesday that he was seized with it, and it was on a Wednesday that he died. It happened that at that time I was making a short stay in Farne, and being about to return home, came to his cell, early in the morning, for a few words of counsel before leaving, and to receive his blessing. Arriving there I gave the accustomed signal of my presence, on which he came to the window, and when I saluted him, answered only by a groan. This caused me to enquire whether he had suffered

“ more than usual in the night, and he replied that he  
“ had suffered much. However still I supposed that  
“ this was only part of his old illness, nothing new, so  
“ without any further enquiry I said, ‘ Perhaps you  
“ ‘ will give us your blessing for it is time that we  
“ ‘ returned to Lindisfarne.’ ‘ Do so,’ he replied,  
“ ‘ Embark as you propose, and may GOD’S blessing  
“ ‘ accompany you! And whensoever it shall please  
“ ‘ Him to take my soul to Himself, remember that  
“ ‘ it is my wish that you bury my body here, in this  
“ ‘ cell, on the South side of the Oratory, where my  
“ ‘ grave will face the Holy Cross which I have erected  
“ ‘ there. You will find a stone coffin concealed in my  
“ ‘ Oratory, . . . and a ‘sindon’ for my shroud, which  
“ ‘ was given me by the Abbess Verca.’ Struck  
“ by these words, I replied, ‘ But if you are so ill, my  
“ ‘ Lord, and believe that you will not recover, I  
“ ‘ entreat your permission that I may leave some  
“ ‘ of the brethren here to minister to you.’” He  
“ replied, ‘ No, go now, but return again presently.’  
“ And though I pressed him with further entreaties.  
“ I could not gain his permission. ‘ Tell me,’ at last,  
“ I said, ‘ What day we should return?’ That, he  
“ replied, ‘ Must be left to the Will of GOD.’ On this  
“ we did, as he bade us, and sailed for Lindisfarne.  
“ Arriving there I summoned the whole community  
“ into the Church, and bade them make unceasing  
“ intercession to GOD for the Bishop, for I felt sure  
“ from what he had told me that his last end was ap-



“proaching. For the same reason I was very anxious  
“to return to Farne, but a furious storm, which raged  
“for four days, made the passage impossible. On  
“the fifth day the sea became tranquil, and we passed  
“over to Farne. On our arrival we found he had  
“left his cell, and was setting in our hospice. I sent  
“away the brethren, who had accompanied me, as  
“they were wanted elsewhere, and remained myself to  
“nurse him. He had an ulcerous swelling on one of  
“his feet which had broken, and sadly needed tend-  
“ing. This I bathed with hot water, seeing also how  
“emaciated and ill he looked, I warmed some wine  
“and gave it him to drink. After which he laid him-  
“self down in the bed, and I sat down beside him.  
“As he continued silent, I began myself to speak,  
“‘I see, my Lord Bishop, how fearfully you have  
“suffered, since we left you, and I cannot help  
“wondering that you would not allow me to leave  
“some one with you.’” ‘It was of the LORD’S  
“ordering,’ he replied, ‘Who willed that I should  
“suffer this affliction without aid of human succour,  
“for no sooner had you left me than I became worse,  
“to that degree that I thought it best to leave my  
“cell, and come here to be nursed by any of you that  
“might happen to return. From the time that I came  
“into this house five days ago and sat down, I have  
“not moved from my seat night or day.’ But, my  
“Lord Bishop, I replied, ‘How is it that you are  
“alive.’ ‘Can you live without food?’ To this he

“made answer by uncovering the seat on which he  
“sat, under which were lying five roots (onions).  
“‘Here,’ he said, ‘has been my larder. I have re-  
“‘freshed myself with one of these whenever I  
“‘suffered from dryness or from thirst, . . . but never  
“‘from the time I came to live on this island have I  
“‘suffered so much from my ghostly enemies! Never  
“‘have I been troubled with such spiritual trials as  
“‘during these last five days.’” Herefrid did not  
dare, he tells us, to enquire what these spiritual trials  
were, his own mind was ill at ease, for it was the  
desire of his heart that the remains of the Saint  
should be laid in Lindisfarne. He requested per-  
mission to leave one or two of the brethren with him,  
and returned in haste to Lindisfarne when he called  
the community together, and informed them of Cuth-  
bert’s desire to be buried in his own cell in Farne.  
All agreed in deprecating it. On this they came in  
a body to Farne, and earnestly supplicated Cuth-  
bert’s permission that they might bury him in their  
Abbey Church. His own heart was set on being laid  
to rest in the little cell in which he had served GOD  
in loneliness for so many years, and which had been  
the scene of many spiritual trials, but not even in  
this matter would he “please himself,” but gave up his  
own wishes, for which they all returned him thanks  
on their knees, and so went home.

Before long his sickness increased so seriously  
that he was conscious his end was close at hand.

He therefore gave orders that he should be carried back to his cell, and in this extremity he permitted one of the Monks, Wahlstod,<sup>1</sup> to enter it and minister to him; the same day also (about 3 p.m.) he sent for the Abbot Herefrid to come to him. He found him lying on a couch in the Oratory, with his face towards the Altar. Herefrid took his seat beside him, but Cuthbert remained silent, and Herefrid earnestly entreated him to give them all his last dying counsel and farewell advice. Cuthbert exerted himself to do so and at broken intervals, as his strength allowed, gave a few weighty words of advice about the observance of unity among themselves, as a Community, and in the Catholic Church. Spent with this exertion he lay quiet and still in bed until the hour of Vespers, and so continued engaged in mental devotion until the first Morning Hour of Prayer (Nocturns), when (all other holy rites having been already completed) Herefrid gave him the Viaticum of the LORD'S Body and Blood. "After which, with eyes fixed on heaven, and arms outstretched, he sent forth his holy soul to GOD."

As soon as Cuthbert was dead Herefrid left the cell to tell it to those who were keeping vigil outside, and one of them immediately ran and climbed an eminence in Farne. There he stood with a flaming

<sup>1</sup> This Monk had long been invalided by chronic dysentery. He afterwards assured the Abbot Herefrid that this disease left him from this date.

brand in either hand, raised aloft, for it had been arranged between them and their brethren in Lindisfarne that this should be the signal of Cuthbert's death, and awaiting it, a Monk had been keeping watch that night on a hill not far from the Abbey. The sentinel, observing the signal, announced the tidings to the Community, who were engaged at the time in the service for Nocturns. As soon as it was possible the body was brought to Lindisfarne, and all due preparation made for the funeral. "The "body," we are told, "was washed, and then robed "in pontifical vestments. The head wrapped in a "napkin. On his breast were placed the Oblations,<sup>1</sup> "on his feet shoes, 'as for one ready to meet "'CHRIST.' So with all honour they placed him in "a sarcophagus (long ago given him for this purpose by an Abbot, Cudda), and buried him in their "Church."

Numerous "miracles" began immediately to occur at the grave and elsewhere. So great was the veneration felt for the Saint that anything that had belonged to him was believed to "have virtue in it." A shred of his dress, a fragment of the furniture of his cell, the water in which his body had been washed, it mattered not what, so only it had been in some way connected with the Saint, was believed to be able to work wonders!

<sup>1</sup> What these *Oblations* were is not clear. The Elements of Bread and Wine or the Eucharistic Vessels. Perhaps both.

How far this was due to the vivid imagination or "faith" of the sufferers may well be a matter of question, but there are no reasonable grounds for doubting that a number of wonderful cures did take place.

Nor did the popular fervour decrease, as it usually does in course of time, as the memory of the Saint might be expected to fade. On the contrary, it increased greatly under the following circumstances. When Cuthbert had been buried about eleven years it came into the mind of the Monks in Lindisfarne to translate his remains. Supposing that after the lapse of so many years nought would remain but the bones, they proposed to place these in a new coffin or shrine—which shrine was to stand above the pavement over the old site of the grave. Having first obtained the necessary permission of the Bishop, (Eadbert), they opened the coffin, and to their astonishment found the body as incorrupt as it was the day it was placed in it; the very joints were flexible as in life, and the vestments, with which it was clothed, as fresh as when they were new!<sup>1</sup> Account for it as we may, there seems no doubt of the truth of the fact; the same phenomenon is certified of other Saints, more especially in the case of those who were buried on the eastern side of England where, as a rule, the soil is very dry.

<sup>1</sup> It seems highly probable that the macerated state of the body, and also the dryness of the soil, both contributed to the arrest of decay.

In the period of which we are writing the incorruption of the body was believed to be due to the holiness of the Saint—on whose body not even death could work its usual change. The discovery therefore that was made by the Monks increased greatly the enthusiasm of the faithful, and gave a further impetus to the popular veneration. And so long as his body was enshrined in Lindisfarne, devotees from every part of England made pilgrimage to his tomb there for purposes of devotion.

Lindisfarne, however, was not destined to be the final resting-place of the Saint. In the 9th century—when all England suffered from the inroads of the Danes (and no part of it so grievously as the Eastern coast)—the bodies of many distinguished Saints were translated elsewhere to secure them from the outrages of these barbarians, who, not content with massacring wholesale the inmates of the Religious Houses, took a heathenish pleasure in invading the sepulchres of the dead, and in wantonly profaning their remains. To save them from this profanation, the bodies or relics of many Saints were at this juncture removed elsewhere, and the Bishop of the Diocese gave order that Cuthbert's body should be conveyed to a place of greater security. Seven Priests of high repute undertook the task, and devoted themselves to the charge of the body for the rest of their lives. It was no light charge, for no part of England was at this time perfectly safe, for the Danes made inroads

everywhere, penetrating at times into the very heart of the kingdom. These Priests made it their business therefore to carry about their precious burden with them as need required. *Wherever the body rested, that town or village was regarded an Episcopal See for the time being.* For some years it rested at Crayke. Its longest stay was at Chester-le-Street (Cunechester), where it remained till A.D. 995. In that year, a certain Bishop Aldwin proposed to translate the body back to Lindisfarne, as there were no Danish troubles then. The Shrine was placed on a carriage, and a part of the journey there was accomplished, when they came to a steep and woody hill, called Dunelm. Here the oxen that conveyed the car came to a sudden standstill. No efforts could make them stir a step further. When everything had been tried in vain, it became the universal belief that this place was destined by Heaven to be the final resting-place of the Saint. Forthwith a splendid Church was built there, in which the body was enshrined, and that Church became at once a Cathedral. This was the origin of the famous See of Durham, which takes precedence of nearly all the other Sees in England. As Cuthbert may be said to have brought it into being, so its importance was entirely due to him, i.e., to the universal veneration in which his memory was held. Kings, princes, lords, and the faithful of high and low degree, seemed to find an especial

pleasure in offering of their wealth "to GOD and to "S. Cuthbert," and they did so with such unlimited generosity that Durham soon became the richest See in England. The whole of the territory which lies between the Tyne and the Tees rivers became the property of that See, whose Bishops in the middle ages took the rank of Princes. A strange outcome this from the world's admiration of the life of poverty led by the Saint! Still it may justly be regarded as a remarkable instance of the durability of a good man's influence long after he has himself passed away. Doubtless the memory of S. Cuthbert's piety remained a holy influence for good in the Church for centuries after his death; and it is probable the time will never come, whilst the world lasts, when his bright example of faith and holiness and forgetfulness of self in the love of GOD will cease to act as an encouragement to others to choose, and persevere in the narrow path, which ends in Heaven.

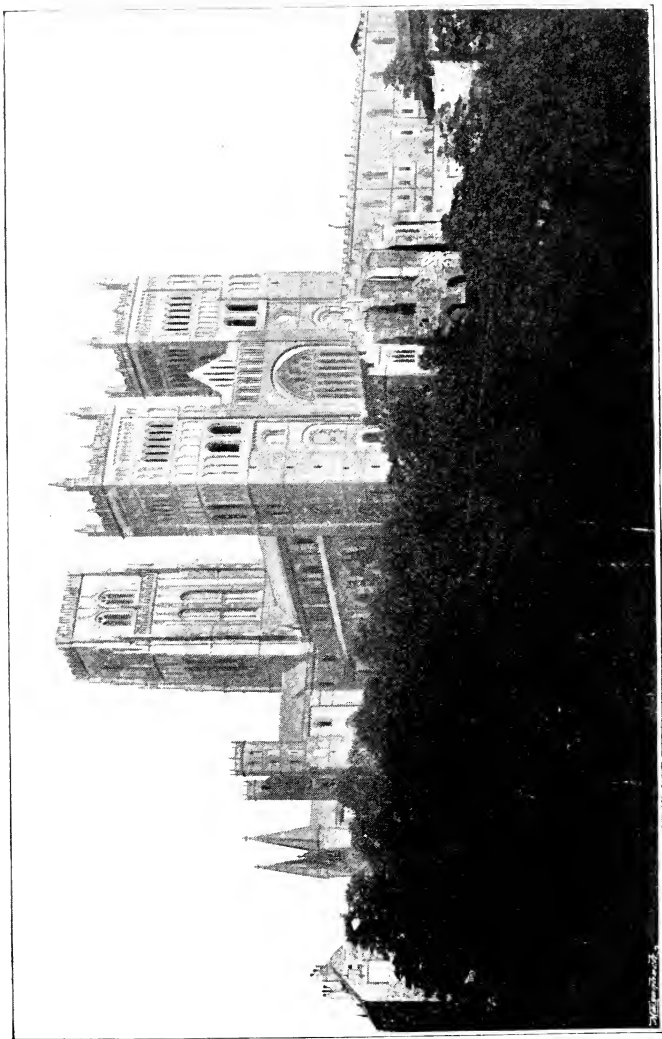
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#### NOTES.

The "patrimony of S. Cuthbert" suffered terribly in the period of the Norman Conquest, both from King William, and also from King Malcolm and the Scots. But William himself revered the Saint, and on occasion of his journey to the north, for the Invasion of Scotland, paid his devotions at his Shrine, and made offerings.

In the year 1104, Cuthbert's body was taken up in order to translate it into the New Cathedral (Durham), and we have the testimony of Simeon of Durham, who beheld it with his own eyes, that it was still whole and perfectly incorrupt.





**DURHAM CATHEDRAL.**

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S. CUTHBERT'S BIRDS.—(*Puffins.*)

Leland tell us—“that certain birds, called S. Cuthbert's birds, have from olden times inhabited the Island of Farne. They assemble there at breeding-time, and obtain much tameness from the sanctity of the place, so that they do not shrink from human touch and sight. They love quiet, they make their nests by the Altar, and no one presumes to hurt them. The Monks use the eggs for themselves and for their guests. The birds seek their food in the waters. The young, when hatched, follow their mothers, and having once entered the sea do not return to their nests.”

**S. Edbert.****BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE.**

A.D. 698. MAY 6.

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THE See of Lindisfarne, after Cuthbert's death, was temporarily administered by Wilfrid, but on that Prelate's translation to York, Lindisfarne was given to Edbert.

Edbert had been brought up in the traditions of the place, and was a man worthy in all respects to take the place of S. Cuthbert. Great in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, he was also most exact in his obedience to the Divine precepts. If there was one Christian grace in which he more excelled than another it was in charity to the poor, and in continual almsgiving. Every year he set apart for the poor a tenth of all his possessions, and this was done, not only with regard to the animals and fruits of the field as the law directed, but also with his garden and wardrobe.

S. Finan, a former Bishop of Lindisfarne, had built as his Cathedral a wooden Church (after the

Scottish fashion), its roof being thatched with reeds. S. Edbert took off this roof, and replaced it with lead, cut in plates, at the same time covering the walls also with plates of lead.

It was a pious custom of this holy Bishop (occasionally in use among the devout of that age) to keep two Lents every year, one at the usual time before Easter, and the additional one during the forty days preceding Christmas. During these Seasons it was his habit to retire and live by himself in a little islet of the sea, there he spent his time entirely in the practice of abstinence, prayer, and other penitential acts. Edbert was in this solitary place when the Brethren of Lindisfarne, A.D. 698, having opened the tomb of S. Cuthbert, found his body whole and incorrupt. They hastened in wonder and joyful astonishment to bring the tidings to the Bishop, bringing with them a small portion of his garments, which were as fresh as on the day of his death. S. Edbert, moved to tears, kissed the garment which had enveloped the man whom he had so dearly loved in the flesh, and bade them clothe the body in fresh garments, and place it in a shrine above-ground in the Sanctuary of the Church, adding in a meaning way, "I know and feel sure that the tomb from which you have taken that body . . . will not be long without a tenant."

Very shortly after this he was seized with a sharp

attack of illness, and the disorder, which seems to have been a kind of fever, increasing day by day, "he departed to the LORD on the sixth of May "the same year."

The Brethren, remembering his words, buried him in the vacant tomb of his beloved spiritual father, S. Cuthbert, whose shrine, with the body in it, was placed on the pavement above.

Bede tells us that it was the constant prayer to GOD of this Saint that, with a view no doubt to better preparation, his death might not be a sudden one.

**S. Ethelwald.****HERMIT.**

A.D. 699.

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THIS venerable Monk, who received the Priesthood in Ripon Monastery, succeeded the man of GOD, Cuthbert, as an Anchoret in the Island of Farne. There he lived in great holiness till his death, A.D. 699, a period of twelve years. He was buried in Lindisfarne by the tomb of S. Cuthbert. His relics shared the wanderings of that Saint's body, and eventually with it found a resting-place in Durham. He was himself succeeded in Farne by another Anchoret, Felgeld, who was alive when Bede wrote his history.

## **S. Ebba (Tabbs).**

ABBESS.

A.D. 684. AUGUST 25.

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S. EBBA was daughter of the fierce heathen King, Ethelfrid, who slew the Monks of Banchor. She was sister of King Oswy, and half-sister of S. Oswald.

On the death in battle of her father, A.D. 617, she, with her brothers, found refuge in Scotland, and, with them, was converted to Christianity. After some years she returned home from exile with her three brothers, Anfrid, Oswald, and Oswy, who, in succession, held the Throne of Northumbria. Soon after her return her hand was sought by a Scotch Prince, Cadan, but in her heart Ebba had devoted herself to religion. Turning therefore a deaf ear to Cadan's proposals, she retired from her brother's court to a place on the river Derwent, where she built herself a Nunnery. Her Nunnery has long since perished, but the village is still named, after her, Ebchester. She was thence transferred to the



important Monastery of Coldingham (Coludi), situated on the sea-coast about six miles from Berwick, and there she was appointed Abbess. This Monastery, like the House at Whitby, was a double one. Here it was that S. Ebba had the happiness of receiving into her Community her neice, the famous S. Audry, who had fled from the court of Northumbria.

S. Ebba lived to a good old age, and died at Coldingham A.D. 684.

S. Abbs' Head takes its name from her.

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#### COLDINGHAM ABBEY.

This celebrated Abbey was burnt to the ground shortly after S. Ebba's death, and it was universally believed at the time that this calamity was a judgment from GOD on the place, on account of the evil lives of the inmates. The story is thus told by Bede (Book IV., Ch. 25):—"At this time the Monastery of Virgins, called the City of Coludi, was burnt down through carelessness, and yet all that knew the same might observe that it happened through the malice of those who dwelt in it, and chiefly of those who seemed to be the greatest, but there wanted not a warning. There was in that Monastery a man of the Scottish (Irish) race, Adamnan, leading a life entirely devoted to GOD in continence and prayer, insomuch that he never took any food or drink, except only on Sundays and Thursdays, but often spent whole nights in prayer. This austerity of life he had first adopted to correct his evil propensities, but in process of time the necessity became a custom. For, in his youth he had been guilty of some wicked action, for which, when he came to himself, he conceived extraordinary horror, and dreaded lest he should be punished for the same by the upright Judge. Repairing therefore to a Priest, who, he hoped, might show him the way of salvation, he confessed his guilt, and desired to be advised how he might avoid the future wrath of GOD. The Priest having heard his

“offence, said, ‘A great sore requires much attention in the cure, and, therefore, give yourself up, as far as you are able, to fasting, reading of psalms, and prayer, to the end that, thus preventing the wrath of our LORD, in Confession, you may find Him merciful.’ Being highly affected with the grief of a guilty conscience, and desiring, as soon as possible, to be loosed from the inward fetters of sin, which lay heavy upon him, he answered, ‘I am young in years, and strong of body, and shall therefore easily bear whatever you shall enjoin me to do, so that I may be saved in the day of our LORD, though you should command me to spend the whole night in prayer standing, and to pass the whole week in abstinence.’ The Priest replied, ‘It is too much for you to hold out the whole week without bodily sustenance, it is sufficient to fast two or three days; do this till I come again to you in a short time, when I will more fully show you what you are to do, and how long to continue your penance.’ Having so said, and prescribed the measure of his penance, the Priest went away, and upon some sudden occasion passed over into Ireland, whence he derived his origin, and returned no more to him, as he had appointed. Remembering this injunction and his own promise, he totally addicted himself to tears, penance, holy watching, and continence, so that he only fed on Thursdays and Sundays, as has been said, and ate nothing all the other days of the week. When he heard that his Priest was gone to Ireland, and had died there, he ever after observed that same abstinence, according to his direction, and as he had begun that course through the fear of GOD, in penitence of his guilt, so he still continued the same unremittingly for the divine love, and in hope of his reward.

“Having practised this carefully for a long time, it happened that he had gone on a certain day to a distance from the Monastery, accompanied by one of the Brothers, and as they were returning from this journey, when they drew near to the Monastery, and beheld its lofty buildings, the man of GOD burst out into tears, and his countenance discovered the trouble of his heart. His companion, perceiving it, asked what was the reason, to which he answered, ‘The time is at hand when a devouring fire shall consume all the structures which you here behold, both public and private.’ The other, hearing these words, as soon as they came into the Monastery told them to Ebba, the Mother of the Congregation. She, with good cause, being much concerned at that prediction, called the man to her, and narrowly enquired of him how he came to know it. He answered, ‘Being busy one night lately in watching and singing

“psalms, I, on a sudden, saw a person unknown standing by me, and being startled at his presence, he bade me not fear, and speaking to me in a familiar manner:’ ‘You do well,’ said he, ‘in that you spend this night-time of rest, not in giving yourself up to sleep, but in watching and prayer.’ I answered, ‘I know that I have great need of wholesome watching and earnest praying to our LORD to pardon my transgressions.’ He replied, ‘you are right, for you and many more do need to redeem their sins by good works, and when they cease from labouring about temporal affairs, then to labour the more eagerly for the desire of heavenly goods; but this very few do, for I, having now visited all this Monastery regularly, have looked into every one’s chambers and beds, and found none of them, except yourself, busy about the care of his soul; but all of them, both men and women, either indulge themselves in slothful sleep, or are awake in order to commit sin; for even the cells that were built for praying or reading are now converted into places of feasting, drinking, talking, and other delights; the very virgins, dedicated to GOD, laying aside the respect due to their profession, whensoever they are at leisure, apply themselves to weaving fine garments, either to use in adorning themselves like brides, to the danger of their condition, or to gain the friendship of strange men: for which reason a heavy judgment from Heaven is deservedly ready to fall on this place and its inhabitants by devouring fire.’ The Abbess said, ‘Why did you not sooner acquaint me with what you knew?’ He answered, ‘I was afraid to do it, out of respect to you, lest you should be too afflicted, yet you may have this comfort, that the calamity will not happen in your days.’ This vision being divulged abroad, the inhabitants of that place were for a few days in some little fear, and leaving off their sins, began to punish themselves, but after the Abbess’s death they returned to their former wickedness, nay, they became more wicked, and when they thought themselves in peace and security, they soon felt the effects of the aforesaid judgment.”

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In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (for A. D. 679) appears this notice:—“Coldingham Abbey was burnt by fire from Heaven.” As Bede tells us expressly that the fire occurred through carelessness. The expression, “fire from Heaven,” means doubtless not lightning, but “by a judgment from Heaven.” It seems highly probable that the Coldingham scandals led to the Abolition of the Double Monasteries, which before very long were discarded.

**S. Benedict Biscop.**

ABBOT.

A.D. 690. JANUARY 12.

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THIS famous Saint, Biscop Baducing, surnamed Benedict, was an Englishman of noble birth, in the North of England, and was at one time a Thane, or Minister, in King Oswy's Court. As such he was offered by the King large possessions of land ; but at a very early age, when he was only 25 years old,<sup>1</sup> having no taste either for the glory or the pleasures of this world, he resigned his dignities and retired into private life, and thenceforth to the end of his days, dedicated his time, his energies, his whole soul, to religion. Endowed naturally with a mind which could appreciate art, in a degree, very rare in the age in which he lived, he made it his study to turn its treasures to the service of religion, and with this view spent much time on the Continent, and

<sup>1</sup> Symeon, of Durham, says of him, "Even in his youth he had an "old man's heart, habits beyond his age—careless of pleasure, noble "by birth, but still more noble in mind, etc."

especially in Rome, regardless of expense, if he could find that which was valuable and useful for the Church at home. There is, of course, a class of persons who delight in religious art, for its beauty only, and with little regard to religion. Far otherwise was it with this holy man, who was chiefly interested in it because he delighted in religion, and loved art as a means of beautifying the House of God, and as an expression of the love which he felt for His worship. It was in early life, A.D. 653, when he was about 25 years old, that he made his first journey to Rome. This was the occasion when he travelled part of the way with S. Wilfrid. (See Wilfrid).

Returning again to the Continent and Rome, some years later, 665, he, on his way home, diverged to Lerins, and spent no little time in its famous monastery. Delighted with the place and with the zeal and piety of the Monks, he greatly desired to spend the remainder of his days there, and made a firm resolve never to return to his native land. Happily for the Church at home it was ordained of GOD otherwise. It happened that he had occasion to go to Rome from Lerins in the year 668, and he was staying there when Archbishop Theodore was leaving Rome for England (See S. Theodore). Pope Vitalian wishing to provide the Archbishop with a guide into England, and aware that Benedict was well acquainted with the way, desired him to do that office for him, and when he hesitated to break his

resolve, the Pope enjoined him for the sake of CHRIST to give up the "pilgrimage" which he had undertaken, and to return to England with the new Archbishop. Under these circumstances Benedict felt himself bound, as a matter of obedience, to give up his own wishes and resolution, and so most happily it came to pass that the Church at home was not deprived of the services of one who could so ill be spared.

Theodore and Benedict arrived in England A.D. 669, and the latter undertook for a time the Abbacy of SS. Peter and Paul in Canterbury, where he remained until Adrian was ready to replace him. Being then once more free, he retraced his steps to Rome for a fourth visit, whence he soon returned, laden with books on every kind of religious instruction, which he had either bought with money, or received by gift from friends. Arriving in England, A.D. 672, he was saddened by the tidings of the death of his friend, Kenwalch,<sup>†</sup> King of Wessex, in whose Province he had designed to settle. He in consequence returned to "his own country," i.e., the North of England. Egfrid, son of Oswy, was at this time on the throne of Northumbria, with whom, no doubt, he had contracted acquaintance when he was a Thane in his father's Court. Benedict sought an interview with him, related his adventures, shewed him his Church treasures, and acquainted him with his desire of founding a religious house in which he might settle

<sup>†</sup> King Kenwalch built the first Church in Winchester.

down in that Province. The King, much delighted with what he heard and saw, granted him at once large lands on the North side of the river Wear, and Benedict, without delay, built there a spacious abbey, called from its situation Wearmouth, which he dedicated to the Apostle Peter, and soon filled with devout Monks. This building, however elaborate, was built of wood; but Benedict was not satisfied with that material for his Church. There was of course abundance of stone at hand, but the English did not yet understand the use of it for building purposes. "Benedict, therefore, crossing the sea, went "into France, and thence brought back with him "masons able to build a Church of stone after the "fashion of the Romans." These masons, fired by his zeal, worked so well and so hard "that within the "space of one year from the laying of the first stone, "the pinnacles were super-added," and the Church was fit for its holy purposes. As the Church drew near to its completion, Benedict "sent agents into "France to bring back artificers of glass (for such "were not to be found in Britain), for making "windows in the Church and the dining hall, and "other buildings, which they also did, and the "artificers coming there, not only completed the "task required, but also instructed the English "people in that kind of work, so admirably suited "for the lighting of Churches, and for the manu- "facture of various household vessels." Not content

with this, Benedict, before the Church was opened, took another journey to Rome, whence he soon returned "laden with a multiplied stock of religious "merchandise," among which was a large additional supply of books. He brought with him also a Charter of Privileges, which he had obtained for his new abbey from the Pope, who also at his request supplied him with an admirable teacher of Church music, John, who was "Precentor of S. Peter's Church, and Abbot "of the Monastery of the blessed Martin." John, coming into England, not only instructed the choir in the new Church, but gave lessons on Church music to the choirs of the various abbeys in those parts. It was on this occasion also that Benedict brought with him a number of sacred pictures and paintings for the ornamentation of his Church. Among these was a picture of the Virgin Mary, and also pictures of the twelve Apostles. These were placed in a row in the vault of the roof. The south wall of the Church was decorated with pictures taken from the Gospel histories, the north wall was illuminated "with "representations of the Apocalyptic visions of the blessed John." The Church was thus decorated, we are told, "to the intent that all who entered the "Church, though ignorant of letters, might behold, "whichever way they looked, either the beloved face "of CHRIST, and of his Saints, though only in a "picture, and be reminded of his gracious Incarna- "tion, or by having before their eyes the trial of



“the last judgment might be drawn to a stricter examination of themselves.”

King Egfrid took the greatest interest in the new foundation, with which he was so much pleased, that of his own accord he made another liberal grant of land in a situation not very far off, but nearer the river Tyne. Benedict took immediate advantage of this gift, and with the help of S. Ceolfrid built another monastery, which he dedicated to S. Paul. The place was called Girvum, and is our modern *Jarrow*, which will ever be famous in the Church from its connection with Venerable Bede, who was brought up in it. Bede was born on the estate before it was given by the King to S. Benedict, he was seven years old when S. Paul's was built. His parents made a present of him to S. Benedict, who caused him to be educated. Bede well repaid the labour of his education. Here we can only advert to the value of Benedict's library to him, without which he could never have become, as he did, the best scholar of his age, or have attained that literary excellence which has made him so famous in England, and indeed in all parts of the Western Church.

Benedict appointed Easterwin, one of his Monks, who was of noble birth, to be Abbot of Wearmouth. Over Jarrow he placed S. Ceolfrid, and then in the year 684 made his last journey to Rome. Amongst the valuables which he brought back was a further treasure of sacred books, and a no less quantity of

religious pictures. "Some of these were for the ornamentation of the new monastery and Church of S. Paul's. The series was arranged with consummate art to exhibit the concordance of the Old with the New Testament. As, for instance, the picture of Isaac carrying the wood on which he was to have been sacrificed was placed over against one in which was our LORD bearing the cross on which he suffered. So, again, the Son of Man nailed to the cross was placed facing the serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness."

Very painful tidings awaited Benedict, which damped all the joy of his return. In his absence one of those "pestilences," which we read of so frequently in Anglo-Saxon times, and which were probably due in part to defective sanitary arrangements, had made havoc in his two communities. Abbot Easterwin, who was his relative, was dead, and with him the greater part of the brethren in Wearmouth. It had also been very fatal in the new monastery at Jarrow. His own health began at this time to give way. Shortly after his return he became very infirm, he was seized with paralysis, which soon deprived him of the use of his lower limbs. The new Abbot also, who had been elected in his absence to preside over Wearmouth, whose name was Sigefrid, was invalided, and there was little or no hope of his recovery. Both these good men in their sufferings constantly gave thanks

to their Creator, and were always "busy in the praises "of GOD, and in fraternal exhortations." Benedict also took great pains in confirming the brethren in the use of the rule which he had established,<sup>1</sup> and for the preservation of the magnificent library which he had brought from the Continent. In the mean time, on account of Sigefrid's illness, some new arrangement was necessary for the government of the communities. An interview between Sigefrid and S. Benedict was arranged. Both were unable to walk. Sigefrid was, therefore, "carried on a bier to the bedroom where Benedict lay on his couch, and there "by the help of their attendants they were placed "together side by side, and their heads laid on one "pillow. A piteous spectacle! They had not even "power to approach their heads, or to kiss each other, "but required the aid of the brethren to enable them "to do so." At this interview it was arranged that Ceolfrid, the Abbot of S. Paul's, should be Abbot of both monasteries, which were, thenceforth, to be regarded as one community. Abbot Sigefrid was taken from his sufferings not long after. S. Benedict's trial-time was of longer duration. Constant sleeplessness at night added much to his sufferings. "To soften the tedious length of the "night, which from the severity of the illness he

<sup>1</sup> This rule was not the Benedictine rule, instituted by his famous namesake, but one which he had drawn up himself from a study of the various rules in use in seventeen monasteries on the Continent.

“passed sleepless, he was wont to summon a reader,  
“who by his direction read to him either the history  
“of the patience of Job, or some other part of the  
“Scriptures. Whereas also he had lost entirely the  
“power of rising for prayer, and could scarce raise  
“tongue or voice for fulfilling the daily course of  
“Psalmody, he provided . . . that some of the brethren  
“should be brought to him, at the hours of prayer, by  
“day and by night, to chant the Psalms in responsive  
“strains, that so with their assistance he might fulfil  
“what by himself he was unable to perform.”

Thus some months passed away, when the time of his release also arrived, when, as it is expressed in his memoir by Bede, “wintry night was about to wane,  
“and a holy morning of eternal happiness, peace, and  
“light to dawn upon him.” Aware of the approaching decease of their beloved founder, the community assembled in Church, passed the night in “prayer,  
“and in continual utterance of the Divine praise, to  
“solace the weighty sorrow of their bereavement.  
“But some of them waited about the bed, in which  
“Benedict, sick in body, strong in soul, awaited the  
“end of death, and beginning of life. For the alle-  
“viation of their grief, the Gospel was read without  
“intermission, as on other nights, by a Priest. When  
“the hour of his departure was at hand he received  
“the Viaticum of the LORD’S Body and Blood, and  
“so that holy soul, long tried and purified in the  
“furnace of affliction, left its tabernacle of clay, and

“flew with joyful freedom to the glory of eternal  
“bliss.”

S. Benedict Biscop died on the 12th of January, A.D. 690, when he was about 62 years old. He was buried in the Church of stone which he had erected at Wearmouth, and which was dedicated to S. Peter.

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William of Malmesbury, who lived in the 12th century, describes the neighbourhood of these famous monasteries as then lying desolate through the ancient devastations of the Danes, and the more recent one of the Normans. “Here is the river Wear, of considerable breadth, “and rapid tide. Both its banks have been made conspicuous by one “Benedict, who there built Churches and monasteries. The industry “of this man any one will admire in bringing over a multitude of “books, and being the first person who introduced into England “constructors of stone edifices, as well as makers of glass windows, “in which pursuits he spent almost his whole life abroad, the love of “his country, and his taste for elegance, beguiling his painful labours, “etc.”

## Life of S. Wilfrid.

### PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

Wilfrid had many biographers. Of these the principal were Bede, Eddius, Fridegod, Edmer, William of Malmesbury, and Peter of Blois.

Eddius, who is for the most part followed in these pages, was an Englishman by birth, and in early life a Monk in Canterbury, who attached himself to Wilfrid. He was well skilled in Church music, and when Wilfrid left Kent, circa A.D. 668, for his Diocese in the North of England, he took Eddius, and another Monk, named Æon, with him, in order that they might teach Church music, and train choirs on the Roman model, i.e., antiphonally. Eddius was at this time apparently a Monk in Ripon. When Wilfrid was banished some years later, Eddius shared his exile, and accompanied him to Rome, and when again, later on, Wilfrid found a new field for his zeal in the conversion of the South Saxons, his labours were shared by the same faithful companion, who continued with him to the end of his life.

We have, therefore, in Eddius' Life of Wilfrid the biography of a contemporary and of a companion in his varying fortunes.

The original life by Eddius is said to be still preserved in the Cottonian Library. Mabillon gives it in Vol. IV., p. 631.

## Life of S. Wilfrid.

BISHOP.<sup>1</sup>

A.D. 709. OCTOBER 12.

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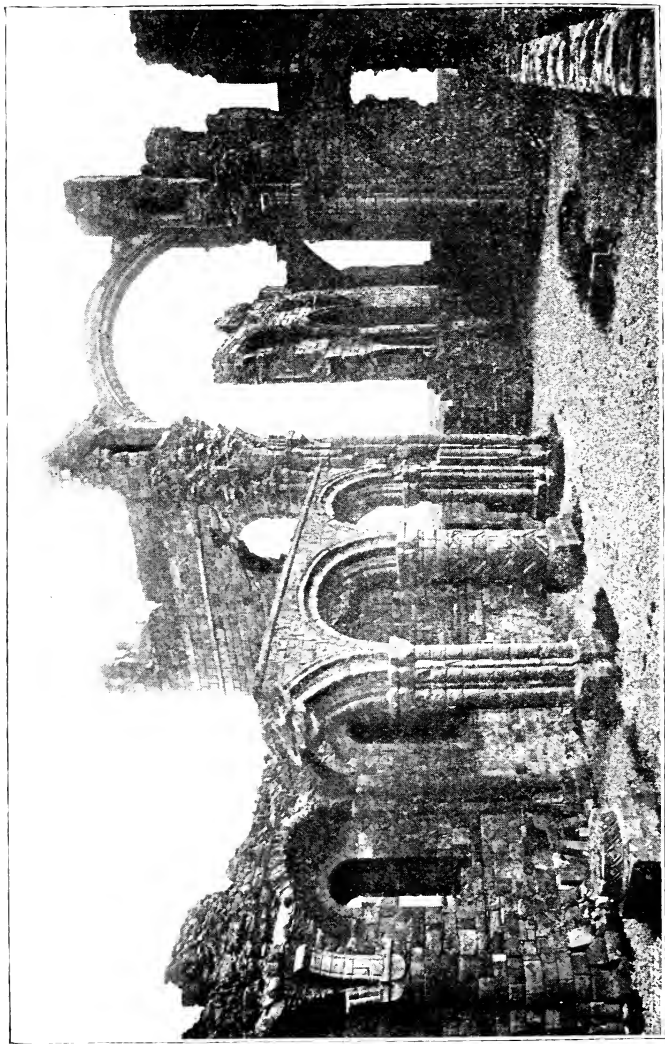
THIS illustrious Saint was born A.D. 634 in the North of England early in the reign of the pious King Oswald. He was of a noble English stock, and was endowed naturally with many excellent qualities. We know nothing of his boyhood, except that he possessed the virtues specially suitable to that age, as seen in his obedience to his parents, and in his modest deferential demeanour to his father's guests, many of whom were Thanes of high degree, and courtiers of the Palace. When about the age of thirteen he had the misfortune to lose his mother, and this proved a turning-point in his life, for his father married again, and, as it happened, a lady of a harsh unkind disposition, who made home unpleasant

<sup>1</sup> It is very remarkable that Wilfrid never claimed the title of Archbishop, or disputed the right of Archbishop Theodore to a jurisdiction over the See of York. He terms himself "an humble Bishop of Saxony."—*Vide Infra*.

to him. Wilfrid, in consequence, became desirous to leave, and his father not unnaturally forwarded his wishes. Assisting him to the best of his power, he provided him "with arms, horses, and a handsome outfit for himself and his servants, that he might make a fit appearance at Court, and so sent him forth into the world with his blessing." Wilfrid betook himself to the Court of Queen Anflada, wife of Oswy, who was then King of Northumbria. There he met many friends among the courtiers whom he had served in his father's house, and they most kindly welcomed him. They introduced him, with high encomiums, to the Queen, in whose eyes he at once found favour. He was possessed of a very graceful form, and also of an acute understanding. The Queen took so great a liking to him that she would have attached him to her service, but Wilfrid had already formed plans for himself, and when the Queen one day sounded him on the subject he confided to her that it was the desire of his heart to dedicate himself to the service of GOD. The good Queen, in no way offended, rather, much delighted, did her best to forward his views. There was a nobleman at Court, for whom she had a great regard, named Cudda. He had lately been seized with a paralytic stroke, and with the fear of death before his eyes, he had determined to retire into some religious house the better to prepare himself for his end. The Queen attached Wilfrid to his







LINDISFARNE PRIORY, HOLY ISLAND.

service, and when Cudda shortly after entered the monastery in Lindisfarne, Wilfrid, as his attendant, accompanied him. It is probable that this took place about the year 648, when Wilfrid was about fourteen years old. Here he quickly gained the love of his lord, and also of all the Monks, both old and young, by his humility and ready obedience to the rules of the house. "Though, 'as 'yet unshorn' he seemed in heart already a Monk, and to be worthy of the blessing gained by Samuel in his ministration on Eli the Priest." At this time Wilfrid learned the book of the Psalms by heart, acquiring besides an intimate knowledge of other books. The monastery in Lindisfarne had been founded by the famous S. Aidan, and under his rule an excellent discipline had been established. The Monks in Lindisfarne were examples of unworldliness, and of devotion to their calling; on the other hand, their ritual observances being the same as those in use in Iona were not in conformity with the rest of the Church. This did not escape Wilfrid's notice, young as he was, and it made him dissatisfied with Lindisfarne. He longed to have a better understanding of the rules and discipline of the Church more generally in use, and there were few books in Lindisfarne to help him. This led him to turn his thoughts to Kent; he was even ambitious of a journey to Rome, where, as he knew, with other advantages, he would find every facility for ecclesiastical study. He first

confided this desire to his lord, Cudda, who freely gave him leave to go. Thus encouraged, he next imparted his design to the Queen, who also highly approved of it.<sup>1</sup> By her's, and also by his father's liberality, Wilfrid was most honourably equipped. The Queen also commended him to the King of Kent (Erconbert), her own nephew, "requesting him "to take care of him until such time as he could "find trusty companions for his journey to Rome." Erconbert,<sup>2</sup> grandson of the famous Ethelbert, gave Wilfrid a very kind reception, and marking his zeal and earnestness conceived a great affection for him. Honorius also, then Archbishop of Canterbury, gave him a hearty welcome.

Wilfrid stayed some months in Kent (probably in "S. Augustine's," Canterbury) where he made great use of his opportunities, more especially learning diligently the institutions there in use. He also re-learned, by heart, the book of the Psalms according to the latest translation. At the close of the year A.D. 653 a young nobleman, named Biscop Baducing (S. Benedict Biscop), happened to be travelling from England to Rome, and the King obtained leave for Wilfrid to accompany him, and they shortly after set out together. Wilfrid was at this time in the prime

<sup>1</sup> Queen Anflæda, daughter of King Edwin, had been taken into Kent, at her father's death, was educated there, and had a great zeal for the Kentish customs.

<sup>2</sup> This King reigned in Kent A.D. 640-664.

of life, quick, lively, full of health and strength, with a pleasant word for everyone, and an aptitude for any good work ; nothing seemed to disconcert his temper. They travelled together as far as Lyons, where for some unknown reason they parted company. It has been surmised that Biscop's sterner temperament did not accord with Wilfrid's lively disposition. Be this as it may, Biscop went on to Rome, while Wilfrid remained for some time in Lyons, where he had become acquainted with a certain Archbishop Dalphin.<sup>1</sup>

This Prelate, we are told, was delighted with Wilfrid's conversation, with the gracefulness of his countenance, the alacrity of his movements, and "the stedfastness of his principles." Conceiving a great affection for him, he took Wilfrid and his companions into his own Palace, shewing them all hospitality, and providing for them as liberally as if they had been his own kin. He would even have adopted Wilfrid for his son, saying to him "If you will stay with me, and trust me, I will give you a good part of France to rule over, and a maiden daughter of my own brother in marriage, and you shall be my adopted son, and shall find in me a father ever ready to assist you." This alluring offer was declined by Wilfrid, who unflinchingly adhered to the resolution he had made of

<sup>1</sup> This is supposed to be Archbishop *Annemund*. No Prelate of the name of Dalphin is found among the Archbishops of Lyons. Archbishop Annemund was contemporary with Wilfrid, and was put to death by Ebroin. It appears that he had a brother, named Dalphin, who was count of the city of Lyons.—See Plummer's Bede.

devoting himself to celibacy and the Priesthood ; he explained to the Prelate the special object of his journey to Rome, and the vow by which in his own heart he had bound himself to GOD. He promised, however, to return to Lyons on his homeward journey, and to pay him another visit. The Bishop made no further attempt to detain him, but facilitated his journey to the best of his power, furnishing him with guides, money, and other necessities.

Wilfrid had a prosperous journey, and arrived with his companions safe at Rome A.D. 654. His first act was to pay his devotions in the Church of S. Andrew. There, prostrate before the Altar, on which the book of the four Gospels was placed, he made special request of that Apostle that he would obtain for him from GOD "the power of learning, and the faculty of teaching to others the holy Gospels." This prayer he always believed was answered him. Wilfrid continued in Rome many months, absorbed in devotion. At this time he found an invaluable friend in Boniface, "the Archdeacon," one of the Pope's counsellors, "a very prudent man, by whose help he learned perfectly the four Gospels, the right calculation of Easter, and many other rules of ecclesiastical discipline, which Boniface taught him with as much care as if he had been his own son." Moreover, when Wilfrid's stay had come to an end, and he was about to leave, he introduced him to the Pope, who

gave him his blessing. After this, A.D. 655, Wilfrid departed, and, laden with ecclesiastical treasures, came back to Lyons "to his father, the Archbishop, who "gave him a most affectionate reception, and induced "him to remain with him the space of three years, "during which time his love increased more and "more towards him." Wilfrid made use of this opportunity for gaining much additional instruction from the best teachers; he also disclosed to the Archbishop his desire for ordination, in which he gladly acquiesced, giving him with his own hand "the "tonsure of S. Peter,"<sup>1</sup> as it was then called. It "re- "presented in shape the crown of thorns which "encircled the head of CHRIST." It was also his intention to have made him his heir, but GOD had ordained otherwise. This Archbishop was cut off by a cruel death. From some unknown cause he had fallen under the suspicion of the Government. The

<sup>1</sup> The tonsure was at this time in general use in the Church, as a necessary rite for admission into Orders. The form of it, however, varied greatly, and was a frequent subject of controversy.

In the *Western Church* the crown of the head was shaved so amply that only a fringe of hair was left round the head. This fringe was held to be emblematic of the crown of thorns worn by the SAVIOUR in his Passion, and its advocates pleaded for it the authority of *S. Peter*.

In the *Eastern Church* the whole head was shaved. This tonsure was called the *Tonsure of S. Paul*.

The Celtic Churches had adopted a tonsure of their own. They shaved the front of the head only. The hair behind was shorn in the shape of a crescent. This tonsure was called in derision by its opponents, the *Tonsure of Simon Magus*.

See note of Dr. Giles on *Bede* III. 26.

period was that of the "Rois Faineants," when the whole power and rule lay with the Mayor of the Palace. The Mayor at this time was Ebroin, a ruthless tyrant, who did not scruple to put many of the Clergy to death. Nine Bishops are said to have suffered martyrdom under his hands; among whom was the famous S. Leger. Wilfrid was at Lyons when this persecution befell the Church. He went with the Archbishop to his trial, and when he was condemned he accompanied him to the place of execution with the full intention of sharing his fate. "When the holy Bishop had received the Crown of "Martyrdom, Wilfrid undressed himself, and stood "with firmness ready for death. The Princes, however, enquired, 'Who that beautiful youth was "that was preparing himself for death.' They were "answered that 'he was from beyond the seas, an "Englishman, out of Britain. Hearing this, they "ordered that he should be spared, and nothing "done to him.'" "Thus," writes his biographer, "Wilfrid gained the glory of confessorship, like S. "John of old, without tasting martyrdom.'"

He remained in France long enough to be present at the obsequies of the Archbishop. As soon as he had seen him buried with due honour, he took ship, and meeting with a favourable voyage, arrived safe in England in the year 658.

Oswy was still King of Bernicia, and his son, Alchfrid, reigned in Deira. This latter Prince was



a zealous favourer "of the Catholic party in England." Hearing of Wilfrid's arrival, and of his reputation for ecclesiastical knowledge, especially in the matter of the observance of Easter, he invited him to visit him. Wilfrid accepted the invitation. They met accordingly, and an intimate friendship sprang up, and thenceforth united them. Charmed with his learning and conversation, Alchfrid would not let him depart, but adjured him to stay "and preach "the Word of GOD to himself and his people." Wilfrid consented, and stayed three years at King Alchfrid's Court, in the course of which time the Prince grew more and more attached to him, and gave him great grants of land for Church purposes. The first of these was at Stanford ;<sup>1</sup> among the rest was Ripon, which he took away from the Scotch party, and conferred on Wilfrid, who shortly afterwards became its Abbot. It is probable that Wilfrid *re-built* this Monastery, which had been originally established by Bishop Eata (See Life of S. Cuthbert), for in one of his letters he calls himself its Founder. Alchfrid's gifts were not confined to land ; he gave also large sums of money to Wilfrid, who, with equal liberality, dispersed them among the poor. "At this time Wilfrid enjoyed "not only the favour of the King, but was esteemed "a Prophet of GOD by people of all ranks, high and "low, rich and poor."

<sup>1</sup> *Probably Stanford in Yorkshire, on the River Derwent.*

It happened about the same time that Agilbert<sup>1</sup> who had been Bishop of Wessex, and was now Bishop of Paris, came from beyond sea, on a visit to King Oswy and his son, Alchfrid. The latter spoke to him in Wilfrid's favour, "acquainting him "with his journey to Rome, his great knowledge and "manifold virtues, and requested him to raise him "to the Priesthood. Agilbert, much impressed by "what he heard, consented, and without delay ordained him Priest." This took place in Ripon Abbey Church.

Shortly after this the controversy about the Observance of Easter, which had slumbered so long, broke into flame. The Church in Northumbria was divided into two parties on this question, and as Easter is the pivot on which most of the other Festivals turn, the result was a constant divergence between them in their religious observances. This discord was felt the more acutely when partisans of either side lived in the same house. None felt it more than King Oswy himself, whose Queen, Anflæda, it will be remembered, was a zealous adherent of the use to which she had been accustomed in Kent. At last, unable to bear it any longer, he gathered together a great "Synod" at

<sup>1</sup> Agilbert was a French Bishop, who came into England, A.D. 650, from Ireland, where he had been studying. He offered his services to King Kenwalk, who accepted them, and he was Bishop of Wessex thirteen years.

Streaneshalch (Whitby), A.D. 664, in order that the representatives of either side might meet in his presence, and come to a final decision.

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#### IN A NOTE ON THE EASTER CONTROVERSY.

It is no easy matter to master this very puzzling question; the following observations, gathered from what is written on the subject by G. H. Moberley in his "Bede's History," page 195, may be sufficient for present purposes.

"The time of Easter," he says, "was a fertile subject of dispute in the Church from the earliest ages. The first important settlement was made in the Council of Nice, when it was agreed that--(1) Easter-day was *always to be on a Sunday*; and (2) that particular Sunday, *which came next after the full moon, following the 21st of March*.

"This settlement was accepted by the whole Church, and yet, even so, diversities arose from the fact that different Churches used different modes of calculation, and so arrived at different conclusions. The Roman Church of that day calculated by a Cycle of 84 years. the Alexandrian Church by a more accurate Cycle (adapted by Eusebius from the old Metonic Cycle) of 19 years. However, in the year 460 the Roman Church abandoned the Cycle of 84 years, and adopted one, framed by Victorius of Aquitaine, which was on the basis of the *Alexandrian Cycle*. All were now agreed in the determination of the particular day in the Paschal month on which Easter should be celebrated.

"And yet even still there remained a point of difference. Because the Latins ruled that it should be between the 16th and 22nd days after the rising of the new moon, but the Alexandrians placed it between the 15th and 21st. However, A.D. 530, Rome made another change and adopted the Cycle of Dionysius Exiguus, which, in the main, agreed with the Alexandrian use. This was the Roman use when Augustine came into England.

"In the meantime the Britons, the Irish, and the Scotch were still calculating by the old Cycle of 84 years (which Rome had formerly used), only they ruled that Easter-day might fall between the 14th and the 20th."

The Reader will notice, 1st, that Rome had twice abandoned her use; and, 2nd, that the Celtic Churches, though nearly approximating to the old Roman use, had, in some respects, adopted a Rule of their own, and, consequently were not in conformity with any other Church, in the East or West.

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The "Synod" of Whitby had such important consequences that it requires more than a passing notice. The following brief account is gathered from *Bede*, in whose History it may be found at large (Book III., Ch. 25):—

The "Synod" was held in S. Hilda Abbey. *There* was gathered together, on that eventful day, every Churchman of note in those parts. King Oswy himself presided. *His* sympathies, it was known, were with the Scottish party. On that side also might be seen Colman, the Bishop of Lindisfarne, with his Clerks, the Abbess Hilda and her followers, Bishop Cedde, who acted as interpreter for the two parties, and many others. On the other side were ranged the Queen (Anfleda), Alchfrid, King of Deira, Bishop Agilbert, his two Priests, Agatho and Wilfrid, and the aged Deacon James.<sup>1</sup>

King Oswy opened the meeting. "It was fit," he said, "that worshippers of the same GOD should observe the same rule of life, and not differ from each other in worship—they were therefore met together to discuss and ascertain which was the

<sup>1</sup> This venerable ecclesiastic had accompanied S. Paulinus to Northumbria, A.D. 625. (See Life of S. Edwin).

“best and truest tradition for the observance of “Easter, &c.” He then called upon his own Bishop, Colman, to speak on the side of the Scottish observance. Colman defended his observance of Easter as being the constant tradition of the Church to which he belonged, which tradition, he asserted, was based on *the practice of the Apostle S. John* (Beloved of our LORD) and of all the Churches over which he presided. The King then desired Agilbert, late Bishop of Wessex, to speak on the behalf of the Kentish custom. Agilbert was a Frenchman, and though he had been a Bishop in England for 13 years, could not speak English; he therefore excused himself on this account, and made request that his Priest, Wilfrid, might speak in his stead. This being granted, Wilfrid came forward as the advocate of the Easter observance as taught by the Missionaries sent by S. Gregory. This custom he shewed, with great force and eloquence, to be the universal custom of the Church. It was the observance, “not only of Rome, Italy, and France, “but also of the Church in Africa, Asia, Egypt, and “Greece, of the whole world in fact—wherever the “Church of CHRIST was spread abroad—except only “in one or two corners of these remote islands, where “the Picts and the Britons were opposed to all the “world. As for the Apostle John,” he proceeded “*his* custom was, (the law not yet having been “wholly abregated) to observe the Paschal Feast

“according to the decree of the Mosaic Law, that is, “on the 14th day of the first month, whether it was “on a Sunday or not. On the other hand, the “Apostle Peter, when in Rome, understood and “taught that Easter-day was always to be celebrated “on a Sunday, i.e., on the Sunday which fell between “the 15th and 21st days after the commencement of “the Paschal Moon. Wherefore,” he concluded, “you, Colman, and your people, observe Easter-day “neither in accordance with S. John or S. Peter, “and in contradiction of both the Law and the “Gospel.”

Colman rejoined, by appealing to the meeting, whether it was likely, whether it was to be believed that the holy Anatolius,<sup>1</sup> and the most reverend Father Columba and his successors, had lived in disobedience of the divine writings? “As for “Anatolius,” Wilfrid replied, “I deny that your “custom is in accord with his rules, and with regard “to Columba, I also appeal to the meeting (*if the “matter is to be decided by authority*) whether it is “best for us to be guided by an obscure Abbot, “however holy, or by the most blessed Prince of “the Apostles, to whom our LORD said, ‘Thou art “‘Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, “‘and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it,

<sup>1</sup> This writer, who lived circa 270, was relied upon, but erroneously, as an authority for celebrating Easter between the 14th and 20th days of the Paschal Moon.

“and to thee will I give the keys of the Kingdom  
“of Heaven.’” The King, greatly moved by these words, which apparently were quite new to him, enquired of Bishop Colman whether it was true that our LORD spoke these words to S. Peter, and when he allowed it, then he declared himself in favour of the Ritual enjoined by that Apostle, who carried the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and might exclude him from entering in. The King’s example had a weighty effect on the meeting ; the nobles and others, both great and small, agreed ; only the Scotch Missionaries and a few of their adherents remained unconvinced. Thus ended this eventful Synod in a decisive victory for Wilfrid and his party.

It is unnecessary to shew that Wilfrid’s assertion that the Easter-day he was advocating rested on the authority of the Apostle Peter was as baseless as that of his opponent, who claimed S. John in favour of his own. Anyone who reads attentively the remarks on the Easter controversy (page 373) may see that the arguments on both sides were beside the mark. It is clear, however, that they were made in good faith, and with no intention to deceive ; everyone must also allow that Wilfrid discharged his task most ably. Nay, it may also be conceded that, on the merits of the case, the decision was not wrong. The Celtic Churches had put themselves in a false position by adhering to an old and imperfect Cycle, when a more

accurate one had been generally adopted. It was folly for the Churches in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, to have an Easter-day of their own, when the rest of the Church had agreed on the observance of another day. Let alone this, it was also an advantage to the infant Church in England to preserve its connection with the Church on the Continent, and with Rome, for Rome undoubtedly was at this time "the centre of the culture and intelligence of the West."

On the other hand it is also plain that a principle was here admitted which had most serious consequences on the future of the Anglo-Saxon Church. The immediate effects, moreover, of the decision were sad enough ; the Scotch Missionaries, who had done so much for the Church in the north, and had done it so nobly and so well, could not reconcile themselves to the new observance. They soon after, in a body, returned to Iona, taking with them thirty of their English converts.<sup>1</sup>

One consequence of Colman's departure was that Northumbria was left without a Bishop. A new appointment became necessary. The famous abbey in Lindisfarne, over which Colman had presided, was also without a head. In making the two appointments great moderation was shewn. By far the larger number of Christians in the north had been educated by the Scotch Missionaries, and though

<sup>1</sup> Colman eventually went to Ireland, where he built abbeys at Inisboffin and at Mayo.



they conformed more or less to the late decision, their sympathies were still with their Scotch teachers, and no little soreness was felt at their departure. As a conciliatory measure, a Scotch Priest, Tuda, who had remained in England, and conformed, was chosen to be the new Bishop of Lindisfarne; and Eata, one of S. Aidan's favourite disciples, was made Abbot of his monastery. The plague, however, was at this time raging in England, and Tuda had scarcely been consecrated before he fell a victim to it. In this crisis the two Kings, Oswy and Alchfrid, called a council of the Witan to consider the election of a successor, and the universal response was in favour of Wilfrid.<sup>1</sup> The Kings and the people assented to their choice, and Wilfrid was bidden in the Name of the LORD to receive Episcopal Orders, and he yielded to the general wish. It was no easy matter, however, at this time to obtain canonical consecration in England. Archbishop Deusdedit was dead, and, from one cause or another, most of the other Sees were vacant; there were but one or two English Bishops left, and as for consecration by the Welsh or Scotch

#### WILFRID'S ELECTION TO THE EPISCOPATE.

<sup>1</sup> We have followed the account given by Eddius, because he mentions the particulars. Bede only says that "*Alchfrid King of Deira* sent his Priest, Wilfrid, to the King of France to be consecrated Bishop over him and his people." This at first sight does not seem to agree with Eddius. The two accounts may be reconciled if we understand Bede to mean that it was by Alchfrid's *influence* that Wilfrid was chosen and sent into France.

Bishops that, of course, under the circumstances, was out of the question. So Wilfrid requested his royal patrons to send him under their protection into France. Both the Kings approved of this plan, and joined in providing him with a ship, a retinue of followers, and great store of money, that he might enter France with proper dignity. On his arrival there a great council was called at Compiègne, at which no less than twelve Bishops were present (his old friend, Agilbert, Bishop of Paris, among them). Wilfrid made his profession of Faith, and Agilbert "willingly and honourably "consecrated him before the people." The Bishops (no one else being allowed to touch it) lifted him up on a golden chair, and bore him into the Church in solemn procession with chants and hymns.

Wilfrid was now thirty years of age (a time of life when men usually attain their highest powers of mind and body), and was already in great repute on account of the purity and gravity of his conversation, his power of preaching, and ability in adapting it to the needs of his hearers. He was, moreover, his biographer tells us, sincerely devout, diligent in the study of the Holy Scriptures, constant in his care for the poor, and generally active in all "good works."

It happened most unfortunately that, from some unknown reason, he lingered long in France after his consecration. Two years elapsed, it would appear, before he returned home. The consequences of this delay were very serious. The need of a Bishop's

presence in Northumbria was keenly felt. King Oswy determined to have a Bishop of his own. Two of Wilfrid's biographers assert that he did this through the instigation of the Scotch party opposed to Wilfrid, but Bede attributes no such motive. There was plenty of room in Northumbria for more Bishops than one, and Oswy was actuated, we may believe, by a desire to provide for the spiritual needs of himself and his people. The Bishop elect was also an admirable choice, being no other than S. Chad, whom he sent into Kent to be consecrated. But it is a strange circumstance that he ordered him to be consecrated Bishop of York.<sup>1</sup> Now York was the capital city of Deira, which Wilfrid naturally claimed as his own See. It thus came to pass that there were two claimants for the See of York. This grave complication was greatly due to Wilfrid's prolonged absence in France. He set out at last on his journey home, A.D. 666, and had a very perilous passage. One day, when he was in the middle of the channel, engaged with his clerks in saying the Office, a violent storm arose, which drove the ship out of its course on to the coast of the South Saxons, on which it was stranded by the receding tide. The country people, who were Pagans, gathered in great numbers from all quarters with intent of seizing the ship, appropriating the valu-

<sup>1</sup> It is quite possible that Oswy thought that Wilfrid would go to *Lindisfarne*, which was the See of his predecessor, Tuda.

ables, and carrying off the crew and passengers as slaves. They also threatened death to any that should resist them. Wilfrid addressed them gently and peacefully, offering them a large sum of money. But they turned a deaf ear to his words, fiercely refusing to allow any one to leave, and haughtily declaring that whatever the sea cast up on their shores was their property. Not far off from this mob of Pagans stood their idolatrous Priest on a small eminence, engaged like another Balaam, in magical arts against the strangers. One of the Bishop's retinue, observing this, cast at him a stone from a sling, with such good success that he struck him, in the midst of his cursings, on the forehead. He fell back senseless on the shore and expired, "like another Goliath." The infuriated Pagans began at once their attack. Wilfrid, fortunately, had with him 120 men that could fight, and they were, moreover, well armed. These men determined to sell their lives dear, and formed themselves into a band, binding themselves with an oath that they would not fly, but would either die or gain the victory. In the meantime Wilfrid, with his Clergy, kneeling on the shore, with hands raised up to heaven, prayed, like Moses when supported by Aaron and Hur. "Three times did that little band of Christians receive the shock of the fierce Pagan army which charged them, and thrice drove them back with great slaughter, whilst they themselves, wonderful to relate, lost but

“ five men. The Pagans were preparing for a fourth  
“ attack, to be led by their King with all their forces,  
“ when by the mercy of GOD, the tide returning  
“ earlier than was expected, carried their boat off the  
“ shore into the deep, and so with hearts full of  
“ gratitude, they proceeded on their course with a  
“ favourable wind which brought them into Sandwich  
“ harbour.”

Wilfrid now learned for the first time, to his great indignation, that another Bishop had possession of the See of York. What was to be done? There was no Archbishop to appeal to; and it was the King himself who had brought the matter about. Under these circumstances Wilfrid determined to bide his time, and retired in silence to his Monastery in Ripon. There he made his head-quarters for nearly three years, though much of the time was spent elsewhere. The King of Mercia, Wulfhere, was greatly attached to him, and frequently invited him to his Court, having need from time to time of a Bishop's services. He also conferred on him large landed estates in different parts of his kingdom. Wilfrid had also a great friend in Egbert, King of Kent, who was only too glad to invite him to Canterbury, where there had been no Archbishop since the death of Deusdedit, A.D. 664. Wilfrid acted as a sort of *locum tenens* in Canterbury for some time, and Ordained many Priests and Deacons.

Returning thence to Ripon he took with him the Rule of S. Benedict, by which he greatly improved the ecclesiastical institutions in the North of England. He also brought with him two singers, Eddi<sup>1</sup> and Æon, besides some masons and artificers of various arts. From this time the knowledge of Church music, hitherto almost confined to Kent, spread throughout the North of England. So matters went on until 669, when Theodore, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, arrived in England. He had heard, no doubt, of Wilfrid's grievance from Bishop Agilbert, with whom he had made some stay in Paris. Not unnaturally he was greatly prejudiced against Chad, who, he supposed, had intruded himself into the See of York, and that by an uncanonical Consecration.<sup>2</sup> He took therefore an early opportunity of citing S. Chad to appear before him, and when he came, publicly upbraided and deposed him. How he soon learned to love and revere him has been told in the life of that Saint. In the meantime Chad retired to his Monastery in Lastingham, and Wilfrid was put at last into possession of the See of York.

His first care was as to the condition of his Cathedral. This, it may be remembered, had been

<sup>1</sup> Eddi or Eddius, who afterwards became his biographer. See Preface.

<sup>2</sup> The reason why Theodore objected to Chad's Consecration was because two *British* Bishops assisted at it.

founded by King Edwin, and dedicated by S. Paulinus. Wilfrid found it in a state of ruin. The roof was not weather-proof, and through the unglazed windows the birds found ready entrance and egress. The tottering walls were filled with their dirt. Wilfrid, horrified at the sight, set himself to the work of Restoration. He renewed the roof, and covered it skilfully with lead ; “ the windows he “ filled with glass, which admitted the light, but kept “ out the birds ;”<sup>1</sup> the walls he washed, making them, to use the words of the Prophet, “ whiter than snow.”<sup>2</sup> The interior of the building and the Altar he furnished with their proper ornaments, with sacred vessels, &c. Great possessions of land had been given him by various benefactors for religious purposes ; he was thus enabled to augment the endowments of the See.

<sup>1</sup> This remark of Eddius shews how recent, and yet not perfectly known, was the introduction of the use of glass.

<sup>2</sup> Our readers will note, with interest, that the Churchwardens of our early days, who were accustomed “ to beautify our Churches by means “ of whitewash,” might, if they had known it, have quoted S. Wilfrid the Great in favour of the practise !

## S. WILFRID.

## PART II.

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WHEN Wilfrid had completed the Restoration of his Cathedral, he turned his attention next to Ripon. Here he built a beautiful Church. "This he completed, from its foundations to its lofty summit, of squared stone, supporting it by a series of columns. When the building was finished he invited to its consecration the two most Christian Kings, Egwin and Ailwin (or Elfwin), Egfrid's younger brother, with the Abbots, Prefects, Rulers, and all persons of any dignity in the kingdom. A great company came together, in whose presence the Church was consecrated, as the Temple of old was by Solomon, and dedicated in honour of S. Peter the Apostle. The Altar also was consecrated, with its vessels, and covered with cloth of purple and gold. The people were communicated, and all canonical rites duly observed. Then Bishop Wilfrid, standing in front of the Altar, turning to the people, enumerated with clear voice, in the presence of the Kings, the estates which in times previous had been given to the Church by Kings and Princes for the good of their souls, *also those sacred places,*



“in different parts of the country, which the old British Clergy had abandoned when fleeing before the sword of the invading Saxon.” When the sermon was over a magnificent feast began, which lasted three days and nights, at which the Kings and all the people made merry together.” Among other ornaments of the Church contributed by Wilfrid “was a marvellous one, unheard of before our times, a copy of the Gospels on Vellum, the pages of which were illuminated with purple and pure gold. He caused also the Gospels to be written in purest gold on vellum, illuminated with purple, and ordered the jeweller to make a cover (*Bibliotheca*) “of purest gold, set with the most precious gems.” These and other remembrances of S. Wilfrid were long preserved in Ripon.

King Egfrid succeeded his father, Oswy, on the Throne of Northumbria, A.D. 670. He had married some years before “the most religious Princess Adeldrida” (S. Audry). Both lived at this time in perfect amity with Wilfrid. Great prosperity and happiness attended the early part of the reign of King Egfrid; he was very successful in his first war with the Picts (who had rebelled against him), and afterwards again in Mercia, when at war with King Wulfhere. These victories added

<sup>1</sup> The passage in Italics is very noteworthy. It seems to give conclusive evidence that Christianity was in great force in the North of England in the old British times before the arrival of the English.

greatly to Wilfrid's Diocese, for it was a common custom in these early days to have but one Bishop for a kingdom, and if a kingdom became double its former size (as happened at times) there was no addition made to the Episcopate. The extent of Wilfrid's See may be imagined, when we remember that it comprised the whole of Northumbria, which kingdom embraced the South of Scotland to the Firth of Forth, and with this (for a time) the Kingdom of Mercia also. Such a Diocese was, of course, beyond the power of any man. That Wilfrid did all that was possible we need not doubt, and also that he made his influence felt in every part of this enormous Diocese, which he presided over with the utmost diligence. Nor did he, in the midst of these labours, neglect his own spiritual life, but was instant in prayer, in vigils, in study, and in fasting. He made it a rule never to drink wine, when alone, however much pressed by the heat of the weather or by extreme cold. Another of his customs was, his Biographer tells us, to have a cold bath at night. This he never omitted even in the depth of winter, till Pope John enjoined him to relax this rigour on the score of his age. At this time he was held in such great esteem in the Church, "that nearly all the "Abbots and Abbesses of the Religious Houses "desired to have him Trustee of their possessions, "or made him their heir after their deaths. The "nobles of the land entrusted him with their sons

“for education, in order that they might be dedicated to the service of GOD, or, if they preferred it, be trained in military matters, and commended to the King.” Wilfrid was now at the height of his power, and, like Wolsey in later times, the greatest man in the kingdom next to the King. It is singular that both came to grief through the jealousy of the King; the Queen, in both cases, being the innocent cause of their misfortunes.

The first tokens of the coming storm before long manifested themselves. Eddius says, “All this honour and prosperity caused much envy and ill-feeling in the hearts of many, and this in spite of Wilfrid’s great liberality towards all classes.” It is probable, however, that if there had not been a deeper root of bitterness in his relations with the King, the jealousy of a few ill-affected nobles would scarcely have injured him. It was a more serious matter when the King became estranged from him. In the meanwhile Wilfrid was enabled to carry out another noble work, the founding of the Church in Hexham. The King in marrying S. Audry gave her the Town of Hexham, with a large extent of land surrounding it, as a wedding gift. The whole of this the Queen conferred on Wilfrid, who forthwith set about the building of a grand Church. Most of the Churches in England, at this period, were built of wood, as were also the houses. There were no *stone-masons* in England. Such had to be

obtained from the Continent, whence Wilfrid fetched them for Hexham.<sup>1</sup> This Church, we are told, "was of stone, beautifully polished, with a crypt below. The building was a most complex affair, with many aisles and winding passages, and the walls were remarkable for their length and height. Another such Church was not to be found on this side of the Alps." It was consecrated to S. Andrew, and was made later on an Episcopal See by Archbishop Theodore, so remaining till the year A.D. 821, when it was united to Lindisfarne.

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### WILFRID'S EXPULSION FROM NORTH-UMBRIA. A.D. 678.

WILFRID'S relations with King Egfrid after a time become exceedingly "strained." The circumstances which led to it were as follows: The Queen had set her heart on a nunnery. She had never lived with the King as his wife. The one great desire of her soul was that she might be permitted to retire from the world. The King bore long with her, hoping that

<sup>1</sup> A sad accident happened whilst the Church was being built. A young man, a member of the Monastery, fell backwards from the top of the wall on to the stone pavement. His legs and arms were broken, and he was taken up for dead. Thanks, however, to the Surgeon's skill, and the prayers of the Community, he recovered, and "lived a long time afterwards in much gratitude to God."

in time she would overcome her repugnance to the married life. In the meantime, Wilfrid, who was her spiritual adviser, and in whom she placed supreme confidence, did all that lay in his power to confirm the Queen in her resolution, and at the same time, it is said, dissembled with the King, who, knowing his great influence with the Queen had entreated him to use it in his favour. The Queen at last wrung from the King, in a moment of weariness, his consent to a divorce. Of this she took immediate advantage; slipping unperceived out of the Palace that same evening with one or two of her most trusted maidens, she directed her steps towards Coldingham, which she reached safely in spite of the King's efforts to bring her back. There she was received by the Abbess Ebba, and immediately made her religious profession. The King, though greatly grieved, yet scrupled, after that, to pursue the matter further, and not very long after married, with Archbishop Theodore's approval, the Princess Irmenburga. But from that time all cordiality between himself and Wilfrid was gone. As it happened, also, the new Queen hated him with all her heart. It is said that Wilfrid had objected to the marriage. In any case, he thought it his duty after she had become Queen to rebuke her sharply and frequently for her levity of mind, her ostentation, oppressiveness, and pride. Stung to the quick, she began to throw out hints against him, and finding that the King accepted them

“readily, she then spoke openly on the subject, continually dwelling on his worldly glory and riches, the number of his abbeys, the number of his soldiers, the submissiveness of the nobles to him, the crowds of young men attached to him, his congregations of Monks. In fact, if his power was compared with the King’s, it was the greater of the two. ‘If war arose, Wilfrid might be a very dangerous man,’ etc.” These insinuations fell on ground ready to receive them, and a fire was kindled in the heart of the King. He determined to get rid of Wilfrid. It was no easy matter, but the following device suggested itself. It was well-known that Archbishop Theodore had greatly at heart an increase of the Episcopate, earnestly desiring a sub-division of the present huge unmanageable Dioceses. If he could be induced to come to Northumbria they might find in him a means for expelling Wilfrid (if he should oppose the division of his Diocese), or, in any case, of confining him to one of the new Sees at a distance from himself. Acting at once on this device, the King invited Theodore to stay with him. Theodore came without delay, and the King, on his arrival, made known to him his great desire for an increase of the Episcopate in his kingdom. The Archbishop was only too pleased to hear it, and thought himself justified in making use at once of so favourable an opportunity. In these days it would appear that little regard was paid “to vested interests.” Theo-

dore, without even consulting Wilfrid, proceeded to consecrate three Bishops, and to give them Sees in his Diocese. These Bishops, according to Eddius, were consecrated by himself alone, they were, Bosa for York, Eata for Hexham, and Eadhead for Lindsey. As for *Lindisfarne*, that was reserved, probably, for Wilfrid. But when he repudiated Archbishop Theodores action altogether, he was deprived of any part of his old Diocese, and Lindisfarne was joined to Hexham. Wilfrid was from home when these violent proceedings took place. Tidings of what had been done of course soon reached him. He hastened home, and sought an interview with the King and the Archbishop. This interview was granted, but not in private. It took place apparently at a *Gemot*, or assembly of some sort in which the Bishops, and the nobles, and people were present with the King. Wilfrid made his expostulation, and enquired: Why! without any crime being laid against him, he had been robbed of his See and its endowments? The King and the Archbishop, judging it best to give no reasons, only replied, "We do not allege any crime against you. But our determination we will not revoke." Wilfrid replied, "I shall appeal then from your decision to the Apostolic See at Rome, and turning from the royal Tribunal towards the time-serving courtiers, who were grinning with pleasure, he cried, "Be assured of this, that by this day next year,

““you, who are now laughing invidiously at my  
 ““discomfiture, will be bitterly weeping for your own  
 ““confusion.’”<sup>1</sup>

Thus undauntedly did Wilfrid face his opponents. But, apparently, no one befriended him at this meeting. The Archbishop did not intercede for him, and the King determining to crush him, pronounced him an outlaw, and publicly banished him from his realm. It was evidently an act of extreme injustice. How far Wilfrid brought it on himself by his previous conduct towards the King may be a question. But how is it possible to justify the action of the Archbishop? That is a matter, however, which there is the less need to discuss, since we know that he himself deeply regretted it afterwards, and humbly begged Wilfrid's pardon for it. Wilfrid, thus driven out of Northumbria, proceeded south, and probably stayed most of the time at Ely,<sup>2</sup> whilst preparations were being made for his journey to Rome. These were made expeditiously, and before the year was over (678) he embarked with many of his Clergy,

<sup>1</sup> Eddius tells us that these words came true, “for on that very day, “next year, the corpse of King Elfwin (Egfrid's younger brother) was “brought into York amidst the loud lamentations of the populace, who “tore their hair and their clothes for grief.”

Elfwin had been slain by the Mercians in a battle near the Trent, A.D. 679. This brave Prince was the idol of the people.

<sup>2</sup> It was here that S. Etheldrida, King Egfrid's first Queen, had retired and built her famous abbey. Wilfrid is said to have planned the buildings. He otherwise assisted her in its construction, and also installed her as Abbess of it, circa 670.



and some faithful adherents. The great body of his people and his Monks (who might be counted by thousands) were left behind in the Dioceses of the newly appointed Bishops. These all sighed for his return, "wept, lamented, and prayed, unceasingly "for the success of his journey." Their position, no doubt, was a most uncomfortable one. Archbishop Theodore, so far from regretting what had been done—without waiting to hear the result of Wilfrid's appeal—consecrated not long after two or three more Bishops in Wilfrid's old Diocese. At the same time, on the other hand, he took the precaution of sending Proctors to Rome to represent him there. Wilfrid meanwhile went on his journey to Rome. In the course of it he had a most narrow escape, for his adversaries, taking for granted that he would sail southwards to Quentavic, and travel by the usual route to Rome, sent messengers to Theodorick, King of the Franks, and "to the impious Duke Efruin" (Ebroin) requesting them either to banish Wilfrid from their dominions, or to take his money and slay his associates. Fortunately for Wilfrid, he, either intentionally, or driven by adverse winds, proceeded by Friesland.<sup>1</sup> He was still there when an unfortunate Bishop *Winfrid*,<sup>2</sup> who had also been deposed

<sup>1</sup> Modern Holland, part of Belgium, and perhaps *Hanover*. Its Episcopal See, *Utrecht*, made such afterwards by S. Willibrord, is about twenty miles from Amsterdam.

<sup>2</sup> *Bishop of Lichfield*, deposed by Archbishop Theodore, circa 674. He was a disciple of S. Chad's.

by Theodore, and was going to Rome, arrived in France. Winfrid was taken for Wilfrid, and was immediately "seized, robbed of all his money, and "eventually left naked in great misery, and many of "his companions were slain." Wilfrid, with better fortune, was kindly received by Algise, King of Friesland. Here he found abundance of Gentile folk, and true to his calling, began without delay to plan their conversion. Having first obtained the King's license, "he preached daily to these Gentiles, "declaring to them the most blessed Trinity, and "the doctrines of the Christian Faith. It happened, "to aid his preaching, that the harvest that year and "the fishing also proved a most abundant one. The "people attributed this to the GOD whom Wilfrid "preached, and were the more readily inclined to "listen to him. Great numbers were converted. "Nearly all the Princes, and thousands of the "common people were baptised by Wilfrid, who "thus laid the foundation of their faith." "A founda- "tion," continues Eddius, "which is to this day being "built on by his son, Bishop Wilbrord, who was "educated in Hrypon, and who still continuing "his abundant labours, gathereth fruit unto life "eternal."

While Wilfrid was at the Court of King Algise, messengers "from Ebroin, 'General' of Theodoric, "King of the Franks, arrived with letters to "that King, promising him, with an oath, a bushel

“of gold pieces if he would deliver Bishop Wilfrid into their hands, or send them his head.” Happily for Wilfrid that King had learned to love and respect him. He invited the royal messengers to a banquet, and in the course of the feast, ordered the letters to be read out in the hearing of the people; “then taking them in his hand, in the sight of all, he tore them in pieces, and threw them into the fire, saying to the bearers of them, “Tell your Lord what I say: May the Creator of “all things so destroy the kingdom and life of “that man who purjures himself before his GOD, “and keeps not the covenant to which he has “agreed.’ On this the messengers returned in “confusion to their lord who had sent them.”

Wilfrid spent the winter (A.D. 678-9) in Friesland, busying himself unceasingly in his evangelical labours; on the arrival of spring he set forward on his journey to Rome, and on the route visited Dagobert II.,<sup>1</sup> King of the French. Here again he was received most kindly; in this case out of gratitude for past benefits. “For this King had “in his youth been driven into exile by his enemies, “and had found refuge in Ireland, where he lived “some years. When he was re-called to France, “his friends wrote to Wilfrid, requesting him to “invite Dagobert to England, and to facilitate his “passage thence into France, which Wilfrid did,

<sup>1</sup> King of *Austrasia*. Metz was the Capital of his Province.

“for he received him hospitably on his arrival from  
“Ireland, supplied him abundantly with money and  
“companions, and so sent him with magnificence  
“into France.” The King gratefully remembering  
this, was very anxious to retain Wilfrid with him,  
offering him a bishopric at Streitburgh, and when  
he could not induce him to stay, he sent him on  
with presents and gifts to the Apostolic See, under  
the guidance of his Bishop, Deodatus. The two  
Bishops came to Berchtere (Berthrid) King of the  
Lombards, “a mild, peaceful man,” who kindly  
received the pilgrims. He informed Wilfrid that  
his enemies in Britain had sent to himself, promising  
great gifts if he would hinder his journey to the  
Apostolic See. “But,” he continued, “I declined  
“such iniquity, for I was once myself, when young,  
“an exile, living under a Pagan King of the Huns,  
“who swore to me by his Idol God, that he would  
“not betray me. This King was afterwards offered  
“any amount of gold pieces if he would give me  
“up to be put to death, but he refused, saying, ‘May  
“‘the gods take my life if I break my vow to thee.’  
“And,” he continued, “shall I, who know the true  
“GOD, sell my soul for the whole of this world’s  
“wealth? Then he sent forward Wilfrid and his  
“company with all honour, and with guides to the  
“holy See.”

<sup>1</sup> This appears to be *Strasbourg*, where was a grand Cathedral built by King Clovis.

## WILFRID IN ROME.

WILFRID arrived safely in Rome with all his companions in the spring, or early summer, of 679, and found that the cause of his journey there was already well-known, for Archbishop Theodore had sent a Monk, named Kenwald, with letters to apprise Pope Agatho of the matter in dispute. After a time a Congregation was held of more than fifty Bishops and Priests in the Church of our Saviour, called the Constantinian Church, to whom Pope Agatho announced the object of their meeting; namely, "to consider the contention lately arisen "in Britain, the circumstances of which they already "knew." On this two of the Bishops, Andrew of Ostia and John of Portus, made reply for the rest, that they had already read Archbishop Theodore's letters, and had heard the allegations of the messengers against Wilfrid, but that they did not find him to have been convicted of any crime, nor was mention made of any charge against him.

Wilfrid, who was hitherto outside the Council Chamber, now received permission to enter, and made his formal appeal and complaint, which was to the effect "that Archbishop Theodore in Synod, "with other Bishops assembled with him,<sup>1</sup> had in-

<sup>1</sup> This passage presents some difficulties. It seems neither to agree with Bede's account, nor with that of Eddius, who both attribute Wilfrid's deposition to Theodore acting on his own authority.

“vaded his See, over which he had presided more  
 “than ten years, and uncanonically intruded three  
 “Bishops in it, and that this had been done without  
 “any Canonical ground or charge against him. He  
 “therefore referred his cause to the Apostolic See.  
 “If it shall appear to you, and these holy Bishops,”  
 he concluded, “that I ought to be deprived, I  
 “humbly embrace your decision; or if you judge  
 “that I should be restored to my See, I gladly  
 “accept the same, except with the proviso that the in-  
 “vading Bishops be expelled from my Diocese. Or  
 “again, if it shall appear to you good that the num-  
 “ber of Sees should be increased, according to the  
 “opinion of the Archbishop and my fellow Bishops,  
 “all I contend for is, that the new Bishops be such  
 “as I can work with harmoniously, and that they  
 “be elected in Synod by the Bishops and Clergy  
 “of the Diocese, and not strangers brought in from  
 “elsewhere. Be the Apostolic decision what it may,  
 “I shall do my best to obey it.”

After some consultation between Pope Agatho and the Bishops, the decision of the Synod was given in Wilfrid's favour; it is plain, however, that special pains were taken to make it as little unpalatable to the Archbishop as possible. The Decree was as follows, “that Wilfrid was to be

Perhaps Wilfrid is here alluding to the *Synod*, or *Great Meeting*, in which the Bishops and Theodore were present, when the Archbishop's act was confirmed. (See pages 14 and 15).

“restored to his old See, but with this difference, “that Priests, acceptable to himself, were to be “selected by him in Council, and consecrated by “the Archbishop for the Sees, which had been made “by him, from which the Bishops, which had been “introduced without Wilfrid’s knowledge were to “be expelled.” The decision seems fair and equitable enough. Whether the authorities in England were prepared to accept the judgment of “a foreign Potentate” will be seen in the following pages.

Wilfrid remained some time in Rome by the Pope’s expressed wish. The Monothelite Heresy was at this time troubling the Church in the East; and, out of precaution, Pope Agatho assembled a Synod<sup>1</sup> at Rome of one hundred and twenty-five bishops “against those who taught there was only one will and operation in our LORD and SAVIOUR.” To this Synod he ordered Wilfrid to be summoned; and when that Prelate had taken his seat among the bishops, he called upon him “to declare his own faith, “and the faith of the province, or island, from whence “he came, and it being found Orthodox, it was

<sup>1</sup> This Synod against the Monothelites was held in Rome at Easter, A.D. 680.

The Monothelite error was a Branch, or Offshoot of the Monophysite Heresy. Assigning to our LORD but one Will, it contradicted that important Article of our Faith in which we profess our Belief that our Blessed Lord “was perfect GOD and perfect Man.” This heresy gave great trouble to the Church in the East, but little affected that of the West.

“thought fit to record the same among the Acts  
 “of that Synod, which was done in this manner :  
 “‘Wilfrid the beloved of GOD, bishop of the City  
 “‘of York, having appealed to the Apostolic See,  
 “‘and having been by that authority acquitted of  
 “‘every charge, whether specified against him or not,  
 “‘and having taken his seat in judgment with one  
 “‘hundred and twenty-five other bishops in the  
 “‘Synod, made confession of the true and Catholic  
 “‘faith, and subscribed the same in the name of the  
 “‘Northern part of Britain and Ireland, inhabited  
 “‘by the English and Britons, as also by the Scots  
 “‘and Picts.’”

Before leaving Rome Wilfrid visited the holy places, he also possessed himself of a great store of relics (being careful to have their titles written on them), and of many other valuable ornaments for Church purposes. He also obtained from the Pope a Charter of Privileges for S. Audry's monastery in Ely, and a Charter for King Ethelred's monastery<sup>1</sup> at Medehampstead (*Peterborough*). At last, in the autumn of the same year, i.e. A.D. 680, he set out on his journey home. All went well in passing through Italy, and he traversed the mountains safely; but, on arriving in France, he learned that his friend, King Dagobert, had been slain in “a conspiracy of the nobles, together  
 “with certain bishops.” One of the latter came

<sup>1</sup> Founded by Ethelred's brothers, Kings Peada and Wulfhere.



out against Wilfrid with a great army, "intending  
"to seize him, and deliver him to Duke 'Efroin,'  
"and to sell his companions for slaves, or slay them  
"if they made resistance. When they came up with  
"Wilfrid a dart was let fly at him, and he was bidden  
"to lie down and receive a traitor's death. The  
"Bishop, at the same time, reviled him as follows :  
" 'How dared you be rash enough to venture on  
" 'French ground? who art worthy of death, for  
" 'sending us a King who has been a destroyer of our  
" 'cities, a contemner of our nobles, and a despiser of  
" 'the Churches of GOD, and of our bishops, for which  
" 'crimes he now pays the penalty, and his dead body  
" 'has been cast out.' "

It was a perilous moment for Wilfrid and his company, but his presence of mind and courage saved them all. "I speak the truth in CHRIST," he replied, "and by the holy Apostle Peter, I do not lie! I  
"assisted, nourished, and elevated the man you speak  
"of, when he was a wanderer and exile, *because he*  
" *was a stranger*, in accordance with GOD'S precept  
"to the Israelites, to take care of strangers, and also  
" *with intent for your good*, that he might build up  
"your cities, comfort your citizens, and defend the  
"Church of GOD. And what, O righteous bishop,  
" *would you* have done but this if one of our nation,  
"and of royal blood, being exile, had fled to your  
"protection? "

The French bishop, overcome by Wilfrid's frank-

ness, replied, "The LORD preserve your going out, and your coming in, &c.! I request your forgiveness. I see I am in the wrong, and that you, as the Patriarch Judah said, are more righteous than myself! The LORD be with you! and may the holy Apostle Peter be your help."

"A soft answer," Solomon tells us, "turneth away wrath." Never was a truer Proverb, and seldom shall we find a finer example of its truth than we have here!

Wilfrid, after this, passed unmolested through France, and after a long journey overland embarked on ship-board, and crossed safely, with all his companions. He proceeded at once to his own country, where he obtained an interview with the King, to whom he delivered the Decree of the Apostolic See, signed by the Pope and his Council with the Papal Bull and Seal attached to it. A Synod was called of all the Princes and chief Ecclesiastics to hear it read.

"After, however, a part of it had been recited, finding it difficult of acceptance, and contrary to their wishes, some of those present contumaciously rejected it, and, what was worse, declared that it had been obtained by bribes." Eadmer tells us that King Egfrid flew into a passion when he learned the purport of the Apostolic decision, and rejecting it with scorn, called Wilfrid a traitor. Many of the nobles, seeing how the land lay,

followed suit, believing the best way of shewing their esteem for the King, was by abusing Wilfrid. The Queen<sup>1</sup> at this crisis snatched his Chrismary off his person. Whilst he was being subjected to these indignities, Wilfrid, addressing such of his adherents as were present, bade them not be troubled on his account at the injuries done him, for that “all who would live to CHRIST must suffer persecution—“the wicked might triumph for a time, but an eternal recompense of joy was awaiting the righteous,” &c. These words, however, only enraged his adversaries still more. Upon this the King, with the advice of his counsellors, and consent of the bishops who held his See, gave order that he should be taken into custody, and confined dishonourably for the space of nine months. “Thus the King and his Sycophants,” says Eddius, “in their wrath, despised the judgment of S. Peter, Prince of the Apostles.” The King also ordered that he should be deprived of his property, and with only the clothes he had on, placed in solitary confinement; also that his adherents should be turned out into the streets, adding, with a fierce oath, that they had better not appear, any one of them, in *his* presence, as they valued their lives. Besides all this, the Queen

<sup>1</sup> *Queen Ermenberga.* This Lady, who hated Wilfrid so bitterly, and who behaved so badly, became a different person after her husband's death. Devoting herself to religion, she received the veil from S. Cuthbert, and in due time became an admirable Abbess in some monastery in the North.

appropriated to herself his Chrismary. "This Chrismary was filled with relics, and, shocking to relate, she kept it always attached to her person, whether she was in her chamber, or in her carriage; but it brought her no more good than the Ark of GOD brought to the Philistines."

When the Synod was concluded Wilfrid was led, "as a sheep to the slaughter," to Osfrid, Prefect of the royal City, Brunenburg (Bamborough). The officers placed him before him, and delivered the King's order, which was that he should confine him in some dark dungeon, in strict custody, concealed from his friends. Earl Osfrid, in obedience to the King's mandate, placed him in a cell where the sun's rays seldom penetrated, and which had no light at night. A watch of guards was also placed outside. "When, however, these guards heard the man of GOD engaged continually in Psalmody, and observed that his cell was illumined with light in the dark night, they conceived a great opinion of his holiness, and impressed the same on all they spoke to." During this very time, when he was so dishonourably detained in prison by the King, he received an offer from him, that if he would only acknowledge his supremacy, and would confess that "the writings obtained from the Apostolic See" were not genuine, he should have a part of his old See restored to him, with other handsome gifts. The only answer which Wilfrid vouchsafed was that "he

“was willing to have his head cut off rather than accede to such terms.”

It happened that at this time the wife of the Prefect was seized with a dangerous illness. She lay like one dead. “With limbs cold and rigid, and eyes closed in a state of insensibility, she seemed to be gasping out her last breath from her frothy mouth.” The Prefect, supposing her to be dying, hastened to Wilfrid, and kneeling before him, confessed his faults, and the injurious conduct of the King, and adjured him in the Name of the LORD to come to his wife “(though he did not deserve it), and to do what he could for her. The holy Prelate went with him at once to the afflicted woman, and standing over her, sprinkled her face with holy water; after which he made a prayer to GOD for her, and then moistened her mouth, pouring in holy water, drop by drop. The woman presently began to retch and sigh, and presently, afterwards recovering consciousness, opened her eyes, her limbs also recovered warmth; she could raise her head and use her tongue, which she did to give thanks to the LORD. She also, like Peter’s mother-in-law, ministered with great honour to Wilfrid. Her name is Ebba,” continues Eddius. “She is still alive, being now a holy mother of virgins, and this anecdote she often narrates with tears.”

The Prefect, her husband, was now ready to suffer anything rather than to be the instrument of Wilfrid’s

punishment, He wrote accordingly to the King, "adjuring him by his life and salvation," not to constrain him to keep an innocent man, like the bishop, any longer in prison, he "would rather suffer "death himself," &c. The King, much enraged, took Wilfrid out of his keeping, and placed him in his city Thymber (Dunbar?) under the care of his Prefect Tidlin, a harsher man, ordering him to keep him in solitary confinement, and to put him in manacles and fetters. Tidlin, having received this command, ordered the smiths to prepare the chains. Their work, however, was so badly done that the chains never fitted, or became so loose that they dropped off his hands and feet; at last they were content to keep him in custody without chains. It appears, also, from one of his biographers, that some of his own people were allowed to come and see him, "whom he taught and baptised whilst he was "in prison." All this looks as if Tidlin connived at these indulgencies, and was unwilling to carry out the full severity of the King's commands. In the meantime Wilfrid passed his time in prayer and psalmody and thanksgiving, until his deliverance came.

The King and Queen were now making a circuit of their kingdom, with great pomp and daily feastings. In the course of their circuit, they came to the Monastery of Coldingham, which was presided over at that time by the holy Abbess Ebba, sister to the

late King Oswy, and so aunt of King Egfrid. There, on the night of their arrival, "the Queen was seized with a devil. She appeared in great distress, unliking to survive till the morning." Whatever her illness was, it was accompanied with great suffering and much cramp of the limbs. The Abbess, according to some accounts, went at once to her, and upbraided her in no measured terms for her treatment of Wilfrid, whilst the King stood by "in a fearful rage, emitting his breath like smoke from his nostrils." Eddius' account seems more probable. He says that "the Abbess went to the Queen in the dawn of the morning and found her lying with limbs contracted, nigh unto death, on which Ebba went to the King, and having acquainted him with the state of the Queen, boldly declared her belief that it was a judgment on her and on himself for their treatment of Wilfrid, and that she felt assured the Queen would not recover if the King did not make amends. If he would not restore him his See, at least he ought to give him back the relics which the Queen had purloined, and should set him free, and allow him and his adherents to go out of his dominions where they willed." The King agreed to this latter alternative. The relics were restored, Wilfrid was let out of prison, with leave to depart with his followers where he chose, and the Queen shortly after recovered from her illness.

## WILFRID'S WANDERINGS.

Thus obliged to leave his own country, Wilfrid, with his companions, went south, A.D. 681. On the way he met a noble Duke (or Prefect) Berthwald, a nephew of Ethelred, King of Mercia. Berthwald, seeing such a company, and learning the cause of their journey, invited Wilfrid to stay with him, telling him he would place some land at his disposal, to which he was heartily welcome. Wilfrid thankfully accepted this offer, and without delay caused a small monastery to be built on this land, where he placed his monks, who, Eddius tells us, still possessed it when he was writing his biography. "The old serpent, however, was on the alert to raise persecution against Wilfrid." King Ethelred's Queen, Osthrida, was a sister of King Egfrid. When she and the King, her husband, heard that Wilfrid had taken up his abode in Mercia, they wrote to Earl Berthwald, and forbade him, as he valued his life, to retain Wilfrid one day under his protection. We learn from another writer (Eadmer), that here, as in Northumbria, the quarrel turned upon the Papal Decree. He was pressed by the King, and by Berthwald, at the King's instance, to abjure it. When all attempts to terrify him had failed, he was expelled out of Mercia. His monks were allowed to remain where they were.

Wilfrid, thus invidiously driven out, sought a refuge in Wessex, where he was allowed to stay for a short



time. But, unfortunately for him, the King of Wessex, Kentwin, had married a sister of Queen Irmenburga. She took up her sister's quarrel, and he was soon obliged to leave Wessex also. Thus, though released out of prison, he could find no rest for the sole of his foot, "for whithersoever he went King Egfrid's unrelenting persecution followed him." It was in this time of distress that Wilfrid turned his thoughts to Sussex, which at this period was a little world of its own, cut off from the rest of England by its hills, and the vast Andred Forest, which extended over the present weald of Kent and Sussex, and which is said to have been one hundred and twenty miles long by thirty broad.

In these wild secluded parts Paganism still survived. An attempt had indeed been made to introduce Christianity by an Irish Missionary, Dicul, one of S. Fursey's companions, who had penetrated into Sussex, and had built himself a very small monastery at Bosenham (Bosham) about five miles from Chichester, where with five or six companions "he served our LORD in great poverty and humility, but none of the natives would follow their course of life, or listen to their preaching."

It was to these Pagans that Wilfrid now fled for refuge, and obtained an interview with their King, who gave him a most hearty welcome. Ethelwalch

and his Queen Ebba<sup>1</sup> both were Christians, and earnestly desired the conversion of their people. The King assured him that if he would stay with him, neither fear nor any amount of money should induce him to betray him. Wilfrid therefore gladly took up his abode in Sussex. It happened that at this time a most dreadful famine, caused by continued drought, was cruelly destroying the people. The horrors of this famine may be understood by what Bede tells us—"It is reported," he says, "that very often forty or fifty men, being spent with want, would go together to some precipice, or to the sea-shore, and there, hand in hand, perish in the fall, or be swallowed up by the waves." Wilfrid, with characteristic energy, threw himself into plans for their relief. Their sea was full of fish, as were also their rivers; but strange to say, the Sussex folk up to this time had paid no attention to fishing, and had no skill to catch any fish except eels.

The Bishop ordered his men to gather a quantity of eel-nets, wherever they could get them, and to cast them into the sea, "and by the blessing of GOD three hundred fishes of various sorts were taken." These he divided between the owners of the nets,

<sup>1</sup> Ebba was the daughter of Eanfrid, Prince of the *Wiccii*, who inhabited Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, and Warwickshire; from the *Wiccii* these two last counties derive their name. They belonged to Mercia, which was now Christian. King Ethelwalch himself had been converted in exile by King Wulphere of Mercia, in whose Court he was staying at the time.

the men who had caught the fish, and the people. This not only relieved their present wants, but turned the attention of the people to a source of supply for the future. In the meantime, having obtained leave of the King (which was gladly accorded), he began his missionary labours. "Standing in the midst of "crowds of the people, he cried, as the Baptist of "old, 'Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at "hand;' and 'Be ye baptized every one of you,' &c."

He continued to preach to them for many months, with much eloquence, setting before them the great truths of the Christian Faith. The people were the more inclined to listen because they regarded him as their benefactor in time of need. Such success, indeed, attended his labours, that many thousands of them were converted, and desired to be baptised. A day was fixed (probably Whitsunday) for this most solemn Service, when a nation was to be received into the Church of CHRIST. It fell out most happily that on this very day, whilst Wilfrid and his priests were engaged in their pious labour, there came a copious down-pour of soft rain, which brought the famine to an end. The people, connecting the two events together, were the more confirmed in their new faith, "and rejoiced in the Living and true GOD, "who had enriched them with wealth, both temporal "and spiritual."

King Ethelwalch, highly delighted with Wilfrid's success, conferred on him his own Palace, which was

at Selsey, with 87 manses of land. Here Wilfrid built a monastery in which his people might live together. Selsey<sup>1</sup> had its name from the seals which used to frequent it. On this little peninsula there were two hundred and fifty Serfs, who passed with the land into Wilfrid's possession. He caused them to be taught the Christian faith, and baptised them, and at the same time set them free.

Wilfrid's stay in Sussex was doubtless a happy episode in his troubled life. Its tranquillity, however, was brief. The little kingdom of Sussex was seldom left long unharrassed by one or other of its more powerful neighbours. The blow, in this instance, fell suddenly from an unexpected quarter. The King of Wessex had driven his kinsman, Cedwalla, into exile. This daring chief gathered a band of associates and adventurers, and made a raid into Sussex, plundering as they went, and slaying any that opposed them. The King, it would appear, came to the rescue, and was slain in the fight. It was a bold but rash stroke on the part of the invaders. The Sussex folk recovered from their panic, and under the leadership of two valiant chieftains, Berthun and Andhun, fell upon the small band of invaders and routed them, slaying many, and dispersing the rest. Cedwalla escaped with his life out of the fray, but knew not

<sup>1</sup> Selsey is about eight miles from Chichester. It became an Episcopal See for Sussex, and remained so until after the Conquest, when the See was transferred to Chichester, A.D. 1070.

where to find a refuge. In this dilemma he bethought himself of Wilfrid, and determined to throw himself on his protection. He found his way to Selsey (or wherever he was staying), and discovered himself, and “implored him to be a father to him, both in “spiritual and worldly matters, promising with an “oath that he would ever be to him an obedient “son.” One would think there must have been a conflict of feelings in Wilfrid’s breast when this stranger, who had been the cause of the death of his friend and patron, Ethelwalch, thus put himself into his power. He knew, however, that there had been no personal malice, the man was also now in fear of his life, and had frankly trusted him with it; his soul revolted from betraying him. He soon found that Cedwalla, though a heathen and a rough soldier, was possessed of noble qualities, and he learnt to love him. The two exiles bound themselves together by a solemn covenant, which was faithfully observed by both. Wilfred frequently gave assistance and help to Cedwalla in the difficulties which beset him; but these difficulties were not of long duration, for as it happened, an opening occurred for Cedwalla’s return into Wessex, where great political confusion then prevailed. Cedwalla went boldly home, overcame all opposition, and in a short time was recognised “Monarch” of Wessex. It was now his turn to shew kindness, nor did he forget Wilfrid, but “sent for him “out of Sussex, entreating him to come as his best

“beloved friend and father; and when he came,” Eddius says, “he made him his chief counsellor, and “conveyed to him numberless estates of land, and “other munificent gifts, for the Service of GOD.”

All England now, in a general sense, was Christian, at least by profession; still, as might be expected, Paganism held its sway in the more secluded districts. Notably this was the case with that beautiful spot, the Isle of Wight, into which the faith had not yet penetrated. From this, its last foothold, idolatry was summarily eliminated soon after the Conversion of Sussex. This little isle had changed hands several times; it had belonged to Wessex, afterwards to Mercia, and then to Sussex, and at this time it had become independent, but Cedwalla coveted it, and was determined to reunite it to Wessex. For this purpose he raised an army, and (probably with a view of making it safe for the future) cruelly determined to exterminate the inhabitants, and replace them with colonists from his own province.

This extraordinary King, half heathen and half Christian, before going into the battle made a solemn vow to the GOD of the Christians, that if he would assist him to gain the victory, he would give one quarter of the island to His service. The unfortunate islanders made a most brave defence, but were overpowered, and Cedwalla, though severely wounded, gained possession of the island. He faithfully ful-

filled his vow, giving one quarter of the island to Wilfrid for religious purposes. The island at this time contained twelve hundred families. Wilfrid's share, therefore, was land for three hundred. Wilfrid made this over "to one of his clerks, called Bernwin, "who was his sister's son, assigning him a Priest "(whose name was Hiddila), that the two together "might administer the word and baptism of salvation to all that would be saved." "Thus," Bede adds, "after all the provinces of the island of Britain "had embraced the faith of CHRIST, the Isle of Wight "also received the same."

It was about this time, A.D. 686, that Archbishop Theodore sought for a reconciliation with Wilfrid; he was now very old and oppressed with frequent infirmities. Believing that his end was nigh, he sent for Wilfrid. They met in the palace of Erconwald, Bishop of London, who is said to have brought about the reconciliation. The Archbishop, after a solemn confession of his past life, declared that nothing pressed upon his conscience so much as his share in the expulsion of Wilfrid from his See and from Northumbria, when no crime had been laid to his charge, and added that he would make such amends as lay in his power by persuading the King and the nobles to be reconciled with him.<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid assured him of his forgiveness, and begged him to do as he

<sup>1</sup> Eddius states that Theodore also expressed an earnest wish that Wilfrid should be his successor.

had said, and write letters to his friends in the north, so that he might obtain a part, at least, of his old diocese. Theodore faithfully fulfilled what he promised; he wrote in Wilfrid's behalf to Aldfrid, King of Northumbria (who had succeeded his half-brother Egfrid), entreating him to be reconciled with Wilfrid. He also sent letters in his favour to Alflæda,<sup>1</sup> Abbess of Whitby, and to Ethelred, the King of Mercia. With the two latter he found no difficulty, Ethelred, in particular, sent for Wilfrid to visit him, and when he came gave him a most honourable reception, and made over to him many monasteries and possessions of land. Ethelred and Alflæda thenceforth continued to be his faithful friends.

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#### WILFRID'S RECALL TO NORTHUMBRIA, EXPULSION, AND SECOND APPEAL TO ROME.

The year A.D. 686 had not expired before Wilfrid received free leave to return to the north, and on his arrival King Aldfrid made over to him the monastery of Hexham with all its possessions. In the following year, also, the King sent him to Lindisfarne, where S. Cuthbert had lately died. Thus he became the ruler of the monastery which, in company with his

<sup>1</sup> This lady, then Abbess of Whitby, was a daughter of King Oswy. She was dedicated to GOD in her infancy by that King according to a solemn vow made by him in a time of great distress. He gave her in charge to S. Hilda, who brought her up, and whom she succeeded.



lord Cudda, he had entered as a youth, and in which he had learned the first rudiments of "Religion." He found its institutions still as little to his taste as he had before, and seized this opportunity for making reforms, introducing the rule of S. Benedict. The Monks, accustomed to their own rule of life, were greatly distressed by Wilfrid's action, and made all the opposition they could. Some of them even left the place. Fortunately for them another change was made at the end of the year. A new Bishop, Edbert, was sent to Lindisfarne, and Wilfrid was at last restored by the King to his old See of York. Aldfrid at the same time gave him back his favourite Abbey of Ripon with all its endowments.

And now one might have hoped that the unfortunate strife, which had disturbed the North of England so long, would have been buried in oblivion, set at rest for ever, but it was not so to be. The strife soon revived. But to whom its re-awakening was due is not clear. It is certain that the new discord was concerned with Ripon, which was dear to Wilfrid as the apple of his eye. King Aldfrid, who, to do him justice, was no tyrant or oppressor, was bent on retaining a Bishop there; (it had been made a See by Archbishop Theodore). Wilfrid objected to this, he considered it an interference with his own rights. This dispute led on to the old quarrel. For the King relied on Theodore's Synodical decree, and Wilfrid on his Papal appeal, which he claimed to have over-

ruled the decree made at home. In consequence of this difference, the relations between the King and the Bishop became soon disturbed; "nor were there wanting persons ready enough to fan the King's resentment into flame." At last the discord became so aggravated that the King demanded of Wilfrid one of two things, that he should either submit, or leave Northumbria. Wilfrid choose the latter alternative; this event took place A.D. 691. Thus Wilfrid, only five years after his recall home, went a second time into exile. Fortunately for him, however, he had now a fast friend in Ethelred, the King of Mercia. This King gave him a most honourable reception, and placed him in the See of Leicester, which had lately been detached from Lichfield. Here Wilfrid made a prolonged stay. He seems to have been twelve years in the Midlands, but most unfortunately his biographers tells us almost nothing of this period of his life.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, whilst Wilfrid was staying in the Midlands, matters did not improve by his removal from the scene of strife. Perhaps one reason may have been that he had left behind him a party of sympathisers, and zealous Monks without number. At all events there was no diminution in the bitterness of the quarrel. At last King Aldfrid called to his aid Berthwald, who was now Archbishop of

<sup>1</sup> During his stay in Mercia he consecrated Offor, second Bishop of Worcester, and S. Swidbert, Missionary Bishop of the Fresons.

Canterbury, and begged his assistance for the appeasing of the strife. The Archbishop consenting, a Synod was arranged in which Wilfrid's matters might be considered. To this Synod Wilfrid was invited, and a free pass accompanied the invitation. The Synod met, A.D. 703, at Onestrefield, about five miles to the North of Ripon. Nearly all the Bishops in England were present at it, Wilfrid among the number. But though it was such an important Synod, nothing was effected at it. It does not appear that either party came in the spirit of conciliation; moreover, Wilfrid was persuaded, rightly or wrongly, that the King and the Archbishop were leagued against him, and became more unbending, if such a thing were possible, than ever.

As for the proceedings, they were the old story over again. Wilfrid was demanded if he would submit to the decrees of Archbishop Theodore passed in Synod, and he replied that he would do so, so far as they were in accord with Pope Agatho's decision. He was then asked if he would be willing to submit his case to the arbitration of the present Archbishop. His reply was tantamount to a refusal.<sup>1</sup> When all else had failed, the King was persuaded to offer him Ripon, *but on this condition, and only on this condition*, that he gave a promise in his

<sup>1</sup> Eddius tell us that Wilfrid was secretly warned by a young Thane (who belonged to the Court) not to sign any paper, as the object was only to entrap him.

own hand-writing *to remain there, never to leave the walls of the monastery without the Kings leave, and never to officiate in his Episcopal capacity.* This offer certainly was not much more than an insult, and Wilfrid met it by declaring his intention of appealing again to Rome.

Thus this unhappy meeting only aggravated the dispute ; so great was the indignation of the King and of the meeting generally, that it was fortunate for Wilfrid that he was provided with a free pass. Thenceforth he was regarded as an outlaw, and deprived of all his possessions in the North. Moreover his Monks and other Churchfolk were treated as ex-communicate. No one would associate with them, “or even partake of a meal if it had been blessed by “one of them.”

As for Wilfrid himself, he found protection in Mercia till a vessel could be found to take him to Rome. Of his second journey there and appeal we need not give the details. It will suffice to say that he met with a kind reception from the Pope (John VI.), who assigned him a house for himself and his companions, until the arrival of the Archbishop's Legates. When they arrived he won his case on their first and principal charge,<sup>1</sup> and in due time he

<sup>1</sup> When the Legates were called upon to specify their first and principal charge against Wilfrid, they replied, “This is our first and “principal charge against Bishop Wilfrid, that he publicly in Synod “refused contumaciously to acquiesce in the judgment that might be “delivered by Berthwald, Bishop of Canterbury, etc.”

was cleared of all the charges made against him. What these charges were we are not told, they were probably of little moment, but they were numerous enough, for it took more than *seventy meetings* for their consideration by the Bishops, who sat as a sub-committee. When all was settled, the Pope confirmed the decree of his predecessors, gave Wilfrid his blessing, and wrote letters in his behalf to King Aldfrid and King Ethelred, and also to Archbishop Berthwald.

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#### WILFRID'S RETURN HOME, LAST ILLNESS, AND DEATH.

It does not appear that Wilfrid made any long stay in Rome this time. If he had consulted his own feelings, we are told, he would have taken up his abode there for the rest of his life, but for the sake of "his people," who were sighing for his return, he hastened home, A.D. 705. Perhaps also he may have felt that his health was giving way. He seems to have been naturally endowed with an iron constitution, and a most vigorous frame ; it is plain, however, that the strain of the strife, and the cares and anxieties of the last few years had told upon it. It is the unyielding oak, we know, that comes down with a crash, when the bending reed survives. Symptoms of an approaching crash shewed themselves too clearly in the course of Wilfrid's journey home. He came

safely into France, but as he was travelling through that country he was seized with sudden illness ; at first he managed to sit on his horse, but soon he had to be carried in a litter by his sorrowing companions, who brought him thus scarcely alive into the City of Meaux.<sup>1</sup> There he lay, like one breathing his last, and, except that he breathed, and that his limbs were not rigid, there was nothing to shew that he was not dead. All hope of his recovery was now gone (he had eaten nothing for four days). Whilst he was lying in this trance, or heavy sleep, he beheld a most wonderful vision :— “ The Archangel Michael appeared, and gave him to understand that his life would be spared for some years. In token of this he would begin to recover that very day, would reach home safely, and would there receive back such of his possessions as he valued most, and would also end his days in peace.” Solemn warning was given him at the same time to hold himself in readiness for the Archangel’s return in four years time.

Awaking out of this trance Wilfrid put his powers to the test, and found he had strength enough to get out of bed. He did so, and seated himself among his people, who with tears in their eyes were singing the Psalms for the day. At his bidding Acca<sup>2</sup> was sent

<sup>1</sup> A town of some importance, about twenty miles North-East of Paris.

<sup>2</sup> See note on page 45, Part III.

for, and when the rest had left the room he related to him the wonderful vision he had seen. After this he was able to take some food, and began to recover his strength so rapidly that in the course of a few days he seemed quite well, and was able to proceed on his journey to the coast, he had a good passage, and landed safely in Kent.

His first step, when in England, was to send messengers to Archbishop Berthwald. The Archbishop, a very kind, amiable man, had no doubt regretted the rancorous spirit that pervaded the late Synod, he had no wish also, probably for a quarrel with the Pope, and assured Wilfrid in his reply that he would do what lay in his power to *obtain some mitigation of the harsh decrees of the late Synod*. Wilfrid, after this, came with his numerous company of Abbots and Monks to London, whence after a short stay he passed on to the Midlands; here his friend, Ethelred, "received him with tears of joy."

This Prince, caught by the spirit of the age, had lately resigned the throne of Mercia, and was about to become a Monk in Bardney, where he had built a noble abbey. He wrote in Wilfrid's behalf to the King, who had succeeded himself,<sup>1</sup> who promised to do his best for Wilfrid.

So far all had gone well. But the greatest diffi-

<sup>1</sup> The King who succeeded Ethelred, on the throne of Mercia, was Kenred, he reigned A.D. 702-709, and then resigned the kingdom and went to Rome, where he died.

culty remained ; this was to obtain King Aldfrid's acquiescence in the Papal decision. On this depended Wilfrid's return home, the recovery of his See, and other possessions in the North of England.

By Ethelred's advice he shortly afterwards sent messengers to King Aldfrid to request permission for himself to come and shew him the Apostolic letters and judgment. Aldfrid gave them an interview, and on this occasion "said nothing unkind or "harsh," but deferred them to another day when he would give them an answer to their request. On the day appointed Wilfrid's representatives returned, when the King, who, in the meantime, had taken his Counsellors' advice, spake as follows : "My very "reverend brethren, make any request you please for "yourselves, and I will grant it, for I honour you "both, but make no request of me henceforth for "Wilfrid, your lord, for what the Kings, my pre- "decessors, and the Archbishop, with their Senate "decreed before my time, and what we now, in con- "junction with the Archbishop (whose mission was "from the Apostolic See), and with nearly all the "Bishops of England have decreed, that I will not "change as long as I live, for any writings of what "you call the Apostolic See."

We must not stop too long to comment on this remarkable passage, or attach the utmost importance to it, for Aldfrid is said to have wavered afterwards on his death-bed. It appears, however, quite plain



that we have here most clearly expressed the deliberate belief of the English Church and nation, in this age when they were deeply attached to Rome, that the Papal See had no unlimited jurisdiction in England, but only such as was voluntarily conceded to it.

Wilfrid's party returned sadly home to report the ill success of their interview with the King. And now all hope seemed cut off, when a sudden event occurred which seemed to give him a fresh opening. Aldfrid was seized with a most serious illness; he lost the use of his limbs, there was no rally, and he died shortly after at Driffeild, A.D. 705. Bede gives him a very high character, both for his learning and the able government of the kingdom. The suddenness of his death caused great confusion in Northumbria; he had left a son, Osred, a mere boy; a powerful Thane, Eardulf, took occasion of the confusion to seize the Crown, and a civil war commenced. Wilfrid thought himself justified, under the circumstances, in returning to Northumbria,<sup>1</sup> but Eardulf quickly expelled him thence. Before long, however, Eardulf himself was driven out, and Osred, the rightful heir, was placed upon the throne. The government fell into the hands of his chief coun-

<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid sent a friendly message to Eardulf, but the reply received was, "Tell that man that I swear by my salvation—if he does not leave my Kingdom in the next six days I will put to death any of his people that I shall meet."

sellors, and, as it happened, *they were Wilfrid's friends.* It was not long, therefore, before the Archbishop of Canterbury was requested to call a Synod with a view to a reconciliation between Wilfrid and the other Bishops, &c. He did so, and they met at the river Nid (in Yorkshire). There were present the boy King and his Princes, three Bishops with their Abbots, the Abbess Elfleda, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Wilfrid. After some discussion on the Pope's Letter, and a declaration on the part of the Bishops that they were not willing to alter what had been settled at home by their own Archbishops and Kings in Synod, and lately by King Aldfrid, the Abbess Elfleda came forward and, calling CHRIST to be her witness, assured the meeting that King Aldfrid, on his death-bed, had changed his mind and made a vow, if he recovered to restore Wilfrid. Now also, Bertfrid, the chief Thane, most unexpectedly spoke in Wilfrid's favour. "We were lately," he said, "shut up in a state of seige, in the city Bebbanburg "(Bamborough), cooped up on a narrow rock, and "surrounded by hostile forces. In this strait we "took counsel together, and made a vow to GOD, "that if He would grant to our youthful Prince "the Kingdom of his father, we would obey the "judgment of the Apostolic See with regard to "Bishop Wilfrid. Scarcely had we made our vow, "when our enemies suddenly changed their minds, "they approached us with offers of friendship ; we

“opened our gates to them, and were ourselves  
“liberated.”

This speech, as might be expected, made a profound impression in Wilfrid's favour. The Bishops, we are told, began to whisper to each other apart, the Archbishop also joined in their consultation, and, at times, the Abbess Elfleda. Eventually the following compromise<sup>1</sup> was arrived at:—“All the Bishops (the King also and Princes) were willing to be reconciled to Bishop Wilfrid, and would restore to him his two best Monasteries, i.e., Ripon and Hexham, with all their revenues.” Wilfrid accepted this compromise, and so at last this thorny controversy, which had disturbed the Church for such a length of time, was settled. All the Bishops the same day kissed and embraced each other, and broke bread in the Holy Communion, and so, having given hearty thanks to GOD for all this happiness, they returned, in the peace of GOD, to their own homes.

Not long after this Meeting, and, it may be, in consequence of it, Wilfrid had another return of the same mysterious illness from which he suffered in France. As then, he lay in an unconscious state, between life and death. It was at Ripon, and the Monks there, fearing to lose him, interceded with

<sup>1</sup> It is certain that Wilfrid himself regarded this settlement as a *compromise*, for, his Biographer tells us, he meditated another journey to Rome to prosecute a further appeal.

GOD, night and day, for his recovery. Rumours of his illness soon spread, and all his Abbots and Anchorets, scattered in different places far and wide, came trooping into Ripon, though with little hope of finding him alive. There assembled, they all knelt down together, and in their common sorrow made petition to GOD that his life might be spared for a time. Their prayer was heard and granted, for the same day Wilfred woke up, as from a sleep, and recovered his senses, his memory, and power of speech; his visitors, on this, returned home with joy.

Wilfrid lived after this a year and a half in happiness and perfect peace. Taking advantage of this respite he ordered everything for the peace of his religious Houses, and for the bequeathal of the vast treasures which still belonged to him; these were all locked up in a safe, or iron box, in Ripon. Thither, not long before his death, he invited two Abbots, and eight of his most trusty monks to come to him. When they were come, he ordered them to open the box, and to place in view all his gold, silver, and precious stones, and divide them into four parts. One of these he willed to be sent to Rome<sup>1</sup> to be there distributed among the Churches, especially those of S. Mary and S. Paul; the second was for the

<sup>1</sup> It is certain that Wilfrid, if his health had permitted, would have gone to Rome again, either to prosecute a further appeal for the full restitution of his rights, or, more likely, to end his days there.

Poor at home ; the third was to be given to the Abbots of Hexham and Ripon ;<sup>1</sup> and the last was to be divided among his companions in exile, who had continued with him in all his laborious journeys and sorrows.

When he had made disposition of his goods, and had provided for the government of Ripon, which he assigned to the Priest Tatbert, his relation and inseparable companion, he informed the community that he had received a pressing invitation from the King of Mercia (Ceolred)<sup>2</sup> which he was the more inclined to accept, because it would give him the means of visiting the numerous abbeys which he had founded in that kingdom. After taking an affectionate farewell of his beloved Monks, he left Northumbria with the good will of all in that Province, of whatever rank or class of life. Thence he journeyed South into Mercia, where he found his Abbots only too joyful to see him. To certain of them he made known the particulars of his will, and gladdened the hearts of all, endowing some communities with lands, making pecuniary gifts to others, distributing his goods to his heirs, as though he foresaw his death. At last he and his company

<sup>1</sup> The Legacy left to these two Abbots was to give them the means of conciliating the King and the powerful nobles, who he feared might take advantage of them after his death.

<sup>2</sup> This King was the son of Ethelred. He died A.D. 716, and was buried at Lichfield.

came to Oundle (in North Hants), where he had formerly dedicated a Church to S. Andrew. Here he was seized with such a severe illness that he knew his end to be nigh. His faculties were this time spared him, and were remarkably clear. Sending at once for his followers, he gave them his last words of advice; now, also, with the view of preventing dissensions after his death, he enumerated, one by one, the various possessions of land which he had at any time given to his Abbots, or now wished to bequeath them. Hexham in particular he assigned to his beloved Priest Acca.<sup>1</sup> After a few more words of exhortation he gave them his final blessing, and then, without a groan or murmur, reclined his head on his pillow and "fell asleep." So peacefully at last did this stormy life come to an end!

There are passages in Wilfrid's life we cannot but deprecate. We must also regret the controversial

<sup>1</sup> Acca was bred up in York among "the Clergy" of Bishop Bosa (one of the intruding Bishops). He afterwards attached himself to Wilfrid, and became one of his most devoted followers, accompanying him in his exile and travels abroad. After Wilfrid's death he was made Bishop of Hexham, and held that See for many years. In the course of his Episcopate he gathered at Hexham "a most numerous and noble library. He likewise adorned 'the House of GOD,' industriously "providing stores of holy vessels, lights, etc." In like manner he greatly improved the singing and chanting. "He, himself," Bede, tell us, "was a most expert singer, as well as most learned in Holy Writ, and "most pure in the confession of the Catholic Faith, etc." "Nor did he "cease until he received the reward of his pious devotion." Acca died A.D. 737. He is in some old martyrologies reckoned among the Saints.

tone of his mind which embittered his enemies, and turned his own people into partizans; but whatever we may think on these points, there can be no question as to the main judgment. All must surely allow that Wilfrid was the foremost man of his day—the ablest, the most gifted, the man of the greatest culture. It is plain, also, that with unsparing devotion he spent his energies, his powers, his wealth, his whole life, in the service of GOD, from his earliest youth to his latest breath. We see also that GOD so blessed his labours, that what he accomplished in any one Province would have been counted a triumphant success for any ordinary man. There is scarce a Province in the Heptarchy in which he did not do some great work for GOD. The North (his own country) he filled with religious houses, and there York, Ripon, and Hexham attested, and still attest, his magnificence. In Mercia he was scarcely less a power, though here, unfortunately, the particulars are lost. In Kent we find him supplying the place of an Archbishop for some years, to the great content of the Church there; in East Anglia assisting S. Audry in her noble work at Ely. Even in Wessex, the farthest Province from his home, his influence is seen converting the Barbarian Cedwalla into a Christian, and almost into a Saint. But most of all he shines as the Evangeliser of Sussex, which Province he turned from a “wilderness into a garden “of the LORD.”

Would it not have been grievous if such a man had died an outcast and in exile? It may be we may differ from him in the great controversy of his life ; that controversy is still an element of discord in the Church : there were Saints on either side in Wilfrid's time, and good Christians may still differ. But even in this matter we may at least remember that Wilfrid had great wrongs, and again it is clear that in this miserable strife he was actuated by no petty motives, but by what he believed to be his duty to GOD.

Not without reason, therefore, was all animosity of feeling buried with him in his grave, and only the remembrance of his virtues survived. By the verdict of posterity he has been styled *Wilfrid the Great*, and the Church of CHRIST has never ceased to revere his memory, or to venerate him as a Saint.

But to return. Tidings of Wilfrid's death at Oundle soon spread, and a goodly band of Abbots and other Churchmen might soon be seen hastening thither. The office of washing the body was performed by the Abbots, who then dressed it in pontifical vestments, and so it was brought in procession with chants and hymns to Ripon ; there the whole community turned out to meet it, and so amid the universal lamentation of that vast assemblage it was taken into the Church of S. Peter, which he had himself founded and built. There they buried the body of this holy man, who had died in the 76th year of his age, and in the 46th of his Episcopate, in the course



of which he had consecrated Churches and ordained Priest and Deacons innumerable.

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NOTES.

We need not dwell on the numerous miracles believed to have occurred in connection with this Saint, both at Ripon and also at Oundle. They were of the usual character, common to that age. It must suffice to say that Wilfrid was venerated as a Saint from the day of his death. His successor at Ripon, the Abbot Tatbert, observed the day of his death (Thursday)<sup>1</sup> as a *weekly* festival, besides celebrating a *Daily Mass* in his behalf. He also established an annual festival on the anniversary of his death. This festival became so popular, and was attended by such crowds of people from all parts of England, that the neighbouring land-owners were much inconvenienced by the multitudes, who trampled down their crops, and in consequence they did their best to discourage it. In time, also, as usually happens, this popular enthusiasm began to die out of itself, and Wilfrid's festival attracted less and less attention. Then came the Danish troubles. For a long time Ripon escaped their rapacity, but in the year A.D. 948 the Danes penetrated to Ripon, laid waste the town, and burnt down Wilfrid's Church. His body was left neglected under its ruins. There it remained only a short time; Archbishop Odo made a visitation in the North of England a few years later; he had a great veneration for Wilfrid, and he came purposely to Ripon to visit his tomb. When he saw the state it was in he was greatly shocked, and could not refrain from tears. By his orders Wilfrid's remains were taken up. The inhabitants of the place valued them so little that they made a present of them to the Archbishop, who brought them to Canterbury, and putting them into a shrine deposited them, with great honour, in the High Altar. There they remained till the Cathedral was burnt down A.D. 1067.

Archbishop Lanfranc, who rebuilt the Cathedral, took them out of the Altar, and placed them in a sepulchre to the North of the High Altar.

King Athelstan, in honour of Wilfrid, made Ripon a sanctuary which embraced the space of a mile round. Death was the penalty of infringing this sanctuary.

<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid is now commemorated on *October 12th*, but that day in the year he died fell on a *Saturday*. He probably died on *October 3rd*, which was on Thursday, and which is in accordance with the obituary of the Church of Durham.

**S. Ceolfrid.**

ABBOT.

A.D. 716. SEPTEMBER 25.

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S. CEOLFRID, whose name answers to Geoffrey, and means "joyful," was of noble birth, related to S. Benedict Biscop. He was born about the year 642, and at the early age of eighteen became a monk in Gilling Monastery (see S. Oswin). Some years later he was at Ripon with S. Wilfrid, who ordained him Priest. With the view of perfecting himself in the rules and discipline of the Religious Life, he studied for a time in Kent, and also paid a visit to East Anglia, drawn thither by the fame of S. Botolph.

Returning home, about A.D. 674, he joined himself to S. Benedict Biscop, with whom he remained an invaluable coadjutor to the end of that Saint's life. He assisted him in building S. Peter's Wearmouth, and, by his desire, laid the foundation of the new Monastery of S. Paul's, Jarrow (the foundation stone and its inscription are still preserved). Benedict made him Abbot of S. Paul's, and eventually

Abbot of both Houses. To him was committed the education of S. Bede; how well he performed his task may be seen in the works and character of his pupil. It is no slight glory to have formed the mind of so great a man! After S. Benedict's death he governed both communities for a space of twenty-six years, "during which time their affairs flourished "beyond measure." S. Ceolfrid made it his great concern to carry out, to the best of his power, the good works which his predecessor had begun. "He "raised Altars, built Oratories, amplified the stock of "Church vestments, and added three libraries to the "one made by S. Benedict." Many valuable additions of land were given to these Monasteries in S. Ceolfrid's time, and it was well it was so, for the number of the brethren had increased to six hundred before he resigned the Abbacy. Bede, his celebrated pupil, speaks of him as "a man illustrious in all "respects, quick in intellect, strenuous in action, "mature in judgment, of fervent zeal and piety." It was his habit to recite the whole Psalter through daily. In his last illness, instead of diminishing he increased his devotions. Having at last grown very old, too old, as he deemed, for performing his duties properly, he, to the universal regret of his faithful monks (who on bended knees, and with tears and sobs, would have dissuaded him), resigned his charge, and being smitten with the desire of seeing once more "the tombs of the Apostles in Rome," and of

dying there, he set out on his journey, accompanied by a certain number of his monks. Travelling was no such easy matter then as it is now! His ship meeting with bad weather was a *month* in reaching France. He landed there on July 4th, and in another month's time had only reached Langres in Burgundy. Here his health broke down altogether, and he died a few hours after his arrival. He was buried at Langres with the greatest honour in the Church of the holy Martyrs, Speusippus, Eleusippus, and Meleusippus. His tomb was held in great reverence by the country-people, "and many miracles are said to have occurred at it." He died A.D. 716, September 25, having been Abbot thirty-five years.

An anonymous writer of that age, speaking of his charitable temper, and loving care of the poor, says that he derived this virtue as an heirloom from his father, "who, when in most high office at Court, "always took a special pleasure in works of mercy "to the poor." In illustration of this he tells the following anecdote:—"When on one occasion he "had prepared a Feast on the grandest scale for the "King, who was coming to be his guest, it happened "unexpectedly that some military necessity required "the King's presence elsewhere. The Earl, on hear- "ing this, gave thanks to the Divine Providence, and "at once gave orders for the poor, the strangers, and "the sick to be invited to dinner, and, with an eye to "the Eternal rewards, gave that feast, which he had

“prepared for an earthly King and his attendants,  
“to the King of kings, in the persons of his lowly  
“ones. He himself waited in all kind of service on  
“the men, and his wife, at his bidding, did the same  
“for the women.”

## S. John of Beberley.

BISHOP.

A.D. 721. MAY 7.

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S. JOHN was born in Harpham village, and, though a native of the North of England, was, we are told, “a disciple of Archbishop Theodore,” which, probably means that he was educated in the admirable school founded at Canterbury by that Prelate. Leland says that at an early age he became a hermit at Harnelsalg.<sup>1</sup> It seems scarcely probable that he became a hermit, in the strict sense of the word, so early in life. It is much more likely that he went there for a temporary retreat (a common custom of the times in Lent and on other occasions). In any case it is clear that his earliest days were devoted to religion. Named, aptly enough, after the Apostle “whom JESUS loved,” he was of a most loveable and loving disposition, and, no doubt, in consequence held in the greatest affection by those

<sup>1</sup> [i.e., Erneshow, now called after him S. John's Lee, not far from Hexham, on the North side of the river Tyne.]

about him. Amongst his many friends was Prince Aldfrid, a son of King Oswy. This Prince, who was devoted to study, was in the year 685 called to the throne of Northumbria, on occasion of the death in battle of his brother Egfrid; and holding S. John in great esteem, caused him to be made Bishop of Hexham, where he remained until the year A.D. 705, when on occasion of Bishop Bosa's death he was translated to York.

S. John was credited with a wonderful power of miraculous healing, and Bede has recorded numerous instances of sick and suffering persons who were cured by his prayers and blessing. Whether these cures were miraculous remains of course a question. It cannot be doubted that the age in which he lived was too facile of belief, and prone to believe anything which was not understood to be miraculous. S. John indeed in no way claimed this power, but however much he might disclaim it, everybody agreed in attributing it to him. We give one or two instances in an appendix. They are good examples of the rest, and have an interest of their own, independent of the question whether there was a miraculous element in them or not.

S. John remained Bishop of York for thirteen years, and having previously been Bishop of Hexham for twenty years, his Episcopate covered a lengthy period. In the course of it he erected in various parts of his Diocese not a few chapels, which eventually became

Parish Churches. Among these was one at a place then called Inderawood, so called from its situation in the wood of Deira. This he dedicated to S. John the Baptist. Seven Priests were here placed by him to serve the Church. Here he would occasionally find a retreat from the cares and labours of his Episcopal work, and when at last he became so old that his health and strength failed him, it was here that he retired to end his days, resigning his See to his Priest, Wilfrid, known as Wilfrid, junior (to distinguish him from Wilfrid the Great). This Inderawood became in time the modern town of Beverley, which has grown out of that religious foundation. Here S. John lived three years after the resignation of his See, "finishing his days in the LORD in holy "living" in the year A.D. 721.

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EXTRACTS FROM BEDE V. CHAPTER II.

"In the beginning of the aforesaid reign [King Alfrid's.] Bishop "Eata died, and was succeeded in the prelacy of the Church of Hagulstad (Hexham) by John, a holy man, of whom those who familiarly "knew him are wont to tell many miracles, and more particularly the "Reverend Berthun, a man of undoubted veracity, and once his "Deacon, now Abbot of the monastery called Inderawood, that is the "wood of the Deiri, some of which miracles we have thought fit to "transmit to posterity. There is a certain building in a retired situa- "tion, and enclosed by a narrow wood and a trench, about a mile and "a half from the Church of Hagulstad, and separated from it by the "river Tyne, having a burying-place dedicated to S. Michael the Arch- "angel, where the man of GOD used frequently, as occasion offered, and "particularly in Lent, to reside with a few companions. Once coming "thither, at the beginning of Lent, he commanded his followers to find "out some poor person, labouring under any grievous infirmity or want,



“whom he might keep with him during those days, by way of alms, for  
“so he was always used to do. There was in a village not far off a  
“certain dumb youth, known to the Bishop, for he often used to come  
“into his presence to receive alms, and had never been able to speak  
“one word. Besides he had so much scurf on his head that no  
“hair ever grew on the top of it, but only some scattered hairs  
“in a circle round about. The Bishop caused this young man to be  
“brought, and a little cottage to be made for him within the enclosure  
“of the dwelling, in which he might reside, and receive a daily  
“allowance from him. When one week of Lent was over, the  
“next Sunday he caused the poor man to come in to him, and ordered  
“him to put his tongue out of his mouth, and show it him; then  
“laying hold of his chin, he made the sign of the cross on his tongue,  
“directing him to draw it back into his mouth, and to speak. ‘Pro-  
“‘nounce some word,’ said he. Say, ‘yea,’ (which in the language of  
“the Angles is the word of affirming and consenting, that is, ‘yes.’  
“The youth’s tongue was immediatly loosed, and he said what he was  
“ordered. The Bishop then pronouncing the names of the other  
“letters, directed him to say A, he did so, and afterwards B, which he  
“also did. When he had named all the letters after the Bishop, the  
“latter proceeded to put syllables and words to him, which being also  
“repeated by him, he commanded him to utter whole sentences, and he  
“did it. Nor did he cease all that day and the next night, as long as  
“he could keep awake, as those who were present relate, to talk some-  
“thing, and to express his private thoughts and will to others, which he  
“could never do before, after the manner of the cripple, who being healed  
“by the Apostles Peter and John, stood up leaping and walked, and  
“went with them into the Temple, walking and skipping, and praising  
“the LORD, rejoicing to have the use of his feet, which he had so long  
“wanted. The Bishop, rejoicing at his recovery of speech, ordered the  
“physician to take in hand the cure of his scurfed head. The physician,  
“we are told, was entirely successful, and so this poor wretched youth,  
“hitherto dumb and deformed, obtained a ready utterance of speech,  
“and a comely appearance. The Bishop rejoicing at his recovery,  
“offered to keep him in his family, but he rather chose to return  
“home.”

In the chapters which follow Bede gives other instances of sick persons who were restored to health, as it was believed, by S. John’s prayers and blessing.

Passing over these, we give the account of a serious accident which befell one of the Bishop’s Clergy, Herebald, and his recovery as it was told by himself to Bede. Book V. chap. VI.

“When in the prime of my youth, I lived among his Clergy, applying myself to reading and singing, but not having yet altogether withdrawn my heart from youthful pleasures, it happened one day that as we were travelling with him, we came into a plain and open road, well adapted for the galloping of our horses. The young men that were with him, and particularly those of the laity, began to entreat the Bishop to give them leave to gallop, and make trial of the goodness of their horses. He at first refused, saying, ‘It was an idle request,’ but at last being prevailed on by the unanimous desire of so many. ‘Do so,’ said he, ‘if you will, but let Herebald have no part in the trial.’ I earnestly prayed that I might have leave to ride with the rest, for I relied on an excellent horse, which he had given me; but I could not obtain my request. When they had several times galloped backwards and forwards, the Bishop and I looking on, my wanton humour prevailed, and I could no longer refrain, but though he forbade me, I struck in among them, and began to ride at full speed, at which I heard him call after me, ‘Alas! how much you grieve me by riding after that manner.’ Though I heard him, I went on against his command. but immediately the fiery horse, taking a great leap over a hollow place, I fell, and lost both sense and motion, as if I had been dead, for there was in that place a stone level with the ground, covered with only a small turf, and no other stone to be found in all that plain, and it happened, as a punishment for my disobedience, either by chance, or by Divine providence so ordering it, that my head and hand (which in falling I had clapped to my head) hit upon that stone, so that my thumb was broken, and my skull cracked, and I lay, as I said, like one dead. And because I could not move they stretched a canopy for me to lie in. It was about the seventh hour of the day, and having lain still, and as it were dead, till the evening, I then revived a little, and was carried home by my companions, but lay speechless all the night, vomiting blood, because something was broken within me by the fall. The Bishop was very much grieved at my misfortune, and expected death, for he bore me extraordinary affection. Nor would he stay that night, as he was wont, among the Clergy, but spent it all in watching and prayer alone, imploring the Divine goodness, as I imagine, for my health. Coming to me in the morning early, and having said a prayer over me, he called me by my name, and as it were waking me out of a heavy sleep, asked ‘whether I knew who it was that spoke to me?’ I opened my eyes and said, ‘I do; you are my beloved Bishop.’ ‘Can you live?’ said he, I answered, ‘I may, through your prayers, if it shall please our LORD.’ He then laid his hand on my head,

“with the words of blessing, and returned to prayer; when he came  
“again to see me, in a short time, he found me sitting, and able to  
“talk, and being induced by Divine instinct, as it soon appeared,  
“began to ask me ‘whether I knew for certain that I had been  
“‘baptised?’ I answered, ‘I knew, beyond all doubt, that I had  
“‘been washed in the laver of salvation, to the remission of my sins,’  
“and I named the Priest by whom I knew myself to have been  
“baptised. He replied, ‘If you are baptised by that Priest, your  
“‘baptism is not perfect, for I know him, and that having been  
“‘ordained Priest, he could not, by reason of the dulness of his under-  
“‘standing, learn the ministry of Catechising and baptising, for which  
“‘reason I commanded him altogether to desist from his presumptuous  
“‘exercising of the ministry, which he could not duly perform.’ This  
“said, he took care to catechise me at that very time. . . . He called  
“the Surgeon, and ordered him to close and bind up my skull, where  
“it was cracked, and having then received his blessing, I was so much  
“better that I mounted on horse-back the next day, and travelled with  
“him to another place, and being soon and perfectly recovered I re-  
“ceived the baptism of life.”

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## THE TOWN OF BEVERLEY.

The Danes in the ninth Century destroyed S. John's Monastery, and murdered its inmates. The Abbey remained desolate for three years, after which time some Clerks and Presbyters returned and repaired it, so as to make it habitable. So matters continued till the reign of King Athelstan.<sup>1</sup> Athel-

<sup>1</sup> Athelstan reigned from A.D. 925—A.D. 941.

The cause of this King's veneration for S. John of Beverley may be traced, perhaps, to the following incident given by Leland who, telling of Athelstan's war with the Northumbrians and their King Anlaf, proceeds—“The King of Northumberland stole upon King Athelstan  
“at Brinandburge, wylling to have slain him (at night), but Athelstan  
“hering the noyse, starte up darkling to fynd his sworde, and finding  
“the scabbard without the sworde, was greatly abashed, and praying  
“to S. John of Beverley, found his sworde, and vanquished the King  
“of Northumberland, his brother-in-law (i. e., Anlaf).

stan (grandson of Alfred the Great), one of the bravest of our Anglo-Saxon Kings, had an extraordinary veneration for S. John of Beverley. This King, being at war with Scotland, placed this Saint on his Standard, and returning home victorious through Yorkshire, conferred great benefits on Beverley. A new College was built for the Canons who served the Church, which was privileged to be a Sanctuary; and Beverley was made the Capitol of the whole East Ridings. All these privileges were confirmed A.D. 938. After this, Beverley much increased in population, and, as the town grew, two other Churches were built, one to S. Mary, and the other to S. Thomas. King Edward the Confessor, also, in the next century, conferred great gifts and further privileges on Beverley.

After the Conquest Beverley had a very narrow escape. The Conqueror, enraged at an insurrection in the North of England, determined to revenge himself upon the people of Yorkshire, who were implicated in it. In his fury he sent an army with orders to make the country a desolation for a hundred miles or so round York, and in a short time nothing was to be seen in those parts but smoking ruins; the destroyers came to Beverley, and in the course of their bloody work a Norman Baron, Thurstan by name, one of William's "veterans," with drawn sword in hand, pursued some poor wretch, who fled into S. John's Church. Thither Thurstan followed, with

intent to slay him. What happened is not certain, for accounts vary, but they agree in this, that the Norman spoiler lost his own life. It seems most probable that he fell in his haste and broke his neck. This, at least, is Leland's account, who says, "William "destroying Yorkshire, spared the liberties of S. John "of Beverley by miracle of a thefe, or spoiler of the "Normans that there brak his neck."

## S. Bede.

A.D. 735. MAY 27.

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VENERABLE BEDE was born, about 673, in the North of England, and was given, being then a child, to S. Benedict Biscop, who placed him in his new Abbey, St. Paul's, Jarrow.

The life of the Cloister, its daily round of study and of religious duties, was so congenial to the turn and habit of his own mind that he never wished to leave it, nor had a desire or thought for anything beyond the walls of his sacred home. Gifted also naturally with the ability of mind which makes a scholar, and being thus devoted to study in a home which possessed the best library in the Kingdom, he attained to a height of excellence in letters, equalled by no other Englishman in Anglo-Saxon times. But the life of such a scholar was necessarily an uneventful one; as a matter of fact, we know little of him; only that which we learn from himself. That little he tells as follows, at the conclusion of his *English History* :

“Thus much of the Ecclesiastical History of

“ Britain, and more especially of the English nation,  
“ as far as I could learn from the writings of the  
“ Ancients, or the traditions of our Ancestors, or of  
“ my own knowledge, has, with the help of GOD,  
“ been digested by me, Bede, the servant of GOD,  
“ and priest of the Monastery of the blessed Apostles,  
“ Peter and Paul, which is at Wearmouth and Jarrow :  
“ who being born in the territory of that same  
“ Monastery, was given, at seven years of age, to be  
“ educated by the most Reverend Abbot, Benedict,  
“ and afterwards by Ceolfrid ; and spending all the  
“ remaining time of my life in that Monastery, I  
“ wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture,  
“ and, amidst the observance of regular discipline,  
“ and the daily care of singing in the Church, I  
“ always took delight in learning, teaching, and writ-  
“ ing. In the nineteenth year of my age I received  
“ Deacon’s Orders ; in the thirtieth, those of the  
“ Priesthood, both of them by the ministry of the  
“ most Reverend Bishop John, and by order of the  
“ Abbot Ceolfrid. From which time, till the fifty-  
“ ninth year of my age, I have made it my business,  
“ for the use of me and mine, to compile out of  
“ the works of the Venerable Fathers, and to in-  
“ terpret and explain according to their meaning the  
“ following pieces.” After he has enumerated, one  
by one, the catalogue of his books, he concludes  
this notice of himself with this prayer : “ And now,  
“ I beseech Thee, good JESUS, that to whom Thou

“hast graciously granted sweetly to partake of the  
“words of Thy wisdom and knowledge, Thou wilt  
“also vouchsafe that he may sometime or other  
“come to Thee, the fountain of all wisdom, and  
“always appear before thy face, Who livest and  
“reignest world without end. Amen.” Sixty-five  
of Bede’s books were on the Holy Scriptures, about  
twenty on other subjects. He applied himself,  
indeed, to every branch of literature and science  
then known, and treated on History, Astrology,  
Orthography, Rhetoric, and Poetry, and no other  
studies did he consider beneath his attention; but  
all these were principally valued by him, as con-  
ducing to the understanding of the Holy Scriptures,  
which he esteemed himself and taught his pupils to  
esteem “as pre-eminent over all other books, by  
reason “of their divine authority,” and because they  
lead to eternal life.

Bede did not commence to write books till his  
thirtieth year, and his life was not a long one, yet  
such was his diligence as an author that his books  
amounted almost to a library. An old writer,  
commenting on this, and on the variety of his  
monastic duties by day and by night, says, “If you  
“consider the life he lived, you might conclude he  
“would have no time for study. If you read of his  
“writings you would judge he could have had no  
“time for prayer.” The state of his health must  
have added greatly to this difficulty; at a somewhat



early period he had contracted a complaint in his stomach, accompanied with shortness of breath. Malmesbury says, "He suffered in his stomach, and drew his breath with pains and sighs." An attack of this disorder had prevented him from visiting his friend, Archbishop Egbert, and led to his writing him a valuable Letter on the duties of a Bishop, which is still extant. In this Letter Bede urges that the people be all taught the Creed and the LORD'S Prayer *in their own tongue*, and that the faithful Laity (many of whom communicated only thrice in a year), should be encouraged to receive the Sacrament of the LORD'S Body and BLOOD every LORD'S Day, and on the birthdays of the Saints, "according to the custom of the Church of CHRIST in Italy, France, Africa, Greece, and in all the East." It is believed that this Letter was written in his last illness; his health was very bad in the later years of his existence, and his sufferings increased a few weeks before he died. He was attended in his last illness by Cuthbert, who had been his pupil, and who wrote the following most touching account of his death to a fellow-student, named Cuthwin :—

"He was much troubled with shortness of breath, yet without pain, before the day of our LORD'S Resurrection, i.e., about a fortnight before, and thus he afterwards passed his life cheerful and rejoicing, giving thanks to Almighty GOD every day and night, nay, every hour, till the day of our LORD'S

"Ascension (May 26th), and daily read lessons to  
 "us his disciples, and whatever remained of the day  
 "he spent in singing Psalms. He also passed all  
 "the night awake in joy and thanksgiving, unless a  
 "short sleep prevented it; in which case he no  
 "sooner awoke than he presently repeated his wonted  
 "exercises, and ceased not to give thanks to GOD  
 "with uplifted hands. I declare with truth that I  
 "have never seen with my eyes, nor heard with my  
 "ears, any man so earnest in giving thanks to the  
 "living GOD. O truly happy man! He chanted the  
 "sentence of S. Paul the Apostle, 'It is dreadful to  
 "'fall into the hands of the Living GOD,' and much  
 "more out of Holy Writ; wherein also he admonished  
 "us to think of our last hour, and to shake off the  
 "sleep of the soul; and being learned in our poetry,  
 "quoted the following passage, 'No man is wiser  
 "'than is requisite; that is, to consider, before the  
 "'soul departs hence what good or evil it has done,  
 "'and how it is to be judged after its departure.'  
 "He also sang Antiphons, according to our custom  
 "and his own, one of which is, 'O Glorious King,  
 "'Lord of all power, Who, triumphing this day,  
 "'didst ascend above all the Heavens; do not  
 "'forsake us orphans, but send down upon us  
 "'the Spirit of truth, which was promised to us by  
 "'the Father. Hallelujah.' And when he came to  
 "the word, 'do not forsake us,' he burst into tears,  
 "and wept much; and an hour after he began to

“repeat what he had commenced, and we, hearing it,  
“mourned with him. By turns we read, and by turns  
“we wept, nay, we wept always whilst we read.  
“In such joy we passed the time till the aforesaid  
“day, and he rejoiced much, and gave GOD thanks  
“because he had been thought worthy to be so  
“weakened. He often repeated, ‘That GOD scourgeth  
“‘every son whom He receiveth,’ and much more  
“out of Holy Scripture, as also this sentence from  
“S. Ambrose, ‘I have not lived so as to be ashamed  
“‘to live among you, nor do I fear to die, because we  
“‘have a gracious GOD.’ During these days he  
“laboured to compose two works, well worthy to  
“be remembered (besides the lessons we had from  
“him and singing of Psalms), viz., he translated the  
“Gospel of S. John as far as these words, ‘But what  
“‘are these among so many,’ (vi. 9), into our own  
“tongue, for the benefit of the Church; and some  
“collections out of the Book of Notes of Bishop  
“Isidore. . . . When the Tuesday before the Ascension  
“of our LORD came, he began to suffer still more in  
“his breath, and a small swelling appeared in his feet,  
“but he passed all that day and dictated cheerfully,  
“and now and then, among other things, said, ‘Go  
“‘on quickly, I know not how long I shall hold out,  
“‘and whether my Maker will not soon take me  
“‘away.’ But to us he seemed very well to know  
“the time of his departure; and so he spent the  
“night awake in thanksgiving, and when the morning

“appeared, i.e., Wednesday, he ordered us to write  
 “with all speed what he had begun ; and this done,  
 “we walked till the third hour with the Relics of  
 “Saints, according to the custom of that day. There  
 “was one of us with him, who said to him, ‘Most dear  
 “‘Master, there is still one chapter wanting ; do you  
 “‘think it troublesome to be asked any more ques-  
 “‘tions?’ He answered, ‘It is no trouble. Take  
 “‘your pen, and make ready, and write fast.’ Which  
 “he did, but at the ninth hour he said to me, ‘I  
 “‘have some little articles of value in my chest, such  
 “‘as pepper, napkins, and incense ; run quickly, and  
 “‘bring the Priests of our Monastery to me that I  
 “‘may distribute among them the gifts <sup>1</sup> which GOD  
 “‘has bestowed on me. The rich in this world are  
 “‘bent on giving gold and silver, and other precious  
 “‘things ; but I, in charity, will joyfully give my  
 “‘brothers what GOD has given unto me.’ He spoke  
 “to every one of them, admonishing and entreating  
 “every one of them that they would carefully say  
 “masses and prayers for him, which they readily  
 “promised, but they all mourned and wept, especially

<sup>1</sup> Monks, at this period, were in the habit of making little presents, at their deaths, or at other times. (This was not forbidden by their Rules, unless it was done clandestinely.) The following are a few instances :—Archbishop Lullus sent to the Abbess Kanebade, frankincense, pepper, and cinnamon ; to another Abbess he sent a silver pen, storax, and cinnamon. S. Boniface sent to Archbishop Egbert, a Corporal, a Pall, a towel, &c. ; to the Abbot Huitbert, a goat-skin mattress ; to King Ethelbald, a hawk, two falcons, two shields, two lances.

“because he said, ‘they should no more see his face  
“‘in this world.’ They rejoiced for that he said,  
“‘It is time that I return to Him Who formed me  
“‘me out nothing; I have lived long; my Merciful  
“‘Judge well foresaw my life for me; the time of my  
“‘dissolution draws nigh, for I desire to die and to  
“‘be with CHRIST.’ Having said much more, he  
“‘passed the day joyfully till the evening, and the  
“‘boy above-mentioned, said, ‘Dear Master, there is  
“‘yet one sentence not written.’ He answered,  
“‘Write quickly.’ Soon after the boy said, ‘The  
“‘sentence is now written.’ He replied, ‘It is well;  
“‘you have said the truth. It is ended. Receive my  
“‘head into your hands, for it is a great satisfaction  
“‘to me to sit facing my holy place, where I was  
“‘wont to pray, that I may also sitting call upon my  
“‘FATHER.’ And thus on the pavement of his little  
“‘cell, singing, ‘Glory be to the FATHER, and to the  
“‘SON, and to the HOLY GHOST,’ he breathed his  
“‘last, and so departed to the heavenly Kingdom.  
“‘All who were present at the death of the blessed  
“‘Father said they had never seen any other person  
“‘expire with so much devotion, and in so tranquil a  
“‘frame of mind. For as you have heard, so long as  
“‘the soul animated his body he never ceased to give  
“‘thanks to the True and Living GOD, with expanded  
“‘hands, exclaiming, ‘Glory be to the FATHER, and  
“‘to the SON, and to the HOLY GHOST,’ with other  
“‘spiritual ejaculations.”

Bede died on May 25, A.D. 735, on Wednesday evening before Ascension Day, "after the first "Vespers of our LORD'S Ascension," whence he is said to have died on the Feast of Ascension, because our Saxon ancestors reckoned Festivals from the first Vespers. His remains were first deposited in the south Porch of the Church. Thence they were removed to a more honourable situation within the Church. Elfrid, a priest of Durham, who had been accustomed to offer up his prayers at Bede's tomb annually on the anniversary of his death, stole his remains, and carried them off to Durham. There he secreted them in the coffin of S. Cuthbert. Here they remained, the theft not being discovered, till A.D. 1104, when they were separated from S. Cuthbert's relics; and fifty years later Hugh Pudsey erected a most beautiful shrine of gold and silver, adorned with jewels, in which he enclosed them. This shrine was pillaged and demolished in King Henry VIII. time. A long inscription now alone remains in Durham Cathedral, concluding with the well-known rhyme,

" Hac sunt in fossâ,  
" Bede Venerabilis Ossa."<sup>1</sup>

Malmesbury speaks of Bede as "a man, whom it "is easier to admire than worthily to extol, who,

<sup>1</sup> The old Legend on this verse is as follows :—The Monk, who was composing Bede's Epitaph, had got so far in his task, " Hac sunt in " fossâ, Bede Ossa." But he could not think of an appropriate epithet to fill up the line. At last, in despair, he went out of doors, leaving his MS. on the table. Returning shortly afterwards, he found

“though born in a remote corner of the world was  
“able to dazzle it with the brilliance of his learning.”  
He says in another place, “My abilities fail, my  
“eloquence falls short, ignorant which to praise most,  
“the number of his writings, or the gravity of his  
“style. . . . With this man was buried almost all  
“knowledge of (English) History down to our times,  
“inasmuch as there has been no Englishman since  
“his death to our times . . . who could continue  
“the thread of his discourse.”

It is indeed in this aspect that we can best understand the debt (the value of which is beyond reckoning), which, as Englishmen, we owe this sacred writer. As a matter of fact, Bede was *the sole Historian* of the Anglo-Saxon time; and to him is due nearly all we know of the arrival of the English in this country, and of their Conversion to Christianity.

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Jarrow and Tynemouth Monasteries did not escape the ravages of the Danes. They lay in ruins for a long period, but were eventually rebuilt. The following items on their after-history are gathered from Leland, who lived in Henry VIII. time.

to his great delight that *an angel* had, in his absence, filled up the vacuum with the word *Venerabilis*, which exactly suited both the sense and the verse, and which has ever since remained inseparately united with Bede's name.

“Aldun, a Priest of Mercia, coming into Northum-  
berland restored Jarrow and Wearmouth Monas-  
teries 208 years after their destruction by the  
Danes (probably about A.D. 1078). He brought  
one or two Monks with him from Evesham, and an  
ass to carry the books, &c. Bishop Walker assisted  
him (and gave him many lands), and a Clergyman,  
named Turgot, with whom he went to Mailros  
(Melrose). But the Scots harassing him he re-  
turned to Jarrow. Count Waltheof also gave  
Tynemouth to him, and the body of S. Oswin.  
Bishop William, who succeeded Bishop Walker,  
translated the Monks from Jarrow and Wearmouth  
to Durham.” But there were Monks in Jarrow in  
Leland’s time, for he tells us “that the Monks at  
Jarrow in his time were wont to shew Bede’s  
Oratory and his little Altar, in which was a small  
piece of Serpentine Marble.”



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