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THE

ANTIQUITIES

OF THE

ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH.

BY THE REV. JOHN LINGARD.

The First American, from the Second London Edition.

PHILADELPHIA:
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THE Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church, by the REV. DR. LINGARD,
is highly approved by us, and strongly recommended. Given under our hand
at Philadelphia, on the Feast of St. Gregory the Great, in the year of our
Lord, 1841. † FRANCIS PATRICK KENRICK, Bp., &c.

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P R E F A C E

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE merited and long established celebrity of Dr. Lingard as a writer and an historian, is, of itself, sufficient to commend to public notice any of the productions of his pen ; but, independently of this consideration, the subject of the present volume possesses much in it to claim the peculiar attention of the American reader.

Whatever concerns the origin, or is connected with the early history, of the Saxon conquerors of England, cannot be devoid of interest for their descendants, however separated by place from the scenes in which they acted such prominent parts. The Antiquities, too, of the Anglo-Saxon Church will be found a most important and useful branch of study for the general scholar ; and almost an indispensable acquisition for the theological student ; as many of the controversies which, unfortunately, divide the Christian world at this day, have either direct reference to the doctrines and discipline of the early Saxon Church, or derive considerable light from a knowledge of its principles and institutions.

Such a guide, then, as Dr. Lingard, whose qualifications for the inquiry are unquestioned, and whose character for integrity is unimpeached, cannot but afford most desirable assistance to such as wish to examine for themselves the momentous questions that form the subject of religious investigation. Dr. Lingard is not here, however, a polemic, but an antiquary ;

and the calm and dispassionate manner in which he treats of facts and doctrines, which have so often formed the subject of much angry controversy, is the best guarantee we can have, that truth alone has ever been the object he had in view ; and that the fullest reliance may be placed in the conclusions at which he has arrived. It will be seen that all his statements are sustained by copious references to original authorities, by means of which the learned reader will be enabled to ascend to the sources of the author's information, and form his own judgment of the justness of his inferences.

In presenting, then, "The Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church" to the people of the United States, the publisher hopes that he will be found to have added to their means of literary enjoyment, and, at the same time, contributed somewhat to their moral and religious improvement.

THE PREFACE.

THE history of the Anglo-Saxon Church has exercised the industry of several writers, whose researches and discoveries have been rewarded with the approbation of the public. It is not my wish to encroach upon their labours. With patient and meritorious accuracy they have discussed and detailed the foundations of churches, the succession of bishops, the decrees of councils, and the chronological series of events. Mine is a more limited attempt, to describe the ecclesiastical polity, and religious practices of our ancestors; the discipline, revenues, and learning of the clerical and monastic orders; and the more important revolutions which promoted or impaired the prosperity of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

Of these subjects I am not ignorant that some have been fiercely debated by religious polemics. The great event of the Reformation, while it gave a new impulse to the powers, imbittered with rancour the writings of the learned. Controversy pervaded every department of literature: and history, as well as the sister sciences, was alternately pressed into the service of the contending parties. By opposite writers the same facts were painted in opposite colours: unfavourable circumstances were carefully concealed, or artfully disguised; and the men, whom the Catholic exhibited as models of virtue, and objects of veneration, the Protestant condemned for their interested zeal, their pride, their ignorance, and their superstition. I will not deny, that the hope of acquiring additional information has induced me to peruse the works of these partial advocates.

But if I have sometimes listened to their suggestions, it has been with jealousy and caution. My object is truth; and in the pursuit of truth, I have made it a religious duty to consult the original historians. Who would draw from the troubled stream, when he may drink at the fountain head?

It may, perhaps, be expected that I should offer an apology for the freedom with which I have occasionally noticed the mistakes of preceding historians. It is certainly an ungracious, but, I think, a useful office. On almost every subject, the public mind is guided by the wisdom or prejudices of a few favourite writers; their reputation consecrates their opinions: and their errors are received by the incautious reader as the dictates of truth. On such occasions, to be silent is criminal; as it serves to perpetuate deception: and to contradict, without attempting to prove, may create doubt, but cannot impress conviction. As often, therefore, as it has been my lot to dissent from our more popular historians, I have been careful to fortify my own opinion by frequent references to the sources from which I have derived my information. No writer should expect to obtain credit on his bare assertion: and the reader, who wishes to judge for himself, will gratefully peruse the quotations, with which I have sometimes loaded the page. To the Anglo-Saxon extracts, when their importance seemed to demand it, is subjoined a literal translation. The knowledge of that language, though an easy, is not a common acquirement.

If I am not deceived by a natural, but, I trust, venial partiality, the subject which I have undertaken to elucidate, is in itself highly curious and interesting. The Anglo-Saxons were, originally, hordes of ferocious pirates. By religion they were reclaimed from savage life, and raised to a degree of civilization, which, at one period, excited the wonder of the other nations of Europe. The following pages are destined to de-

scribe the nature and the practices of that religion, the duties and qualifications of its ministers, and the events which confirmed its influence over the minds of its professors. Such researches, whatever may be the nation to which they refer, are pleasing to an inquisitive reader. When they relate to our own progenitors, they will be perused with additional interest.

I must, however, acknowledge, that I am far from being satisfied with the performance. On several subjects, my information has been necessarily incomplete. After the revolutions of more than a thousand years, the records of Anglo-Saxon antiquity can exist only in an imperfect and mutilated state. If much has been preserved, much also has been lost. To collect and unite the scattered fragments, has been my wish and endeavour; but in despite of every exertion, many chasms will be discovered, which it was impossible to supply. If the deficiency of the materials be not admitted as a sufficient apology, the reader must accuse the skill of the artist: his industry, he trusts, may defy reproof; and on it he rests his only claim to commendation.

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ANTIQUITIES

OF THE

ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

Christianity introduced into Britain—The conquests of the Saxons—Their conversion—Conduct of the Missionaries—Controversies respecting Easter.

AT the commencement of the Christian era, Britain was the principal seat of the Druidical superstition. By whom, and at what period, the natives were converted to Christianity, are subjects of interesting but doubtful inquiry.¹ If we may believe the testimony of an ancient and respectable historian, they were indebted for this invaluable blessing to the zeal of some among the first disciples of Christ.² The names of the missionaries he thought proper to omit: but the omission has been amply supplied by the industry of more modern writers. With the aid of legends, traditions, and conjectures, they have discovered that St. Peter and St. Paul, St. Simon and St. James, severally preached in Britain; and that, after their departure, the pious undertaking was continued by the labours of Aristobulus, and Joseph of Arimathea.³ To notice the evidence which has been

¹ For the time, we are often referred to the words of Gildas, (*tempore, ut scimus, summo Tiberii Cæsaris. Gild. de excid. Brit. edit. Bertram. p. 71;*) but a diligent perusal will show that the writer alludes to the first preaching of the gospel in the Roman empire, not to the conversion of Britain.

² See Eusebius, (*Dem. Evang. l. i. c. 7.*) who informs us, that the apostles not only preached to the nations on the continent, but passed the ocean and visited the British isles, (*Ἦντες τον ἁγιων παρελθον επι τας καλλημενας Βρεττανικας νησους.*) Theodoret appears to assert the same, though his words may admit a wider interpretation. *Οι δε ημετεροι αλιεις κ μωρον της Ρωμικης αλλα και—Βρεττανους—δεξασθαι τη σταυρωθentos της νομης ανετεισαν.* Theod. tom. iv. p. 610.

³ The original testimonies are carefully collected by Usher, (*De Brit. Eccl. primord. p. 1—30.*) The Catholic polemic was anxious to prove that the British church was founded by St. Peter, (*Parsons, Three conver. vol. i. p. 7, fol. 1688. Broughton, Eccles. Hist. p. 68. Alford, Annal. tom. i. p. 26. 39. 49.*) and the Protestant objected with equal zeal the rival pretensions of St. Paul, (*Godwin, De prim. Brit. conver. p. 5. Stillingfleet, Orig. Brit. p. 37.*) The former relied on the treacherous authority of Metaphrastes: the latter on the ambiguous and hyperbolical expressions of a few more ancient writers.

adduced in support of these fables, would be superfluous. In an age of less discernment, they could hardly obtain credit: in the present they may be deservedly neglected.

If it be true that, at this early period, any of the Britons embraced the doctrine of the gospel, we may safely pronounce their number to have been inconsiderable, and must look to some later epocha for the more general diffusion of religious knowledge. By the native writers we are referred to the reign of Lucius, a British prince, who is conjectured to have been the third in descent from Caractacus, and to have inherited a portion of the authority, which Claudius had formerly bestowed upon that hero.⁴ Though educated in the errors of paganism, he had imbibed, according to their account, a secret reverence for the God of the Christians; and was at last encouraged by the favourable edict of the Emperor Aurelius, to solicit the spiritual aid of Eleutherius the Roman pontiff.⁵ Two clergymen, Fugatius and Damianus, were commissioned to second the pious wishes of the prince; their zealous exertions were rewarded with the most rapid success; and the honourable title of apostles of Britain was secured to them by the gratitude of their disciples.⁶

Of the subsequent history of the British church, but few particulars can be gleaned from the works of the ancient writers. The first event which claims our notice is the persecution raised against the Christians by the policy, or the superstition, of Dioclesian. He had committed the government of the island to Constantius; and that prince, though he abhorred the cruel policy of enforcing perjury and dissimulation, by the fear of torments, dared not, in the subordinate station of Cæsar, to refuse the publication of the imperial edict, or to prevent the inferior magistrates from indulging their private hatred against the enemies of the gods. If the British church had to lament, on this occasion, the weakness of several among her children, who yielded to the impulse of terror, she could also boast of the courage of many, who braved the fury of their adversaries, and grasped with joy the crown of martyrdom. At their head our ancestors were accustomed to revere the saints, Alban, the proto-

⁴ He was the great-grandson of Arviragus, whose identity with Caractacus was formerly suggested by Alford, (tom. i. p. 35,) and has since been ably maintained by Dr. Milner, (Hist. of Winch. vol. i. p. 29.) The objections of Cressy, (Hist. p. 22,) and of Stillingfleet, (Orig. p. 29,) may be easily repelled, or eluded.

⁵ The conversion, and even the existence of Lucius, have been questioned by the skepticism of some writers. But that the Christian faith was publicly professed in Britain, before the close of the second century, is clear from incontestible authority; (Tert. cont. Jud. p. 189, edit. Regalt. Orig. hom. vi. in Luc., hom. vi. in Ezech.); and that Lucius was the person to whom their ancestors owed this advantage, is the general assertion of the British writers. I can see no reason why their evidence should be refused, till it be opposed by the equal testimony of other historians.

⁶ Nennius, p. 108, edit. Bert. Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 667. Were not the Triads a very questionable authority, a dangerous competitor might be produced in Bran, the supposed grandfather of Caractacus. See Triad 35.

martyr of Britain, and Julius and Aaron, citizens of Caerleon.⁷ But Constantius was not long the silent spectator of cruelties which he condemned: within two years he was vested with the imperial purple; and, from that moment, he placed the Christians under his protection, and returned the sword of persecution into its scabbard.⁸

In a remote corner of the west, the Britons had scarcely heard of the controversies which agitated the oriental churches. But they lent a more willing ear to the doctrines of their countryman Pelagius; and his disciples, armed with syllogisms and distinctions from the logic of Aristotle, confounded the simplicity, though they could not pervert the faith of their pastors. The rapid progress of error alarmed the zeal of the orthodox clergy; and the Roman pontiff, or the bishops of Gaul, or perhaps both, commissioned St. Germanus of Auxerre, and St. Lupus of Troyes, to support the declining cause of catholicity.⁹ They met the disciples of Pelagius in the synod of Verulam: the day was spent in unavailing debate; in the evening a miracle confirmed the arguments of Germanus; and his opponents declared themselves proselytes to his doctrine. The missionaries returned in triumph to their dioceses; but they were scarcely departed, when the exploded opinions were preached with renewed activity, and the bishop of Auxerre was compelled to resume his apostolic functions. His labours, however, were repaid with the most complete success. The partisans of error disappeared before him; and Pelagianism was eradicated from the island.¹⁰ But the satisfaction, which the Britons expressed at this event, was clouded by subsequent misfortunes: a foreign and more formidable enemy arose; and, after a long and doubtful struggle, the religion, with the government of the natives, sunk beneath the persevering efforts of the Saxons.

The Saxons, in the commencement of the second century, were a small and contemptible tribe on the neck of the Cimbrian Chersonesus:¹¹ in the fourth, they had swelled into a populous and mighty nation, whose territories progressively reached the Elbe, the Weser, the Ems, and the Rhine.¹² Their favourite occupation was piracy. A body of Franks, stationed by the

⁷ Gild. p. 72, 73. Bed. Hist. l. 1, c. vii.

⁸ Euseb. vit. Const. l. 1, c. xvi. For the date of this persecution, an. 305, see Smith, (Bed. Hist. appen. p. 659.)

⁹ An. 429. From whom Germanus received his mission, is an unimportant question, which has been warmly but fruitlessly discussed. By Constantius (Vit. Germ. l. 1, c. xix.) it is ascribed to the Gallic prelates; by Prosper (Chron. ad. an. 429, lib. adv. collat. c. xli.) to Pope Celestine.

¹⁰ Vit. Ger. l. 11, c. i.

¹¹ *Ἐπι τὸν αὐχένα τῆς Κιμβρικής χερσονήσου.* Ptol. in quar. Europ. tab. That Ptolemy wrote before the middle of the second century, appears from the latest of his observations, which were made in the year 139, (Encycl. method. Physique, tom. i. p. 305.)

¹² Ann. Marcel. l. 37. Ethelwerd. l. 1, f. 474, edit. Savile.

emperor Probus on the coast of Pontus, had seized a Roman fleet, and steering unmolested through the Bosphorus and the Mediterranean sea, had reached in safety the shores of Batavia. Their successful temerity awakened the adventurous spirit of the neighbouring nations; who, though they were ignorant of the art of navigation, though they possessed neither the patience nor the skill to imitate the construction of the Roman vessels, boldly determined to try their fortune on the ocean. In light and narrow skiffs, the intrepid barbarians committed themselves to the mercy of the winds and waves;¹³ the commerce of the provincials rewarded their audacity, and increased their numbers; and, in the midst of every storm, the Saxon squadrons issued from their ports, swept the neighbouring seas, and pillaged with impunity the unsuspecting coasts of Gaul and Britain. When the Emperor Honorius recalled the legions from the defence of the island, the natives, who had often experienced the desperate valour of the Saxons, solicited their assistance against their ancient enemies the Picts and the Scots. Hengist, with a small band of mercenaries, accepted the proposal:¹⁴ but the perfidious barbarian turned the sword against his employers, and the possession of Kent was the fruit of his treachery. The fortune of Hengist stimulated the ambition of other chieftains. Shoals of new adventurers annually sought the shores of Britain; and the natives, though they defended themselves with a courage worthy of a more prosperous issue, were gradually compelled to retire to the steep and lofty mountains which cover the western coast.

By this memorable revolution, the fairer portion of the island, from the wall of Antoninus to the British channel, was unequally divided among eight independent chieftains.¹⁵ The other barbarous tribes, that dismembered the Roman empire, exercised the right of victory with some degree of moderation; and, by incorporating the natives with themselves, insensibly learned to imitate their manners, and to adopt their worship. But the natural ferocity of the Saxons had been sharpened by the stubborn resistance of the Britons. They spared neither the lives nor the habitations of their enemies; submission was seldom able to disarm their fury; and the churches, towns, and villages, all the works of art, and all the remains of Roman grandeur, were devoured by the flames.¹⁶ But while they thus indulged their resent-

13

Cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum
Ludus, et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo.

Sid. Apol. carm. 7, ad. Avit.

14 Ann. 449.

¹⁵ Anxious for the honour of his countrymen, Goodall attempts to prove, that the conquests of the Saxons were bounded by the river Tweed. See his introduction to Scottish history prefixed to Fordun's Scotchichronicon, (Edin. 1759, p. 40.)

¹⁶ *Confovebatur de mari usque ad mare ignis, orientali sacrilegorum manu exaggeratus, et finitimas quasque civitates agrosque populans, qui non quievit accensus, donec cunctam pene exrens insulæ superficiem rubra occidentalem trucique oceanum lingua delamberet.* Gild. p. 85. Gildas was an enemy and a Briton. He may have exag-

ment, they dried up the more obvious sources of civil and religious improvement. With the race of the ancient inhabitants disappeared the refinements of society, and the knowledge of the gospel: to the worship of the true God succeeded the impure rites of Woden; and the ignorance and barbarism of the north of Germany were transplanted into the most flourishing provinces of Britain.

It was once the boast, or the consolation of the Greeks, that, if they had been subdued by the superior fortune of Rome, Rome in her turn had yielded to them the empire of learning and the arts.¹⁷ The history of the fifth and sixth centuries presents an almost similar revolution. The fierce valour of the northern barbarians annihilated the temporal power of Rome; and the religion of Rome triumphed over the gods of the barbarians. Scarcely had the Saxons obtained the undisputed possession of their conquests, when a private monk conceived the bold, but benevolent design, of reducing these savage warriors under the obedience of the gospel. Gregory, on whom the veneration of posterity has bestowed the epithet of *the great*, had lately resigned the dignity of Roman prefect, and buried in the obscurity of the cloister all his prospects of worldly greatness. While he remained in this humble station, he chanced to pass through the public market at the moment in which some Saxon slaves were exposed to sale. Their beauty caught the eye of the fervent monk; and he exclaimed, with a pious zeal, that forms so fair ought no longer to be excluded from the inheritance of Christ. Impressed with this idea, he repaired to the pontiff, and extorted from him a reluctant permission to quit his monastery, and announce the gospel to the barbarous conquerors of Britain. But the people of Rome were unwilling to be deprived of a man whose virtues they adored. Their clamours retarded his departure; and his subsequent elevation to the papal throne compelled him to abandon the design.¹⁸

Gregory, however, still kept his eyes fixed on Britain. The absence of his personal exertions he could easily supply by those of other missionaries; and, from his high station in the church, he might direct their operations, and second their endeavours. The patrimony of St. Peter, in Gaul, was at this period administered by the presbyter Candidus. To him he gave an extraordinary commission to purchase a competent number of Saxon

gerated the cruelties of the invaders; but the substance of his narrative is corroborated by the Saxon chronicle, (p. 15,) and by the subsequent tenor of the Saxon history.

¹⁷ *Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes*

Intulit agresti Latio.—Hon.

¹⁸ Bede l. ii. p. 78. I see no reason to dispute the truth of this anecdote, on the ground that it is not mentioned by foreign writers. Bede asserts, that he received it "traditione majorum;" and no nation could be more interested than the Saxons to preserve the memory of the accident which led to their conversion. See also the Saxon homily in nat. St. Greg. p. 11. 18, edit. Elstob.

slaves under the age of eighteen, and to send them with sure guides to Rome, where they might be educated under his eye, and at his expense.¹⁹ It was his intention to raise them, at a convenient time, to the priesthood, and to employ them in the conversion of their countrymen. But their progress was slow; and his zeal was impatient. After a short interval he resolved to try the courage of his monks, ignorant as they were of the language and manners of the barbarians. Having selected the most learned and virtuous of the community, he explained to them his views, elevated their hopes with the prospect of eternal rewards, and confirmed their consent with his apostolical benediction. Animated by the exhortation of the pontiff, the missionaries traversed with speed the north of Italy, and arrived at the foot of the Gallic Alps: but the enthusiasm which they had imbibed in Rome, insensibly evaporated during their journey; and, from the neighbourhood of Lerins, they despatched Augustine, their superior, to Gregory, to explain their reasons for declining so unpromising and so dangerous an enterprise. But the pontiff was inflexible. He exhorted, conjured, commanded them to proceed; he solicited in their favour the protection of the princes and prelates of the Franks; he begged of the Gallic clergy to depute some of their body to be their interpreters and associates; and at last, after a long and tedious suspense, received the welcome news, that they had landed in safety on the isle of Thanet. It was the year five hundred and ninety-seven.

Of the Saxon kingdoms, that of Kent was the most ancient, and the best disposed to receive the truths of the gospel. The immediate descendants of Hengist seem not to have inherited the martial virtues of that conqueror, but, by cultivating the arts of peace, they had endeavoured to excite a spirit of improvement among their subjects. The example of their neighbours, the Franks, who had embraced the Christian faith, taught them to view with less partiality the worship of their ancestors; and from the prosperity of that apostate people they might infer, that victory was not exclusively attached to the votaries of Woden. Bertha, daughter to Charibert, king of Paris, was married to their sovereign: she practised the rites of the gospel in the heart of their metropolis; and the saintly deportment of Liudhard, the prelate who attended her, reflected a lustre on the faith which he professed. From the epistles of St. Gregory it appears, that these and similar causes had awakened a desire of religious knowledge among the inhabitants of Kent, and that application for instruction had been made to the prelates of the Franks; whose apathy and indolence are lashed by the severe but merited animadversions of the pontiff.²⁰

¹⁹ Greg. Ep. l. v. ep. 10.

²⁰ Bed. Hist. l. i. p. 61. Malm. de Reg. l. i. c. i. f. 4, edit. Savile. Greg. Ep. l. v. ep. 58, 59.



For General, East View

SHE ALICE'S INQUIRY WITH HER BROTHERS

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It was at this favourable period that Augustine reached the isle of Thanet, and despatched a messenger to inform the Saxon king, that he was arrived from a distant country, to open to him and his subjects the gates of eternal happiness. Probably the mind of Ethelbert had been prepared by the diligence of his queen. He consented to hear the foreign priests: but fearful of the secret influence of magic, determined to give them audience in the open air. Elated with this faint gleam of success, the missionaries approached the appointed place in the slow and solemn pomp of a religious procession: before them was borne a silver cross, and a portrait of Christ; and the air resounded with the anthems which they chanted, in alternate choirs, praying for the conversion of the pagans. Ethelbert listened with attention to the discourse of Augustine: his answer was reserved but humane. Though he expressed no inclination to abandon the worship of his forefathers, he acknowledged that the offers of the missionary were plausible, and praised the charity, which had prompted strangers to undertake so perilous a journey, for the advantage of an unknown people. He concluded with an assurance of his protection as long as they chose to remain in his dominions.²¹

Without the walls of Canterbury, the queen had discovered the ruins of an ancient church, built by the Britons in honour of St. Martin. By her orders it had been repaired, and given to the Bishop Liudhard: it was now transferred to the use of the missionaries, whose efforts she seconded with all her influence. The patronage of the sovereign insured the respect of the subjects; and curiosity led numbers to view the public service, and learn the religious tenets of the strangers. They admired the solemnity of their worship; the pure and sublime morality of their doctrine; their zeal, their austerity, and their virtue. Insensibly the prejudices of the idolaters wore away; and the priests of Woden began to lament the solitude of their altars. Ethelbert, who at first maintained a decent reserve, ventured to profess himself a Christian; and so powerful was his example, that ten thousand Saxons followed their prince to the waters of baptism.²²

From the natural ferocity of the Saxon character, there was reason to fear that the royal convert, in the fervour of proselytism, might employ the flames of persecution to accelerate the progress of Christianity. But his teachers were actuated by motives more

²¹ Bed. l. i. p. 61. Hom. Sax. in nat. St. Greg. p. 33—34. Gosceline pretends to give us the very speech of Augustine; but it was probably composed for him by that writer, (Ang. Sac. tom. ii. p. 59.) From the Saxon homily we learn, that on this and similar occasions, the French clergymen served as interpreters. *And he þurh þære pealrcoda muð sam cýnunge 7 hýr leode Godeþ popð bobode.* p. 33.

²² Bede l. i. c. 26. The joy of the pontiff prompted him to impart his success to Eulogius, the patriarch of Alexandria. In solemnitate Dominicæ nativitatis plus quam decem millia Angli ab eodem nunciati sunt fratre et co-episcopo nostro baptisati. (Ep. Greg. l. vii. ep. 30. Smith's Bed. app. viii.)

congenial to the mild spirit of the gospel: and with a moderation which is not always the associate of zeal, sedulously inculcated that the worship of man, to be grateful to the Deity, must be the spontaneous dictate of the heart; and that the obstinacy of the idolater was to be overcome, not by the sword of the magistrate, but by the labours of the missionary.²³ These lessons they had imbibed from the mouth of the pontiff; and they were frequently inculcated in his letters. In obedience to his instructions, the weakness and prejudices of the converts were respected; the deserted temples of Woden were converted into Christian churches; and the national customs gradually adapted to the offices of religion. Hitherto the Saxons had been accustomed to enliven the solemnity of their worship by the merriment of the table. The victims which had bled on the altars of the gods, furnished the principal materials of the feast; and the praises of their warriors were mingled with the hymns chanted in honour of the Divinity. Totally to have abolished this practice, might have alienated their minds from a religion, which forbade the most favourite of their amusements. By the direction of Gregory, similar entertainments were permitted on the festivals of the Christian martyrs; tents were erected in the vicinity of the church; and as soon as the service was concluded, the converts were exhorted to indulge with sobriety in their accustomed gratifications, and return their thanks to that Being, who showers down his blessings on the human race.²⁴

From Kent the knowledge of the gospel was speedily transmitted to the neighbouring and dependent kingdom of Essex. Saberct, the reigning prince, received with respect the Abbot Mellitus, and invited him to reside in his metropolis.²⁵ But the prospect of the missionary closed with the death of his patron. The three sons of Saberct, who were still attached to the worship of their ancestors, bursting into the church during the time of sacrifice, demanded a portion of the consecrated bread, which Mellitus was distributing to the people.²⁶ The bishop (he had been lately invested with the episcopal dignity) dared to refuse; and banishment was the consequence of his refusal. He joined his brethren in Kent: but they were involved in equal difficulties. After the death of Bertha, Ethelbert had married a second wife. His son Eadbald was captivated with her youth and beauty; at his accession to the throne he took her to his bed; and when the missionaries ventured to remonstrate, abandoned a religion which forbade the gratification of his passion. Dis-

²³ Bed. l. i. c. 26. Hom. Sax. in nat. St. Greg. p. 36.

²⁴ For this condescension, which was copied from the practice of the first Christian missionaries, (Mosh. Hist. Eccl. sæc. ii. p. 2, c. iv. not.) the pontiff has been chastised by the puritanical zeal of Dr. Henry, (vol. iii. p. 194.) He asserts, that it introduced the grossest corruptions into the Christian worship. But to accuse, is easier than to prove: and Henry has prudently forgotten to specify the nature of these corruptions.

²⁵ An. 604.

²⁶ Bed. l. ii. c. 5.

heartened by so many misfortunes, Mellitus, with Justus of Rochester, retired into Gaul.²⁷ Laurentius, the successor of St. Augustine, had determined to follow their example; but spent the night before his intended departure in the church of St. Peter. At break of day he repaired to the palace; discovered to the king the marks of stripes on his shoulders; and assured him, that they had been inflicted by the hands of the apostle, as the reward of his cowardice. Eadbald was astonished and confounded. He expressed his willingness to remove the causes of discontent; dismissed his father's widow from his bed; and recalled the fugitive bishops. His subsequent conduct proved the sincerity of his conversion: and Christianity, supported by his influence, soon assumed an ascendancy which it ever after maintained.²⁸

From the south, the knowledge of the gospel passed to the most northern of the Saxon nations. Edwin, the powerful king of Northumbria, had asked and obtained the hand of Edilberga, the daughter of Ethelbert: but the zeal of her brother had stipulated that she should enjoy the free exercise of her religion, and had extorted from the impatient suitor a promise, that he would impartially examine the credibility of the Christian faith. With these conditions Edwin complied, and alternately consulted the Saxon priests and Paulinus, a bishop who had accompanied the queen. Though the arguments of the missionary were enforced by the entreaties of Edilberga, the king was slow to resolve; and two years were spent in anxious deliberation. At length, attended by Paulinus, he entered the great council of the nation; requested the advice of his faithful Witan; and exposed the reasons which induced him to prefer the Christian to the pagan worship.²⁹ Coiffi, the high priest of Northumbria, was the first to reply. It might have been expected, that prejudice and interest would have armed him with arguments against the adoption of a foreign creed: but his attachment to paganism had been weakened by repeated disappointments, and he had learned to despise the gods, who had neglected to reward his services. That the religion which he had hitherto taught, was useless, he attempted to prove from his own misfortunes; and avowed his resolution to listen to the reasons, and examine the doctrine of Paulinus. He was followed by an aged thane, whose discourse offers an interesting picture of the simplicity of the age. "When," said he, "O king, you and your ministers are seated at table in the depth of winter, and the cheerful fire blazes on the hearth in the middle of the hall, a sparrow, perhaps, chased by the wind and snow, enters at one door of the apartment, and escapes by the other. During the moment of its passage, it enjoys the warmth; when it is once departed, it is seen no more. Such is

²⁷ Ann. 625. Both Justus and Mellitus became afterwards archbishops of Canterbury.

²⁸ Id. l. ii. c. 6.

²⁹ An. 627.

the nature of man. During a few years his existence is visible : but what has preceded, or what will follow it, is concealed from the view of mortals. If the new religion offer any information on these important subjects, it must be worthy of our attention."³⁰ To these reasons the other members assented. Paulinus was desired to explain the principal articles of the Christian faith : and the king expressed his determination to embrace the doctrine of the missionary. When it was asked, who would dare to profane the altars of Woden, Coiffi accepted the dangerous office. Laying aside the emblems of the priestly dignity, he assumed the dress of a warrior : and, despising the prohibitions of the Saxon superstition, mounted the favourite charger of Edwin. By those who were ignorant of his motives, his conduct was attributed to a temporary insanity. But he disregarded their clamours, proceeded to the nearest temple, and, bidding defiance to the gods of his fathers, hurled his spear into the sacred edifice. It stuck in the opposite wall ;³¹ and, to the surprise of the trembling spectators, the heavens were silent, and the sacrilege was unpunished. Insensibly they recovered from their fears, and, encouraged by the exhortation of Coiffi, burnt to the ground the temple and the surrounding groves.³² From so favourable a beginning, the missionary might have ventured to predict the entire conversion of the nation : but he could not calculate the numerous chances of war ; and all the fruits of his labours were speedily blasted by the immature death of the king. Edwin was slain as he bravely fought against Penda king of Mercia, and Cædwalla king of the Britons. During more than twelve months, the victors pillaged the kingdom of Northumbria without opposition ; Edilberga, her children, and Paulinus, were compelled to seek an asylum in Kent ; and the converts, deprived of instruction, easily relapsed into their former idolatry.

The history of the Saxon kingdoms is marked with the most rapid vicissitudes of fortune. Oswald and Eanfrid were the sons of Adelfrid, the predecessor of Edwin. In the mountains of Scotland they had concealed themselves from the jealousy of that prince ; and had spent the time of their exile in learning, from the monks of Hii, the principles of the gospel. After the victory of the confederate kings, they returned to Northumbria. Eanfrid was treacherously slain in a parley with Cædwalla : Oswald determined to avenge the calamities of his family and country. With a small, but resolute band of followers, he sought the army

³⁰ Bed. l. ii. c. 13.

³¹ This circumstance is not to be found in the Latin copies of Bede ; but it has been preserved by King Alfred in his version. Ða ƿeæt he mid hƿ ƿƿeƿe ꝥ hit ƿeode ƿeƿe on ðam heaƿge. Bed. Hist. Sax. p. 517.

³² Alcuin has celebrated the fame of Coiffi in his poem on the church of York.

O nimium tanti felix audacia facti !

Polluit ante alios quas ipse sacraverat aras.—v. 186

of the enemy, and discovered it negligently encamped in the neighbourhood of Hexham. A cross of wood was hastily erected by his order, and the Saxons, prostrate before it, earnestly implored the protection of the God of the Christians. From prayer they rose to battle, and to victory. Cædwalla was slain; his army was dispersed; and the conqueror ascended without a rival the throne of his ancestors.³³ As he piously attributed his success to the favour of Heaven, he immediately bent his attention to the concerns of religion, and solicited a supply of missionaries from his former instructors. Cormac was sent, a monk of a severe and unpliant disposition; who, disgusted with the ignorance and barbarism of the Saxons, speedily returned in despair to his monastery. As he described to the confraternity the difficulty and dangers of the mission, "Brother," exclaimed a voice, "the fault is yours. You exacted from the barbarians more than their weakness could bear. You should have first stooped to their ignorance, and then have raised their minds to the sublime maxims of the gospel." This sensible rebuke turned every eye upon the speaker, a private monk of the name of Aidan: he was selected to be the apostle of the Northumbrians; and the issue of his labours justified the wisdom of the choice. As soon as he had received the episcopal ordination, he repaired to the court of Oswald. His arrival was a subject of general exultation; and the king condescended to explain in Saxon the instructions which the missionary delivered in his native language. But the success of Aidan was owing no less to his virtues than to his preaching. The severe austerity of his life, his profound contempt of riches, and his unwearied application to the duties of his profession, won the esteem, while his arguments convinced the understanding of his hearers. Each day the number of proselytes increased; and, within a few years, the church of Northumbria was fixed on a solid and permanent foundation.³⁴

The East-Angles were indebted for their conversion to the zealous labours of Felix, a Burgundian prelate. In the commencement of the seventh century, their monarch, Redwald, had invited to his court the disciples of St. Augustine, and received from them the sacrament of baptism. Yet he abjured not the worship of his country; and the same temple was sanctified by the celebration of the Christian sacrifice, and polluted by the immolation of victims to the gods of paganism.³⁵ His son Eorpwald was more sincere in his belief: but the merit of firmly establishing the Christian worship was, by his death, transferred to his successor, Sigebert, who, during a long exile in Gaul, had imbibed with the knowledge of the gospel a profound veneration for the monastic institute. No sooner had he ascended the

³³ Bed. l. iii. c. 1—2. Ann. 635.

³⁴ Bed. l. iii. c. 3—5.

³⁵ Bed. l. ii. c. 15. Hume (Hist. p. 32. Millar, 4^o, 1762) inadvertently ascribes the apostasy of Redwald to his son Eorpwald.

throne, than Felix, commissioned by Honorius of Canterbury, requested permission to instruct his subjects. He was received with welcome, and fixed his residence at Dunwich, the capital of the kingdom.³⁶ By the united efforts of the king and the missionary, the knowledge of Christianity was rapidly diffused; and, the better to eradicate ignorance and idolatry from the higher classes of the people, a public school was instituted after the model of that at Canterbury.³⁷ Having shared for a time the cares and splendour of royalty with Egeric, a near relation, Sigebert retired to a monastery to prepare himself for death. But his repose was disturbed by the invasion of a foreign enemy. A formidable body of Mercians had penetrated into the heart of the country; the misfortunes of the campaign were ascribed to the want of conduct or of valour in Egeric; and the East-Angles clamorously demanded the aged monarch, who had so often led them to victory. With reluctance he left his cell to mix in the tumult and dangers of the field. On the day of battle, when arms were offered him, he refused them as repugnant to the monastic profession, and with a wand directed the operations of the army. But the fortune of the Mercians prevailed: both the kings were slain; and the country was abandoned to the ravages of the conquerors. Yet, under the pressure of this calamity, the converts persevered in the profession of their religion; and Felix, within the seventeen years of his mission, had the merit of reclaiming the whole nation from the errors of paganism.

While Christianity was thus making a rapid progress in the kingdoms of the north and east, a new apostle appeared on the southern coast, and announced the tidings of salvation to the fierce and warlike inhabitants of Wessex.³⁸ His name was Birinus. Animated with a desire of extending the conquests of the gospel, he had obtained from Pope Honorius a commission to preach to the idolatrous tribes of the Saxons. By a fortunate

³⁶ Anno 631.

³⁷ The situation and design of this school have been the subject of much controversy between the champions of the two universities. The origin of Cambridge was formerly derived by its partisans from Cantaber, a Spanish prince, who was supposed to have landed in Britain in the reign of Gurguntius, about 400 years before the Christian era, (see Caius De Ant. Cant. p. 20—60;) and the Oxonians, not to yield to their opponents, claimed for their first professors, the philosophers whom Brutus had brought with him more than a thousand years before that period, (Assertio Antiq. Oxon. p. 1. London, 1568.) Antiquity so remote, was too ridiculous to obtain credit: both contracted their pretensions; and Sigebert was selected for the founder of Cambridge, Alfred the Great for that of Oxford. The war, however, was still continued, and the most eminent scholars joined either party, as their judgment or partiality directed. Without engaging in the dispute, I may be allowed to observe, that there appears no reason to believe, with the advocates for Oxford, that the school of Sigebert was designed only to teach the rudiments of grammar, or, with their opponents, that it was established at Cambridge. Bede tells us, that it was formed in imitation of the school at Canterbury, in which all the sciences known at that period were studied; and Smith has made it highly probable that it was situated either at Seaham or Dunwich. See Smith's Bede, App. p. 721.

³⁸ Ann. 634.

concurrence of circumstances, he had scarcely opened his mission, when Oswald of Northumbria arrived at the court of Kingils, and demanded his daughter in marriage. The arguments of the missionary were powerfully seconded by the influence of the suitor. The princess and her father embraced with docility the religion of Christ; and the men of Wessex were eager to conform to the example of their monarch. Success expanded the views of Birinus: from the capital he removed to Dorchester, a city on the confines of Mercia; and flattered himself with the expectation of converting that extensive and populous kingdom.

But Mercia was destined to receive the faith from the pious industry of the Northumbrian princes; who were eminently instrumental in the dissemination of Christianity among the numerous tribes of their countrymen. Peada, the son of Penda, king of Mercia, had offered his hand to the daughter of Oswiu, the successor of Oswald: but the lady spurned the addresses of a pagan; and the passion of the prince induced him to study the principles of her religion. His conversion was rewarded with the object of his affections. To those who doubted his sincerity, he replied that no consideration, not even the refusal of Alcfleda, should ever provoke him to return to the altars of Woden: but an argument more convincing than mere professions was the zeal with which he procured four Northumbrian priests to instruct the Middle-Angles, whom he governed as king during the life of his father. Even Penda himself was induced to grant his protection to the missionaries; and though he refused to yield to their exhortations, he treated with contempt such of his subjects as had enrolled themselves among the Christians, and yet retained the manners of pagans. Within a few years the fortune of war annexed the crown of Mercia to that of Northumbria, and Diuma, a missionary, was raised to the episcopal dignity. The converts were true to the faith which they had embraced; and retained it with enthusiasm, after they had thrown off the yoke, and replaced the sceptre in the hands of their native princes.

The zeal of Oswiu was not satisfied with one royal proselyte; and his solicitations prevailed on Sigebert, the East Saxon monarch, to receive the sacred rite of baptism.³⁹ The men of Essex supported the character of their fathers. Like them they embraced the Christian faith, and like them apostatized. A dreadful pestilence, which they attributed to the vengeance of Woden, induced them to rebuild the altars, and restore the worship of that deity. Jaruman, bishop of Mercia, was alarmed: with haste he repaired to the kingdom of Essex; and by his preaching and authority confirmed the faith of the wavering, and refuted the errors of the incredulous.⁴⁰

³⁹ An. 653.⁴⁰ Bed. l. iii. c. 30.

The inhabitants of Sussex were the most barbarous of the Saxon nations, and the last that embraced the profession of Christianity. Unmoved by the example of their neighbours, whom they branded with the infamous name of apostates, they long resisted the repeated efforts of the missionaries; but their obstinacy was induced to yield to the superior zeal or superior address of St. Wilfrid, a Northumbrian prelate. Expelled from his diocese by the intrigues of his enemies, he wandered an honourable exile among the tribes of the south, when Edilwalch, the king of Sussex, who had been lately baptized, invited him to attempt the conversion of his subjects. Wilfrid had travelled through most of the nations on the continent; to the advantages of study he had joined those of observation and experience; and while his acquirements commanded the respect, the improvements which he introduced conciliated the esteem of the barbarians. His first converts were two hundred and fifty slaves, whom, together with the isle of Selsey, he had received as a present from the munificence of Edilwalch.⁴¹ On the day of their baptism, they were unexpectedly gratified with the offer of their liberty from their generous instructor, who declared that they ceased to be his bondsmen from the moment in which they became the children of Christ. The liberality of Wilfrid was felt and applauded: numbers crowded to his sermons; and those who were not convinced by his reasons, were silenced by the authority of the king. Within the space of five years he firmly established the Christian worship in Sussex: and after his departure the wants of the mission were supplied by the pastoral care of the bishops of Winchester.⁴²

Thus in the space of about eighty years was successfully completed the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons; an enterprise, which originated in the charity of Gregory the Great, and was unremittingly continued by the industry of his disciples, with the assistance of several faithful co-operators from Gaul and Italy. Of the conduct which they pursued, and the arguments which they employed, a few particulars may be collected from the works of the ancient writers.⁴³ They were instructed most carefully to avoid every offensive and acrimonious expression; to inform the judgment without alienating the affections; and to display on every occasion the most disinterested zeal for the welfare of their disciples.⁴⁴ The great and fundamental truth of

⁴¹ An. 678.

⁴² Compare Bede (l. iv. c. 13, v. c. 18. 28) with Eddius (vit. Wilf. c. 40) and Huntingdon, (l. iii. f. 192, int. scrip. post Bed.)

⁴³ Daniel, bishop of Winchester, in a letter to St. Boniface, enumerates the arguments, which were thought the best calculated to convince the pagans, (Ep. Bonif. p. 78, edit. Serrar.) The letters of the pontiffs to the Saxon kings, (Wilk. con. vol. i. p. 12. 30. 34,) and some passages of Bede (His. l. ii. c. 13, l. iii. c. 22) may also be consulted.

⁴⁴ Non quasi insultando vel irritando eos, sed placide et magna moderatione. Ep. Dan. *ibid.*

the unity of God was the first lesson which they sought to inculcate. The statues of the gods could not, they observed, be fit objects of adoration; since whatever excellence they possessed was derived from the nature of the materials, and the ingenuity of the artist:⁴⁵ and from the successive generation of the German deities they inferred, that none of them could be the first great cause, from whose fecundity all other beings received their existence.⁴⁶ If *they* were the dispensers of every blessing, why, it was asked, were their votaries confined to the barren and frozen climate of the north, while the warmer and more fertile regions were divided among those who equally despised their promises and their threats?⁴⁷ If Woden were the God of war, why did victory still adhere to the standards of the tribes, which had trampled on his altars and embraced the faith of Christ? To the incoherent tenets of paganism they opposed the great truths of revelation; the fall and redemption of man, his future judgment, and endless existence during an eternity of happiness or misery. For the truth of these doctrines, they adverted to the consent of the powerful and polished nations, which had preferred them to their ancient worship; to the rapidity with which, in defiance of every obstacle, they had spread themselves over the earth, and to the stupendous events by which their diffusion was accompanied and accelerated.⁴⁸ Nor did they hesitate to appeal, like the apostles, to the miracles, which deposed in favour of their mission; and the supernatural powers with which they believed themselves to be invested, attracted the notice of Gregory. His zeal rejoiced at the triumphs of the gospel: but his virtue was alarmed for the humility of his disciples. In a long letter to Augustine, he earnestly exhorted him to reflect on the nothingness of man in the presence of the Supreme Being; to shut his ears to the subtle suggestions of vanity; and to be convinced that the wonders, which accompanied his preaching, were wrought by God, not to reward the merits of those who were only humble instruments in the hand of Almighty power, but to display his mercy to the Saxons, and to attract their minds by sensible proofs to the knowledge of salvation.⁴⁹

In one respect the missionaries ventured to deviate from the example of those who had preceded them in their sacred functions.

⁴⁵ Bed. l. ii. c. 10, l. iii. c. 22.

⁴⁶ Quoslibet ab aliis generatos concede eos asserere, ut saltem modo hominum natos deos et deas potius homines quam deos fuisse, et cæpisse, qui ante non erant, probes. Ep. Dan. *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Cum Christiani fertiles terras, vini olcique feraces cæterisque opibus abundantes possideant provincias, pagani frigore semper rigentes terras reliquerunt. *Ibid.* See a similar argument in Bede, (l. ii. c. 13.)

⁴⁸ Inferenda quoque sæpius eis est orbis auctoritas Christiani. Ep. Dan. *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Quidquid de faciendis signis acceperis vel accepisti, hæc non tibi sed illis deputes donata pro quorum tibi salute collata sunt. Ep. Greg. ad Aug. apud Bed. l. i. c. 31. Wilk. con. vol. i. p. 10.

Though the first preachers of Christianity rapidly extended their conquests through every class of Roman subjects, almost three centuries elapsed before they presumed to attempt the conversion of the emperors. But at the period of the Anglo-Saxon mission the circumstances were changed. The rulers of the barbarous nations had proved themselves not insensible to the truths of the gospel; and the influence of their example had been recently demonstrated in the conversion of the Franks, the Visigoths, and the Suevi. Hence the first object of the missionaries, Roman, Gallic, or Scottish, was invariably the same, to obtain the patronage of the prince. His favour insured, his opposition prevented their success.⁵⁰ Yet let not malignity judge lightly of their merit. If virtue is to be estimated by the effort which it requires, they will be entitled to no ordinary degree of praise. They abandoned the dearest connexions of friends and country; they exposed themselves to the caprice and cruelty of unknown barbarians: they voluntarily embraced a life of laborious and unceasing exertion, without any prospect of temporal emolument, and with the sole view of civilizing the manners, and correcting the vices of a distant and savage people. If they neither felt nor provoked the scourge of persecution, they may, at least, claim the merit of pure, active, and disinterested virtue: and the fortunate issue of their labours is sufficient to disprove the opinion of those who imagine that no church can be firmly established, the foundations of which are not cemented with the blood of martyrs.⁵¹

In the judgment of a hasty or a prejudiced observer, the faults of the disciple are frequently transferred to the master: and the facility with which the natives of Essex relapsed into idolatry after the death of Saberct, and those of Northumbria after the fall of Edwin, has encouraged a suspicion that the missionaries were more anxious to multiply the number, than to enlighten the minds of their proselytes. It should, however, be remembered that the teachers were few, the pupils many, and their ignorance extreme. Under such difficulties, the rapid, though temporary success of Mellitus and Paulinus bears an honourable testimony to their zeal: nor should it excite surprise, if, after their unfortunate expulsion, the converts, without the aid of instruction, or the support of the civil power, gradually returned to their former worship. To these two instances may be successfully opposed the conduct of all the

⁵⁰ On this subject see the remarks of Macquer (*Abrégé chronologique de l'histoire ecclésiastique*, vol. i. p. 512, an. 1768,) who unfortunately adduces the conduct of Cædwalla, to prove that the converts were Christians only in name, and still retained all the vices of paganism. But Cædwalla was neither a Saxon nor a convert. He was a British prince, whom national animosity urged to wreak his vengeance on the vanquished Northumbrians.

⁵¹ I shall not pollute these pages with the abuse which, about two centuries ago, religious bigotry so lavishly bestowed on the apostles of the Saxons. If the reader's taste lead him to such offal, he may peruse the works of Bayle, (*Cent. 8, c. 85. Cent. 13, c. 1.*) of Parker, (*Ant. Brit. p. 33—46.*) and of Fox, (*Acts and Mon. tom. i. p. 107.*)

other Saxon nations, in which Christianity, from its first admission, maintained a decided superiority. To object, that they yielded without conviction, is to venture an assertion that certainly is not countenanced by the obstinacy with which men adhere to their religious prejudices; and is sufficiently contradicted by the reserve with which Ethelbert listened to the instructions of Augustine, by the long resistance of Edwin to the arguments of Paulinus, and by the tardy but sincere conversions of Peada, prince of Mercia, and Sigebert, king of Essex. But the claim of the missionaries to the gratitude, may be best deduced from the improvement, of their disciples; and whoever wishes justly to estimate their merit, will carefully compare the conduct of the Christian with that of the pagan Saxons.

By the ancient writers, the Saxons are unanimously classed with the most barbarous of the nations which invaded and dismembered the Roman empire.⁵² Their valour was disgraced by its brutality. To the services they generally preferred the blood of their captives; and the man whose life they condescended to spare, was taught to consider perpetual servitude as a gratuitous favour.⁵³ Among themselves, a rude and imperfect system of legislation intrusted to private revenge the punishment of private injuries; and the ferocity of their passions continually multiplied these deadly and hereditary feuds. Avarice and the lust of sensual enjoyment had extinguished in their breasts some of the first feelings of nature. The savages of Africa may traffic with Europeans for the negroes whom they have seized by treachery, or captured in open war: but the more savage conquerors of the Britons sold, without scruple, to the merchants of the continent, their countrymen, and even their own children.⁵⁴ Their religion was accommodated to their manners, and their manners were perpetuated by their religion. In their theology they acknowledged no sin but cowardice, and revered no virtue but courage. Their gods they appeased with the blood of human victims. Of a future life their notions were faint and wavering: and if the soul were fated to survive the body, to quaff ale out of the skulls of their enemies was to be the great reward of the virtuous: to lead a life of hunger and inactivity the endless punishment of the wicked.⁵⁵

Such were the pagan Saxons. But their ferocity soon yielded to the exertions of the missionaries, and the harsher features of their origin were insensibly softened under the mild influence of the gospel. In the rage of victory they learned to respect the

⁵² Julian, de laud. Constan. p. 116. Sidon. l. viii. ep. 9. Zozim. l. iii. p. 147.

⁵³ *Altissimæ gratiæ stabat in loco.* Gild. p. 87.

⁵⁴ *Familiari, says Malmesbury, (de reg. l. i. c. 3,) ac pene ingenita consuetudine, adeo ut non dubitarent arcissimas necessitudines sub prætextu minimorum commodorum distrahere.*

⁵⁵ Two passages in Bede (l. ii. c. 13. l. iii. c. 30) will almost justify a doubt whether they believed any future state at all.

rights of humanity. Death or slavery was no longer the fate of the conquered Britons: by their submission they were incorporated with the victors; and their lives and property were protected by the equity of their Christian conquerors.⁵⁶ The acquisition of religious knowledge introduced a new spirit of legislation: the presence of the bishops and superior clergy improved the wisdom of the national councils; and laws were framed to punish the more flagrant violations of morality, and prevent the daily broils which harassed the peace of society. The humane idea, that by baptism all men become brethren, contributed to meliorate the condition of slavery, and scattered the seeds of that liberality which gradually undermined, and at length abolished so odious an institution. By the provision of the legislature the freedom of the child was secured from the avarice of an unnatural parent; and the heaviest punishment was denounced against the man who presumed to sell to a foreign master one of his countrymen, though he were a slave or a malefactor.⁵⁷ But by nothing were the converts more distinguished than by their piety. The conviction of a future and endless existence beyond the grave elevated their minds and expanded their ideas. To prepare their souls for this new state of being, was to many the first object of their solicitude: they eagerly sought every source of instruction, and with scrupulous fidelity practised every duty which they had learnt.⁵⁸ Of the zeal of the more opulent among the laity, the numerous churches, hospitals, and monasteries which they founded, are a sufficient proof: and the clergy could boast with equal truth of the piety displayed by the more eminent of their order, and of the nations instructed in the Christian faith by the labours of St. Boniface and his associates.⁵⁹ In the clerical and monastic establishments, the most sublime of the gospel virtues were carefully practised: even kings descended from their thrones, and exchanged the sceptre for the cowl.⁶⁰ Their conduct was applauded by their contemporaries: and the moderns, whose supercilious wisdom affects to censure it, must at least esteem the motives which inspired, and admire the resolution which completed the sacrifice. The progress of civilization

⁵⁶ See the laws of Ina, 23, 24, 32, 46, (Wilk. leg. Sax. p. 18, 20, 22.)

⁵⁷ Though this inhuman custom was severely forbidden by different legislators, (Wilk. leg. Sax. p. 17, 93, 107, 138,) it was clandestinely continued long after the Norman conquest, (Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 258. Malm. de reg. l. i. c. 3. Girald. de expug. Hiber. l. i. c. 18.)

⁵⁸ See Bede (l. ii. c. 17, l. iii. c. 26, l. iv. c. 3. Ep. ad Egb. Ant. p. 311,) and the testimony of St. Gregory. Gens Anglorum prave agere metuit, ac totis desiderii ad æternitatis gloriam pervenire concupiscit, (Moral. l. xxvii. c. 8. Ep. l. ix: 58.)

⁵⁹ The Old Saxons, the Franks, the Hessians, and the Thuringians were converted by St. Boniface; the inhabitants of Westphalia by St. Swibert; the Frisians and the Hollanders by St. Wilfrid and St. Willibrord; the nations north of the Elbe by St. Willehad. See Walker's translation of Spelman's Alfred, (pref. not.)

⁶⁰ According to Walker, (ibid.) three and twenty Saxon kings, and sixty queens and children of kings, were revered as saints by our ancestors.

kept equal pace with the progress of religion: not only the useful but the agreeable arts were introduced; every species of knowledge which could be attained, was eagerly studied; and during the gloom of ignorance which overspread the rest of Europe, learning found, for a certain period, an asylum among the Saxons of Britain.⁶¹ To this picture an ingenious adversary may, indeed, oppose a very different description. He may collect the vices which have been stigmatized by the zeal of their preachers, and point to the crimes which disgraced the characters of some of their monarchs. But the impartial observer will acknowledge the impossibility of eradicating at once the fiercer passions of a whole nation; nor be surprised if he behold several of them relapse into their former manners, and, on some occasions, unite the actions of savages with the profession of Christians. To judge of the advantage which the Saxons derived from their conversion, he will fix his eyes on their virtues. *They* were the offspring of the gospel; their vices were the relics of paganism.

It was fortunate for the converts, that, during the seventh century, the peace of the western church was seldom disturbed by religious controversy. Though their teachers came from different and far distant countries, they were unanimous in preaching the same doctrine; and it was for several centuries the boast of the Saxons, that heresy had never dared to erect its standard within the precincts of their church. In points of discipline, national partiality would prompt each missionary to establish the practice of his own country; though Gregory, with a laudable liberality of sentiment, exhorted his disciples to despise the narrow prejudices of education, and carefully to select from the customs of different churches, whatever was best calculated to promote the general interests of virtue and religion.⁶² But all were not animated with the spirit of the pontiff. The Scottish monks had been taught to respect as sacred every institution, which had been sanctioned by the approbation of their ancestors; while the Roman missionaries contended, that the customs of an obscure and sequestered people ought to yield to the consentient practice of the principal Christian churches. Each party pertinaciously adhered to their own opinion; and the controversy was conducted with a violence which threatened to destroy the fabric, that had been erected with so much labour and perseverance. Yet the great objects, which called forth the zeal, and divided the harmony of these holy men, regarded not the essentials of Christianity: they were confined to, 1, the proper time

⁶¹ See the chapter on the learning of the Saxons.

⁶² *Novit fraternitas tua Romanæ Ecclesiæ consuetudinem, in qua se meminit nutritam. Sed mihi placet, sive in Romana, sive in Galliarum, seu in qualibet ecclesia aliquid invenisti, quod plus omnipotenti Deo possit placere, sollicitè eligas, et in Anglorum ecclesia institutione præcipua, quæ de multis ecclesiis colligere potuisti, infundas.* Bed. l. i. c. 27, interrog. 2.

for the celebration of Easter, and, 2, the most approved method of wearing the ecclesiastical tonsure.

1. The festival of Easter, instituted in honour of the resurrection of Christ, has always been considered as the principal of the Christian solemnities. To reduce the different churches of the east and west to uniformity in the celebration of this great event, was an object which engaged the attention of the prelates assembled in the council of Nice: and as the commencement of the Paschal time depended on astronomical calculation, it was determined that the patriarch of Alexandria should annually consult the philosophers of Egypt, and communicate the result of their researches to the Roman pontiff; whose duty it was to notify the day of the festival to the more distant churches. Unfortunately, the Roman agreed not with the Alexandrian method of computation; a different cycle of years was employed; and the limits of the equinoctial lunation were affixed to different days. Hence arose an insuperable obstacle to the uniformity required by the council; and it not unfrequently happened, that while the western Christians were celebrating the joyous event of the resurrection, those of the east had but just commenced the penitential austerities of Lent.⁶³ Weary of the disputes occasioned by this difference of computation, the Roman church about the middle of the sixth century adopted a new cycle, which had been lately composed by Dionysius Exiguus, and which, in every important point, agreed with the Egyptian mode of calculation.⁶⁴ But the British churches, harassed at that period by the Saxons, and almost precluded from communicating with Italy, on account of the convulsed situation of the continent, were unacquainted with this improvement,⁶⁵ and continued to use the ancient cycle, though their ignorance of its application caused them to deviate widely from the former practice of the Roman church.⁶⁶ Hence it happened

⁶³ The cycle of the Alexandrians contained nineteen years, that of the Romans eighty-four: according to the former the equinoctial new moon could not occur sooner than the eighth of March, nor later than the fifth of April, while the latter affixed these limits to the fifth of March and the third of April. Hence it happened in the year 417, that Easter was celebrated at Rome on the 25th of March, and at Alexandria on the 22d of April. Smith's *Bede*. ap. n^o. 9, p. 697, 698.

⁶⁴ It contained 95 years, or five Egyptian cycles.

⁶⁵ This is the reason which Bede assigns for their adhesion to the old method. *Ut pote quibus longe extra orbem positus nemo synodalia Paschalis observantiæ decreta porrexerat.* L. iii. c. 4.

⁶⁶ On this circumstance the prejudice of party has endeavoured to build a wild and extravagant system. Because the British Christians of the seventh century differed from the Roman church in the time of celebrating Easter, it has been gratuitously assumed that they were Quartodecimans: that of consequence their fathers were of the same persuasion; and ultimately that the faith was planted in Britain by missionaries, who were sent not from Rome, but from some of the Asiatic churches. The truth or falsehood of the latter hypothesis is of little consequence; yet it is certain that the Britons in the time of St. Augustine were not Quartodecimans, as they observed Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon, only when that day happened to be a Sunday; (*Bede*. L. iii. c. 4. 17:) and that their ancestors were not Quartodecimans is no less certain, if

that, during the sixth and seventh centuries the British Christians scattered along the western coasts of the island, observed in the computation of Easter a rule peculiar to themselves: and when it was asked how *they*, buried in an obscure corner of the earth, dared to oppose their customs to the unanimous voice of the Greek and Latin churches, they boldly but ignorantly replied, that they had received them from their forefathers, whose sanctity had been proved by a multitude of miracles, and whose doctrine they considered as their most valuable inheritance.

2. When once the spirit of controversy has taken possession of the mind, the most trifling objects swell into considerable magnitude, and are pursued with an ardour and interest, which cannot fail to excite the surprise, perhaps the smile, of the indifferent spectator. Of this description was the dispute respecting the proper form of the ecclesiastical tonsure, which contributed to widen the separation between the Roman and Scottish missionaries. The former shaved the crown of the head, which was surrounded by a circle of hair, supposed to represent the wreath of thorns, forced by the cruelty of his persecutors on the temples of the Messiah: the latter permitted the hair to grow on the back, and shaved in the form of a crescent the front of the head. Each party was surprised and shocked at the uncanonical appearance of the other. The Romans asserted that their tonsure had descended to them from the prince of the apostles, while that of their adversaries was the distinguishing mark of Simon Magus and his disciples.⁶⁷ The Scots, unable to refute the confident assertions of their adversaries, maintained, that their method of shaving the head, however impious in its origin, had been afterwards sanctified by the virtues of those who had adopted it.⁶⁸ The arguments of the contending parties serve only to prove their ignorance of ecclesiastical antiquity. During the first four hundred years of the Christian era, the clergy were not distinguished from the laity by any peculiar method of clipping the hair: and the severity of the canons proceeded no farther than the prohibition of those modes, which were the offspring of vanity and effeminacy.⁶⁹ The tonsure originated from the piety of the first professors of the monastic

any credit be due to Eusebius, (Hist. l. v. c. 23,) to Socrates, (l. v. c. 21,) to Constantine in his letter to the bishops, (Eus. l. iii. c. 14,) and to the subscriptions of the British prelates to the council of Arles (Spel. Conc. p. 40, 42.) I should not omit that Goodall (ad Hist. Scot. introd. p. 66. Keith's Catal. of Scot. Bishops, pref. p. vii.) asserts that the Scots employed the same cycle, and observed Easter on the same day as was customary in the Roman church previous to the council of Nice. He finds his opinion on the ancient paschal table published by Bucher, in which the festival is fixed on the fourteenth day of the moon for the years 316 and 320.

⁶⁷ Bed. l. iii. c. 25. v. c. 21.

⁶⁸ Numquid, says Colman, patrem nostrum Columbam, et successores ejus divinis paginis contraria sapuisse vel egisse credendum est? quos ego sanctos esse non dubitans, semper eorum vitam, mores, et disciplinam sequi non desisto. Bed. l. iii. c. 25.

⁶⁹ Deflua casaricus compscitur ad breves capillos. Pruden. *πρὸς στρεβανον*, 13.

institute. To shave the head was deemed by the natives of the east a ceremony expressive of the deepest affliction: and was adopted by the monks as a distinctive token of that seclusion from worldly pleasure, to which they had voluntarily condemned themselves. When, in the fifth century, the most illustrious of the order were drawn from their cells, and raised to the highest dignities in the church, they retained this mark of their former profession; the new costume was gradually embraced by the clergy; and the tonsure began to be considered, both in the Greek and the Latin church, as necessary for admission into the number of ecclesiastics. It was at this period that the circular and semicircular modes of shaving the head were introduced. The names of their authors were soon lost in oblivion; and succeeding generations, ignorant of their real origin, credulously attributed them to the first age of Christianity.⁷⁰

Such were the mighty objects, which scattered the seeds of dissension in the breasts of these holy men. The merit of restoring concord was reserved for the zeal and authority of Oswiu, king of Northumbria. As that province had received the doctrine of the gospel from the Scottish missionaries, their influence was predominant with the prince and the majority of the people; but his queen, Eanfled, who had been educated in Kent, and his son Alchfrid, who attended the lessons of St. Wilfrid, eagerly adhered to the practice of the Roman church. Thus Oswiu saw his own family divided into opposite factions, and the same solemnities celebrated at different times within his own palace. Desirous to procure uniformity, he summoned the champions of each party to meet him at Whitby, the monastery of the Abbess Hilda, and to argue the merits of their respective customs in his presence. The conference was conducted with freedom and decency. To Wilfrid was intrusted the defence of the Roman, to Colman, bishop of Lindisfarne, that of the Scottish missionaries. Each rested his cause on the authority of those from whom the discipline of his church was supposed to be derived: and the king concluded the discussion by declaring his conviction, that the institutions of St. Peter were to be preferred before those of St. Columba. This decision was applauded by the courtiers: and of the Scottish monks many ranged themselves under the banners of their adversaries; the remainder retired in silent discontent to their parent monastery in the isle of Hii.⁷¹

The termination of this controversy has subjected the successful party to the severe but unmerited censures of several late historians. They affect to consider the Scottish monks as an injured and persecuted cast: and declaim with suspicious vehe-

⁷⁰ See Smith's Bed. app. n^o ix. According to an ancient book of canons quoted by Usher, the semicircular tonsure was first adopted in Ireland. (Ush. Ant. Brit. c. 17, p. 924.)

⁷¹ Bed. l. iii. c. 25, 26. An. 664.

mence against the haughty and intolerant spirit of the Roman clergy.⁷² But, if uniformity was desirable, it could only be obtained by the submission or retreat of one of the contending parties: and certainly it was unreasonable to expect that those, who observed the discipline which universally prevailed among the Christians of the continent, should tamely yield to the pretensions of a few obscure churches on the remotest coast of Britain.⁷³ The charge of persecution is not warranted by the expression of the original writers, who give the praise of moderation almost exclusively to the Romans. Bede has recorded the high esteem in which Aidan and his associates were held by the bishops of Canterbury and Dunwich; and observes that through respect to his merit, they were unwilling to condemn his departure from the universal discipline of the Catholic church.⁷⁴ The letters which the Roman missionaries wrote on occasion of this controversy, uniformly breathe a spirit of meekness and conciliation; and prove that the writers rather pitied the ignorance, than resented the obstinacy of their opponents.⁷⁵ But historic truth will not permit equal praise to be given to the conduct of the Scottish and British prelates. When Daganus, a Caledonian bishop, arrived at Canterbury in the days of Lawrence, the successor of St. Augustine, he pertinaciously refused to eat at the same table, or even in the same house with those, who observed the Roman Easter;⁷⁶ and St. Aldhelm assures us that the clergy of Demetia carried their abhorrence of the Catholic discipline to such an extreme, that they punished the most trivial conformity with a long course of penance, and purified with fanatic scrupulosity every utensil, which had been contaminated by the touch of a Roman or a Saxon priest.⁷⁷ We may wonder and lament that for objects of such inferior consequence men could suspend their more important labours, and engage in acrimonious controversy: but candour must admit that of the two parties, the Romans had the better cause, and by their moderation deserved that victory which they ultimately obtained.⁷⁸

⁷² Henry, *Hist. of Brit.* vol. iii. p. 204. Rapin, vol. i. p. 71.

⁷³ Numquid universali, quæ per orbem est, ecclesiæ Christi, eorum est paucitas uno de angulo extremæ insule præferenda. Wilf. apud Bed. l. iii. c. 25. Also l. ii. c. 19.

⁷⁴ Bed. *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Bed. l. ii. c. 4. 19. Wilk. *Conc.* tom. i. p. 36. 40. Ep. Bonif. 44, p. 59.

⁷⁶ Bed. l. ii. c. 4.

⁷⁷ Apist. Aldhel. ad Geron. Regem, inter Bonifac. ep. 44, p. 59. See also Bede, l. ii. c. 20. *Mat. West.* ad an. 586.

⁷⁸ Smith's Bed. app. viii. ix.

CHAPTER II.

Extensive jurisdiction of St. Augustine—Archbishops of Canterbury—York—Lichfield—Number of Bishoprics—Election of Bishops—Episcopal Monasteries—Institution of Parishes—Discipline of the Clergy—Celibacy.

EPISCOPAL authority is coeval with Christianity. The plenitude of the priesthood, which its divine Founder had communicated to the apostles, was by them transmitted to the more learned and fervent of their disciples. Under the appropriate title of bishops, these ministers presided in the assembly of the faithful, delegated to the inferior clergy a discretionary portion of their authority, and watched with jealous solicitude over the interests of religion.¹ Wherever Christianity penetrated, it was accompanied with the episcopal institution: and the anomalous existence of a church without a bishop was a phenomenon reserved for the admiration of later ages. Faithful to the practice of his predecessors in the conversion of nations, Augustine was careful to receive, within the first year of his mission, the episcopal consecration from the hands of the Gallican prelates. At the same time he consulted his patron respecting the future economy of the rising church. Gregory, whose zeal already predicted the entire conversion of the octarchy,² commanded it to be equally divided into two ecclesiastical provinces, in each of which twelve suffragan bishops should obey the superior jurisdiction of their metropolitan. London and York, which under the Romans had possessed a high pre-eminence over the other cities of the island, were selected for the archiepiscopal sees; and the precedency of their prelates was ordered to be regulated by the priority of their consecration. But a flattering distinction was granted to the superior merit of Augustine. The general government of the mission was still intrusted to his hands; and the northern metropolitan with his suffragans was directed to listen to his instructions, and to obey his orders³

From the Saxons the pontiff extended his pastoral solicitude to the Britons. The long and unsuccessful wars which they had waged against their fierce invaders, had relaxed the sinews of ecclesiastical discipline; and the profligate manners of their

¹ *Hw nama, says Ælfric, is gecweden Episcopos, þæt is oþerwceapigend. þæt he oþerwceapige gýmle hw underþeodðan.* Ep. Ælf. apud Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 167.

² At this time the Saxon conquests were divided between eight chieftains or kings; but as Bernicia and Deira were soon united to form the kingdom of Northumbria, there appears no reason why the word heptarchy should be rejected, as applied to a later period.

³ Bede l. i. c. 29.

clergy were become, if we may credit the vehement assertions of Gildas, an insult to the sanctity of their profession. More anxious to enjoy the emoluments, than to discharge the duties of their station, they purchased the dignities of the church with presents, or seized them by force; and the fortunate candidate was more frequently indebted for his success to the arms of his kindred, than to the justice of his pretensions. Indolence had induced a passion for ebriety and excess; the patrimony of the poor was sacrificed to the acquisition of sensual gratifications; the most solemn oaths were sworn and violated with equal facility; and the son, from the example of his father, readily imbibed a contempt for clerical chastity.⁴ So general and unfavourable a character may, possibly, excite the skepticism of the reader; but the picture is drawn by the pencil of a countryman and contemporary; and, though the colouring may occasionally betray the exaggeration of zeal, there is no reason to doubt that the outline is faithful and correct. Gregory lamented, and sought to remedy these disorders; and, treading in the footsteps of his predecessor, Celestine, who two centuries before had appointed the monk Palladius to the government of the Scottish church,⁵ invested Augustine with an extensive jurisdiction over all the bishops of the Britons.⁶ To these degenerate ecclesiastics the superintendence of a foreign prelate, distinguished by the severe regularity

⁴ Ep. Gild. edit. Gale, p. 23, 24. 38.

⁵ Ad Scotos in Christum credentes ordinatur a Papa Celestino Palladius et *primus episcopus* mittitur. Prosp. in Chron. an. 431. What is the meaning of *primus episcopus*? Was Palladius the first, who appeared among the Scottish Christians with the episcopal character, as Fordun supposes after Higden, (Hist. l. iii. c. 8, p. 113, edit. Flamirio,) or was he the first in authority among the Scottish prelates, as seems to have been the opinion of the continuator of Fordun, and of the ancient bishops of St. Andrews; who, though they exercised the authority, assumed not the title of metropolitans, but styled themselves *primi episcopi Scotorum*? (See Keith's Catalogue of Scottish Bishops, pref. p. iii. Goodall ad Hist. Scot. introduc. p. 65.) In either sense Celestine appears to have conceived himself authorized to invest his missionary with authority over a foreign church.

⁶ Bed. l. i. c. 27. This has been considered as a wanton invasion of the rights of the British churches. That it was warranted by precedent is clear from the last note; nor would it be a difficult task to prove that the Britons were always subject to the jurisdiction of the Roman see. While they formed a part of the western empire, they must have been on the same footing with the other provinces; and from the language of Gildas we may infer, that after their separation, they still continued to acknowledge the superior authority of the pontiff. He informs us that the British ecclesiastics, who had not sufficient interest at home to obtain the richest benefices, crossed the seas and traversed distant provinces with costly presents, in order to obtain the object of their ambition; and then returned in triumph to their native country. *Præmissis ante solite nuntiis, transnavigare maria terrasque spatiosas transmeare non tam piget quam delectat, ut talis species comparetur. Deinde cum magno apparatu repedantes sese patriæ ingerunt, violenter manus sacrosanctis Christi sacrificiis extensuri.* (Ep. Gild. p. 24.) As the power of the emperors was then extinct, this passage must mean that the British clergymen carried their disputes before the tribunal of some foreign prelate, who, undoubtedly, was the bishop of Rome. For who else possessed either the right or the power to control competitors, who either declined the jurisdiction, or appealed from the decision of their own metropolitan? To this argument Stillingfleet has opposed an angry but evasive answer. (Orig. Brit. p. 363.)

of his conduct, offered no very pleasing prospect: and when they reflected, that to acknowledge his authority was to subject their church to the control of the Saxon hierarchy, their pride was alarmed, and they determined to refuse all connexion with him.⁷ The difficulty of the attempt did not, however, damp the ardour of Augustine. He acted with a vigour proportionate to the confidence which Gregory had reposed in his zeal; and, by the influence of Ethelbert, prevailed on some of the British prelates to meet him near the confines of their country. From the morning till night he laboured to effect an accommodation; his exhortations, entreaties, and menaces were ineffectual; but a miracle is said to have subdued their obstinacy, and a promise was extorted that they would renew the conference on a future day. The promise was observed; but not till they had consulted a neighbouring hermit famed for sanctity and wisdom. His answer betrays their secret apprehensions, and shows that the independence of their church was the chief object of their solicitude. He advised them to watch jealously the conduct of the missionary: if he rose to meet them, they might consider him as a man of a meek and unassuming temper, and securely listen to his demands: but if he kept his seat, they should condemn him of pride, and return the insult with equal pride.⁸ On the appointed day seven bishops, accompanied by Dinot, abbot of Bangor, repaired to the conference.⁹ Augustine had arrived before them: he did not rise at their approach; and the advice of the hermit was religiously obeyed. To facilitate their compliance the missionary had reduced his demands to three: that they should observe the orthodox computation of Easter; should conform to the Roman rite in the administration of baptism; and join with him in preaching the gospel to the Saxons. Each request was refused, and his metropolitanical authority contemptuously rejected. "Know, then," exclaimed the archbishop, in the anguish of disappointed zeal, "know, that if you will not assist me in pointing out to the Saxons the ways of life, they, by the just judgment of God, will prove to you the ministers of death." They heard the prophetic menace, and departed.¹⁰

⁷ See the verses of a Saxon poet transcribed by Whelock (p. 114:) but see them in the original; for the Latin version has been enriched with the prejudices of the translator.

⁸ Bed. l. ii. c. 2, p. 80.

⁹ Whether Dinot possessed the gift of tongues may with reason be doubted: that he could not mistake the title of the British metropolitan is evident. His supposed answer to Augustine, which Spelman and Wilkins have honoured with a place, in their editions of the English councils, is said to betray its origin by the modernism of its language, and the anachronism respecting the see of Caerleon. The forgery was detected by Turberville, (Manual, p. 460,) and defended by Stillingfleet and Bingham, (Stil. orig. Brit. p. 360. Bing. vol. i. p. 348.)

¹⁰ As Bede, when he enumerates the demands of Augustine, omits the recognition of his authority, some Catholic writers have maintained that it was not mentioned, and of consequence was not rejected. Their opinion is, however, expressly refuted by Bede

Augustine did not long survive this unsuccessful attempt, and his prediction was supposed to have been verified within eight years after his death.¹¹ Edelfrid, the warlike and pagan king of Northumbria, had entered the British territories, and discovered the army of his opponents near the city of Chester. Diffident of their own courage, they had recourse to spiritual weapons; and a detachment of more than twelve hundred monks from the monastery of Bangor occupied a neighbouring eminence, whence, like the Jewish legislator, they were expected to regulate by their prayers the fate of the contending armies. As soon as they were descried, "if they pray," exclaimed the king, "they also fight against us;" and led his troops to the foot of the hill. Brocmail, who had been intrusted with its defence, fled at the approach of the Saxons; the monks were slaughtered without mercy; and of the whole number no more than fifty were able to regain their monastery.¹²

himself, (*neque se illum pro Archiepiscopo habituros. p. 80.*) But are we thence to conclude, with other writers, that the Britons also disavowed the supremacy of the pontiff? The inference will not convince the incredulity of those who know how frequently prelates in communion with the see of Rome, have objected to the papal mandates in points of local discipline. As a recent instance may be mentioned, the conduct of the French bishops with respect to the concordat between Pius VII. and Bonaparte.

¹¹ There can be little doubt that the death of Augustine should be fixed to the year 605, and the battle of Chester to 613. See Langhorn, p. 145. 149. Smith's Bed. p. 81, not. 29.

¹² Bed. p. 81. About five hundred years after this event, the fabulous Geoffry of Monmouth, anxious to exalt the character of his forefathers at the expense of their conquerors, attributed the massacre of the monks to the intrigues of St. Augustine, and King Ethelbert; and his account was adopted by the incautious credulity of two obscure historians, Grey and Trivet, (Langhorn, p. 159.) But religious are more powerful than national prejudices. The story was improved by the reformed writers, and the archbishop was represented as departing in sullen discontent from the conference, and exhorting the Saxon princes to efface with the blood of his adversaries the insult which had been offered to his authority. (See Bale, cent. 13, c. 1. Parker, p. 48, God. p. 33, and a crowd of more modern writers, whose zeal has re-echoed the calumny.) But this heavy accusation is supported by no proof, and is fully refuted by the testimony of Bede, who refers the massacre of the monks to its true cause, their appearance in the field of battle; and expressly declares that it occurred long after the death of Augustine, (*ipso Augustino jam multo ante tempore ad celestia regna sublato. Bed. p. 81.*) To elude the force of this passage, Bishop Godwin has boldly asserted that it was added to the original text of Bede by the officious solicitude of some admirer of the missionary. He does not, indeed, desire us to believe him "without aiming at any proof," as Mr. Reeves inadvertently asserts; (*Hist. of the Christ. Church, vol. i. p. 354.:*) but rests his opinion principally on the absence of the passage from the Saxon version by King Alfred. (God. p. 33.) He should, however, have observed that the royal translator frequently abridged the original, and omitted entire lines, when they were not necessary to complete the sense. Thus, for example, in the sentence preceding the controverted passage, he has not translated the account of Brocmail's flight, nor, in the sentence which follows it, the date of the ordination of Justus and Mellitus. (See Smith's edition of Alfred's version, p. 504.) Whelock is another writer, who has attempted to prop up this baseless calumny. (*Hist. Eccl. p. 114.*) It were easy to expose the inaccuracies into which his zeal has hurried him: but every candid reader will admit, that if there be any reason to doubt the true meaning of Alfred's version, it will be more prudent to consult the original of Bede, than the commentaries of controvertists. As to the Latin MSS., they uniformly attest the authenticity of the suspected passage. It even occurs in that of More, written within two years from the death of Bede, and probably transcribed from the original copy of the venerable historian. Smith's Bede, pref. and p. 81, not. 6.

The system of ecclesiastical polity which Gregory had dictated to the missionaries, was never effectually carried into execution. Paulinus had indeed been consecrated for the see of York: but he was compelled to retire before he had completed the conversion of the nation; and the Northumbrian prelates for more than a century aspired to no higher rank than that of bishops. Augustine himself preferred Canterbury to London; and the metropolitan dignity was secured to the former by the rescripts of succeeding pontiffs. Its jurisdiction at first extended no farther than the churches founded by the Roman missionaries.¹³ But at the death of Deusdedit, the sixth archbishop, the presbyter Wighard was chosen to succeed him, and sent to Rome by the kings of Kent and Northumbria, to receive the episcopal consecration from the hands of the pontiff, and to consult him respecting the controversies which divided the Saxon bishops. During his residence in that city he fell a victim to the plague; and Vitalian, who then enjoyed the papal dignity, seized the favourable moment to place in the see of Canterbury a prelate of vigour and capacity. The object of his choice was Theodore of Cilicia, an aged monk, who, to the severest morals, added a perfect knowledge of ecclesiastical discipline. Him he invested with an extensive jurisdiction, similar to that which Gregory had conferred on St. Augustine. At his arrival the new metropolitan assumed the title of archbishop of Britain, and was acknowledged as their immediate superior by all the Saxon prelates. The authority which he claimed was almost unlimited; but the murmurs of opposition were silenced by the veneration that his character inspired, and by a new decree of Pope Agatho in favour of the see of Canterbury. After his death, different bishops attempted to assert their independence; and the successors of St. Augustine had more than once to contend with the ambition of their suffragans. The first who dared to refuse obedience was Egbert, bishop of York, and brother to the king of Northumbria. Depending on the ancient regulation of St. Gregory, and supported by the influence of his brother, he appealed to the pontiff; and a papal decree severed from the immediate jurisdiction of the Kentish metropolitan, all the bishoprics situated to the north of the Humber.¹⁴ His success roused the hopes of a more dangerous antagonist. The great prerogatives of Canterbury were an object of jealousy to Offa, the haughty and powerful king of Mercia. He thought it a disgrace that his prelates should profess obedience to the bishop of a tributary state; and resolved to invest the ancient see of Lichfield with the archiepiscopal dignity. Janbyrht of Canterbury was not wanting to himself in this controversy. He entreated and threatened: he employed the influence of friends and of presents: he adduced the decrees of former popes, and

¹³ Bede, l. iv. c. 2.

¹⁴ Chron. Sax. An. 735. Malm. de Pont. l. iii. f. 153.

pleaded the prescription of two centuries in favour of his church. But the power of Offa was irresistible. His design was approved by the prelates of an English council, and their approbation was confirmed by a rescript of the Roman pontiff. The bishops of Mercia and East-Anglia acknowledged the authority of the new metropolitan; and the archbishop of Canterbury, condemned to lament in silence the diminution of his revenue and authority, reluctantly contented himself with the obedience of the bishops of Rochester, London, Selsey, Winchester, and Sherburne. But the triumph of the Mercian was not of long continuance. Within nine years Kenulf ascended the throne, and, actuated either by motives of justice, or by the desire of reconciling to his government the inhabitants of Kent, expressed his willingness to restore to the church of Canterbury that pre-eminence which it originally enjoyed. The most formidable obstacle arose from a quarter where it had been least expected. Leo, who was then invested with the papal dignity, refused to alter a regulation which, at the general petition of the Saxon nobility and clergy, had been established by his predecessor. To overcome the opposition of the pontiff, it required an embassy from the king, and a journey to Rome by the archbishop, Ethelward. But his consent was no sooner obtained, than it was joyfully received by the Saxon prelates, and the metropolitan of Lichfield descended to the subordinate station of a suffragan.¹⁵ The event of this contest proved honourable and useful to the see of Canterbury; and so firmly established its precedence, that it has since borne, without suffering any considerable injury, the revolutions of more than ten centuries.¹⁶

The first Saxon dioceses were of enormous extent, and generally commensurate to the kingdoms in which they were established. The jurisdiction of the see of Winchester stretched from the frontiers of Kent to those of the Cornwall Britons: a single bishopric comprised the populous and extensive province of Mercia; and the prelate who resided sometimes at York, sometimes in Lindisfarne, watched over the spiritual interests of all the tribes of Saxons and Picts, who dwelt between the Humber

¹⁵ For this controversy consult Wharton, (*Ang. Sac.* vol. i. p. 429, 430, 460,) the Saxon chronicle, (an. 785,) and Wilkins, (p. 152, 160, 164—7.)

¹⁶ From the original grants it is evident that the great authority conferred on St. Augustine and Theodore was meant to expire at their death. (*Bed.* p. 70, 160. *Wilk.* p. 41.) Yet their successors often claimed, and sometimes exercised a superiority over all the neighbouring churches. From numerous records it appears that the bishops of Scotland, and even of Ireland, frequently repaired to Canterbury, for the sacred rite of consecration, (*Wilk.* p. 373, 374. *Ang. Sac.* vol. i. p. 80, 81;) and though the majority of the Welch prelates continued to profess obedience to the bishop of St. David's, yet those of Landaff, who disputed the archiepiscopal dignity with the possessors of that see, rather than submit to their adversaries, acknowledged the authority of the English metropolitan. Their celebrated bishop, Oudoceus, with the approbation of Mouric, king of Glamorgan, had been ordained by St. Augustine; and his successors were careful to observe a practice which had been sanctioned by his example. *Langhorn*, p. 137. *Usher de prim.* p. 85. *Ang. Sac.* vol. ii. p. 673.

and the friths of Forth and Clyde. No powers of any individual were adequate to the government of dioceses so extensive; and Theodore, from the moment of his arrival in England, had formed the design of breaking them into smaller and more proportionate districts. But few men can behold with pleasure the diminution of their authority or profit: and the duty of transmitting unimpaired to future ages the dignity which they enjoyed, would furnish the reluctant prelates with a specious objection against the measures of the primate. Theodore, however, secure of the protection of the holy see, pursued his design with prudence and with firmness. The contumacy of Winfrid, the Mercian bishop, he chastised by deposing him from his dignity, and successively consecrated five other prelates for the administration of his extensive diocese:¹⁷ and when Wilfrid of York had incurred the resentment of his sovereign, the king of Northumbria, he improved the opportunity, and divided into four bishoprics the provinces of that kingdom. The conduct of Theodore was imitated by his immediate successor, and, within a few years after his death, the number of Saxon bishops was increased from seven to seventeen.¹⁸ This augmentation was not, however, sufficient to satisfy the spiritual wants of the people; and the venerable Bede zealously laments that, in the great and populous diocese of York there were many districts which had never been visited by their bishop, and thousands of Christians, whose souls had not received the Holy Spirit by the imposition of his hands.¹⁹ To remove so alarming an evil, this enlightened monk earnestly but ineffectually proposed that the original plan of Gregory the Great should be completed; that the church of Northumbria should be intrusted to the separate administration of twelve prelates; and that the new episcopal sees should be fixed in some of the rich but nominal monasteries, which covered and impoverishd that kingdom.²⁰

The election of bishops has frequently been the subject of controversy between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. As long as the professors of the gospel formed a proscribed but increasing party in the heart of the Roman empire, each private church observed without interruption the method established by its founder. But after the conversion of Constantine, when riches and influence were generally attached to the episcopal dignity,

¹⁷ Bed. l. iv. c. 6. Ang. Sac. vol. i. p. 423, not.

¹⁸ They were, in Kent, Canterbury and Rochester; in Essex, London; in East-Anglia, Dunwich and Helmham; in Sussex, Selsey; in Wessex, Winchester and Sherburne; in Mercia, Lichfield, Leicester, Worcester, and Synnacester; in Northumbria, York, Hexham, Lindisfarne, and Whithern.

¹⁹ Bed. ep. ad Egb. p. 307.

²⁰ *Habito majore concilio et consensu pontificali simul et regali, prospiciatur locus aliquis monasteriorum ubi sedes episcopalis fiat Quod enim turpe est dicere, tot sub monasteriorum nomine hi, qui monachicæ vitæ prorsus sunt immunes, in suam ditionem acceperunt, ut omnino desit locus ubi filii nobilium aut emeritorum militum possessionem accipere possint.* Bed. *ibid.* p. 309. The nature of these nominal or lay monasteries will be explained in one of the following chapters.

the freedom of canonical election alarmed the jealousy of the imperial court; the prince often assumed the right of nominating to the vacant sees; and the clergy were compelled to submit to a less, rather than provoke by resistance a more dangerous evil. However, the occasional exercise of the imperial claim was chiefly confined to the four great patriarchal churches of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome: and of the eighteen hundred dioceses which the empire comprised, the greater part enjoyed, till the irruption of the barbarians, the undisturbed possession of their religious liberties. But the Saxon church in its infancy was divided among seven independent sovereigns, ignorant of ecclesiastical discipline, and impatient of control. Their impetuosity was not easily induced to bend to the authority of the canons; and their caprice frequently displayed itself in the choice and expulsion of their bishops. Of this a remarkable instance is furnished by the conduct of Coinwalch, king of Wessex. Agilbert, a Gallic prelate, whom his industry and talents had recommended to the notice of the king, was appointed by him to succeed Birinus, the apostle of that nation. But the influence of the stranger was secretly undermined by the intrigues of Wini, a Saxon ecclesiastic of engaging address and more polished accent; and after a decent delay, the foreign bishop received from Coinwalch an order to surrender to the favourite one-half of his extensive province. Opposition was fruitless: and Agilbert, rather than subscribe to his own disgrace by retaining a mutilated diocese, retired from the kingdom of Wessex, and left his more fortunate antagonist in possession of the whole.²¹ But Wini in his turn experienced the caprice of his patron. On some motive of disgust he also was compelled to abdicate his see, and an honourable but fruitless embassy was sent to Agilbert to solicit him to return. Similar instances which occur during the first eighty years of the Saxon church, show the inconstant humour and despotic rule of these petty sovereigns: and the submission of the prelates proves, that they were either too irresolute to despise the orders, or too prudent to provoke the vengeance of princes, whose power might easily have crushed the fabric, which they had reared with so much difficulty and danger.

By Theodore the discipline of the Saxon church was reduced to a more perfect form. The choice of bishops was served to the national synods, in which the primate presided, and regulated the process of the election.²² Gradually it devolved to the clergy of each church, whose choice was corroborated by the presence and acclamations of the more respectable among the laity.²³ But

²¹ Unde offensus graviter Agilbertus, quod hoc ipso inconsulto ageret Rex, rediit Galliam. Bede, l. iii. c. 7.

²² Compare Wilkins, (p. 46.) Bede, (l. iv. c. 28, v. c. 8. 18.) and the letter of Waldhar, bishop of London, (Smith's Bede, p. 783.)

²³ Electio præsulum et abbatum tempore Anglorum penes clericos et monachos erat. Malm. de Pont. l. iii. f. 157. Plegmund of Canterbury was chosen of Grode and

the notions of the feudal jurisprudence insensibly undermined the freedom of these elections. As it was dangerous to intrust the episcopal power to the hands of his enemy, the king forbade the consecration of the bishop elect, till the royal consent had been obtained: and as the revenues of the church were originally the donation of the crown, he claimed the right of investing the new prelate with the temporalities of his bishopric. As soon as any church became vacant, the ring and crosier, the emblems of episcopal jurisdiction, were carried to the king by a deputation of the chapter, and returned by him to the person whom they had chosen, with a letter by which the civil officers were ordered to maintain him in the possession of the lands belonging to his church.²⁴ The claims of the crown were progressive. By degrees the royal will was notified to the clergy of the vacant bishopric under the modest veil of a recommendation in favour of a particular candidate: at last the rights of the chapter were openly invaded; and before the fall of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty we meet with instances of bishops appointed by the sovereign, without waiting for the choice, or soliciting the consent of the clergy.²⁵

The ministers of the public worship in the infancy of the Saxon church were divided into two classes, the clergy and the monks; who, as they were at first united by their common desire to convert the barbarians, were afterwards rendered antagonists by the jealousy of opposite interests. The companions of St. Augustine, when he departed from Rome, were Italian monks: but during his journey he was joined by several of the Gallic clergy, to whose labours and preaching, as *they* alone spoke the Saxon language, he was greatly indebted for the success of his mis-

op̄ eallen h̄y hallechen, (Chron. Sax. p. 90:) Ædnoth of Dorchester, tam cleri quam populi votis, (Hist. Rames. p. 343, 447,) Adulph of York, omnium consensu et voluntate regis et episcoporum, cleri et populorum. (Cœn. Burgen. hist. p. 31.) The archbishop of Canterbury is said to have retained the right of nominating to the see of Rochester. Selden, not. ad Eadmer. p. 144.

²⁴ Ingulf. p. 32, 39, 63. A letter written by Edward the Confessor on one of these occasions is preserved in the history of Ely, p. 512.

²⁵ A multis itaque annis retroactis nulla electio prælatorum erat mere libera et canonica: sed omnes dignitates tam episcoporum quam abbatum per annulum et baculum Regis curia pro sua complacentia conferebat. Ing. p. 63. The royal nomination, however, was not always successful. Egelric, appointed by Edward to the archbishopric of York, was refused by the canons, and compelled to retire to the church of Durham. (Cœn. Burg. hist. p. 45. Simeon says he was opposed by the clergy of Durham, p. 167.) That the right assumed by the crown was often exercised to the disadvantage of religion, became the subject of frequent complaint under the Saxon princes, (Chron. Sax. p. 157, 162, Ingulf. p. 63. Sim. Dun. p. 166;) but after the Norman conquest the abuse grew intolerable; and the first ecclesiastical dignities were prostituted by William Rufus to the highest bidder. At last the pontiffs interfered, and reclaimed the ancient freedom of canonical election. This gave birth to the celebrated dispute concerning investitures, which has furnished many writers with a favourite theme, the ambition of the Roman bishops. In treating it, they whimsically declaim against the ignorance of the higher clergy at that period, and yet condemn the only measure which could remedy that evil.

sion.²⁶ The economy of the rising church soon demanded his attention: and, desirous to imitate the discipline of other Christian countries, he placed his monks in a convent without the walls of Canterbury; and intrusted the duty of his cathedral to the clergy who had accompanied him from Gaul.²⁷ Scarcely, however, was the archbishop dead, when (if we may give credit to a suspicious charter) the partiality of Ethelbert attempted to disturb the order established by his teacher, and permission was obtained from the pontiff to introduce a colony of monks, who might either supersede, or assist the former canons.²⁸ But if this plan were in contemplation, there is reason to believe it was not executed. Long after the death of Ethelbert, we discover the clergy in possession of Christchurch; nor were they compelled to yield their benefices to the superior power of the monks before the commencement of the eleventh century.²⁹

The motives which actuated Augustine, probably induced many of the other prelates to establish communities of clergy for the service of their cathedrals. St. Aidan, indeed, seems to form an exception. Lindisfarne, which he had chosen for his residence, was regulated after the model of the parent monastery in the isle of Hii; and both the bishop and his clergy practised, as far as their functions would permit, the same religious observances as the abbot and his monks. But the apology which Bede offers for the singularity of the institution, is a sufficient proof, that it had been adopted by few of the other prelates;³⁰ and the many regulations, which occur in the acts of the Saxon councils, respecting the conduct and the dress of the canons, shew that order of men to have been widely diffused through the different dioceses of the heptarchy.³¹

²⁶ Compare the 38th and 59th epistles of St. Gregory, (ep. l. v.) with Bede's History, (l. i. c. 27, inter. 1, 2.) See also Alford, ann. 598, and Stillingfleet's answer to Cressy, p. 271.

²⁷ See Spelman, (Conc. vol. i. p. 116,) the bull of Eugenius IV. to the canons of the Lateran, (Pannot. de canon. l. ii. c. 14,) and Smith, (Flores hist. p. 363.)

²⁸ Quod postulasti concedimus, ut vestra benignitas in Monasterio Sancti Salvatoris monachorum regulariter viventium habitationem statuatur. Ep. Bon. iv. ad Ethel. apud Spel. vol. i. p. 130.

²⁹ See the charter of Ethelred to the monks after he had expelled the canons. (Wilk. Con. p. 282, 284.) Stillingfleet shows that, notwithstanding the introduction of the monks, the clergy still possessed several prebends in that church as late as the reign of Henry the Second. (Ans. to Cressy, p. 290.)

³⁰ Neque aliquis miretur . . . revera enim ita est . . . Ab Aidano omnes loci ipsius antistites usque hodie sic episcopale exercent officium, ut regente monasterium Abbate, quem ipsi cum concilio fratrum elegerint, omnes presbyteri, diaconi, cantores, lectores, ceterique gradus ecclesiastici, monachicam per omnia cum ipso episcopo regulam servant. Bed. vit. Cuth. c. xvi.

³¹ Wilk. tom. i. p. 101. 147. 286. Tom. iv. app. p. 754. See also the letter of St. Boniface addressed to the Saxon bishops, priests, deacons, *canons*, clerks, abbots, monks, &c. (Ep. Bonif. 6, edit. Ser.) Eugenius IV. ascribes the introduction of canons to the order of St. Gregory. Beatissimus Gregorius Augustino Anglorum episcopo, velut plantationem sacram in commisso sibi populo præcepit institui. Bulla Eug. IV. p. 100. Pannot. cit. Smith Flores, p. 363.

Under the general appellation of canons our ancestors comprised the ecclesiastics, who professed to regulate their conduct by the decrees of the councils, and the statutes of the ancient fathers.³² In almost every episcopal see, contiguous to the cathedral, was erected a spacious building, which was distinguished by the name of the episcopal monastery, and was designed for the residence of the bishop and his clergy.³³ The original destination of the latter was the celebration of the divine service, and the education of youth: and, that they might with less impediment attend to these important duties, they were obliged to observe a particular distribution of their time, to eat at the same table, to sleep in the same dormitories, and to live constantly under the eye of the bishop, or, in his absence, of the superior whom he had appointed.³⁴ But they retained the power of disposing of their own property; and in this respect the canonical differed essentially from the monastic profession.³⁵ Their numbers were constantly supplied from the children who were educated under their care, and the proselytes, who, disgusted with the pleasures or the troubles of the world, requested to be admitted into their society. Among them were to be found the descendants of the noblest families, and Thanes, who had governed provinces, and commanded armies.³⁶ A severe probation preceded their admittance into the order: nor did they receive the tonsure from the hands of the bishop, till their conduct had been nicely investigated, and the stability of their vocation satisfactorily proved.³⁷

These communities were the principal seminaries for the education of the clergy. Though each parish-priest was constantly attended by a certain number of inferior clerks, who were or-

³² *Canones dicimus regulas, quas sancti patres constituerunt, in quibus scriptum est, quomodo canonici, id est, clerici regulares vivere debent.* Excerpt. Egb. Archiep. p. 101. As Northumbria was principally converted by the Scottish missionaries, the clergy were there known by the Scottish name of *Culdees*, (*Colidei* or *Keledei*, from *Keile servus*, and *Dia Deus*, Goodall, introd. ad *Hist. Scot.* p. 68.) In the cathedral church of York they retained this appellation as late as the eleventh century. (*Monast. Ang.* vol. ii. p. 368.) This circumstance alone is sufficient to refute the strange notion of some modern Scottish writers, that the *Culdees* were a kind of presbyterian ministers, who rejected the authority of bishops, and differed in religious principles from the monks. Goodall has demonstrated from original records, that they were the clergy of the cathedral churches who chose the bishop, and that all their disputes with the monks regarded contested property, not religious opinions. See preface to *Keith's Catalogue of Bishops*, p. viii.

³³ Alford, the learned annalist, has incautiously sanctioned the vulgar error that a monastery necessarily implies a habitation of monks. (*Alf. tom.* iii. p. 182.) The distinction of clerical and monastic monasteries is repeatedly inculcated in our Saxon writers. (*Wilk.* p. 86, 100, 160. *Gale*, p. 481.) It was equally known in other nations. See the epistle of St. Ambrose to the church of Vercelli, (l. iii.) the life of St. Augustine by Possidius, (c. xi.) the sermons of St. Augustine, (*de diversis*, 49, 50,) the council of Mentz, (c. 20,) and *Historia de los Seminarios clericales*, (en Salamanca, 1778, p. 6—14.)

³⁴ *Bed. l. i. c. 27.* *Wilk.* p. 147, 293.

³⁶ *Hoved. an.* 794, 796. *Wilk.* p. 226, xiii.

³⁵ *Conc. Aquisgran. I. can.* 115.

³⁷ *Wilk.* p. 98.

dered to listen to his instructions, and were occasionally raised to the priesthood; yet it was from the episcopal monastery that the bishop selected the most learned and valuable portion of his clergy. With the assistance of the best masters, the young ecclesiastics were initiated in the different sciences which were studied at that period: while the restraint of a wise and vigilant discipline withheld them from the seductions of vice, and inured them to the labours and the duties of their profession. According to their years and merit they were admitted to the lower orders of the hierarchy: and might, with the approbation of their superior, aspire at the age of five-and-twenty to the rank of deacon, at thirty, to that of priest.³⁸ But it was incumbent on the candidate to prove, that no canonical impediment forbade his promotion; that he was not of spurious or servile birth; that he had not been guilty of any public and infamous crime; and, if he had formerly lived in the state of wedlock, that neither he nor his wife had been married more than once.³⁹ From the moment of his ordination he was bound to obey the commands of his bishop; to reside within the diocese; to limit the exercise of his functions according to the directions of his superior; and to serve with fidelity the church in which he might be placed.⁴⁰ But though he was thus rendered dependent on the nod of his diocesan, that prelate was admonished to temper the exercise of his authority with mildness and discretion, and to recollect, that if, in the discharge of the episcopal duties, he was the superior, on other occasions he was the colleague of his priests.⁴¹

In the infancy of the Saxon church, the scanty supply of missionaries was unequal to the multiplied demands of the people intrusted to their care. The bishop either followed the court and preached according to his leisure and opportunity; or fixed his residence in some particular spot, whence, attended by his clergy, he visited the remoter parts of the diocese. Churches were not erected except in monasteries, and the more populous towns; and the inhabitants of the country depended for instruction on the casual arrival of priests, whom charity or the orders of their superiors induced to undertake these obscure and laborious journeys. Bede has drawn an interesting picture of the avidity with which the simple natives of the most neglected cantons were accustomed to hasten, on the first appearance of a missionary, to beg his benediction, and listen to his instructions:⁴² and the celebrated St. Cuthbert frequently spent whole weeks and months in performing the priestly functions, amid the most mountainous and uncultivated parts of Northumbria.⁴³ The inconvenience

³⁸ Wilk. p. 106, 107.

³⁹ Id. p. 85. It was necessary, as will be proved hereafter, that his wife should be dead, or have consented to a perpetual separation.

⁴⁰ Id. p. 43. 83. 102. 105. 127. 171.

⁴¹ Id. p. 103.

⁴² Bed. l. iii. c. 26.

⁴³ Bed. vit. Cuth. c. 9, 16.

of this desultory method of instruction was soon discovered; and Honorius of Canterbury is said to have first formed the plan of distributing each diocese into a proportionate number of parishes, and of allotting each to the care of a resident clergyman.⁴⁴ But the authority is doubtful; and the attempt, if it were made, was probably confined to the territories of the Kentish Saxons. To Archbishop Theodore belongs the merit of extending it to the neighbouring churches, from which it was gradually diffused over the remaining dioceses. That prelate exhorted the thanes to erect and endow, with the permission of the sovereign, a competent number of churches within the precincts of their estates; and, to stimulate their industry, secured to them and their heirs the right of patronage.⁴⁵ Thus the ecclesiastical distribution of each diocese into parishes, was conformable to the civil division of the province into manors: but as many of these were of great extent, to accommodate the more distant inhabitants, oratories were erected, which, though at first subordinate to the mother church, were frequently, with the concurrence of the bishop, emancipated from their dependence, and honoured with the parochial privileges.⁴⁶

Theodore, however, was careful not to deprive the bishop of that authority which was necessary for the government of the his clergy. Though the right of advowson was vested in the patron, the powers of institution and deprivation were reserved unimpaired to the diocesan.⁴⁷ Besides the regulations which that prelate might think proper to publish in his annual visitation, twice in the year the parish priests were compelled to attend the episcopal synod, to give an account of their conduct, and to receive the orders of their superior.⁴⁸ They were admonished that to preach the pure doctrine of the gospel, and to eradicate the lurking remains of idolatry, were among the most important of their obligations.⁴⁹ Each Sunday they were to explain in English that portion of the Scripture which was read during the mass, and to devote a part of their time to the instruction of their parishioners in the truths and duties of Christianity.⁵⁰ Through veneration to the holy husel, the victim of salvation whom they

⁴⁴ Godwin de p̄sul. p. 40.

⁴⁵ Smith's Bede, p. 189, not. Whelock's Bed. p. 399, not. Spelman's Councils, p. 152. The bishops appear to have ceded the right of advowson to the lay proprietor on these conditions; that he should build a church and habitation for the clergyman, should assign a certain portion of glebe land towards his support, and should grant him the tithes of his estate. If the thane afterwards built another church, and the bishop permitted it to have a burial-ground, the incumbent might claim one-third of the tithes; otherwise he was to be supported at the expense of the patron. This I conceive to be the meaning of the many regulations in Wilkins, p. 103. 245. 300. 302.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Wilk. p. 103, xxiii. 105, lvii.

⁴⁸ Id. p. 146, i. iii.

⁴⁹ Id. p. 96, viii.—xii. 150, xix.

⁵⁰ Id. p. 102, iii. vi. 134, xiii. 135, xv.

believed to be immolated on their altars,⁵¹ the church, the vestments, and the sacred vessels were ordered to be kept clean, and to be treated with respect.⁵² The sick were particularly recommended to their care. They were frequently to visit them, to hear their confessions, to carry them the eucharist, and to anoint them with the last unction.⁵³ In the tribunal of penance, an institution which formed the most difficult of their functions, they were advised to weigh with discretion every circumstance, that they might apportion the punishment to the crime: and, in order to assist their judgment, were frequently to consult, and scrupulously to observe the directions of the penitentiary.⁵⁴ They were exhorted to be satisfied with the revenue of their churches; and the severest censures awaited the priest, who presumed to demand a retribution for the discharge of his functions.⁵⁵ Every dissipating amusement and indecorous employment was forbidden. They could neither accept of civil offices, nor engage in the speculations of commerce. The tumultuous pleasures of the chase and of public diversions they were exhorted to despise as derogatory from their character, and to employ their leisure hours in the study of theology, and the exercise of manual labour. Their dress was to be plain but decent: free from the ornaments of fashionable vanity; and conformable to the severity of the canons.⁵⁶ To bear arms was strictly forbidden; but arms were always worn by the Saxon as a token of his freedom, and the number of statutes by which they were prohibited, is a proof of the diffusion and obstinacy of this national prejudice.⁵⁷

The obvious tendency of these laws was to enforce the duties, and to uphold the sanctity of the priestly character. But there was another regulation, the general expediency of which will not be so universally admitted. From the gospel and the epistles of St. Paul, the first Christians had learned to form an exalted notion of the merit of chastity and continency.⁵⁸ In all, they were revered: from ecclesiastics, they were expected. To the latter were supposed more particularly to belong that voluntary renunciation of sensual pleasure, and that readiness to forsake parents, wife, and children, for the love of Christ, which the Saviour of mankind required in the more perfect of his disciples:⁵⁹ and this idea was strengthened by the reasoning of the apostle, who had observed, that while the married man was necessarily

⁵¹ *Sacrificium victimæ salutaris.* Bed. l. iv. c. 28.

⁵² Wilk. p. 107, c. 219, xxvi.

⁵³ Id. p. 60, vii. 102, xx. 103, xxi. xxii. 127, xv.

⁵⁴ Id. 115, i. 125, i. 236, ix.

⁵⁵ Id. p. 102, xii. 104, xl. 146, iii. Burials were excepted from this law. See chapter iii.

⁵⁶ Id. p. 99, xxviii. 102, xiv. xvi. xviii. 112, clix. 124, vii. viii. 138, 139.

⁵⁷ Id. p. 102, xvii. 112, clv. clxi.

⁵⁸ Mat. xix. 10. 1 Cor. vii.

⁵⁹ Luk. xiv. 26.

solicitous for the concerns of this world, the unmarried was at liberty to turn his whole attention to the service of God.⁶⁰ Hence it was inferred that the embarrassments of wedlock were hostile to the profession of a clergyman. His parishioners, it was said, were his family; and to watch over their spiritual welfare, to instruct their ignorance, to console them in their afflictions, and to relieve them in their indigence, were expected to be his constant and favourite occupations.⁶¹ But though the first teachers of Christianity were accustomed to extol the advantages, they do not appear to have imposed the obligation of clerical celibacy. Of those who had embraced the doctrine of the gospel, the majority were married previously to their conversion. Had they been excluded from the priesthood, the clergy would have lost many of its brightest ornaments: had they been compelled to separate from their wives, they might justly have accused the severity and impolicy of the measure.⁶² They were, however, taught to consider a life of continency, even in the married state, as demanded by the sacredness of their functions:⁶³ and no sooner had the succession of Christian princes secured the peace of the church, than laws were made to enforce that discipline, which fervour had formerly introduced and upheld.⁶⁴ The regulations of the canons were supported by the authority of the emperors: by Theodosius, the priest who presumed to marry, was deprived of the clerical privileges; by Justinian, his children were declared illegitimate.⁶⁵ Insensibly, however, the Greek and Latin churches adopted a diversity of discipline, which was finally established by the council in Trullo. Both of them indulged the inferior clerks with the permission to marry: though that marriage, until it was dissolved by the natural death of the wife, or interrupted by her voluntary retreat into a convent, was an effectual bar to their future promotion. But by the Greeks they were only forbidden to aspire to the episcopal dignity; by the severity of the Latins they were excluded from the inferior orders of sub-deacon, deacon, and priest.

The reader who is more conversant with modern than with ancient historians may not, perhaps, be disposed to believe that the discipline of the Latins was ever introduced into the Saxon church. He has, probably, been taught, that "the celibacy of the clergy was first enjoined by the popes in the tenth century, and not adopted by our ancestors till five hundred years after their

⁶⁰ 1 Cor. vii. 32, 33.

⁶¹ The validity of this inference is maintained in the very act of parliament which licenses the marriages of the clergy. 2 Ed. vi. c. 21.

⁶² Hawarden, Church of Christ, vol. ii. p. 405. 410. Ed. 1715.

⁶³ Orig. Hom. 23 in Lib. Num. Euseb. Dem. Evan. l. i. c.

⁶⁴ See the councils of Elvira, (can. 33.) of Neocæsarea, (can. 1.) of Ancyra, (can. 10.) of Carthage, (con. 2, can. 2,) and of Toledo, (con. 1, can. 1.)

⁶⁵ *Ne legitimos quidem et proprios esse eos, qui ex hujusmodi inordinata constupratione, nascuntur, aut nati sunt.* Leg. 45, cap. de epis. et cler.

conversion: that the Saxon bishops and parochial clergy, like those of the present church of England, added to the care of their flocks that of their wives and children: and that even the monasteries of monks were in reality colleges of secular priests, who retained the choice, without quitting the convent, either of a married or a single life.⁶⁶ But after a patient, and, I think, impartial investigation, I hesitate not to say that the marriages of the ancient Saxon clergy must be classed with those imaginary beings, which are the offspring of credulity or prejudice. Had they been permitted, they would certainly have claimed the notice of contemporary writers, and have been the object of synodical regulations: but to search for a single trace of their existence in the writings of contemporaries, or the regulations of synods, will prove an ungrateful and a fruitless labour.⁶⁷ Every monument of the first ages of the Saxon church which has descended to us, bears the strongest testimony that the celibacy of the clergy was constantly and severely enforced. Of the discipline established by the Roman missionaries, every doubt must be removed by the answer of St. Gregory to St. Augustine, according to which, only the clerks who had not been raised to the highest orders, and who professed themselves unable to lead a life of continency, were permitted to marry;⁶⁸ and the consentient practice of the northern Saxons is forcibly expressed by Ceolfrid, the learned abbot of Weremouth,⁶⁹ by Bede, in different passages of his writings,⁷⁰ and by Egbert, the celebrated archbishop of York, in his excerpts.⁷¹ In many of the canons which are acknowledged to have been observed by their successors, it is either evidently sup-

⁶⁶ See Tindall's *Rapin*, (tom. i. p. 80.) Burton's *Monasticon Eboracense*, (p. 30.) Huine, (*Hist. c. ii. p. 28.*) and Henry, (*Hist. vol. iii. p. 215.*)

⁶⁷ Among the writers, who contend that the Saxon clergy were permitted to marry, I am acquainted with no one besides Inett, who has ventured to appeal to any contemporary authority. He refers his reader to Theodore's penitentiary, which was published by Petit with so many interpolations that it is impossible to distinguish the original from the spurious matter, (Inett, vol. i. p. 124.) The words in the penitentiary are these: *Non licet viris feminas habere monachas, neque feminis viros: tamen non destruamus illud quod consuetudo est in hac terra.* (*Pœn. p. 7.*) But this passage, if genuine, speaks not of the clergy nor of marriage: and probably alludes to the secular or double monasteries, which will be afterwards described, and in which it sometimes happened that communities of monks or nuns were subjected to the government of persons of a different sex. This custom the canon disapproves, though it dares not abolish it.

⁶⁸ *Si qui sint clerici extra sacros ordines constituti, qui se continere non possunt, sortiri uxores debent.* Bed. *Hist. l. i. c. 27.*

⁶⁹ *Carnem suam cum vitii et concupiscentiis crucifigere oportet eos qui - - gradum clericatus habentes arctioribus se necesse habent pro domino continentię frænis astringere.* Ep. Ceolf. ad Naiton reg. apud Bed. *l. v. c. 21.*

⁷⁰ *Sine illa castimonie portione, quæ ab appetitu copulæ conjugalis cohibet, nemo vel sacerdotium suscipere vel ad altaris potest ministerium consecrari; id est, si non aut virgo permanserit, aut contra uxoriæ conjunctionis fœdera solverit.* Bed. *de taber. l. iii. c. 9.* See also his commentary on St. Luke, c. 1.

⁷¹ *Clerici extra sacros ordines constituti, id est, nec presbyteri nec diaconi sortiri uxores debent; sacerdotes autem nequaquam uxores ducant.* Exc. Egb. apud Wilk. p. 112, can. clx.

posed⁷² or openly commanded.⁷³ The sentence of degradation is pronounced against the priest or deacon who shall presume to marry:⁷⁴ and the ecclesiastic who had separated from his wife to receive the sacred right of ordination, and had returned to her again, was condemned to a penitential course of ten or seven years.⁷⁵ An improvement was made on the severity of the fathers assembled in the great council of Nice, and even female relations were forbidden to dwell in the same house with a priest.⁷⁶ During more than two hundred and fifty years from the death of Augustine, these laws respecting clerical celibacy, so galling to the natural propensities of man, but so calculated to impart an elevated idea of the sanctity which becomes the priesthood, were enforced with the strictest rigour: but during part of the ninth, and most of the tenth century, when the repeated and sanguinary devastations of the Danes threatened the destruction of the hierarchy no less than of the government, the ancient canons opposed but a feeble barrier to the impulse of the passions: and of the clergy who escaped the swords of the invaders, several scrupled not to violate the chastity which at their ordination they had vowed to observe. Yet even then the marriage of priests was never approved, perhaps never expressly tolerated, by the Saxon prelates:⁷⁷ and as often as a transient gleam of

⁷² Wilk. p. 103, xxxi.

⁷³ *ƷodeƷ ƷaceƷd̅aƷ. Ʒ diaconaf. Ʒ oþne ƷodeƷ ðeoƷaf ðe on ƷodeƷ temple Ʒode ðenig̅an Ʒc̅yl̅on. Ʒ halig̅dom. Ʒ halig̅ bec handl̅igan. Ða Ʒc̅yl̅on Ʒymb̅le h̅yna cl̅ennyƷƷe heald̅an. "God's priests and deacons, and God's other servants, that should serve in God's temple, and touch the sacrament and the holy books, they shall always observe their chastity."* Pœnit. Eg. p. 133, iv.

⁷⁴ *Ʒif m̅æƷƷe ƷƷeoƷt oþne diacon Ʒifige. Ðolig̅on h̅yna hadeƷ.* "If priest or deacon marry, let them lose their orders." Ibid. i. and p. 134, v. But deposition was the only punishment: the marriage was not annulled. It was only in the twelfth century that holy orders were declared to incapacitate a person for marriage. Pothier, *Traite du Contrat de Marr.* p. 135.

⁷⁵ *Ʒif h̅p̅yl̅c Ʒehadod man. biƷceop oþne m̅æƷƷe ƷƷeoƷt oþne munuc oþne diacon hiƷ Ʒem̅æccan h̅æƷde æƷ he Ʒehadod ƷæƷe. Ʒ Ða Ʒon ƷodeƷ luƷon hiƷ Ʒonlet. Ʒ to hade Ʒeng. Ʒ hiƷ ðonne eƷt ƷƷþþan toƷædeƷe h̅p̅yƷƷdon Ðurh h̅amed Ðing. ƷæƷte ælc be hiƷ endeb̅yƷdn̅yƷƷe. ƷƷa hiƷ buƷan aƷƷiten ƷƷ be manl̅ite. "If any man in orders, bishop, priest, monk, or deacon, had his wife, ere he were ordained, and forsook her for God's sake, and received ordination, and they afterwards return together again through lust, let each fast according to his order, as is written above with respect to murder."* Ibid. p. 136.

⁷⁶ *Ælcon ƷodeƷ ðeoƷe ðe on cl̅ennyƷƷe Ʒode ðeoƷig̅an Ʒc̅yle. ƷƷ Ʒonboden þ̅ he naþon ne hiƷ maƷan ne oþerne Ʒifman Ʒon nanef ƷeoƷceƷ Ðingon inne mid him næbbe. Ðil̅æƷ he Ðurh deoƷleƷ coƷnunge ÐæƷ on ƷeƷing̅ige.* Ibid. p. 134, vi.

⁷⁷ The only semblance of a proof that these marriages were tolerated, occurs in the regulations for the clergy of Northumbria, published about the year 950, and designed, as I conceive, to direct the officers in the bishop's court. *Ʒif ƷƷeoƷt cƷenan Ʒonl̅æte. Ʒ oþne nime. anaþema Ʒit.* "If a priest forsake his

tranquillity invited them to turn their attention to the restoration of discipline, the prohibitions of former synods were revived, and the celibacy of the clergy was recommended by paternal exhortations, and enforced by the severest penalties.⁷⁸

To calculate the probable influence of this institution on the population of nations has frequently amused the ingenuity and leisure of arithmetical politicians; of whom many have not hesitated to arraign the wisdom of those by whom it was originally devised, and of those by whom it is still observed. Yet, in defiance of their speculations, several Catholic countries continue to be crowded with inhabitants; and to account for the scanty population of others we need only advert to the defects of their constitution, the insalubrity of the climate, the establishment of foreign colonies, and barrenness of a parched and effete soil.⁷⁹ Neither is it certain that to increase the number of inhabitants is, in all circumstances, to increase the resources of the state; but it is evident that the man, who spends his life in promoting the interests of morality, and correcting the vicious propensities of his fellow-creatures, adds more to the sum of public virtue and of public happiness than he whose principal merit is the number of his children. If it be granted that the clerical functions are of high importance to the welfare of the state, it must also be acknowledged that, in the discharge of these functions, the unmarried possesses great and numerous advantages over the married clergyman. Unencumbered with the cares of a family, he may dedicate his whole attention to the spiritual improvement of his parishioners: free from all anxiety respecting the future establishment of his children, he may expend without scruple the superfluity of his revenue, in relieving the distresses of the sick, the aged, and the unfortunate. Had Augustine and his associates been involved in the embarrassments of marriage, they would never have torn themselves from their homes and country, and have devoted the best portion of their lives to the conversion of distant and unknown barbarians. Had their successors seen themselves surrounded with numerous families, they would never have founded those charitable establishments, nor have erected those religious edifices, that testify the use to which they devoted their riches, and still exist to re-

concubine and take another, let him be accursed." (Wilk. p. 219, xxxv.) This by some is explained to imply a permission to keep one concubine, provided she be put on the same footing as a wife; but others, with greater probability, conceive the curse to be directed against him, who having put away one concubine at the requisition of the bishop, had afterwards taken another.

⁷⁸ See Wilkins, p. 214, i. 225, viii. 229, ix. 233, xxxi. 250, v. vi. 268, xii. 286, i. 293. 301, vi. From the severity of the thirty-first canon, published in the reign of Edgar, Johnson is convinced that it must have been composed by St. Dunstan. The learned translator had probably forgotten that it was composed two centuries before, and published by Archbishop Egbert. Compare Wilk. p. 136, with p. 233, xxxi.

⁷⁹ See on the last cause a curious dissertation by the Abbe Mann. Transactions of Acad. of Sciences at Manheim, vol. vi.

proach the parsimony of succeeding generations.⁸⁰ But it was not from the impolicy of the institution, that the reformers attempted to justify the eagerness with which they emancipated themselves from its yoke.⁸¹ They contended that the law of clerical celibacy was unjust, because it deprived man of his natural rights, and exacted privations incompatible with his natural propensities. To this objection a rational answer was returned: that to accept the priestly character was a matter of election, not of necessity: and that he, who freely made it the object of his choice, chose at the same time the obligations annexed to it. The insinuation that a life of continency was above the power of man, was treated with the contempt which it deserved. To those, indeed, whom habit had rendered the obsequious slaves of their passions, it might appear, with reason, too arduous an attempt: but the thinking part of mankind would hesitate before they sanctioned an opinion which was a libel on the character of thousands, who, in every department of society, are confined by their circumstances to a state of temporary or perpetual celibacy.

CHAPTER III.

Revenues of the Clergy—Donations of Land—Voluntary oblations—Tithes—Church Dues—Right of Asylum—Peace of the Church—Romescot.

It is a maxim of natural equity, consecrated by the uniform practice of the wisest as well as the most illiterate nations, that the man whose life is devoted to the service, should be supported at the expense of the public. As the ministers of religion are engaged in the exercise of functions the most beneficial to society, they may with justice claim a provision, which shall be sufficient to remove the terrors of poverty, and permit a close

⁸⁰ "He that hath wife and children," saith Lord Bacon, "hath given hostages to fortune: for they are impediments to great enterprises either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of the greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or the childless man, which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. . . . Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants A single life doth well with churchmen: for charity will hardly water the ground, where it must first fill a pool." Bacon's Essays, p. 17, London, 1696. A Roman philosopher was of the same opinion. *Vita conjugalibus altis et generosis spiritibus frangit, et a magnis cogitationibus ad humillimas detrahit. Seneca.*

⁸¹ It is amusing to hear the reasons assigned by Bale for his union with the faithful Dorothy. *Scelestissimi antichristi characterem illico abradi, et ne deinceps in aliquo essem tam detestabilis bestię creatura, uxorem accepi Dorotheam fidelem, divinę huic voci auscultans; qui se non continet, nubat. Baleus de seip. Cent. viii. c. ult.*

attention to the discharge of their duties: but the manner in which this provision should be secured, is a subject of political discussion, and has always varied according to the exigence of circumstances, the manners of the people, and the method of public instruction. The present chapter will attempt to investigate the principal sources, from which the support of the Anglo-Saxon clergy was originally derived. The civil and religious revolutions of more than ten centuries have occasioned many important alterations: yet the more lucrative of the ancient institutions are still permitted to exist. Though the zeal of the first reformers execrated the doctrines, it was not hostile to the emoluments of popery: and their successors are still willing to owe their bread to the liberality of their Catholic ancestors.

I. As donations of land were the usual reward with which the Saxon princes repaid the services of their followers, they naturally adopted the same method of providing for the wants of their teachers: and in every kingdom of the heptarchy some of the choicest manors belonging to the crown were separated from its domain, and irrevocably allotted to the church. Ethelbert, of Kent, as he was the first of royal proselytes, stands the foremost in the catalogue of royal benefactors. He withdrew his court from Canterbury to Reculver, and bestowed on the missionaries the former city and its dependencies: with proportionate munificence he founded the episcopal see of Rochester; and as soon as Saberct, king of Essex, had received the sacred rite of baptism, assigned, in conjunction with that prince, an ample territory for the support of the Bishop Mellitus and his clergy.¹ The other Saxon monarchs were emulous to equal the merit of Ethelbert; and the fame of their liberality has been transmitted to posterity by the gratitude of the ecclesiastical historians. Kinegils, of Wessex, gave the city of Dorchester to his teacher, Birinus; and from his son and successor, Coinwalch, the church of Winchester received a grant of all the lands within the distance of seven miles from the walls of that capital.² The isle of Selsey, containing eighty-seven hides, together with two hundred and fifty slaves, was bestowed by Edilwalch, of Sussex, on the missionary, St. Wilfrid;³ and the wealth of the ancient Northumbrian prelates sufficiently attests the munificence of Oswald and his successors. Nor were the episcopal churches the sole objects of their liberality. In proportion to the diffusion of Christianity, parishes were established, and monasteries erected. In every parish a certain portion of glebe land was assigned towards the maintenance of the incumbent; and each monastery possessed estates proportionate to the number of its inhabitants. As landed property was the great source of civil distinction

¹ Bed. l. i. c. 33, l. ii. c. 3. Monast. vol. i. p. 18. Ang. Sac. vol. i. p. 333.

² Ang. Sac. vol. i. p. 190. 288.

³ Bed. l. iv. c. 13.

among our ancestors, the principal of the clergy were thus raised to an equality with the temporal thanes, admitted into the great council of the nation, and vested with an authority, which rendered them respectable even in the eyes of those who still adhered to the religion of their forefathers.

The piety of the converts was seldom content with the mere donation of their property: and the value of the present was generally enhanced by the immunities which they annexed to it. The tenure of lands among the Anglo-Saxons had been established on nearly the same principles as in the other northern nations: and each estate subjected its proprietor to the performance of several duties to its superior lord. But most of the clerical and monastic possessions were soon discharged from every servile and unnecessary obligation.⁴ By a transition easy to the human mind, they were considered as the property, not of man, but of God; and to burden them with the services which vassals were compelled to render to their superiors, was deemed a profanation and a sacrilege. A just distinction, however, was drawn between the claims of individuals and those of the public: and while the former were cheerfully abandoned, the latter were strictly exacted from the ecclesiastical no less than the lay proprietor. To repair the roads and bridges, to contribute towards the maintenance of the fortifications, and to furnish an equitable proportion of troops in the time of war, were services so essential to the national prosperity, that from them no exemption could be granted. Such was the solemn declaration of Ethelbald, king of Mercia:⁵ but other princes were not always guided by the same policy, and, unless some charges of ancient dates have been fabricated in more modern times, we must believe that several monasteries were emancipated from every species of secular service, and permitted to enjoy the protection, without contributing to the exigencies of the state.⁶

In addition to these immunities, others, equally honourable in themselves, and more beneficial to the public, were enjoyed by the principal of the clerical and monastic bodies. The king, who erected a church or monastery, was urged by devotion, sometimes perhaps by vanity, to display his munificence: and the distinctions, which he lavished on its inhabitants, seemed to reflect a lustre on the reputation of their founder. The superior was frequently invested by the partiality of his benefactor, with the civil and criminal jurisdiction: and throughout the domain annexed to his church, he exercised the right of raising tolls on the transport of merchandise, of levying fines for breaches of the peace, of deciding civil suits, and of trying offenders within his

⁴ Wilk. p. 57. 60.

⁵ Wilk. p. 100. Spel. p. 527. Lel. Collect. vol. ii. p. 54.

⁶ See the charters of Ina, (Wilk. p. 80,) of Witlaff, (ibid. p. 177,) of Bertull, (ibid. p. 183,) and of Edward the Confessor, (ibid. p. 318.)

courts.⁷ These important privileges at the same time improved his finances, and peopled his estates. The authority of the clerical was exercised with more moderation than that of the secular thanes: men quickly learned to prefer the equity of their judgments to the hasty decisions of warlike and ignorant nobles; and the prospect of tranquillity and justice encouraged artificers and merchants to settle under their protection. Thus, while the lay proprietors reigned in solitary grandeur over their wide but unfruitful domains, the lands of the clergy were cultivated and improved; their villages were crowded with inhabitants; and the foundations were laid of several among the principal cities in England.

That spirit of liberality which distinguished the first converts, was inherited by many of their descendants. In every age of the Saxon dynasty we may observe numerous additions made to the original donations: and the records of different churches have carefully preserved the names and motives of their benefactors. Of many the great object was to support the ministers of religion, and by supporting them to contribute to the service of the Almighty. Others were desirous to relieve the distresses of their indigent brethren; and with this view they confided their charities to the distribution of the clergy, the legitimate guardians of the patrimony of the poor.⁸ A numerous class was composed of thanes, who had acquired opulence by a course of successful crimes, and had deferred the duty of restitution, till the victims of their injustice had disappeared. These were frequently induced, towards the decline of life, to confer, as a tardy atonement, some part of their property on the church: and when they had neglected it, their neglect was generally compensated by the pious diligence of their children and descendants.⁹ To these motives may be added, the want of heirs, the hope of obtaining spiritual aid from the prayers of the clergy, gratitude for the protection which the church always offered to the unfortunate, and a wish to defeat the rapacity of a powerful adversary; all of which contributed in a greater or less degree to augment the possessions of the ecclesiastics. Had the revenue arising from these different sources been abandoned to the judgment or caprice of the incumbents, it might frequently have been abused; and the abuse would probably have relaxed the zeal of their benefactors. But this evil had been foreseen, and, in some measure, prevented by the wisdom of Gregory the Great. According to a constitution, which that pontiff sent to the missionaries, the general stock was divided into four equal portions.¹⁰

⁷ Gale, p. 318. 320. 323. 490. 512. Wilk. p. 80. 177. 256.

⁸ Wilk. p. 19. 102, v. 228, lv. lvi.

⁹ This is the meaning of the terms which so frequently occur in the ancient charters, "pro remedio, salute, redemptione animæ meæ et priorum, antecessorum meorum."

¹⁰ Bed. l. i. c. 27.

Of these, one was allotted to the bishop for the support of his dignity ; another was reserved for the maintenance of the clergy ; a third furnished the repairs of the church and the ornaments of religious worship ; and the last was devoted to the duties of charity and hospitality. It formed a sacred fund, to which every man who suffered under the pressure of want or infirmity was exhorted to apply, without the fear of infamy or the danger of a repulse.

In estimating the riches of the Saxon clergy, a hasty observer may adopt the most exaggerated calculation. But if there were many circumstances which favoured, there were also many which retarded their aggrandizement : and each list of benefactions may be nearly balanced by an opposite catalogue of losses and depredations. 1. The liberality of their friends was shackled by the restraints of the law. As the ecclesiastical estates were emancipated from the services, with which secular tenures were encumbered, and belonged to a body whose existence was perpetual, every donation of land to the church proved a loss to the crown, and was considered as invalid, until a charter of confirmation had been obtained from the piety, or purchased from the avarice of the prince.¹¹ 2. The easy concession of former kings frequently appeared unreasonable to their successors, whose necessities were more pressing, or whose veneration for the church was less indulgent. Sometimes with, often without the pretext of justice, they seized the most valuable manors belonging to the clergy, and, sensible of their power in this world, despised the threats of future vengeance which their predecessors had denounced against the violators of their charters. The first, who thus invaded the patrimony of the church, were Ceolred of Mercia, and Osred of Northumbria. The former perished suddenly ; the latter fell by the hands of his enemies : and though their fate was ascribed to the anger of Heaven, it did not always deter succeeding princes from copying their example.¹² 3. The rapacity of the monarch often stimulated that of the nobles, who viewed with a jealous eye the wealth of the clergy, and considered the donations of their ancestors as so many injuries offered to their families. Whenever the favour of the sovereign, or the anarchy in which the Saxon governments were frequently plunged, afforded a prospect of impunity, they seldom failed to extort by threats, or seize by violence, the lands which were the objects of their avarice.¹³ 4. The prelates themselves often contributed to the spoliation of their sees. They assumed a right of granting to their friends and retainers a portion of lands, to be holden by them and their heirs during a certain number of years, and after that period to revert to the church : but their successors

¹¹ See Gale, p. 322. 326, 327.

¹² See Wilkins, tom. i. p. 89. 93.

¹³ Ibid. p. 100. 144.

always found it difficult to recover what had thus been alienated, and were generally compelled either to relinquish their claims, or to continue the original grant in the same family.¹⁴ 5. War was another source of misfortune to the church. Its property was indeed guarded by the most terrific excommunications: but in the tumult of arms, spiritual menaces were despised; and if some princes respected the lands of the clergy, others ravaged them without mercy, and reduced the defenceless incumbents to a state of absolute poverty. So exhausted was the see of Rochester by the devastations of Edilred, king of Mercia, that two successive bishops resigned their dignity, and sought from the charity of strangers that support which they could not obtain in their own diocese.¹⁵ From the whole history of the Saxon kingdoms it is evident that the temporal prosperity of the church depended on the character of the prince who swayed the sceptre. If he declared himself its patron, the stream of wealth flowed constantly into its coffers: if he were needy and rapacious, it presented the most easy and expeditious means to satisfy his avarice. During the revolutions of each century, it alternately experienced the fluctuations of fortune: and the clergy of the same monastery at one time possessed property more ample than the richest of their neighbours; at another were deprived of the conveniences, perhaps even of the necessaries of life.

II. Besides the produce of their lands, the clergy derived a considerable revenue from the voluntary oblations of the people. During the three first centuries of the Christian era, the church could not boast of the extent of her possessions: but the fervour of her more wealthy children supplied the absence of riches, and by their daily liberality she was enabled to support her ministers, maintain the decency of religious worship, and relieve the necessities of the indigent. However adequate this resource might prove during the time of persecution, the clergy naturally wished for a provision of a less precarious tenure, which should remain when the fervour of their disciples had subsided; and their wishes were speedily realized by the numerous estates which they received from the bounty of the Christian emperors. This important alteration might diminish, but it did not abolish the oblations of the people; they still continued to offer at the altar the bread and wine for sacrifice; and the treasury of each church was frequently enriched by valuable presents of every description.¹⁷ The liberality of the Saxon converts did not yield to that of their brethren in other countries. The custom of voluntary oblations was adopted in the southern provinces at the recommendation

¹⁴ Several curious charters of this description are printed in Smith's *Bede*, (app. xxi.) and a Catalogue of them is preserved by Wanely, (*Ant. litt. Septen.* p. 255.)

¹⁵ *Bed. Hist.* l. iv. c. 2.

¹⁶ See a remarkable instance in *Ingulf*, (p. 11.)

¹⁷ *Bingham*, vol. i. p. 185.

of the Roman missionaries; in the northern it was introduced by the Scottish monks. Though it does not appear to have been commanded by any legislative authority, it was preserved in its ancient vigour as late as the close of the tenth century. At that period the pious Christian (so we learn from Archbishop Ælfric) was accustomed "to repair on each Sunday with his offering to the church, and to implore by his prayers and alms the blessing of Heaven on all the people of God."¹⁸ It must be evident, that a revenue which thus depended on the means and the disposition of the people, was of a very fluctuating nature: but, while the offerings of the poor could only have been considerable by their number, those of the rich were frequently of the highest value. In the inventories of different churches we constantly meet with gold and silver vases, the richest silks, vestments, gems, and paintings; and the display of these ornaments on the more solemn festivals, gratified the piety, and awakened the emulation of the spectators.

III. But the principal resource of the parochial clergy was the institution of tithes. Under the Mosaic dispensation the faithful Israelite had been commanded to distribute the tenth of his annual profits among the ministers of the altar; his example was spontaneously imitated by the more devout of the Christian laity; and when a legal provision was called for by the rapid increase of the clergy, the establishment of tithes was adopted as the least oppressive mode by which it could be raised. In the sixth and seventh centuries, this offering, which, in its origin, had been voluntary, began to be exacted as a debt in almost every Christian country; and the practice of the more fervent during the preceding ages was conceived to justify the claim. If we may believe a royal legislator, the payment of tithes among the Saxons was as ancient as their knowledge of the gospel, and introduced by St. Augustine, together with the other practices common to the Christians of that period.¹⁹ But men are not often prompted to make pecuniary sacrifices from the sole motive of duty: and as the number of the clergy was small, and their wants were liberally supplied by the munificence of the converted princes, it is probable, that for several years their pretensions were generally waived, or feebly enforced.²⁰ The institution, however, of paro

¹⁸ *Mið heora oppnungum euman to ðære mærran rýmble nýrre . . . for eal Godeþ folc ðingien ægþer ge mið heora zebedum ge mið heora ælmeþran.* Wilk. tom. i. p. 273.

¹⁹ See the ninth law of Edward the Confessor, (Wilk. p. 311.) I am sensible that this alone is not sufficient to make the establishment of tithes coeval with the profession of Christianity in this country: but it is strengthened by the testimony of St. Boniface of Mentz, and Egbert of York, who, in the course of the eighth century, speak of them as of an old regulation. See Wilkins, p. 92. 102. 107, and note (A) at the end of the volume.

²⁰ Thus Alcuin dissuaded a missionary in Germany, placed in similar circumstances, from enforcing the payment of tithes. Alc. ep. apud Mabil. vet. analec. p. 400.

chial churches, imperiously required an augmentation of the number of pastors; and, to provide for their support, the payment of tithes was, before the close of the eighth century, severely commanded by civil and ecclesiastical authority in the council of Calcuith.²¹ The regulations which were then adopted, at the recommendation of the papal legates, received many improvements from the piety or the policy of succeeding legislators. The obligation was declared to extend to every species of annual produce, even to the profits of merchandise and of military service;²² and, that avarice might not shelter itself under the pretext of ignorance, the times of payment were carefully ascertained, the festival of Pentecost for the tithe of cattle, and that of Michaelmas or All-saints for the tithe of corn. Censures and penalties were denounced against the man who presumed to withhold the property of the church. His produce of the year was divided into ten equal parts, of which one was given to the minister, four were forfeited to the proprietor of the land, and four to the bishop: and the execution of this severe law was intrusted to the vigilance of those who were to profit by it, the curate, the lord of the manor, the bishop's reeve, and the king's reeve.²³

IV. Whether it was that this resource proved inadequate, or that the clergy were unwilling to surrender the advantages which they derived from the piety of the people, several other charities were converted into obligations, and enforced by the canons of the church and the laws of the prince. 1. Within fifteen days after the festival of Easter, a donation, probably of one silver penny for every hide of arable land, was exacted under the appellation of *plough-alms*, as an acknowledgment that the distribution of the seasons was in the hands of the Almighty, and to implore his blessing on the future harvest.²⁴ 2. At the feast of St. Martin, a certain quantity of wheat, sometimes of other grain, was offered on the altar as a substitute for the oblations of bread and wine which were formerly made by the faithful, as often as they assisted at the sacred mysteries. It was distinguished by the name of *kirk-shot*, and was assessed according to the rate of the house inhabited by each individual at the preceding Christmas. By the laws of Ina, whoever refused to pay it, was amerced forty shillings to the king, and twelve times the value of the tax to the church: and during the next three centuries, though the latter of these penalties remained stationary, that which was paid into the royal treasury progressively increased, till it amounted to three times the original sum.²⁵ 3. Thrice in the year, at Candlemas, the vigil of Easter, and All-saints, was paid the *leot-shot*,

²¹ Wilk. p. 149.

²² Id. p. 107. 278.

²³ Id. p. 245. 288. 302.

²⁴ Id. p. 203. 288. 295. 302.

²⁵ Id. p. 59. 302. It was sometimes paid in fowls at Christmas. Spel. Glos. p. 135.

or a certain quantity of wax, of the value of one silver penny for each hide of land. The object of this institution was to supply the altar with lights during the celebration of the divine service.²⁶ 4. The only fee which the parochial clergy were permitted to demand for the exercise of their functions, was the soul-shot, a retribution in money for the prayers said in behalf of the dead. By different laws it was ordered to be paid while the grave remained open, and to the clergy of that church to which the deceased had formerly belonged.²⁷ The aggregate amount of all these perquisites composed in each parish a fund, which was called the patrimony of the minster, and which was devoted to nearly the same purposes as the revenues of the cathedral churches. After two-thirds had been deducted for the support of the clergy and the repairs of the building, the remainder was assigned for the relief of the poor and of strangers. In a country which offered no convenience for the accommodation of travellers, frequent recourse was had to the hospitality of the curate: and in the vicinity of his residence a house was always open for their reception, in which, during three days, they were provided with board and lodging at the expense of the church.²⁸

The Saxon princes, as they endowed the church with a plentiful revenue, were also careful to dignify it with the privileges which it enjoyed in all other Christian countries. Of these the principal was the right of sanctuary; an institution, which, however prejudicial it may prove under a more perfect system of legislation, was highly useful in the ages of anarchy and barbarism. Its origin is lost in the gloom of the most remote antiquity. The man who fled from the resentment of a more powerful adversary, was taught by his fears to seek protection at the altars of the gods; and the Jewish legislator selected by the divine appointment six cities of refuge, in which the involuntary homicide might screen himself from the vengeance of his pursuers. As

²⁶ Wil. p. 203. 288. 302. The wax-shot, which, according to Inett, (vol. i. p. 121,) is still paid in some parts of England, is probably a relic of this ancient custom.

²⁷ Id. 288. 302.

²⁸ Id. 102, 103. 253. We are frequently told, that at this period the clergy were so intent on their own interest, that they seemed to have "comprised all the practical parts of Christianity in the exact and faithful payment of tithes," and the other dues of the church. Hume Hist. c. 2. p. 57. Mosheim Hist. Sac. vii. par. 2, c. iii. To misrepresent is often a more easy task than to collect information. The Saxon clergy appear both to have known and taught the pure morality of the gospel. Their preachers sedulously inculcated that the first of duties was the love of God, and the second the love of our neighbour. *Godspelllice bebodu ur læraþ. 7 myngaþ. þæt pe eallum mode 7 eallum mægene. æneft God lupian 7 purðian. 7 7yððan ure nextan lupian 7 healdan 7pa 7pa ur 7ylfe.* Reg. Can. apud Wanl. p. 49. It were too long to transcribe the original passages, but whoever is conversant with the works of Bede, Boniface, and Alcuin, with the Saxon homilies, and the *Liber Legum ecclesiasticarum*, (Wilk. p. 270.) must acknowledge that the ingenuity of the most learned professor of the present day would find it difficult to improve the moral doctrines which were taught to our forefathers. See note B.

soon as Constantine the Great had enrolled himself among the professors of the gospel, the right of asylum was transferred by the practice of the people from the pagan to the Christian temples: the silence of the emperors gradually sanctioned the innovation; and by the Theodosian code, the privilege was extended to every building designed for the habitation, or the use of the clergy.²⁹ To this decision of the imperial law the Saxon converts listened with respect, and their obedience was rewarded by the numerous advantages which it procured. Though religion had softened, it had not extirpated the ancient ferocity of their character. They continued to cherish that barbarous prejudice, which places the sword of justice in the hand of each individual, and exhorts him to punish his enemy without waiting for the more tardy vengeance of the law.³⁰ As their passions frequently urged them to deeds of violence, this system of retaliation was productive of the most fatal consequences. The friends of each party associated in his defence; family was leagued against family; and in the prosecution of these bitter and hereditary feuds, innocence too often suffered the fate which was due to guilt. On such occasions, the church offered her protection to the weak and the unfortunate. Within her precincts they were secure from the resentment of their enemies, till their friends had assembled, and either proved their innocence, or paid the legal compensation for their offence.³¹ It should however be observed, that the right of asylum, though it retarded, did not prevent the punishment of the guilty.³² After a certain time the privilege expired. The three days allotted by the laws of Alfred were successively extended to a week, to nine days, and lastly to an indefinite period, which might be shortened or protracted at the discretion of the sovereign: but when it was elapsed, the fugitive, unless he had previously satisfied the legal demands of his adversaries, was delivered to the officers of justice.³³ Neither were the churches open to criminals of every description. The chance of protection was wisely diminished in proportion to the enormity of the offence. The thief who had repeatedly abused, at last forfeited the benefit of the sanctuary: and the man who had endangered the safety of the state, or violated the sanctity of religion, might legally be dragged from the foot of the altar to

²⁹ The motive of this extension was the indecency of permitting the fugitive to remain for several days and nights in the church. *Hanc autem spatium latitudinem ideo indulgemus, ne in ipso Dei templo et sacrosanctis altaribus confugientium quenquam mane vel vespere cubare vel pernoctare liceat.* Cod. Theod. l. ix. tit. 45.

³⁰ This prejudice was so inveterate among some of the northern nations, that, by the Salic law, every member of a family who refused to join his brethren in the pursuit of vengeance, was deprived of his right of inheritance. Henault, *Abreg. Chron.* vol. i. p. 118.

³¹ *Wilk. Leg. Sax.* p. 15, v. 35, ii. iii.

³² *Temporum cautela, says Justinian, non nocentibus sed læsis datur a lege.* *Novel.* 17, c. 7.

³³ *Wilk. Leg. Sax.* p. 35, ii. 36, v. 110.

receive the punishment of his crime.³⁴ There were, however, a few churches which claimed a proud pre-eminence above the others. To them their benefactors had accorded the extraordinary privilege of securing the life of every fugitive, how enormous soever might be his guilt, and of compelling his prosecutor to accept in lieu of his head a pecuniary compensation. Among these may be numbered the churches of York, Beverley, Ramsey, and Westminster;³⁵ but none could boast of equal immunities with the abbey of Croyland. The monastery, the island, and the waters which surrounded it, enjoyed the right of sanctuary; and a line of demarcation, drawn at the distance of twenty feet from the opposite margin of the lake, arrested the pursuit of the officers, and insured the safety of the fugitive. Immediately he took the oath of fealty to the abbot, and the *man* of St. Guthlake might laugh in security at the impotent rage of his enemies. But if, without a written permission, he presumed to wander beyond the magic boundary, the charm was dissolved; justice resumed her rights; and his life was forfeited to the severity of the laws. When the monastery was rebuilt, after its destruction by the Danes, Edred offered to revive the ancient privilege in favour of his chancellor, Turketul; but it was declined by the hoary statesman, who considered the ordinary right of asylum as equally beneficial to the public, and less liable to abuse.³⁶

The *peace of the church* was an institution of a similar nature, and adopted by the clergy, in order to mitigate the ferocity of their countrymen. To devote to the work of vengeance the days which religion had consecrated to the worship of the Almighty, they taught to be a profanation of the blackest die. At their solicitation, peace was proclaimed on each Sunday and holiday, and during the penitential times of lent and advent: every feud was instantly suspended; and the bitterest enemies might meet and converse without danger under the protection of the church. The same indulgence was extended to the man who quitted his home to assist at the public worship, to obey the summons of his bishop, or to attend the episcopal synod or national council. Covered by this invisible ægis, he might pursue his journey in security; or if his enemy dared to molest him, the presumption of the aggressor was severely chastised by the resentment of the laws.³⁷ Sensible of the benefits which they derived from these institutions, the weak and defenceless naturally looked for protection to the church: its ministers were caressed and revered; and the gratitude of their clients was frequently testified by numerous and valuable donations.³⁸

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 198, vi.

³⁵ Spelman's Gloss, voce *Fridstol.* *Monast. Ang.* vol. i. p. 60. 236.

³⁶ *Wilk. Con.* p. 176. 181. *Ingulf.* p. 40.

³⁷ *Leg. Sax.* 109, 110, 197

³⁸ This circumstance has encouraged some writers to attribute these institutions to the avarice of the clergy. But the real cause of their adoption was their utility. Not only the churches, but also palaces of the kings, and the houses of their officers

But England was not the only theatre on which the Saxon kings and nobles displayed their regard for the ministers of religion. In their frequent pilgrimages to the tombs of the apostles, they were careful to visit the most celebrated churches on the continent, and to leave behind them numerous evidences of their liberality. Before the close of the eighth century, the monastery of St. Denis, in the neighbourhood of Paris, was possessed of extensive estates on the coast of Sussex;³⁹ to the presents of the Saxon princes, several of the churches, originally established in Armorica by the fugitive Britons, were indebted for their support;⁴⁰ and the munificence of Alfred has been gratefully recorded by the archbishop of Rheims; that of Canute by the canons and monks belonging to the two great monasteries in St. Omer's.⁴¹ But Rome was the principal object of their liberality. The imperial city was no longer the mistress of the world. More than once she had been sacked by the barbarians: the provinces from which she formerly drew her subsistence, had submitted to their arms; her walls were insulted by the frequent inroads of the Saracens; and the popes, with the numerous people dependent on their paternal authority, were frequently reduced to the lowest distress. By the Saxon princes, the affection, which St. Gregory had testified for their fathers, was gratefully remembered. They esteemed it a disgrace that the head of their religion should suffer the inconveniences of want, and each succeeding king was careful, by valuable donations, to demonstrate his veneration for the successor of St. Peter, and to contribute a portion of his wealth to support the government of the universal church. The munificence of Ethelwulf is particularly described by Anastasius, an eyewitness. During the year of his residence in Rome, he spread around him with profusion the treasures which he had brought from England. To the pontiff, Benedict III., he gave a crown of pure gold, weighing four pounds, two cups and two images of the same precious metal, a sword tied with pure gold, four Saxon dishes of silver-gilt, a rochet of silk with a clasp of gold, several albs of white silk with gold lace and clasps, and two large curtains of silk, embroidered with gold. In the basilic of St. Peter he distributed presents of gold to the clergy and nobility of Rome; and gratified the people with a handsome donative in pieces of silver.⁴² But these were occasional charities; the Romescot was perpetual. During a long period anterior to the Norman con-

possessed the privilege of sanctuary. The king's peace, like that of the church, was granted to all who were engaged in his service, or travelling on the four great roads, or employed on the navigable rivers. Leg. Sax. p. 199.

³⁹ Dublet, Ant. St. Dion. apud Alf. tom. ii. p. 650. 656.

⁴⁰ Malm. de pont. l. v. p. 363.

⁴¹ Wise's Asser. p. 126. Encom. Emmæ, p. 173.

⁴² Anast. Biblioth. de vitis Pontif. v. i. p. 403. For the names and destination of these and similar presents, see Domenico Georgi, de liturgia Romani Pontificis, vol. i.

quest, a silver penny was annually paid by every family possessed of land or cattle to the yearly value of thirty pence, and the general amount was carefully transmitted to the Roman pontiff. The origin of this tax is involved in considerable obscurity. If we may credit the narration of later historians, it was first established by Ina, king of Wessex, about the commencement of the eighth century; was afterwards extended by Offa of Mercia, to all the shires of that populous nation; and at last, by the command of Ethelwulf, was levied in all the provinces of the Saxons. But this fair and well-connected system will vanish at the approach of criticism. If Ina was the original author of the Romescot, it will be difficult to account for the obstinate silence both of Bede, who particularly relates his devotion towards the Roman see, and of every other historian that wrote during the five following centuries. The claims of Offa and Ethelwulf are more plausible. Offa, who was accustomed to ascribe the success of his arms to the intercession of St. Peter, had promised from himself and his successors a yearly pension of three hundred and sixty mancuses to the church of the apostle; and this promise was confirmed by a solemn oath in presence of the papal legates.⁴³ That he faithfully performed his engagement, we know from the best authority: that it was gradually neglected by the princes who succeeded him, is highly probable. Under Kenulf, to whom he left the sceptre of Mercia, the original sum appears to have dwindled to one-third of its former amount;⁴⁴ and after his death no vestige of its payment can be discovered before the pilgrimage of Ethelwulf. That prince, during his residence in Rome, revived, with a few variations, the charitable donation of Offa; and a perpetual annuity of three hundred mancuses was granted to the pontiff, to be appropriated in equal portions to the church of St. Peter, that of St. Paul, and the papal treasury.⁴⁵ During the conquests of the Danes it was probably forgotten; but Alfred had no sooner subdued these formidable enemies, than he was careful to execute the will of his father: the *royal alms* (such is the expression of the Saxon Chronicle) were each year conveyed to Rome; and soon after, in the reign of Edward, we meet with the first mention of the Romescot as an existing regulation.⁴⁶ From these premises it were not, perhaps, rash to infer, that the Peter-pence should be ascribed to

The crown and images were probably suspended over the tomb of St. Peter. (id. p. 243 :) the dishes (Gabathæ) were used to receive the offerings at mass, (id. p. 91 :) the curtains of silk embroidered with gold, (vela de fundato, id. p. 372,) were employed in the church on great festivals.

⁴³ See the letter of Leo III. in *Anglia sacra*, (vol. i. p. 461.) The money was to be expended in relieving the poor, and furnishing lights for the church. The want of oil for this purpose was often lamented by the popes. *Cum neque oleum sit nobis pro luminaribus ecclesiæ juxta debitum Dei honorem.* Ep. Steph. VI. Basil. Imper. apud Walker, p. 7. A mancuse contained thirty pence, or six Saxon shillings. (See note C.)

⁴⁴ Wilk. Con. p. 164, 165.

⁴⁵ Asser. p. 4.

⁴⁶ Leg. Sax. p. 52.

the policy of Ethelwulf or his immediate successors, who, by this expedient, sought to raise the money which they had engaged to remit to the holy see. By later legislators it is frequently mentioned, and severely enforced. The time of payment is limited to the five weeks which intervene between the feast of St. Peter and the first of August; and the avarice of the man who may attempt to elude the law, is ordered to be punished by a fine of thirty pence to the bishop, and of one hundred and twenty shillings to the king.⁴⁷ From a curious schedule extracted from the register of the Lateran, by the order of Gregory VII., it appears that the collection of the tax was intrusted to the care of the bishops of each diocese, and that the entire sum amounted at that period to something more than two hundred pounds of Saxon money.⁴⁸

CHAPTER IV.

Origin of the Monastic Institute—Anglo-Saxon Monks—Of St. Gregory—Of St. Columba—Of St. Benedict—Vows of Obedience—Chastity—Poverty—Possessions of the Monks—Attention to the Mechanic Arts—To Agriculture—Their Hospitality—Their Charities.

IN the conflict of rival parties, men are seldom just to the merit of their adversaries. When the reformers of the sixteenth century rose in opposition to the church of Rome, they selected the monastic order for the favourite object of their attack, and directed the keenest shafts of satire against the real or imaginary vices of its professors. For near three hundred years the lessons of these apostles have been re-echoed by the zeal of their disciples: with the name of monk, education usually associates the ideas of fraud, ignorance, and superstition: and the distorted portrait which was originally drawn by the pencil of animosity and fanaticism, is still admired as a correct and faithful likeness. If, in the following pages, monachism appear dressed in more favourable colours, let not the writer be hastily condemned. Truth is the first duty of the historian; and the virtues of men deserve to be recorded no less than their vices. The object of the present chapter is, to investigate the origin of the monastic profession; to distinguish the different tribes of the Anglo-Saxon monks; and to delineate the leading principles of their religious discipline. The subject is curious; and the important part,

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 114.

⁴⁸ Apud Selden, *Nalect.* p. 73.

which the order formerly bore on the theatre of the world, will confer an interest on the inquiry.¹

During the three first centuries of the Christian era, the more fervent among the followers of the gospel were distinguished by the name of Ascetes. They renounced all distracting employments; divided their time between the public worship and their private devotions; and endeavoured by the assiduous practice of every virtue, to attain that sublime perfection, which is delineated in the sacred writings. As long as the imperial throne was occupied by pagan princes, the fear of persecution concurred with the sense of duty to invigorate their efforts: but when the sceptre had been transferred to the hands of Constantine and his successors, the austerity of the Christian character was insensibly relaxed; the influence of prosperity and dissipation prevailed over the severer maxims of the gospel; and many, under the assumed mask of Christianity, continued to cherish the notions and vices of paganism. The alarming change was observed and lamented by the most fervent of the faithful, who determined to retire from a scene so hateful to their zeal, and so dangerous to their virtue: and the vast and barren deserts of Thebais were soon covered with crowds of anachorets, who, under the guidance of the Saints Anthony and Pachomius, earned their scanty meals with the sweat of their brows, and, by a constant repetition of prayers, and fasts, and vigils, edified and astonished their less fervent brethren. Such was the origin of the monastic institute. Its first professors were laymen, who condemned the lax morality of their contemporaries, and aspired to practise in the solitude of the desert, the severe and arduous virtues of their forefathers. They lived in small communities, of which a proportionate number obeyed the paternal authority of a common superior. To obtain admission, no other qualifications were required in the postulant, than a spirit of penitence, and a desire of perfection. As long as these continued to animate his conduct, he was carefully exercised in the different duties of the monastic profession: if he repented of his choice, the gates were open, and he was at liberty to depart. But the number of the apostates was small: the virtue of the greater part secured their perseverance; and it was not till after the decline of their original fervour, that irrevocable vows were added by the policy of succeeding legislators.²

¹ The latest writer on this subject is Mr. Fosbrooke, who compiled his two volumes on the manners and customs of the monks and nuns of England, "to check that spirit of monachism and popery which has lately been revived." Perhaps with many the benevolence of the intention may atone or the asperity of the execution: but it can scarcely apologize for the republication of calumnies, which have been often refuted by the more candid of the Protestant historians. See Brown Willis on Mitred Abbeyes, with the preface by Hearne, in Leland's Collectanea, vol. vi. p. 51.

² Bingham, vol. i. p. 243. Fleury, Hist. l. vi. c. 20. Droit Eccles. c. xxi. By his brethren and countrymen, the clergy of France, Fleury has, for almost a century, been

From Egypt the monastic institute rapidly diffused itself over the neighbouring provinces, and the west was eager to imitate the example of the east. At the commencement of the fifth century, colonies of monks were planted in every corner of the empire; and the conversion of the northern barbarians prodigiously increased their numbers. The proselytes admired the austere virtues of the institute; and considered its professors as a class of superior beings, the friends and favourites of the Deity. No sooner was a monastery erected, than it was filled with crowds, who either wished to preserve, within the shelter of its walls, their innocence from seduction; or sought to efface, by tears of repentance, the excesses of a profligate life. The opulent and powerful fancied that, by promoting the interests, they participated in the merits of the order: and the most vicious flattered themselves, that they might make some atonement for their past offences, by contributing to support a race of men, whose lives were devoted solely to the service of their Creator. In proportion as the order increased, it was divided and subdivided without end. Every abbot, who had founded a monastery, assumed the liberty of selecting or forming for his monks, such regulations as his judgment preferred; the simplicity of the Egyptian model was improved or disfigured by the additions of posterior and independent legislators; and though the more prominent features of each family bore a striking resemblance, a thousand different tints nicely discriminated them from each other. That this freedom of choice, which was exercised by the cenobites of the continent, had been refused by the Saxon monks, and that they universally belonged to the Benedictine institute, has been warmly maintained by learned and respectable antiquaries.³ But their opinion is not supported by sufficient authority: and the Benedictine institute has justly acquired too high a reputation, to be reduced to the necessity of pirating the eminent characters of other orders. I shall, therefore, confine myself to our ancient writers. With the light which they afford,

numbered among the most eminent of the Catholic writers: by an English critic, in a late publication, he has been pronounced little better than a disguised infidel. Which are we most to admire, *their* blindness or *his* sagacity? Compare vol. i. of the History of the Christian Church, p. xiv. xvi, with vol. iii. p. 317.

³ Reyner, in his *Apostolatus Benedictinorum* in Anglia, is, like other genealogists, often fanciful, and sometimes extravagant. In the Saxon church he can discover nothing but Benedictine monks. The Italian missionaries were Benedictine monks; the Gallic missionaries were Benedictine monks; the Scottish missionaries were, or immediately became Benedictine monks. Each writer of eminence, and each prelate of distinguished sanctity, the religious of every convent, and the clergy of every cathedral, were all Benedictine monks. (*Apost. Bened.* p. 1—203.) The merit of patient reading and extensive erudition, Reyner might justly claim: but a natural partiality urged him to display the ancient honours of his order, and his judgment was the slave of his partiality. He was succeeded by Mabillon, an antiquary of equal learning, and superior discernment, who selected the principal arguments of Reyner, and endeavoured to strengthen them by the addition of several passages from ancient and unpublished manuscripts. See *Mabil. præf. Sæc. 1, Bened. Vet. Analcc.* p. 499.

we may still pierce through the gloom of eleven intervening centuries; and discover among our ancestors three grand divisions of the monastic profession, in the disciples of, 1, St. Gregory, 2, St. Columba, and, 3, St. Benedict.

1. Among the patrons of monachism, a distinguished place is due to Gregory the Great, whose piety prompted him to exchange the dignity of Roman prefect for the cowl of a private monk, and whose merit drew him from the obscurity of his cell to seat him on the throne of St. Peter. In Sicily his ample patrimony supported six separate families of monks: and the remainder of his fortune was devoted to the endowment of the great monastery of St. Andrew's in Rome. After such important services, he might with propriety assume the office of legislating for those who owed their bread to his liberality: and from the scattered hints of ancient writers we may safely collect, that the regulations which he imposed on his monks, were widely different from the statutes of most other religious orders.⁴ The time which *they* dedicated to manual labour, *he* commanded to be employed in study; and while they claimed the merit of conducting their lay disciples through the narrow path of monastic perfection, he aspired to the higher praise of forming men, who by their abilities might defend the doctrines, and by their zeal extend the conquests of the church.⁵ Of these the most eminent were honoured with his friendship, and enjoyed a distinguished place near his person. They attended him in his embassy to the capital of the east: they were admitted into his council at his elevation to the pontificate; and they supplied him with missionaries, when he meditated the conversion of the Saxons. Augustine was proud to copy the example of his father and instructor. To the clergy who officiated in his cathedral, he associated several of his former brethren, as his advisers and companions: and for the remainder he erected a spacious monastery, which, as far as circumstances would permit, was an exact copy of its prototype in Rome. Of the spiritual progeny of this establishment we have no accurate history. That the neighbouring convents received their first inhabitants from Canterbury, and carefully observed the regulations of the parent monastery, is highly probable: whether, at any later period, previously to the reform of St. Dunstan, they abandoned their ancient rule, and

⁴ See Broughton, Memorial, p. 231. But have not the Benedictine writers strenuously claimed this pontiff as a member of their institute? I shall only answer that I have patiently perused the dissertations of Reyner, (Apost. p. 167,) and Mabillon, (Anal. vet. p. 499,) and am still compelled to think with Baronius, (An. 581, viii.) Broughton, (Mem. p. 244.) Smith, (Flores Hist. p. 81.) Henschenius and Papebroche, (Act. San. tom. 2 Mart. p. 123.) Thomassin, (De vet. et nov. Discip. l. iii. c. 24.) Basnage, (Annal. anno 581,) and Gibbon, (vol. iv. p. 457,) that their claim is unfounded. See also Sandini, Vit. Pontif. vol. i. p. 203.

⁵ The institute of St. Gregory seems to have been an attempt to unite, as much as possible, the clerical with the monastic profession. Bergier, Diction. Theol. art. Communauté.

adopted the Benedictine institute, is a subject of more doubtful, but unimportant controversy.⁶

2. Eight-and-forty years after the arrival of Augustine on the coast of Kent, Oswald, king of Northumbria, requested a supply of missionaries from the Scottish monks. Columba, of the royal race of the Neils in Ireland, by his preaching and miracles had converted the barbarous inhabitants of Caledonia; and the gratitude of his proselytes recompensed his labours with the donation of the isle of Icolmkill, one of the smallest of the Hebrides.⁷ His memory was long cherished with every testimony of veneration by the northern nations. The customs which his approbation had sanctified in their eyes, were, with pious obstinacy, perpetuated by his disciples: his monastery was selected for the sepulchres of the kings of Ireland, Scotland, and Norway;⁸ and the provincial bishops, though in their episcopal functions they preserved the superiority of their order, in other points submitted to the mandates of the abbot, as the legitimate successor of Columba: a singular institution, of which no other example is recorded in the ecclesiastical annals.⁹

From this monastery came Aidan, the successful apostle of Northumbria. During the course of his labours, the missionary kept his eyes fixed on his patron, Columba; and after his example, requested permission to retire from the court, and fix his residence in some lonely island, where his devotions might not be interrupted by the follies and vices of men. His petition was granted. Lindisfarne, at a small distance from the Northumbrian coast, was peopled with a colony of Scottish monks; and in their company the bishop spent the hours which were not devoted to the exercise of the episcopal functions. His immediate successors were the zealous imitators of his conduct; and from the monastery of Aidan, the institute was rapidly diffused through the kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira, Mercia and East-Anglia.

⁶ The rule of St. Gregory was observed at Canterbury till the year 630, according to the testimony of Pope Honorius, (*vestram dilectionem sectantem magistri et capitis sui St. Gregorii regulam*. Bed. 11. 18.) The privilege of choosing their own abbots, a claim which distinguished the Benedictines, is said to have been granted to the monks by Adeodatus, in 673. (Wilk. p. 43.) But this charter may be reasonably suspected, as the archbishop continued after that period to nominate the superiors of all the monasteries in the kingdom of Kent. (*Ibid.* p. 57.) At the distance of four hundred years, King Ethelred introduced Benedictine monks into the cathedral, and in the Saxon copy of the charter, which he gave on that occasion, is made to say that they were of the same description as the companions of St. Augustine, (*of ðære hýrne ðe fer Augurcīnūf hīden to bpohte*. Wilk. p. 282. *Mores Comment. de Ælf.* p. 88.) It is however observable, that in the Latin, which, from the signatures, appears to have been the authentic copy, this passage is not to be found, (*Wilk.* p. 284. *Mores.* p. 84.)

⁷ Bed. l. iii. c. 3. *Chron. Sax.* p. 21. An. 560.

⁸ See Buchanan, (*Rerum Scotic.* l. i. p. 28.) A chart of the island is given in the title page of Pinkerton's *Vit. antiq. Sanctorum in Scotia*.

⁹ Bed. l. iii. c. 4. That Columba acknowledged himself inferior to bishops, is evident from his life by Adomnan, (*l. i. c. 45.* ed. Pinkerton, p. 93.)

The rule which was followed by these disciples of Columba, has not been transmitted to us by any Latin writer: and the Irish copies which have been preserved, are written in a language, that has hitherto eluded the skill of the most patient antiquary.¹⁰ But Bede, in different parts of his works, has borne the most honourable testimony to their virtue. With a glowing pencil he displays their patience, their chastity, their frequent meditation on the sacred writings, and their indefatigable efforts to attain the summit of Christian perfection. They chose for their habitation the most dreary situations: no motives but those of charity could draw them from their cells; and, if they appeared in public, their object was to reconcile enemies, to instruct the ignorant, to discourage vice, and to plead the cause of the unfortunate. The little property which they enjoyed was common to all. Poverty they esteemed as the surest guardian of virtue: and the benefactions of the opulent they respectfully declined, or instantly employed in relieving the necessities of the indigent. One only stain did he discover in their character, an immoderate esteem for their forefathers, which prompted them to prefer their own customs to the consent of all other Christian churches: but this he piously trusted would disappear in the bright effulgence of their virtues.¹¹

3. While the disciples of Gregory in the south, and those of Columba in the north, were labouring to diffuse their respective institutes, the attention of the continental Christians was called to another order of monks, who gradually supplanted all their competitors, and still exist in Catholic countries, distinguished by their learning, their riches, and their numbers. For their origin they were indebted to the zeal of Benedict, a native of Norcia, who, in the commencement of the sixth century, to avoid the contagious example of the Roman youth, buried himself, at the age of fourteen, in a deep and lonely cavern, amid the mountains of Subiaco. Six-and-thirty months the young hermit passed in this voluntary prison, unknown to any except his spiritual director, a monk of an adjacent monastery: but a miracle betrayed him to the notice of the public; his example diffused a similar ardour around him: and his desert was quickly inhabited by twelve confraternities of monks, who acknowledged and revered him as their parent and legislator. But the fame of Benedict awakened the jealousy of his neighbours. Their calumnies compelled him to quit his solitude, and he retired to the summit of mount Cassino, in the ancient territory of the Volsci. There he spent the remainder of his years in the practice of every monastic virtue, and the possession of those honours which that age was accustomed to confer on superior sanctity. To his care the patricians of Rome intrusted the education of their children; his cell was

¹⁰ Usher, Brit. eccl. antiq. p. 919.

¹¹ Bed. Hist. l. iii. c. 17. 26.

visited by the most distinguished personages, who solicited his benediction; and Totila, the haughty conqueror of Italy, condescended to ask the advice, and trembled at the stern reproof of the holy abbot.

During the two centuries which had elapsed since the retreat of St. Anthony into the desert, the monks had gradually degenerated from the austere virtue of their founders: and Benedict composed his rule, not so much to restore the vigour, as to prevent the total extinction of the ancient discipline. "The precepts of monastic perfection," says the humble and fervent legislator, "are contained in the inspired writings: the examples abound in the works of the holy fathers. But mine is a more lowly attempt to teach the rudiments of a Christian life, that, when we are acquainted with them, we may aspire to the practice of the sublimer virtues."¹² But the admirers of monachism were not slow to appreciate the merit of his labours. From Gregory the Great his rule obtained the praise of superior wisdom;¹³ and the opinion of the pontiff was afterwards adopted or confirmed by the general consent of the Latin church.

In distributing the various duties of the day, Benedict was careful that every moment should be diligently employed. Six hours were allotted to sleep. Soon after midnight the monks arose to chaunt the nocturnal service; during the day they were summoned seven times to the church, to perform the other parts of the canonical office: seven hours were employed in manual labour; two in study; and the small remainder was devoted to the necessary refection of the body.¹⁴ Their diet was simple but sufficient: twelve, perhaps eighteen ounces of bread, a hemina of wine,¹⁵ and two dishes of vegetables, composed their daily allowance. The flesh of quadrupeds was strictly prohibited: but the rigour of the law was relaxed in favour of the children, the aged, and the infirm. To the colour, the form, and the quality of their dress, he was wisely indifferent; and only recommended that it should be adapted to the climate, and similar to that of the labouring poor. Each monk slept in a separate bed; but all lay in their habits, that they might be ready to repair, at the first summons, to the church. Every thing was possessed in common: not only articles of convenience, but even of necessity, were received and resigned at the discretion of the abbot. No brother was allowed to cross the threshold of the monastery without the permission of his superior: at his departure he requested the prayers of the community: at his return he lay prostrate in the

¹² Reg. St. Ben. c. 73.

¹³ St. Greg. Dial. l. ii. c. 36.

¹⁴ Reg. St. Ben. c. 8. 16. 48.

¹⁵ The exact measure of the hemina is unknown. It has been the subject of many learned dissertations by the Benedictine writers. See Nat. Alex. tom. v. p. 462. Mabil. Sæc. Bened. iv. tom. i. p. cxvi.

church, to atone for the dissipation of his thoughts during his absence. Whatever he might have seen or heard without the walls of the convent, he was commanded to bury in eternal silence.¹⁶

The favour of admission was purchased with a severe probation. On his knees, at the gate, the postulant requested to be received among the servants of God : but his desires were treated with contempt, and his pride was humbled by reproaches. After four days his perseverance subdued the apparent reluctance of the monks : he was successively transferred to the apartments of the strangers and of the novices ; and an aged brother was commissioned to observe his conduct, and instruct him in the duties of his profession. Before the expiration of the year, the rule was read thrice in his presence ; and each reading was accompanied with the admonition, that he was still at liberty to depart. At last, on the anniversary of his admission, he entered the church, and avowed, before God and the community, his determination to spend his days in the monastic profession, to reform his conduct, and to obey his superiors. The solemn engagement he subscribed with his name, and deposited on the altar.¹⁷

The legislator who wishes to enforce the observance, must punish the transgression of his laws. But in apportioning the degree of punishment, Benedict advised the superior to weigh not only the nature of the offence, but the contumacy of the offender. There were minds, he observed, which might be guided by a gentle reprimand, while others refused to bend to the severest chastisement. In his penal code he gradually proceeded from more lenient to coercive measures. The inefficacy of private admonition was succeeded by the disgrace of public reproof : if the delinquent proved insensible to shame, he was separated from the society of his brethren ;¹⁸ and the continuance of his obstinacy was rewarded with the infliction of corporal punishment. As a last resource, the confraternity assembled in the church by order of the superior, and recommended, with fervent prayer, their rebellious brother to the mercy and grace of the Almighty. He was then expelled ; but the gates of the convent were not shut to repentance. Thrice the returning sinner might expect to be received with kindness in the arms of an indulgent father : but the fourth relapse filled up his measure of iniquity, and he was ejected forever.¹⁹

From mount Cassino and the desert of Subiaco, the Benedictine order gradually diffused itself to the utmost boundaries of

¹⁶ Reg. 39, 40. 22. 33. 67.

¹⁷ Ibid. c. 58.

¹⁸ This was termed excommunication ; but the culprit, during his confinement, was often visited and consoled by the senipete, id est, seniores sapientes, (Ben. Reg. c. 27.) Does not this passage unfold the mystery which antiquaries have discovered in the *Sempete* of Croyland ?

¹⁹ St. Ben. Reg. c. 23—29.

the Latin church. The merit of introducing it to the knowledge of the Saxons, was claimed by St. Wilfrid.²⁰ That prelate, in his pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles, had conversed with the disciples of St. Benedict; and though he had been educated in the Scottish discipline at Lindisfarne, he bore a willing testimony to the superior excellence of their institute. Having afterwards obtained a copy of the Benedictine rule, he established it in the monasteries which were immediately dependent on him, and propagated it with all his influence through the kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia. Of the success of his labours we may form an estimate from the thousands of monks, who, at the time of his disgrace, lamented the loss of their guide and benefactor.²¹ Yet the zeal of Wilfrid was tempered with prudence. If he preferred the foreign institute, he was not blind to the merit of the discipline previously adopted by his countrymen: many customs which experience had shown to be useful, and antiquity had rendered venerable, he carefully retained; and by amalgamating them with the rule of St. Benedict, greatly improved the state of monastic discipline.²²

Contemporary with Wilfrid, and the companion of his youth, was Bennet Biscop, the celebrated abbot of Weremouth. At the age of five-and-twenty he quitted the court of his friend and patron, Oswiu, king of Northumbria, and directed his steps to the capital of the Christian world. His intention was to embrace the monastic profession: but he wished previously to visit the places in which it was practised in the highest perfection. With pious curiosity he perused the rules, and observed the manners of seventeen among the most celebrated foreign monasteries; thrice he venerated the sacred remains of the apostles at Rome; and two years he spent among the cloistered inhabitants of the small isle of Lerins, who gave him the religious habit, and admitted him to his vows. At the command of Pope Vitalian, he accompanied Archbishop Theodore to England, as his guide and interpreter; and was intrusted by him with the government of the monks of Canterbury. But this office he soon resigned: his devotion led him again to the Vatican; and the labour of his pilgrimage was amply repaid with what he considered a valuable collection of books, paintings, and relics. At his return, he was received with joy and veneration by Egfrid, king of Northumbria, and obtained from

²⁰ *Nonne ego curavi, quomodo vitam monachorum secundum regulam S. Benedicti patris, quam nullus ibi prior inexit, constituerem? Wilfrid apud Edd. c. 45.*

²¹ *Multa millia. Edd. c. 21.*

²² *Revertens cum regula Benedicti instituta ecclesiarum Dei melioravit. Edd. c. 14.* In the regulations drawn up by St. Dunstan, (*Apost. Bened. app. par. 3, p. 80.*) and the letter of St. Ethelwold to the monks of Egnesham, (*Walney's MSS, p. 110.*) may be seen several of the customs peculiar to the ancient Saxon monks. St. Wilfrid, instead of leaving to his disciples the choice of their future abbot, as was ordered by the Benedictine rule, chose him himself, and ordered them to obey him. *Edd. Vit. Wilf. c. 60, 61.* See also Butler's *SS. Lives*, March 12.

the munificence of that prince, a spacious domain near the mouth of the river Were, on which he built his first monastery, dedicated in honour of St. Peter. The reputation of Bennet quickly multiplied the number of his disciples; another donation from the king enabled him to erect a second convent at Jarrow, on the southern bank of the Tyne; and so prolific were these two establishments, that, within a few years after the death of the founder, they contained no less than six hundred monks.²³ Of the discipline to which he subjected his disciples, the rule of St. Benedict probably formed the groundwork: the improvements which he added were the fruit of his own observation during his travels, and of his constant attention to the welfare of his monasteries.²⁴ From his labours, the most valuable benefits were derived to his countrymen. By the workmen whom he procured from Gaul, they were taught the arts of making glass, and of building with stone: the foreign paintings with which he decorated his churches, excited attempts at imitation: and the many volumes, which he deposited in the library of his monastery, invited the industry, and nourished the improvement of his monks. Bennet contributed more to the civilization of his countrymen, than any person since the preaching of the Roman missionaries: and his memory has been with gratitude transmitted to posterity by the venerable Bede, in the most pleasing of his works, the Lives of the Abbots of Weremouth.

While the Benedictine order was thus partially established in the kingdom of Northumbria, its interests were espoused with equal or greater zeal in the more southern provinces, by Aldhelm, bishop of Sherburn, and Egwin, bishop of Worcester. The former introduced it into his three monasteries of Malmsbury, Frome, and Bradanford;²⁵ the latter erected a magnificent abbey at Evesham, in which, by the order of Pope Constantine, he placed Benedictine monks, whose institute was scarcely known in that province.²⁶ Their example was imitated by many of their brethren, who, according to their fancy or their judgment, adopted in a greater or less proportion the foreign discipline.

²³ Bed. Vit. abbat. Wirem. p. 293.

²⁴ That he adopted the regulation of St. Benedict with respect to the election of the abbot, is certain from Bede, (ibid. p. 298,) and the next century, Alcuin recommended to the monks, the frequent study of the rule St. Benedict, (Alc. ep. 49.) Hence Mabillon contends, that the monks of Weremouth were Benedictines. (Anal. vet. p. 506.) But the adoption of one regulation is not a sufficient proof: and the homily of Bede, on the founder of this monastery, will justify a suspicion, that the Benedict, whose rule was recommended, was not the Italian, but the Saxon abbot. Bennet himself seems to ascribe the discipline which he established, to his own observations. *Ex decem quippe et septem monasteriis, quæ inter longos meæ crebræ peregrinationis discursus optima comperi, hæc universa didici, et vobis salubriter observanda contradidi,* (Bede. ibid. p. 277.)

²⁵ Anno 675. Malm. de Pont. l. v. p. 344. 353. 356. Aldhelm says of St. Benedict, Primo pui statuit nostræ certamina vitæ
Qualiter optatam teneant cœnobio formam.

De Laud. virg. in Biblioth. Pat. vol. viii.

²⁶ Quæ minus in illis partibus habetur. Bulla Cons. apud Wilk. p. 71, an. 709.

The different gradations of the monastic hierarchy, as it exists at present, its provincials, generals, and congregations, were then unknown: and each abbot legislated for his own subjects, uncontrolled by the opinion, or the commands of superiors. But the rule of St. Benedict, besides other claims to their esteem, contained one regulation, which united the suffrages of the whole monastic body. Formerly the right of nominating to the vacant abbeys had been vested in the bishops of each diocese:²⁷ but the legislator of Subiasco saw, or thought he saw, in this practice, the source of the most grievous abuses; and made it essential to his rule, that the superior of each monastery should be chosen by the suffrages of its inhabitants.²⁸ This regulation, so flattering to their independence, was eagerly accepted by the monks of every institute, and was opposed with equal warmth by several of the bishops, who considered it as an infringement of their ancient rights. But the episcopal order contained within its bosom the avowed protectors of the monastic state; and the contested privilege was soon confirmed by the decrees of popes, and the charters of princes.²⁹

But monasteries were not inhabited exclusively by men: the retirement of the cloister appears to have possessed peculiar attractions in the eyes of the Saxon ladies. The weaker frame, and more volatile disposition of the sex, seemed, indeed, less adapted to the rigour of perpetual confinement, and the ever recurring circle of vigils, fasts, and prayers: but the difficulty of the enterprise increased the ardour of their zeal: they refused to await the erection of convents in their native country: crowds of females resorted to the foreign establishments of Faremoutier, Chelles, and Andeli; and the former of these houses was successively governed by abbesses of the royal race of Hengist.³⁰ But before the close of the seventh century, the southern Saxons could boast of several fervent communities of nuns under the guidance of Eanswide, Mildrede, and Ethelburge, princesses no less illustrious for their piety, than for their birth. In Northumbria, at the same period, the abbess Heiu, the first lady among the northern tribes, who put on the monastic veil, governed, under the patronage of the bishop Aidan, a small and obscure convent at Hereteu, or the isle of the hart.³¹ She was succeeded by Hilda, whose family, virtue, and abilities reflected a brighter

²⁷ Thus St. Aldhelm was appointed by the bishop of Winchester, *pro jure tunc episcoporum*. Malm. de Reg. l. i. c. 2, f. 6. Gale, 344. Apost. Ben. p. 20. Wilk. p. 57. 86.

²⁸ Ben. Reg. c. 64. This, and the other monastic exemptions, were successively granted by the pontiffs, to secure the monks from the oppressive conduct of certain bishops. Yet there were many, who considered the remedy as more pernicious than the disease. See St. Bernard, (*De Consid.* l. iii. c. 4,) and Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, (*Ep. Pet. Blesen.* ep. 68:) also Fleury, (*Discours* viii. c. 13.)

²⁹ Wilk. Con. p. 44. 49. 71. 74. Gale, 311. 345. 353.

³⁰ Anno 640. Bed. l. iii. c. 8.

³¹ Hartlepool, *id.* l. iv. c. 23.

luster on the institute. Hilda was allied to the East-Anglian and Northumbrian princes; her advice was respectfully asked and followed by kings and prelates; and to her care Oswiu commended his infant daughter Ælfleda, with a dower of one hundred hides of land.³² Enriched by the donations of her friends, she built at Whitby a double monastery, in one part of which a sisterhood of nuns, in the other a confraternity of monks, obeyed her maternal authority. Among her disciples she established that community of goods, which distinguished the first Christians at Jerusalem; and whatever they possessed, was considered as the common property of all. Their virtue has been attested by the venerable Bede: and no less than five of the monks of Whitby were raised to the episcopal dignity, during the life of their foundress.³³ From Northumbria the institute was rapidly diffused over the kingdom of Mercia.

The reader will perhaps have been surprised, that a society of men should be subject to the spiritual government of a woman. Yet this scheme of monastic polity, singular as it may now appear, was once adopted in most Christian countries. Its origin may be ascribed to the severity with which the founders of religious orders have always prohibited every species of unnecessary intercourse between their female disciples and persons of the other sex. To prevent it entirely was impracticable. The functions of the sacred ministry had always been the exclusive privilege of the men: and they alone were able to support the fatigues of husbandry, and conduct the extensive estates, which many convents had received from the piety of their benefactors. But it was conceived that the difficulty might be diminished, if it could not be removed: and with this view, some monastic legislators devised the plan of establishing double monasteries. In the vicinity of the edifice, destined to receive the virgins who had dedicated their chastity to God, was erected a building for the residence of a society of monks or canons, whose duty it was to officiate at the altar, and superintend the external economy of the community. The mortified and religious life, to which they had bound themselves by the most solemn engagements, was supposed to render them superior to temptation: and to remove even the suspicion of evil, but they were strictly forbidden to enter the enclosure of the women, except on particular occasions, with the permission of the superior, and in the presence of witnesses. But the abbess retained the supreme control over the monks, as well as the nuns: their prior depended on her choice, and was bound to regulate his conduct by her instruc-

³² Oswiu had vowed to consecrate his daughter to the service of God, if he were successful in his war against Penda. Bed. l. iii. c. 24. The *Terræ centum et viginti familiarum*, are translated by Alfred, *hund cƿelƿtīz hīda*. (Ælf. vers. p. 556.) The hide contained 120 acres. Hist. Elien. p. 472. 481.

³³ Bed. l. iii. c. 24. l. iv. c. 23.

tions.³⁴ To St. Columban this institute was indebted for its propagation in France; and from the houses of his order, which were long the favourite resort of the Saxon ladies, it was probably introduced into England. During the two first centuries after the conversion of our ancestors, the principal nunneries were established on this plan: nor are we certain that there existed any others of a different description.³⁵ They were held in the highest estimation: the most distinguished of the Saxon female saints, and many of the most eminent prelates, were educated in them: and so edifying was the deportment of the greatest part of these communities, that the breath of slander never presumed to tarnish their character. The monastery of Coldingham alone forms an exception. The virtue of some among its inhabitants was more ambiguous: and an accidental fire, which was ascribed to the vengeance of Heaven, confirmed the suspicions of their contemporaries, and has transmitted to posterity the knowledge of their dishonour.³⁶ The account was received with the deepest sorrow by St. Cuthbert, the pious bishop of Lindisfarne: and in the anguish of his zeal, he commanded his disciples to exclude every female from the threshold of his cathedral. His will was religiously obeyed; and for several centuries no woman entered with impunity any of the churches, in which the body of the saint had reposed.³⁷ But notwithstanding the misfortune at Coldingham, and the disapprobation of Cuthbert, the institute continued to flourish, till the ravages of the pagan Danes levelled with the ground the double monasteries, together with every other sacred edifice which existed within the range of their devastations.³⁸

³⁴ As I am not acquainted with any writer who has professedly treated this subject, I have been compelled to glean a few hints from the works of the ancient historians. An establishment of nearly a similar nature existed at Remiremont, in Lorraine, till it was swept away by the torrent of the French revolution. See note (D.)

³⁵ That the monasteries of Faremoutier, Chelles, and Andeli, were double, appears from Bede, (l. iii. c. 8,) and is proved by Broughton, (Mem. p. 343.) Among the Saxons, the principal at least were of the same institute: Whitby, (Bed. l. iv. c. 23, Vit. Cuth. c. 24,) Berking, (Id. c. 7,) Coldingham, (Id. c. 25,) Ely, (Id. c. 19,) Wenlock, (Bonif. ep. 21, p. 29,) Repandun, (Gale, p. 243. Wigor, p. 568,) and Winburn, (Mab. sæc. 3, Vit. St. Liob. p. 246.) See also Bed. l. iii. c. xi., and Leland's *Collectanea*, (vol. iii. p. 117.) At Beverley, a monastery of monks, a college of canons, and a convent of nuns, obeyed the same abbot. *Mong. Ang.* vol. i. p. 170. *Lel. Coll.* vol. iii. p. 100.

³⁶ Bed. l. iv. c. 25.

³⁷ Sim. Dunel. *Hist. Ecc. Dun.* p. 102. For the accommodation of the women, a new church was built, and called the green kirk. *Ibid.* A similar regulation was observed in several of the monasteries of St. Columban, in France. See Butler's *SS. Lives*, Sept. 5. Mab. præf. 1, sæc. 3, cxxxvii.

³⁸ Another order of religious women, whose existence, it seems, had long been forgotten, was described by one of our most learned antiquaries. Spelman had observed that the Saxons always made a distinction between *Nonna* and *Monialis* in Latin, and *Nunna* and *Mynekin* in their own language: whence he inferred, that the latter must have been the wives of married clergymen, by whose enemies they had been branded with the name of *mynekin*, from *miune*, a Gothic word of no very decent signification. (*Spel. Con.* p. 529. *Wilk. Con.* p. 294.) It were difficult to err more egregiously.

Such were the different religious orders which, as far as I can discover, were introduced among the Anglo-Saxons. In the distribution of time, the arrangement of fasts and prayers, and the subordinate parts of interior discipline, they were distinguished from each other: but all equally adopted the three engagements, which are still considered as essential to the monastic institute: 1, An unlimited submission to the lawful commands of their superiors; 2, A life of perpetual celibacy; and, 3, A voluntary renunciation of private property.

1. In the language of monastic discipline, the most important of the virtues, which are not absolutely imposed on every Christian, is obedience.³⁹ The natural perversity of the human will is considered as the source of every moral disorder; and to prevent it from seeking forbidden gratifications, it should resign the right of deciding for itself, and be taught to submit on all occasions to the determination of another. He who aspires to the praise of a true religious, ought, according to the patriarch of the western monks, to place at the disposal of his superior all the faculties of his mind, and all the powers of his body.⁴⁰ In the rule which St. Dunstan promulgated for the observance of the Anglo-Saxon monasteries, may be seen the extent to which this maxim was carried. It regulates not only the more important points, but descends to the minutest particulars; requires the permission of the superior for the most ordinary actions of life; and severely condemns the brother who, on any occasion, shall presume to determine for himself, without having asked and obtained the advice, or rather the command of his abbot.⁴¹ The obedience which is required must be prompt and cheerful; it comprises the decisions of the judgment no less than the resolves of the will:⁴² but it admits of one exception. When the commands of

From the excerpta of Egbert of York we learn, that the mynekins were women, "who had consecrated themselves to God, who had vowed their virginity to God, and who were the spouses of Christ." *ƒe ƒrode ƒylƒum beoƒ ƒehalƒode. ƒ hýra ƒehat ƒrode ƒehatan habbaƒ.* Wilk. p. 134, xi. *ƒe ƒrode ƒylƒum beƒeddod biƒ to brýde.* Ibid. p. 136. *ƒe ƒrodeƒ brýd biƒ ƒehaten.* Ibid. p. 131, xviii. The truth is, that the mynekins were so called from the Saxon "munuc," because they observed the rule of the monks, while the nuns observed the rule of the canons. This distinction is clearly marked in the Codex Constitutionum in the Bodleian Library, in which the mynekins are classed with the monks, and ordered to practise the same duties; and the nuns are classed with the priests, and commanded like them to observe chastity, and live according to their rule. *Riht iƒ ƒ mynecena mynƒterhce maean. eƒne ƒƒa ƒe eƒædon æƒop be munecan.—Riht iƒ ƒ ƒƒeoƒƒaƒ ƒ eƒen ƒel nunnan neƒƒollice libban ƒ clæanýƒƒe healðan.* Cod. Jun. 121.

³⁹ *Tota monachorum vita in simplicitate consistit obedientiæ.* Alcuin. ep. 59.

⁴⁰ *Quibus nec corpora sua nec voluntates licet habere in propria potestate.* Reg. S. Bened. c. 33.

⁴¹ *Nullus quippiam quamvis parum sua et quasi propria adinventione agere præsumat.* Apost. Bened. app. par. 3, p. 92.

⁴² *Reg. St. Columb. c. 1. Reg. St. Bened. c. 5. Ibid. c. 5. 7.*

the superior are contrary to the law of God, the monk is exhorted to throw off the shackles of obedience, and boldly to hazard the frowns and vengeance of his abbot, rather than incur the displeasure of the Almighty.⁴³

2. To obedience was added the strictest attention to chastity. The high commendations with which this virtue is mentioned in the inspired writings, had given it a distinguished place in the esteem of the first Christians. As early as the commencement of the second century, we discover numbers of both sexes, who had devoted themselves to a life of perpetual celibacy;⁴⁴ and their example was eagerly followed by the founders of the monastic institute, whose successors, to the present day, bind themselves in the most solemn manner to observe it with scrupulous exactitude. To the Saxons, in whom, during the tide of conquest, the opportunity of gratification had strengthened the impulse of the passions, a life of chastity appeared the most arduous effort of human virtue: they revered its professors as beings of a nature in this respect superior to their own; and learned to esteem a religion which could elevate man so much above the influence of his inclinations. As they became acquainted with the maxims of the gospel, their veneration for this virtue increased: and whoever compares the dissolute manners of the pagan Saxons, with the severe celibacy of the monastic orders, will be astonished at the immense number of male and female recluses who, within a century after the arrival of St. Augustine, had voluntarily embraced a life of perpetual continency. Nor was the pious enthusiasm confined within the walls of convents: there were many who, in the midst of courts, and in the bonds of marriage, emulated the strictest chastity of the cloister. Of these, Edithryda may be cited as a remarkable example. She was the daughter of Anna, the king of the East-Angles, and, at an early period of life, had bound herself by a vow of virginity. But her secret wish was opposed by the policy of her friends, and she was compelled to marry Tondberct, Ealdorman of the Girvii. Her entreaties, however, moved the breast of her husband; and compassion, perhaps religion, prompted him to respect her chastity. At his death she retired to a solitary mansion in the unfrequented isle of Ely: but her relations invaded the tranquillity of her retreat, and offered her in marriage to Egfrid, the son of the king of Northumbria, a prince who had scarcely reached his fourteenth year. Notwithstanding her tears, she was delivered

⁴³ *Admonendi sunt subditi, ne plus quam expedit, sint subjecti.* St. Greg. apud Grat. 2, q. 7, can. 57.

⁴⁴ St. Just. Apol. 1, c. 10. Athenag. Leg. c. 3. Yet the sagacity of Mosheim has discovered, that this practice owed its origin not to the doctrine of the gospel, but to the influence of the climate of Egypt. (Mos. Sec. ii. p. 2, c. 3, xl. Sec. iii. p. 2, c. 3.) If this be true, we must admire the heroism of its present inhabitants, who in their harems have subdued the influence of the climate, and introduced the difficult practice of polygamy, in lieu of the easy virtue of chastity.

to the care of his messengers, and conducted a reluctant victim to the Northumbrian court. Her constancy, however, triumphed over his passion: and after preserving her virginity during the space of twelve years, amid the pleasures of the palace, and the solicitations of her husband, she obtained his permission to take the veil in the monastery of Coldingham.⁴⁵ Absence revived the affection of Egfrid: he repented of his consent; and was preparing to take her by force from her convent, when she escaped to her former residence in Ely. After a certain period, her reputation attracted round her a sisterhood of nuns, among whom she spent the remainder of her days in the practice of every monastic duty, and distinguished by her superior fervour and superior humility.⁴⁶

To secure the chastity of their disciples, the legislators of the monks had adopted the most effectual precautions which human ingenuity could devise. The necessity of mortifying every irregular inclination was inculcated both by precept and example. The sobriety of their meals, and the meanness of their dress, perpetually recalled to their minds, that they had renounced the world and its concupiscence, and had dedicated their souls and bodies to the service of the Deity. They were commanded to sleep in the same room: and a lamp, which was kept burning during the darkness of the night, exposed the conduct of each individual to the eye of the superior. The gates of the convent were shut against the intrusion of strangers: visits of pleasure and even of business were forbidden: and the monk, whom the necessities of the community forced from his cell, was constantly attended, during his absence, by two companions.⁴⁷ To the precautions of prudence were added the motives of religion. The praises of chastity were sung by the poets, and extolled by the preachers: its votaries were taught to consider themselves as the immaculate "spouses of the Lamb;" and to them was promised the transcendent reward, which the book of the Apocalypse describes as reserved for those "who have not been defiled with women." But where thousands unite in the same pursuit, it is impossible that all should be animated with the same spirit, or persevere with equal resolution. Of these recluses there undoubtedly must have been some, whom passion or seduction prompted to violate their solemn engagement: but the unsullied

⁴⁵ Notwithstanding the prohibition of Hutchinson, (*Hist. and Ant. of Durham*, p. 17,) I have ventured on the authority of Bede, (*Hist. l. iv. c. 19. 25.*) to place Edilthryda at Coldingham.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* *Hist. Eliensis*, p. 597. Hume observes (*Hist. c. 1, p. 31*) that Egfrid died without children, because his wife refused to violate her vow of chastity. He should, however, have added, that the king, at the time of their separation, was only twenty-six years of age, that he married a second wife, and that he lived with her fourteen years. Egfrid came to the throne in 670, separated from Edilthryda in 671, and was killed in battle in 685. Compare Bede, (*l. iv. c. 19. 26.*) with the *Saxon Chronicle*, an. 670. 673. 679.

⁴⁷ *Wilk. Conc.* p. 97. 100. *Apost. Bened. app. par. 3, p. 78, 79.*

reputation of an immense majority contributed to cast a veil over the shame of their weaker brethren, and bore an honourable testimony to the constancy of their own virtue, and the vigilance of their superiors.

3. A voluntary renunciation of property was the third condition, required from the proselyte to the monastic state. The Saviour of mankind had denounced the severest woes against the worldly rich; and to his approbation of a life of poverty was originally owing the establishment of monachism. Anthony, a young Egyptian, who had lately succeeded to an extensive estate, was prompted by curiosity or devotion, to enter a church during the celebration of the divine worship. "Go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," were the first words which met his ear. He considered them as the voice of Heaven directed to himself; sold all his property; distributed the price to the poor; and retired into the desert of Thebais. His reputation soon attracted a considerable number of disciples; and the profession of poverty was sanctified in their eyes by the conduct of their teacher. With the monastic institute this spirit was diffused through the western empire: and the same contempt of riches which distinguished the anachorets of Egypt, was displayed by the first monks of Britain. Wealth they considered as the bane of a religious life: the donations of their friends, and the patrimony of their members, were equally refused: and the labours of husbandry formed their daily occupation, and provided for their support.⁴⁸ The same discipline was anxiously inculcated by each succeeding legislator. St. Benedict informed his followers, that "they would then be truly monks, when, like their fathers, they lived by the work of their hands:" and St. Columban exhorted his disciples to fix their eyes on the treasure reserved for them in heaven, and to believe it a crime not only to have, but even to desire, more than was absolutely necessary upon earth."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ang. Sac. tom. ii. p. 645, 646.

⁴⁹ Tunc vere Monachi sunt, si labore manuum vivunt sicut patres nostri. St. Ben. Reg. c. 48. Non solum superflua eos habere damnabile est, sed etiam velle. Dum in cælis multum sint habituri, parvo extremæ necessitatis censu in terris debent esse contenti. St. Colum. Reg. c. 4. He also composed verses in praise of poverty, some of which I shall transcribe, as a specimen of his poetic abilities.

O nimium felix parvus, cui sufficit usus,
 Corporis ut curam moderamine temperet æquo.
 Non misera capitur cæcæque cupidine rerum;
 Non majora cupit quam quæ natura reposcit;
 Non lucri cupidus nummis marsupia replet;
 Nec molles cumulat tinearum ad pabula vestes.
 Pascere non pingui procurat fruge caballos;
 Nec trepido doluit tales sub pectore curas;
 Ne subitis pereat collecta pecunia flammis,
 Aut fracta nummos rapiat fur improbus arca.
 Vivitur argento sine, jam sine vivitur auro.

The ancient discipline was long observed in the east: but the western monks gradually departed from its severity, and the departure was justified by the prospect of greater advantage. The numerous irruptions of the barbarians had, in several provinces, swept away the principal part of the clergy, and the duty of public instruction devolved on the monks, whose good fortune had preserved them from the general devastation.⁵⁰ As, to perform their new functions with decency and advantage, a certain fund of knowledge was necessary, the pursuit of learning began to be numbered among the duties of the cloister; and the drudgery of manual labour was exchanged for the more honourable and more useful occupation of study. Monasteries were now endowed with extensive estates, adequate to the support of their inhabitants: and their revenues were constantly augmented by the liberality of their admirers. Yet the profession of poverty was not resigned. By the aid of an ingenious though not unfounded distinction, it was discovered that it might still subsist in the bosom of riches; and that each individual might be destitute of property, though the wealth of the community was equal to that of its most opulent neighbours. Monastic poverty was defined to consist in the abdication of *private* property: whatever the convent possessed was common to all its members: no individual could advance a claim in preference to his brethren: and every article, both of convenience and necessity, was received from the hands, and surrendered at the command of the abbot.⁵¹ These notions the Saxon monks received from their instructors. To refuse the donations of their friends would have been to injure the prosperity of the brotherhood: and each year conducted new streams of wealth to the more celebrated monasteries. Many, indeed, were left to languish in want and obscurity, but there were also many whose superior riches excited the envy of the

Nudi nascuntur, nudos quos terra recepat.

Divitibus nigri reserantur limina ditis:

Pauperibusque piis cœlestia regna patescunt.

Ep. Hunaldo. discip. apud Massingham, p. 411.

⁵⁰ The first who admitted the monks to holy orders, was St. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria. (Sandini Vit. Pont. p. 118, not. 7.) Siricius shortly after decreed that such monks should be aggregated to the clergy, as were fitted by their morals and education for the clerical functions. (Quos tamen morum gravitas, et vitæ ac fidei institutio sancta commendat. Siricii Epist. ad Himer. Terrac. c. 13.) The devastations of the barbarians caused them to be more frequently employed in the public ministry: and when the propriety of this innovation was questioned in the commencement of the seventh century, Boniface IV. called a council at Rome, and defended the interests of the monks. See the acts in Smith's appendix to Bede, p. 717.

⁵¹ It appears, however, from many instances in the Saxon records, that though the private monks were destitute of property, the abbot, if he were the founder, considered the monastery and its dependencies as his own, and disposed of them by his testament. If the heir was a monk, he became the abbot; if a layman, he received the revenue, and was bound to maintain the monks. See Eddius, (Vit. Wilf. c. 60, 61.) Wilkins, (Conc. p. 84, 144, 172, 175,) Ieland, (Collect. vol. i. p. 238,) and the charters in the appendix to Smith's edition of Bede, (p. 764.)

covetous, and the rapacity of the powerful. The extensive domains which Oswiu gave to the Abbess Hilda, have been already noticed. Egfrid, one of his successors, displayed an equal munificence in favour of the Abbot Bennet Biscop.⁵² When the property of the rich abbey of Glastenbury was ascertained, by order of the king of Mercia, it was found to comprise no less than eight hundred hides:⁵³ and in the enumeration of the different estates belonging to the monks of Ely, are mentioned more than eighty places, situated in the neighbouring counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, Hereford, and Huntingdon.⁵⁴

The estates of the monks, like those of the clergy, were liberated from all secular services: and the hope of participating in so valuable a privilege, gave occasion to a singular species of fraud, which cast a temporary but unmerited stain on the reputation of the order. We learn from Bede, that in the reign of Aldfrid, king of Northumbria, certain noblemen had expressed an ardent desire to consecrate their property to the service of religion. By the influence of friends and presents, the consent of the sovereign was obtained; and the ecclesiastical privileges were confirmed to them by ample charters, subscribed with the signatures of the king, the bishops, and the principal thanes.⁵⁵ But their secret motives were betrayed by the sequel of their conduct: and the advantages, not the virtues of the profession, proved to be the object of their pursuit. They quitted not the habits nor the pleasures of a secular life: but were content to assume the title of abbots, and to collect on some part of their domain a society of profligate and apostate monks. The wife also was proud to copy the example of her husband; and her vanity was flattered with the power of legislating for a sisterhood of females as ignorant and dissipated as herself. The success of the first adventurers stimulated the industry of others. Each succeeding favourite was careful to procure a similar charter for his family: and so universal was the abuse, that the venerable Bede ventured to express a doubt whether, in a few years, there would remain a soldier to draw the sword against an invading enemy.⁵⁶ That respectable priest, in the close of his ecclesiastical history, dedicated to King Ceolwulf, hints in respectful terms his opinion of these nominal monks; but in his letter to Archbishop Egbert, he assumes a bolder tone, and, in the language of zeal and detestation, insists on the necessity of putting a speedy period to so infamous a practice.⁵⁷ But the secular abbots were nume-

⁵² Bed. l. iii. c. 24. Hist. Abbat. Wirem. p. 294, 295.

⁵³ Malm. Antiq. Glast. p. 314, 315.

⁵⁴ Hist. Elien. p. 510. For the motives of these donations see the preceding chapter, p. 80.

⁵⁵ Anno 704.

⁵⁶ *Decet prospicere ne, rarescente copia militiæ secularis, absint qui fines nostros a barbarica incursione tueantur omnino deest locus, ubi filii nobilium aut emeritorum militum possessionem accipere possint.* Bed. Ep. ad Egb. p. 309.

⁵⁷ Bed. Hist. l. v. c. 24. Ep. ad Egb. Ant. p. 309. 312.

rous and powerful, and existed in the other kingdoms no less than in that of Northumbria. It was in vain that Bede denounced them to his metropolitan, and that the synod of Cloveshoe attributed their origin to avarice and tyranny:⁵⁸ they survived the censures of the monk, and the condemnation of the synod; their monasteries were inherited by their descendants; and for their extirpation the Saxon church was indebted to the devastations of the pagan Danes in the succeeding century.⁵⁹

It is against the wealth and immunities of the monks that their enemies have directed the fiercest of their attacks. Wit and malignity have combined to expose the riches which sprung from the profession of poverty, and the distinctions which rewarded the vow of obedience. From the discipline of the cloister its votaries are supposed to have acquired the science of fraud and superstition; the art of assuming the garb of sanctity, to amuse the credulity of the people, and of prostituting to private advantage the most sacred institutions. In investigating the manners of a class of men who lived in a remote period, it is always difficult to restrain the excursions of the fancy: but if passion be permitted to guide the inquiry, possible are frequently substituted for real occurrences; and what *might* have been the guilt of a few individuals, is confidently ascribed to the whole body. If, in the theology of the monks, "to patronize the order was esteemed the first of virtues," if they taught that "the foundation of a monastery was the secure road to heaven, and that a bountiful donation would, without repentance, efface the guilt of the most deadly sins,"⁶⁰ they were undoubtedly the corrupters of morality, and the enemies of mankind. But of these doctrines no vestige remains in their writings, and we have yet to learn from what source their modern adversaries derive the important information. If they had consulted the venerable Bede, he would have taught them that "no offering, though made to a monastery, could be pleasing to the Almighty, if it proceeded from an impure conscience;"⁶¹ from the council of Calcuith, they

⁵⁸ Wilkins, p. 95.

⁵⁹ Most of the modern writers, who attempt to describe the Saxon monks, are careful to consult the invective of Bede against the secular monasteries. But, unfortunately, they are unable to distinguish the real from the pretended monks; and scrupulously ascribe to the former every vice with which *he* reproaches the latter. (See Inett, Orig. Sax. vol. i. p. 127. Biog. Britan. art. Bede. Henry, Hist. vol. iii. p. 299.) Inett has even discovered, from Bede's letter to Archbishop Egbert, that, on account of the general depravity of the monks, those who were desirous to have their children educated virtuously, were obliged to send them abroad. (Inett, *ibid.*) After a diligent perusal of the same letter, I may venture to assert that it does not contain the most remote allusion to such a circumstance. In reality, the true monasteries were, at this period, filled with men of the strictest virtue; and Bede's complaints were directed only against the noblemen, who made themselves abbots, in order to obtain the monastic privileges, and against their followers, who, without practising the duties, assumed the name and the dress of the monks.

⁶⁰ Hume, Hist. p. 42. 77. Sturges, Reflect. on Popery, p. 31. Hen. vol. iv. p. 299.

⁶¹ Bed. Ep. ad Egb. p. 312.

might have learnt that "repentance was then only of avail, when it impelled the sinner to lament his past offences, and restrained him from committing them again;"⁶² and in the acts of the synod of Cloveshoe, they might have seen how repugnant such interested morality was to the genuine doctrine of the Saxon church. "The man," say the prelates, "who indulges his passion, in the confidence that his charities will procure his salvation, instead of making an acceptable offering to God, throws himself into the arms of Satan."⁶³ Alms, indeed, were enumerated by the monks among the most efficacious means of disarming the justice of the Almighty: and in this opinion they were supported by the clearest testimonies of the inspired writings.⁶⁴ But they did not point out their own body as the sole, or the principal object of charity. To the penitent, who was anxious to make his peace with heaven, they proposed works of public utility. They exhorted him to repair the roads and erect bridges; to purchase the freedom of slaves; to exercise the duties of hospitality; and to clothe and support the distressed peasants, whom the broils of their petty tyrants often reduced to the lowest state of wretchedness.⁶⁵ If, among these different objects, frequent donations were made to the religious houses, the impartial reader will consider them as proofs rather of their merit than their avarice. For men, however vicious they may be, are seldom blind to the vices of their teachers. The malignity of the human heart is gratified with discovering the defects of those who claim the reputation of superior virtue. Had the monks been, as they are so frequently described, an indolent, avaricious, and luxurious race, they would never have commanded the confidence, nor have been enriched by the benefactions of their countrymen.

It is at the commencement of religious societies, that their fervour is generally the most active. The Anglo-Saxon monks of the seventh century, were men, who had abandoned the world through the purest motives; and whose great solicitude was to practise the duties of their profession. They had embraced a life, in appearance at least, irksome and uninviting. Their devotions were long; their fasts frequent; their diet coarse and scanty. For more than a century wine and beer were, in the monastery of Lindisfarne, excluded from the beverage of the monks; and the first mitigation of this severity was introduced in favour of Ceolwulf, a royal novice.⁶⁶ The discipline, which St. Boniface prescribed to his disciples at Fulda, he had learned in England; and from it we may infer, that the Saxon Benedic-

⁶² *Admissa deflere, et fleta in postmodum non admittere.* Wilk. Con. p. 181.

⁶³ *Sua Deo dare videntur, (sed) seipsos diabolo per flagitia dare non dubitantur.* Id. p. 98, xxvi. Cloveshoe was probably Abingdon, (Stevens's Translation of Bed. p. 292, not.) It was originally called Seusham, or Seukesham, (Lel. Itiner. vol. ii. p. 42, ix. p. 33.)

⁶⁴ Dan. iv. 24. Matt. xxiv. 35. Luc. xi. 14.

⁶⁵ Wilk. p. 140. 236.

⁶⁶ Heved. anno 742.

tines, whose institute was less austere than that of the Scottish cœnobites, were men of the strictest abstinence. They refrained from the use of flesh, wine, and beer, refused the assistance of slaves, and with their own hands cultivated the deserts which surrounded them.⁶⁷ The voluntary professors of a life so severe and mortified, ought certainly to be acquitted of the more sordid vices; and if they consented to accept the donations of their friends, we may safely ascribe that acceptance to lawful and honourable motives. The truth of this observation will be exemplified in the conduct of the first abbots of Weremouth. They were descended from the noblest families in Northumbria; and their monastery was endowed with the most ample revenues. Yet they despised the vain distinctions of rank and wealth; associated with their monks in the duties of the cloister, and the labours of husbandry; and in their diet, their dress, and their accommodations, descended to a level with the lowest of their disciples. Their riches were not devoted to the encouragement of idleness, or the gratification of sensuality: but by their liberality, foreign artists were invited to instruct the ignorance of their countrymen; paintings and statues were purchased for the decoration of their churches; and their library was enriched with the choicest volumes of profane and sacred literature. The last care of Bennet, their founder, was directed to these objects. He had a brother, whose avarice would have grasped at the government, and whose prodigality would have quickly exhausted the treasury of the abbey. Him he conjured the monks to banish from their thoughts; to permit neither authority nor affection to influence their suffrages; and to elect for his successor the worthiest, though he might be the youngest and most ignoble brother in the monastery.⁶⁸

The conduct of the abbots of Weremouth, was the conduct of almost all the superiors of religious societies at this period. To erect edifices worthy of the God whom they adored, to imitate the solemnity of the Roman worship, and to arrest by external splendour the attention of their untutored brethren, were the principal objects of their ambition: and in the prosecution of these objects, they necessarily accelerated the progress of civil as well as religious improvement. 1. The architecture of the Saxons, at the time of their conversion, was rude and barbarous. They lived amid ruins, which attest the taste of a more civilized people: but their ignorance beheld them with indifference, and their indolence was satisfied with the wretched hovels of their ancestors. The first impulse was communicated by the missionaries, who

⁶⁷ *Viros strictæ abstinentiæ; absque carne et vino, absque sicera et servis, proprio manuum suarum labore contentos.* Ep. Bonif. p. 211. In these points they seem to have improved on the original rule of St. Benedict. See note (E).

⁶⁸ Bede, *Vitæ Abbatum Wirem.* passim. *Homilia in natal. Divi. Benedicti.* op. tom. vii. col. 464.

constructed churches for the accommodation of their converts. Those built by the Scots were of oaken planks, those by the Romans of unwrought stone. Both were covered with reeds or straw. But when the Saxons, in their visits to the tombs of the apostles, had seen the public buildings of other countries, they blushed at the inferiority of their own; and resolved to imitate what they had learned to admire. The considerations of labour and expense were despised; and every art, which that age connected with the practice of architecture, was introduced or improved. Walls of polished masonry succeeded to the rough erections of their ancestors; the roofs of their churches were protected with sheets of lead; lofty towers added to the size and appearance of the building: and, to the astonishment of the untravelled multitude, windows of glass admitted the light, at the same time that they excluded the wind and rain.⁶⁹ The names of those, to whom the more southern nations were indebted for these improvements, are unknown:⁷⁰ but in the north, the labours of St. Bennet and St. Wilfrid have been gratefully recorded by contemporary historians. The neighbouring churches of Weremouth and Jarrow established the reputation of the former, and were long the admiration of his countrymen.⁷¹ The efforts of the latter were more numerous, and more widely diffused. His first attempt was to repair and beautify the cathedral church of York, which had been originally built by Edwin of Northumbria; and now, after the short interval of forty years, was rapidly hastening to decay. By his instructions the walls were strengthened, the timber of the roof was renewed, and a covering of lead opposed to the violence of the weather. From the windows he removed the lattices of wood, and curtains of linen, the rude contrivances of an unskilful age; and substituted in their place the more elegant and useful invention of glass. The interior of the church he cleansed from its impurities, and washed the walls with lime, till they became, according to the expression of his biographer, whiter than the snow.⁷² His success at York was a fresh stimulus to his industry, and at Rippon he raised a new church, which was built from the foundations according to his design. We are told that the masonry was nicely polished, that rows of columns supported the roof, and that porticoes adorned each of the principal entrances.⁷³ The monastery at Hexham was the last and most admired of his works. The height and length of the walls, the beautiful polish of the stones, the number of the columns and porticoes, and the spiral windings, which led to

⁶⁹ Edd. Vit. Wilf. c. 14.

⁷⁰ St. Aldhelm was probably active in this pursuit. Malmesbury tells us, that one of the churches built by him was superior to any other in England. Gale, p. 349.

⁷¹ Bede, p. 295.

⁷² Super nivem dealbavit. Edd. Vit. Wilf. c. 16. See also Malm. de Pont. l. iii.

⁷³ Edd. c. 17.

the top of each tower, have exercised the descriptive powers of Eddius, who, after two journeys to the apostolic see, boldly pronounced that there existed not, on this side of the Alps, a church to be compared with that of Hexham.⁷⁴ It is, indeed, probable that these buildings, which once excited raptures in the breasts of their beholders, would, at the present day, displease by the absence of the symmetry and taste. But we should recollect, that they were the first essays of a people emerging from barbarism, the rudiments of an art which has been perfected by the labours of succeeding generations. The men by whose genius, and under whose patronage they were constructed, were the benefactors of mankind, and might justly claim the gratitude not only of their contemporaries, but also of their posterity.⁷⁵

2. The interior of these edifices exhibited an equal spirit of improvement, and a superior display of magnificence. Of the spoils which their barbarous ancestors had wrested from a more polished people, a considerable portion was now dedicated to the service of the Deity; and the plate and jewels, which their piety poured into the treasuries of the principal churches, are represented of such immense value, that it is with reluctance we assent to the testimony of contemporary and faithful historians. From them we learn that, on the more solemn festivals, every vessel employed in the sacred ministry was of gold or silver; that the altars sparkled with jewels and ornaments of the precious metals; that the vestments of the priest and his assistants were made of silk, embroidered in the most gorgeous manner; and that the walls were hung with foreign paintings, and the richest tapestries.⁷⁶ In the church of York stood two altars, entirely covered with plates of gold and silver. One of them was also ornamented with a profusion of gems, and supported a lofty crucifix of equal value. Above were suspended three ranges of lamps, in a pharus of the largest dimensions.⁷⁷ Even the books employed in the offices of religion were decorated with similar magnificence. St. Wilfrid ordered the four gospels to be written with letters of gold, on a purple ground, and presented them to the church of Rippon in a casket of gold, in which were enchased a number of precious stones.⁷⁸ Of these ornaments some had been purchased from foreign countries; many were executed by the industry of native artists. In their convents the nuns were employed in the elegant works of embroidery: in the monasteries the monks practised the different mechanical arts. The ironsmith, the joiner, and the

⁷⁴ Id. c. 22.

⁷⁵ See note (F.)

⁷⁶ Bed. p. 295. 297. 299. 300. Edd. Vit. Wilf. c. 17. Alc. de Pont. v. 1224. 1266. 1488.

⁷⁷ Alc. *ibid.* v. 1488. The pharus was a contrivance for suspending lights in the church. Georgi, de Liturg. Rom. Pont. vol. i. p. lxxix.

⁷⁸ Edd. c. 17. Bed. l. v. c. 19. If the reader wish to see other accounts of the magnificent furniture of their churches, he may consult the *Monasticon*, vol. i. p. 40. 104. 165. 222.

goldsmith, were raised by their utility, to a high degree of consequence among their brethren; their professions were ennobled by the abbots and bishops, who occasionally exercised them; and these distinctions contributed to excite emulation, and accelerate improvement.⁷⁹

3. While the mechanic trades thus flourished under the patronage of the richer ecclesiastics, the more important profession of agriculture acquired a due share of their attention. The estates of the lay proprietors were cultivated by the compulsory labours of their theowas or slaves: but in every monastery numbers of the brotherhood were devoted to the occupation of husbandry; and the superior cultivation of their farms quickly demonstrated the difference between the industry of those who worked through motives of duty, and of those whose only object was to escape the lash of the surveyor.⁸⁰ Of the lands bestowed on the monks, a considerable portion was originally wild and uncultivated, surrounded by marshes, or covered with forests. They preferred such situations for the advantage of retirement and contemplation; and as they were of less value, they were more freely bestowed by their benefactors.⁸¹ But every obstacle of nature and soil was subdued by the unwearied industry of the monks. The forests were cleared, the waters drained, roads opened, bridges erected, and the waste lands reclaimed. Plentiful harvests waved on the coast of Northumbria, and luxuriant meadows started from the fens of the Girvii.⁸² The superior cultivation of several counties in England, is originally owing to the labours of the monks, who, at this early period, were the parents of agriculture as well as of the arts.

⁷⁹ Bede, p. 296. St. Dunstan worked in all the metals: (Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 94 :) he made organs (Gale, p. 324) and bells. (Monast. vol. i. p. 104.) St. Ethelwold practised the same trades as his instructor. Ibid. By a law published in the reign of Edgar, but probably transcribed from a more ancient regulation, every priest was commanded "to learn some handicraft, in order to increase knowledge. *to eacan læpe.*" Wilk. p. 225.

⁸⁰ From the Domesday survey, Mr. Turner observes, that the church lands were in a higher state of cultivation than those of any other order of society. Vol. iv. p. 205.

⁸¹ Bede, p. 128. 144. 156. 164. Several monasteries took their names from their situations, as Atbearwe, in the forest, (Bede, p. 144 :) Ondyrwuda, in the wood of the Deiri, (Bede, p. 183 :) Croyland, boggy land, (Ing. p. i. :) Thorney, the island of thorns, (Hug. Cand. p. 3 :) Jarrow or Gyrvum, a fen, (Id. p. 2.)

⁸² The coast of Northumbria was cultivated by the monks of Coldingham, Lindisfarne, Bambrough, Tinmouth, Jarrow, Weremouth, Hartlepool, and Whitby: the marshes of the Girvii were drained and improved by the monks of Croyland, Thorney, Ely, Ramsey, and Medhamsted. This fenny region, the theatre of monastic industry, extended the space of 68 miles, from the borders of Suffolk to Wainfleet in Lincolnshire, (Camden's Cambridgeshire.) After the lapse of so many centuries, there is reason to fear, that a very considerable part of it will be again lost to cultivation, by repeated inundations. In the years 1795, 1799, and 1800, about 140,000 acres were under water. "Two or three more floods," says Mr. Young, "will complete the ruin: and 300,000 acres of the richest land in Great Britain will revert to their ancient proprietors, the frogs, the coots, and the wild ducks of the region." *Annals of Agriculture*, 1804.

If the monastic bodies thus acquired opulence for themselves, they were not insensible to the wants of the unfortunate. The constant exercise of charity and hospitality had been indispensably enjoined by all their legislators. Within the precincts of each monastery stood an edifice, distinguished by the Greek name of *Xenodochium*, in which a certain number of paupers received their daily support, and which was gratuitously opened to every traveller who solicited relief. The monks were divided into classes, of which each in rotation succeeded to the service of the hospital. The abbot alone was exempted. To confine his attendance to particular days was repugnant to his other and more important occupations: but he was exhorted frequently to join his brethren in the performance of this humble and edifying duty. To the assistant monks it was recommended to shut their ears to the suggestions of pride and indolence; to revere the Saviour of mankind in the persons of the poor, and to recollect that every good office rendered to them, he would reward as done to himself.⁸³ Severity and impatience were strictly forbidden: they were to speak with kindness, and to serve with cheerfulness: to instruct the ignorance, console the sorrows, and alleviate the pains of their guests: to attach the highest importance to their employment; and to prefer the service of the indigent brethren of Christ, before that of the wealthy children of the world.⁸⁴ The legislator who framed these regulations, must have been inspired by the true spirit of the gospel; to execute them with fidelity, required men actuated by motives superior to those of mercenary attendants; and humanity will gratefully cherish the memory of these asylums, erected for the support of indigence and misfortune.⁸⁵

But it was in the time of public distress, that the charity of the monks was displayed in all its lustre. In their mutual wars the Saxon princes ravaged each others' territories without mercy; and, after the establishment of the monarchy, the devastations of the Danes frequently reduced the natives to the extremity of want. Agriculture was yet, except among the monastic bodies, in its infancy. The most plentiful years could scarcely supply the general consumption, and as often as an unfavourable season stinted the growth, or a hostile invasion swept away the produce

⁸³ St. Matt. c. xxv. v. 40.

⁸⁴ *Nec pauperibus æterni Christi vicarius tardus ac tepidus ministrare differendo desistat, qui celer ac fervidus divitibus caducis ministrando occurrere desiderat.* Apost. Bened. app. par. 3, p. 92.

⁸⁵ When the humanity of Louis XVI. induced him to improve the state of the public hospitals in France, a member of the academy of sciences was sent to inquire into the manner in which similar establishments were conducted in this country. At his return he gave to the English hospitals that praise which they so justly merit: but observed, that to render them perfect, two things were wanting, the zeal of the French curates, and the charity of the hospital nuns. "Mais il y manque deux choses, nos curés et nos hospitalières." Bergier, Art. Hôpitaux.

of the harvest, famine, with its inseparable attendant, pestilence, was the necessary result. On such occasions the monks were eager to relieve the wants of their countrymen; and whoever is conversant with their writers, must have remarked the satisfaction with which they recount the charitable exertions of their most celebrated abbots. Among these, a distinguished place is due to Leofric, the tenth abbot of St. Albans.⁸⁶ To erect a church, which in magnificence might equal the dignity of the abbey, had been the favourite project of his two immediate predecessors. The ruins of the ancient Verulam had been explored; the necessary materials had been prepared; the treasury was filled with the donations of their friends; and a profusion of gold and silver vases proved the extent of their resources. Leofric, in the vigour of manhood, succeeded to their riches and their projects: and his hopes were gratified with the prospect of erecting an edifice, which would transmit his name with honour to posterity. But the public calamity soon dissipated the flattering illusion. The horrors of famine depopulated the country, and his heart melted at the distress of his brethren. He cheerfully resolved to sacrifice the object of his ambition; the granaries of the monastery were opened to the sufferers; the riches of the treasury were expended for their relief; the plate reserved for his table was melted down; and, as a last resource, he ventured to sell the precious ornaments destined for the use and decoration of the church.⁸⁷ Of his monks there were several, who murmured at the liberality of their abbot; but they were careful to conceal their avarice beneath the mask of piety. Whatever had been once consecrated to the service of God, could not, they observed, without impiety, be alienated to profane purposes. Leofric meekly but truly replied, that the living were to be preferred to the inanimate temples of God: and that to support the former was a work of superior obligation to the decoration of the latter. His conduct was applauded: and his opponents were condemned to silence by the voice of the public.⁸⁸

In the same rank with Leofric, we may place Godric, the abbot of Croyland. His monastery, situated in the midst of deep and extensive marshes, offered a secure asylum to the crowds that fled from the exterminating swords of the Danes. Though his treasury had been lately pillaged by the officers of the crown; though Swein, the chieftain of the barbarians, threatened him with his resentment; Godric listened not to the suggestions of terror or of prudence, but received the fugitives with open arms, consoled them in their loss, and associated them to his own fortunes. During several months Croyland swarmed

⁸⁶ An. 1000.

⁸⁷ Some jewels and cameos were excepted, for which he could find no purchaser Mat. Paris, p. 995.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

with strangers, who were accommodated and supported at his expense. The cloisters and the choir were reserved for his own monks, and those of the neighbouring monasteries: the fugitive clergy chose for their residence the body of the church: the men were lodged in the other apartments of the abbey; and the women and children were placed in temporary buildings erected in the cemetery. But the most vigilant economy was soon compelled to sink under the accumulated expenses. The anxiety of the benevolent abbot was daily increased by the suspicions of Ethelred, and the menaces of Swein; and in his anguish he was heard to envy the fate of those whom he had followed to the grave. A last expedient remained, to solicit the friendship of Norman, a powerful retainer of Duke Edric; and the grant of a valuable manor for the term of one hundred years, secured the protection of that nobleman. While he lived, Croyland enjoyed tranquillity; but the estate was unjustly retained by his descendants, and recovered by the abbey.⁸⁹

CHAPTER V.

Government of the Anglo-Saxon Church—Episcopal Synods—National Councils—Supremacy of the Popes—They establish Metropolitan Sees—Confirm the Election of the Archbishops—Reform Abuses—And receive Appeals.

THE origin and nature of ecclesiastical government have, in modern ages, been the subjects of numerous and discordant theories. But in the sixth and seventh centuries, when the Anglo-Saxons embraced the doctrine of the gospel, the churches of the east and west obeyed one common constitution; and, in every Christian country, a regular gradation of honour and authority cemented together the great body of the clergy, from the lowest clerk to the pontiff who sat in the chair of St. Peter. To reject, or to improve this plan of government, were projects which never engaged the attention of our ancestors. The ignorance of the converts reposed with confidence on the knowledge of the missionaries: and the knowledge of the missionaries taught them to revere as sacred those institutions, which had been sanctioned by the approbation of antiquity. Hence the ecclesiastical polity of the Anglo-Saxons, as soon as circumstances permitted it to assume a consistent form, appeared to have been cast in the same mould as that of the other Christian nations. I. The concerns of each diocese were regulated by the bishop in his annual synods: II. A more extensive power of legislation was exercised

⁸⁹ Ingulf. f. 507. An. 1010. See note (G).

by the provincial and national councils; III. And these, in their turn, acknowledged the superior control of the Roman pontiffs.

I. The Anglo-Saxon bishops, in their respective dioceses, exercised the episcopal jurisdiction according to the direction of the canons: and few instances are preserved in history, of either clerk or layman, who dared to refuse obedience to their legitimate authority. Twice in the year, on the calends of May and November, they summoned their clergy to meet them in the episcopal synod. Every priest, whether secular or regular, to whose administration a portion of the diocese had been intrusted, was commanded to attend: and his disobedience was punished by a pecuniary fine, or by suspension from his functions during a determinate period.¹ As the subjects of their future discussion involved the interests of religion, and the welfare of the clergy, each member was exhorted to implore by his prayers, and deserve by his conduct the assistance of the Holy Spirit. With this view, they were commanded to meet together, and travel in company to the episcopal residence; to be attended by the most discreet of their clerks; and carefully to exclude from their retinue every person of a light or disedifying deportment.² Three days were allotted for the duration of the synod; and on each day, the general fast was only terminated by the conclusion of the session. At the appointed hour, they entered the church in order and silence; the priests were ranged according to their seniority; below them sat the principal among the deacons; and behind was placed a select number of laymen, distinguished by their superior piety and wisdom. The bishop opened the synod with an appropriate speech, in which he promulgated the decrees of the last national council;³ explained the regulations which he deemed expedient for the reformation of his diocese; and exhorted the members to receive with reverence the mandates of their father and instructor. He did not, however, prohibit the freedom of debate.⁴ Each individual was requested to speak his sentiments without restraint; to offer the objections or amendments which his prudence and experience might suggest; to expose the difficulties, against which he had to struggle in the government of his parish; and to denounce the names and crimes of the public sinners, whose contumacy refused to yield to the zeal of their pastor, and defied the censures of the church.⁵

¹ Wilk. Con. vol. i. p. 220, xlv. vol. iv. p. 784.

² Id. vol. i. p. 225, iv. 266, iv.

³ Id. p. 98, xxv. Of the discourses spoken by the bishops on these occasions, two are still preserved; one of which is supposed to have been composed by Ælfric, the author of the Saxon homilies, the other by Ælfric, afterwards archbishop of York, (Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 153. 161.) Wilkins imagines they were collected from the rule of St. Benedict: but a diligent comparison will show that they were formed after the *admonitio synodalis* of the Roman pontifical, which has been accurately published by Georgi. *De Liturg. Rom. Pont.* vol. iii. p. 425.

⁴ Wilk. vol. iv. p. 785.

⁵ Id. vol. i. p. 225, v. vi.

It had been the wish of St. Paul, that his converts should prefer, for the decision of their disputes, the assembly of the saints to the tribunal of a pagan magistrate: the ancient fathers, the inheritors of his spirit, had commanded, that the controversies of the clergy should be withdrawn from the cognisance of the secular judges, and committed to the wisdom and authority of their ecclesiastical superiors.⁶ The synod, as soon as the plan of reform had been adjusted, resolved into a court of judicature; every clerk, who conceived himself aggrieved by any of his brethren, was admitted to prefer his complaint, and justice was administered according to the decisions of the canons, and the notions of natural equity. But the testimony and recriminations of the contending parties might have scandalized their weaker brethren; and, during these trials, every stranger was prudently excluded from the debates. On their re-admission, they were publicly invited to accuse, before the assembly of his peers, the clergyman who had notoriously neglected the duties of his profession, or dared to violate the rights of his fellow-citizens: and, if a prosecutor appeared, the parties were heard with patience, and judgment was pronounced. The business of the meeting was then terminated: the bishop arose, made a short exhortation, gave his benediction, and dissolved the assembly.⁷

II. The many and important advantages which must have arisen from synods thus organized and conducted, were felt, and duly appreciated by the Anglo-Saxon prelates: but the superior dignity and superior authority of the national councils have chiefly claimed the notice, and exercised the diligence of historians. The right of convoking these assemblies was vested in the archbishop of Canterbury; but in the exercise of this privilege he was directed, not only by the dictates of his own prudence, but sometimes by the commands of the pope, more frequently by the decrees of the preceding council.⁸ At his summons the bishops repaired to the appointed place, accompanied by the abbots, and the principal ecclesiastics of their dioceses; who, though they pretended to no judicial authority, assisted at the deliberations, and subscribed to the decrees.⁹ Of these assemblies the great objects were, to watch over the purity of faith, and the severity of discipline; to point out to the prelates and the parochial clergy the duties of their respective stations; to reform

⁶ Id. vol. iv. p. 785, 786.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ After York became an archbishopric, each of the metropolitans convoked, on certain occasions, the bishops of their respective provinces.

⁹ See Wilkins, Con. p. 51. 94. 167. 169. Respecting the council of Calcuith, Henry informs us, (and he affects to consider the information as highly important, Hen. vol. iii. p. 241,) that in the preamble to the canons, it is said to have been "called in the name, and by the authority of Jesus Christ, the supreme head of the church." Were the assertion true, I know not what inference he could justly deduce from it: but unfortunately it is one of the pious frauds, into which his zeal sometimes betrayed him. The passage is not to be found in any edition of the acts of the council. See Spelman, (p. 327.) and Wilkins, (p. 169.)

the abuses, which the weakness of human nature insensibly introduces into the most edifying communities; and to regulate whatever concerned the propriety and splendour of the public worship. The selection of the subjects of discussion appears to have been intrusted to the wisdom of the metropolitan, who composed a competent number of canons, and submitted them to the judgment of his brethren.¹⁰ Their approbation imparted to them the sanction of laws, which bound the whole Saxon church, and were enforced with the accustomed threat of excommunication against the transgressors. But it was soon discovered, that the dread of spiritual punishment operates most powerfully on those who, from previous habits of virtue, are less disposed to rebel; and that it is necessary, among men of strong passions and untutored minds, to oppose to the impulse of present desire, the restraint of present and sensible chastisement. With this view the bishops frequently solicited and obtained the aid of the civil power. Whenever the *witena-gemot*, the council of the sages, was assembled, they were careful to improve the favourable opportunity; to call the public attention to the more flagrant violations of ecclesiastical discipline; and to demand that future transgressors might be amenable to the secular tribunals. To the success of these applications the statutes of the Saxon councils bear ample testimony.¹¹ So early as the reign of Ethelbert, the laws of Kent had guarded the property of the church with the heaviest penalties;¹² and the zeal of his grandson, Earconbert, prompted him to enforce with similar severity the observance of the canonical fast of Lent.¹³ Persuaded of the necessity of baptism by the instructions of his teachers, the legislator of Wessex placed the new-born infant under the protection of the law, and by the fear of punishment stimulated the diligence of the parents. The delay of a month subjected them to the penalty of thirty shillings: and if, after that period, the child died without having received the sacred rite, nothing less than the forfeiture of their property could expiate the offence.¹⁴ To relapse into the errors of paganism, provoked a still more rigorous punishment. The sincerity of the convert was watched with a suspicious eye; and the man that presumed to offer sacrifice to the gods, whom he had previously abjured, besides the loss of his estate, was condemned to the disgrace of the pillory, unless he was redeemed by the contributions of his

¹⁰ Among the constitutions of the Anglo-Saxon metropolitans, is preserved a code of laws, which St. Odo appears to have selected from the canons of preceding synods. (Wilk. p. 212.) It has been particularly noticed by Henry, as characteristic of the haughty spirit which he is pleased to ascribe to that prelate, (Hcn. Hist. vol. iii. p. 264.) But from what lexicographer had the historian learned that *ammonemus regem et principes*, means, "I command the king and the princes?" It is a singular fact that Henry's short version of ten lines is disgraced by four blunders, each of which is calculated to enforce the charge of arrogance against the archbishop.

¹¹ Wilk. Con. p. 56. 58. 60. Leges Sax. passim.

¹² Wilk. Con. p. 29. An. 605.

¹³ Bed. l. iii. c. 8. An. 640.

¹⁴ Leges Sax. p. 14. An. 633.

friends.¹⁵ By degrees, these penal statutes were multiplied, till there scarcely remained a precept of the decalogue, the overt transgression of which was not punishable by the civil law. But of nothing were the Saxons more jealous than of the honour of their women. Every species of insult which could be offered to female chastity, was carefully enumerated; the degrees of guilt were discriminated with accuracy; and the chastisement was proportioned to the nature of the offence, and the dignity of the injured person.¹⁶ The fines arising from these ecclesiastical crimes were paid into the treasury of the bishop, and to his prudence was intrusted the administration of the money: but he was strictly commanded to devote it to the relief of the poor, the repairs of decayed churches, and the education of those who had destined themselves to the ministry of the altar.¹⁷

III. From the history of the evangelists we learn that, among the companions of Jesus, Peter was particularly distinguished by his heavenly Master.¹⁸ That precedency of honour and jurisdiction, which has been denied to him by the skepticism of modern polemics, was readily conceded by the more docile piety of our ancestors: whose sentiments are plainly and forcibly recorded in the works of their most celebrated writers. "The prince of the apostles, the shepherd of all believing nations, the head of the chosen flock, and the first pastor of the church," are the titles by which they commonly describe him:¹⁹ and to him they are careful to attribute, as "a peculiar privilege, the power to bind, and

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 11. **Healþränge** sometimes means the pillory, sometimes a legal compensation instead of the punishment.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 2, 3, 4, 6, et passim. If the clergy were assisted by the power of the civil magistrate, the civil magistrate in return was much indebted to the superior knowledge of the clergy. It was by the persuasion, and with the assistance of the missionaries, that the first code of Saxon laws was published by Ethelbert, "juxta morem Romanorum." *Bed. l. ii. c. v.* From the time of their conversion, the study of the Roman jurisprudence appears to have been a favourite pursuit with the clergy. St. Aldhelm visited the school at Canterbury, that he might learn, "legum Romanorum jura, et cuncta jurisconsultorum secreta." (*Ep. Aldhel. apud Gale, p. 341*;) and Bede speaks of the code of Justinian as of a work well known to his countrymen. (*Bede Chron. p. 28, anno 567.*) To this study was necessarily added that of the ecclesiastical canons; and the knowledge of each must have given the clergy a great superiority, both as legislators in the witenagemot, and as magistrates in the different courts, at which it was their duty to attend. Alfred the Great, in his laws, seems to ascribe the substitution of pecuniary compensation in the place of corporal punishment, to the advice of the clergy, who taught that mercy rather than revenge should distinguish the penal code of a Christian people. (*Leg. Sax. p. 33.*) It is, however, difficult to reconcile this assertion with the testimony of Tacitus, who observed, several centuries before, that such compensations were common among the nations of Germany. *Levioribus delictis, pro modo, pœna: equorum pecorumque numero convicti multantur: pars multa regi, vel civitati, pars ipsi qui vindicatur, vel propinquis ejus exsolvitur—Luitur enim etiam homicidium certo armentorum ac pecorum numero, recipiturque satisfactionem universa domus.* *Tac. German. c. 12. 21.*

¹⁷ *Leges Sax. p. 124.*

¹⁸ *Matt. x. 2; xvi. 18, 19; xvii. 26. Mark iii. 16. Luc. v. 10; vi. 4; xxii. 32. John i. 42; xxi. 15—19.*

¹⁹ *Primi pastoris ecclesie, principis apostolorum. Bed. l. ii. c. 4. Hom. in vig. St. And. tom. vii. col. 409. Eallum zeleafullum leodum lareop 7 hyrðe.*

the monarchy to loose in heaven and on earth."²⁰ Nor did they conceive the dignity which he enjoyed, to have expired at his death. The same motives, to which was owing its original establishment, pleaded for its continuance; and the high prerogatives of Peter were believed to descend to the most remote of his successors. The bishop of Rome was pronounced to be "the first of Christian bishops; the church of Rome, the head of all Christian churches."²¹

Impressed with these notions, the Anglo-Saxons looked up to the pontiff with awe and reverence; consulted him respecting the administration of their church; and bowed in respectful silence to his decisions. His benediction they courted as the choicest of blessings:²² and to obtain it, was one of the principal motives which drew so many pilgrims to the threshold of the Vatican. No less than eight Saxon kings,²³ besides crowds of noblemen and prelates, are recorded to have paid their homage in person to the representative of St. Peter: and those who were deterred by reasons of policy, or the dangers of the journey, were yet careful to solicit by their ambassadors, and to deserve by their presents, the papal benediction.²⁴ Highly as they prized his friendship, so they feared his enmity. The dread of his resentment struck terror into the breasts of the most impious: and the threat of his malediction was the last and strongest rampart which weakness could oppose to the rapacity of power. The clergy of each church, the monks of each convent, sought to shelter themselves under his protection: and the most potent monarchs, sensible that their authority was confined within the narrow limits of their own lives, solicited, in favour of their religious foundations, the interference of a power, whose influence was believed to extend to the most distant ages. Of the bulls issued at their request by different popes, several have descended to posterity,²⁵

Hom. apud Whelock, p. 395. Quem dominus Jesus Christus caput electi sibi gregis statuit. Ep. Alcuini Eanbaldo Archiep. apud Canis. Ant. Lect. tom. ii. p. 455. Pastor gregis dominici. St. Ald. de Vir. p. 361.

²⁰ Ipse potestatem ligandi et monarchiam solvendi in cœlo et in terra felici sorte et peculiari privilegio accipere promeruit. Ep. St. Aldhelmi Gerontio Regi inter Bonif. ep. 44, p. 61. These quotations would not have loaded the page, had not several eminent writers asserted, that the Anglo-Saxons were ignorant of the primacy of St. Peter. See note (H) at the end of the volume.

²¹ Cum primum in toto orbe pontificatum gereret. Bed. Hist. l. ii. c. 1. Totius ecclesiæ caput eminet eximum. Bed. Hom. in nat. D. Bened. vol. vii. p. 464. Caput ecclesiarum Christi. Alcuin. apud Canis. tom. ii. p. 455.

²² See the epistles of Alcuin to the popes Adrian and Leo. Canis. tom. ii. p. 418, 419.

²³ Cæadwalla, Ina, Offa, Kenred, Offa, Siric, Ethelwulph, and Canute.

²⁴ Hanc benedictionem omnes, qui ante me sceptro præfuere Merciorum, meruerunt ab antecessoribus tuis adipisci. Hanc ipse humilis peto, et a vobis, o beatissime, impetrare cupio. Ep. Kenulphi Reg. Leoni pap. apud Wilk. p. 164. See also p. 40. 165. Chron. Sax. p. 86. 89, 90.

²⁵ They may be read in the collections of the Anglo-Saxon councils by Spelman and Wilkins. Several of them have not escaped the suspicion of antiquaries. But, if it could even be proved that none extant are genuine, there is sufficient evidence that it was customary to obtain such charters, from the very commencement of the Saxon

and are conceived in terms the best calculated to strike with religious awe the minds of those who are predisposed to receive such impressions. In them the pontiff usually asserts the authority which he exercises as successor to the prince of the apostles; separates from the communion of the faithful the violators of his charters; and threatens their contumacy with the punishments that befell Dathan, and Abiron, and Judas, the betrayer of the Lord.

But the confirmation of royal grants and monastic privileges was the least important part in the exercise of the papal prerogative. By his authority the pontiff—1st, Established, extended, or restricted the jurisdiction of the archiepiscopal sees; 2d, Confirmed the election of the metropolitans; 3d, Enforced the observance of canonical discipline; 4th, And revised the decisions of the national councils.

1. In relating the changes which affected the jurisdiction of the Anglo-Saxon metropolitans, it will be necessary to recapitulate what has been already noticed in a preceding chapter. The first ecclesiastical division of the Octarchy was made, not by the missionaries, but by Gregory the Great, who, in the plenitude of his authority, fixed with precision the number of the metropolitans, and of their suffragans. When subsequent events had prevented the execution of his plan, the apostolic see was again consulted, and by Vitalian all the Saxon prelates were subjected to the archbishop of Canterbury; by Agatho their number was limited to eleven.²⁶ At the distance, however, of sixty years, Gregory III. restored the metropolitan jurisdiction to the church of York; and Adrian, not long after, at the solicitation of the king of Mercia, raised the see of Lichfield to the same dignity. Though the superiority of the new primate was borne with reluctance by his former equals, none of them dared to refuse him the respect due to his rank; but submitted in silence to the papal mandate, till Leo III., at the urgent request of Kenulf, the successor of Offa, rescinded the decree of his predecessor.²⁷ These instances may suffice to show, that the powers of the Anglo-church. (See Eddius, Vit. Wilf. c. 49,) Bede, (Vit. Abbat. Wirem. p. 295. 300,) and the council of Calcuith, (Wilk. p. 147, viii.)

²⁶ Wilk. p. 46.

²⁷ Anno 803. It will require some share of ingenuity, in those who affect to assert the independence of the Anglo-Saxon church, to elude the strong language in which the bishops of the council of Cloveshoe relate the conclusion of this business. "Ipse apostolicus Papa, ut audivit et intellexit quod injuste fuisset factum, statim sui privilegii auctoritatis præceptum posuit, et in Britanniam misit, et præcepit, ut honor St. Augustini sedis integerrime redintegraretur." The conduct of Pope Adrian they ascribe to misinformation. "Insuper cartam a Romana sede missam per Hadrianum papam de pallio et archiepiscopali sede in Licedfeldensi monasterio, cum consensu et licentia domni apostolici Leonis papæ præscribimus aliquid valere, quia per subreptionem et male blandam suggestionem adipiscabatur." Wilk. p. 167. In Spelman's Councils these passages are omitted: but they have been restored by Smith (Bed. app. p. 787) and Wilkins, (Con. p. 167.) On this subject may also be consulted the letter of Kenulf, king of Mercia, and the two answers of Pope Leo. Id. p. 164. Ang. Sac. vol. i. p. 460.

Saxon metropolitans were regulated by the superior authority of the pontiff; and that every alteration in their jurisdiction was introduced by his order, or confirmed by his approbation.

2. The pallium was an ecclesiastical ornament, the use of which was exclusively reserved to the metropolitans. Its origin is involved in considerable obscurity; but at the period in which our ancestors were converted, no archbishop was permitted to perform the most important of his functions, till he had obtained it from the hands of the pontiff. As soon as Augustine had received the episcopal consecration, he was careful to solicit this ornament from his patron Gregory the Great; his example was religiously imitated by all succeeding metropolitans, both at Canterbury and York; and with the pallium they received a confirmation of the archiepiscopal dignity:²⁸ whence, in the language of the court of Rome, they were usually styled the envoys of the holy see.²⁹ Before the primate elect could obtain this badge of his dignity, he was required to appear at Rome, and to answer the interrogations of the pontiff: but Gregory and his immediate successors excused the Saxon metropolitans from so laborious a journey, and generally sent the pallium by the messengers, who carried the news of their election.³⁰ Later pontiffs were, however, less indulgent. To prevent the highest ecclesiastical preferments from being occupied by men of noble birth, but disedifying morals, it was resolved to recall the former exemptions, and to subject every candidate to an examination in presence of the pope, before he could obtain the confirmation of his election. To this regulation the Saxon archbishops reluctantly submitted; and a second grievance was the consequence of their submission. According to the received notions of the northern nations, they blushed to approach the throne of their superior, without a present:³¹ but the sums, which at first had been received as gratuitous donations, were gradually exacted as a debt; and the increasing demand was followed by loud and repeated complaints. During the pontificate of Leo III., the Saxon prelates, in a firm, but respectful memorial, urged the indults of former popes to their predecessors; and requested that the pallium might be granted to their primates, without the fa-

²⁸ Idcirco ammonemus Brithwaldum præsulem sanctæ Cantuariorum ecclesiæ, quem auctoritate principis apostolorum Archiepiscopum ibidem confirmavimus. Ep. Joan. Pap. apud Edd. c. 52.

²⁹ This title is given to Archbishop Brithwald by his own messengers. Sancti Brithwaldi Cantuariorum ecclesiæ et totius Britannæ archiepiscopi, ab hac apostolica sede *emissi*. Edd. c. 51. Yet Brithwald was a Saxon, and owed his election to the clergy of Canterbury.

³⁰ Wilk. Con. p. 32. 35. Chron. Sax. p. 61. 69. 72.

³¹ During the middle ages, men had scarcely any notions of government, which were not derived from the feudal jurisprudence. Its principles not only formed the basis of civil polity, but were also gradually introduced into the ancient system of ecclesiastical discipline. To this source it were easy to trace most of the new customs which were adopted during that period.

tigue of a journey, or the expense of a present.³² The petition was unsuccessful; repeated precedents gave a sanction to the obnoxious custom; and the bishops at last desisted from a fruitless opposition.³³ After the lapse of two centuries, the hopes of their successors were awakened by the pilgrimage of Canute the Great to the tombs of the apostles. The king pleaded with warmth the cause of his prelates; the reluctance of the Romans yielded to the arguments of a royal advocate; and the pontiff contracted his claims to the personal attendance of future metropolitans.³⁴

3. To preserve the purity of the Christian worship, and to enforce the observation of canonical discipline, were always considered by the popes as the most important of their duties. With this view they frequently demanded from the Saxon prelates an exposition of their belief, and admonished them to reform the abuses which disfigured the beauty of their church. As early as the year six hundred and eighty, when the rapid progress of Monothelitism alarmed the zeal of the orthodox pastors, Agatho had summoned the archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans to attend a council at Rome:³⁵ but the length of the journey, and the necessities of their dioceses, were admitted as a legitimate excuse; and in lieu of their presence in the synod, the pontiff consented to accept a public profession of their faith. John, abbot of St. Martin's, was selected as papal legate on this occasion: and shortly after his arrival, Theodore and his suffragans assembled at Hethfield, and declared their adhesion to the decrees of the five first general councils, and to the condemnation of Monothelitism by Martin the First. The legate subscribed with the bishops, and received a copy of the acts, which he forwarded to Rome.³⁶

From the faith, the inquiries of the popes were soon directed to the manners of the Saxons. While Theodore lived, the vigilance of his administration supported the vigour of ecclesiastical discipline: but under his more indulgent, or less active successors, it was insensibly relaxed, till the loud report of Saxon immorality aroused the patriotism of St. Boniface, and provoked the animadversions of Zachary, the Roman pontiff. The missionary,

³² Wilk. Con. p. 166. Ann. 801.

³³ Chron. Sax. p. 126. 129. 152.

³⁴ Wilk. Con. p. 298. Ann. 1031.

³⁵ Sperabamus de Britannia Theodorum confamilum et coepiscopum nostrum, magnæ insulæ Britanniae archiepiscopum et philosophum, cum aliis qui ibidem hactenus demorantur: et hac de causa concilium huc usque distulimus. Ep. Agath. ad Imp. apud Bar. ann. 680. Malm. de Pont. l. i. f. 112. Spelman conjectures this council to have been that of Constantinople, but his mistake is corrected by the accuracy of Alford. Tom. ii. p. 368.

³⁶ Intererat huic synodo, pariterque Catholicæ fidei decreta firmabat vir venerabilis Joannes . . . Volens Agatho Papa, sicut in aliis provinciis, ita etiam in Britannia, qualis esset status ecclesiæ ediscere, hoc negotium reverentissimo Abbati Joanni injunxit. Quamobrem collecta ob hoc synodo, inventa est in omnibus fides inviolata Catholica, datumque illi exemplar ejus Romam perferendum. Bed. l. iv. c. 18.

from the heart of Germany, the theatre of his zeal, wrote in terms of the most earnest expostulation to the principal of the Saxon kings and prelates: the pontiff commanded Archbishop Cuthbert and his suffragans, under the penalty of excommunication, to oppose the severity of the canons to the corrupt practices of the times. His injunctions were cheerfully obeyed; the fathers of the council of Cloveshoe professed their readiness to second the zeal of the supreme pastor; and thirty canons of discipline were published for the general reformation of the bishops, clergy, monks, and laity.³⁷

The successors of Zachary inherited the vigilance of their predecessor. Forty years had not elapsed, when Adrian deemed it expedient to send the bishops of Ostia and Tudertum to Britain, with a code of laws for the use of the Anglo-Saxon church. The legates were received with respect by the clergy and laity. At their request two synods were assembled, one in Mercia, the other in Northumbria; twenty canons were published; and a solemn promise was received from each bishop, that he would cause them to be faithfully observed in his diocese.³⁸ But during the invasions of the Northmen, the feeble restraint of the law could not arrest the rapid decline of discipline, and, for almost a century, the voice of religion was drowned in the louder din of war. The return of tranquillity called forth the zeal of Pope Formosus. He had determined to sever the Saxon bishops from the communion of the holy see: but his anger was appeased by the representations of Archbishop Plegmund; and he contented himself with an exhortatory epistle, in which he complained, that, by the negligence of the prelates, the superstitions of paganism had been permitted to revive, and several dioceses been left, for a considerable period, destitute of pastors. After the lapse of fourteen

³⁷ The letter of Zachary is thus described in the proœmium to the acts of the council. *Scripta toto orbe venerandi pontificis, Domni Apostolici papæ Zachariæ, in duabus chartis in medium prolata sunt, et cum magna diligentia, juxta quod ipse apostolica sua auctoritate præcepit, et manifeste recitata, et in nostra quoque lingua apertius interpretata sunt. Quibus namque scriptis Britannîe hujus insulæ nostri generis accolas familiariter præmonebat, et veraciter conveniebat, et postremo amabiliter exorabat, et hæc omnia contemnentibus et in sua pertinaci malitia permanentibus anathematis sententiam proculdubio proferebam insinuabat.* Wilk. Con. p. 94. Language so forcible might have appalled a less sturdy polemic: but the sagacity or temerity of Dr. Henry has selected this very council to prove that the Saxon church rejected the papal supremacy. The curious reader may turn to note (I) at the end of the volume.

³⁸ The mission of these legates, as well as of the abbot John, has escaped the philosophic eye of Hume, who assures us that Ermanfroi, bishop of Sion, three centuries afterwards, was the first legate who ever appeared in the British Isles. (Hume, *Hist. c. iv. p. 182.*) Carte indeed observed them, but at the same time discovered, from a vague expression in the Saxon chronicle, that, instead of being invested with any authority, their only object was to renew the ancient correspondence between the two churches. (Carte, *Hist. vol. i. p. 270.*) This idea is satisfactorily refuted by their despatches to the pontiff. *Scriptissimus capitulare de singulis rebus, et per ordinem cuncta disserentes auribus illorum pertulimus, qui cum omni humilitatis subjectione, clara voluntate tam admonitionem vestram quam parvitatem nostram amplexantes, spoponderunt se in omnibus obedire.* Wilk. Con. p. 146.

years, both the bishops of Wessex died; and Plegmund seized the favourable opportunity to content the desires of the pope. He convened his suffragans, and divided the kingdom into five smaller districts. His conduct was approved at Rome; and he consecrated, on the same day, no less than seven bishops, five for the sees lately erected, and two for the vacant churches of Selsey and Dorchester.³⁹

4. In every rational system of legislation, the errors, which may arise from the ignorance or corruption of the inferior officers of justice, should be corrected by the greater wisdom, and superior authority of the higher courts of judicature. In the Christian church the Roman pontiffs were considered as the principal guardians of the canons; and from the earliest antiquity they have claimed and exercised the right of reviewing the causes of those bishops, who appealed to their equity from the partial decisions of provincial or national synods.⁴⁰ The first of the Saxon prelates, who invoked in his favour the protection of the holy see, was Wilfrid, the celebrated bishop of York.⁴¹ The history of his appeals has been related by two classes of writers, as opposite in sentiment as distant in time: by contemporary historians, who lament the causes which rendered them necessary, and hail the success with which they were attended: and by modern polemics, who condemn them as the unwarrantable attempts of an ambitious prelate to preserve his own power, by sacrificing the religious liberties of his countrymen. The clamorous warmth of the latter opposes a curious contrast to the silent apathy of the former: and a diligent comparison will justify the conclusion, that the present champions of the independence of the Anglo-Saxon church are actuated by motives which never guided the pens of the more ancient writers. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall attempt to clear the history of Wilfrid from the fictions, with which modern controversy has loaded it:⁴² my

³⁹ The reader, who is no stranger to the chronological difficulties, with which this event has tortured the ingenuity of antiquaries, will have observed that, while I admit the epistle of Formosus to be genuine, I reject as fabulous a part of the narrative contained in Malmesbury, and the register of Canterbury. (Wilk. Con. p. 199. 200.) I ascribe the epistle to Formosus, not merely on their authority, but principally on that of Eadmer, who, during the dispute respecting the precedency of Canterbury, in the commencement of the twelfth century, appears to have consulted the ancient records of that church, and to have discovered this letter and some others among a greater number, which age had rendered illegible. Eadm. nov. l. v. p. 128, 129. The consecration of the seven bishops could not have occurred before the year 910, when Fridestan, one of their number, is recorded in the Saxon chronicle to have taken possession of the see of Winchester. (Chron. Sax. p. 102.) As Asser, bishop of Sherburne, died only that year, and Denulf, of Winchester, in the preceding, (Ibid. Wigorn. ann. 909,) it follows that the story of the kingdom of Wessex having been without a bishop during seven years, is a fiction, which was probably invented to explain the origin of the complaint contained in the letter of Formosus.

⁴⁰ Natalis Alex. Hist. Eccl. sæc. iv. diss. xxviii. prop. 3.

⁴¹ Anno 678.

⁴² Among the historians, who have disputed with each other the merit of defaming this prelate, the pre-eminence is justly due to Carte, whose laborious volumes have

vouchers will be Eddius, the individual companion of his fortunes, and Bede, his contemporary and acquaintance: and the importance of the subject will, I trust, form a satisfactory apology for the length of the narration.

Egfrid, king of Northumbria, had married Ædilthryda, a princess, whose invincible attachment to the cloister has been noticed in the preceding chapter. Wearied with the constant solicitations of his wife, he referred her to Wilfrid, whom he had honoured with a distinguished place in his friendship, and endeavoured by the most seducing promises to allure to his interest. But his hopes were disappointed. After mature deliberation, the bishop approved the choice of the queen; and the king's displeasure was the reward of his approbation. From the court Ædilthryda retired to a convent; and Egfrid called to his throne another princess, named Ermenburga. The levity of the new queen was not calculated to efface the memory of her predecessor; her haughtiness, extortion, and prodigality, excited discontent; and the zeal of Wilfrid induced him to expostulate with her on the impropriety of her conduct. He had done no more than his duty required: but the pride of Ermenburga was wounded; she vowed to be revenged; and Egfrid, whose mind was already alienated, consented to be the minister of her resentment.⁴³

The see of Canterbury was, at this period, filled by Theodore, a prelate whose ardour for the improvement of the Saxon church, sometimes hurried him beyond the limits which the canons had prescribed to the exercise of the metropolitan authority. At the invitation of Egfrid, he visited the court of Northumbria. What secret proposals he might receive from the king, we can only conjecture:⁴⁴ but he had always avowed a desire to multiply the number of the Saxon bishoprics, and the present was a moment the

furnished a plentiful source of misrepresentation to the prejudice or negligence of succeeding writers. With the aid of a few scattered hints, in the works of three obscure authors, of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, (Gervase, Stubbs, and Richard of Hexham,) and of many gratuitous suppositions created by his own fancy, he has succeeded in forming a narrative most unfavourable to the character of Wilfrid. He had other, and more authentic documents before him, in the writings of Bede and Eddius. But of these he asserts, that the first has shown his disapprobation of Wilfrid by his silence: and that to Eddius no credit can be given, because he was chaplain to the injured prelate. It may, however, be observed, that Bede has made more frequent mention of Wilfrid, than, perhaps, of any other person, (Bed. l. iii. c. 13. 25. 28; l. iv. c. 2. 3. 5. 12. 13. 15. 16. 19. 23. 29; l. v. c. 11. 19;) and that Eddius wrote at a time when thousands were alive to convict him of falsehood, had he been guilty of it. If Bede was silent, and Eddius concealed the truth, where did Carte discover it?

⁴³ For the origin of the dissension between Egfrid and Wilfrid, compare Bede, (Hist. l. iv. c. 19,) Eddius, (Vit. Wilf. c. 24,) Eadmer, (Vit. Wilf. apud Mabil. c. 34,) and the monk of Ely, (Ang. Sac. vol. i. p. 598.)

⁴⁴ Eddius insinuates, (Vit. c. 24,) and Malmsbury asserts, (De Pont. l. iii. f. 149,) that Theodore was bribed by the presents of Egfrid. But it is not probable that the charge could be proved, as Wilfrid thought proper to abandon it in his petition to the pontiff. Edd. Vit. c. 29.

most propitious to his design. By his own authority, without the concurrence, without even the knowledge of Wilfrid, he divided the extensive diocese of York into three portions, and immediately conferred them on three bishops, whom he consecrated for the occasion.⁴⁵ The ejected prelate received the news with astonishment. He hastened to the court, exposed the injustice of the partition, and reclaimed in his favour the aid of the canons. But his remonstrances were heard with contempt; the flattery of the courtiers applauded his disgrace; and, as a last resource, he appealed, by the advice of some of the bishops, to the justice and authority of the apostolic see.⁴⁶

Had Theodore been educated in the same school with our modern writers, he would have laughed at the simplicity of Wilfrid, and the impotence of his appeal. But he was acquainted with the decisions of the canons; and his anxiety to preoccupy the ear of the pontiff, was more expeditious than the diligence of the deposed bishop, who, by the inclemency of the season, was detained in Friesland, and spent the winter in preaching to the pagans the truths of the gospel. With the return of spring he resumed his journey; and, at his arrival in Rome, was informed that his pretensions had been already notified and opposed by the monk Cœnwald, the envoy and advocate of the archbishop. Agatho summoned a council to his assistance; and the bishops of the suburbicane churches, with the priests and deacons of Rome, to the number of fifty, assembled to judge the cause of the Anglo-Saxon prelates. Before this court Wilfrid appeared with the dignity of conscious innocence. He called on the members to do justice to an injured and persecuted bishop, who, from the extremities of the earth, had been compelled to invoke the equity of the successor of St. Peter. Could his adversaries impeach his moral conduct? Could they point out in his administration a single instance, in which he had violated the holy canons? Yet had he been expelled from his diocese, and had seen it parcelled out, and bestowed on three intruded prelates. Of the motives which had induced the metropolitan to treat him with such

⁴⁵ It has been said that Lindisfarne, the ancient residence of the Scottish bishops, was left open for the acceptance of Wilfrid; (Wharton, *Ang. Sac.* vol. i. p. 693. *Carte, Hist.* vol. i. p. 248:) but this opinion is positively contradicted by Eddius, (*Vit.* c. 24,) and by Bede, (*Hist.* l. iv. c. 12.)

⁴⁶ *Cum consilio coepiscoporum suorum.* Ed. *Vit.* c. 24. In *Carte's* romance, the whole blame of this transaction is laid on the ambition of Wilfrid, who is accused of opposing the execution of the ninth canon of the council of Herutford, concerning the division of the larger dioceses. But as it might be objected, on the authority of Bede, that this canon was not approved; he eludes the difficulty, by affirming with Wharton, that the passage in the ecclesiastical historian is a forgery, probably of the monks, who hoped, by this expedient, to purify the character of Wilfrid. (*Carte, Hist.* vol. i. p. 246, note.) If on a mere conjecture we are bound to credit so malicious an accusation, at least we may be allowed to admire the ingenuity of the man, who could so artfully interpolate every manuscript, that the spurious passage cannot be distinguished from the text in any, not even in that which was written before, or immediately after the death of Bede himself. See *Smith's Bede*, præf. and p. 149.

harshness, it was not for him to judge. Theodore was the envoy of the holy see: he respected his character; and did not presume to condemn his conduct. As for himself, his great anxiety had been to secure the peace of the Anglo-Saxon church: he had not raised a clamorous opposition, but had withdrawn in silence from the violence of his enemies, and thrown himself with confidence on the justice of the holy see. The judgment of that see he now implored: and in its decision, favourable or unfavourable, he should willingly and respectfully acquiesce.⁴⁷

With the answer and recriminations of Cœnwald we are not acquainted. The cause was patiently and impartially discussed: and the judgment of the synod condemned the irregularity of his expulsion, though it seemed to approve the policy of the partition. It was ordered that Wilfrid should be restored to the diocese of which he had been unjustly deprived: but that he should, in conjunction with the other bishops, select from his own clergy a certain number of prelates, to assist him in the government of so extensive a diocese. To this decision was annexed the sentence of suspension against the clergyman, of excommunication against the laic, that should presume to oppose its execution.⁴⁸ A copy was delivered to Wilfrid, who remained some months in Rome, assisted with one hundred and twenty-five bishops at a second council, subscribed to the decrees, and bore testimony to the catholic belief of the Britons, Saxons, Picts, and Scots, who inhabited the northern provinces of the two British islands.⁴⁹

But the enmity of Egfrid and Ermenburga was too violent to listen to the dictates of justice, or to be subdued by the terrors of a papal mandate. In his journey to Rome, Wilfrid had with difficulty escaped the many snares which, by their direction, had been laid for his life: at his return, he was apprehended by their order, and committed to prison. During a confinement of nine months, the influence of threats and promises was alternately employed to extort a confession, that the decision of the pontiff had been forged by his friends, or purchased by presents.⁵⁰ But his constancy defeated every artifice; and his liberation was at last granted to the earnest prayer of the abbess Ebba, provided he would promise never more to set his foot within the territories of Egfrid. With a sigh Wilfrid subscribed the harsh condition; and, retiring from Northumbria, solicited the protection of Brithwald, nephew to the king of Mercia. That generous nobleman granted him a small estate, on which he built a monastery for

⁴⁷ Ed. c. 29.

⁴⁸ Ibid. c. 31. The success of Wilfrid is attributed by Inett (History p. 101) to the absence of his accusers. Yet it appears from undeniable authority, that not only Cœnwald, but several others were present. *Præsentibus ejus contrariis, qui a Theodoro et Hilda abbatissa ad eum accusandum huc prius convenerant.* Epist. Joan. pap. apud Eddium, c. 52.

⁴⁹ Ed. c. 51. Bed. l. v. c. 19.

⁵⁰ Edd. c. 33. 35.

himself and the faithful companions of his exile. But the emissaries of Egfrid discovered his retreat; and Wilfrid, rather than endanger the safety of his friend, fled into the kingdom of Wessex. At this distance he might have hoped to elude the notice of his enemies: but Irmenigild, the queen of Wessex, and the sister of Ermenburga, had imbibed the sentiments of the Northumbrian princess; and the fugitive bishop, after having sought in vain an asylum among his Christian countrymen, was compelled to intrust his safety to the honour and compassion of a pagan people. Edilwalch, king of Sussex, received him with welcome; pitied his misfortunes; and swore to protect him against the open violence, or the secret intrigues of the court of Northumbria.⁵¹ Wilfrid soon repaid the hospitality of his royal patron. By his preaching he converted numbers of the idolaters to the faith of Christ; by his superior knowledge he instructed them in the arts of civilized life. A continued drought for three years had exhausted the sources of vegetation; and the horrors of famine frequently urged the barbarians to put an end to their miserable existence. From the venerable Bede we learn, that in bodies of forty or fifty persons, they frequently proceeded to the nearest cliff, and there, linked in each others' arms, precipitated themselves into the waves.

Their distress excited the compassion of their guest, who, observing that the sea and the rivers abounded with fish, taught them the art of making nets, and of drawing from the waters a plentiful supply of food.⁵² For these services Edilwalch bestowed on him the isle of Selsey: where he was often visited by Cedwalla, an exile of the royal race of Cerdic. The similarity of their fortunes endeared him to the prince: who, when he had ascended the throne of his fathers, invited Wilfrid to his court, granted him a fourth part of the isle of Wight, and raised him to a distinguished place in his councils.⁵³ But the banishment of Wilfrid was now hastening to its conclusion. Theodore, as he had been the first to inflict, was also the first to repair the injury. Before his death he condemned the injustice of his former conduct, solicited a reconciliation, and wrote in favour of the exiled bishop to the kings of Mercia and Northumbria. Of these letters, one is still extant. In it the primate urges the obedience due to the pontiff; bears testimony to the merit of Wilfrid, his innocence, his patience, and his zeal; and entreats the king to grant this last request to his friend and father, ready to sink into the grave.⁵⁴

Theodore did not live to witness the effect of his exhortations, and his death was speedily followed by that of Egfrid. The

⁵¹ Edd. c. 39, 40.

⁵² Ibid. c. 40. Bed. l. iv. c. 13.

⁵³ Edd. c. 41. Bed. l. iv. c. 16.

⁵⁴ Edd. c. 42.

Northumbrian prince fell in battle, and with him expired the influence of Ermenburga. Aldfrid, the new king,⁵⁵ cheerfully consented to receive the exile under his protection, gave him immediate possession of the church of Hexham, and shortly after restored to him the sees of Lindisfarne and York.⁵⁶ During five years he again possessed the administration of his extensive diocese: but they were years of anxiety and distress. His opponents still formed a powerful party; and though they yielded for the present, they eagerly watched a more favourable moment. Their secret wishes were soon gratified by the attachment of Wilfrid to his monastery of Rippon. During his exile, many of its manors had been seized by his enemies; and when he reclaimed them, the palace resounded with complaints against his restless temper and insatiable ambition. Aldfrid lent a willing ear to these suggestions; and a plan was readily formed to precipitate the fall of the bishop. Wilfrid unexpectedly received a royal summons to surrender the monastery into the hands of his sovereign, that it might be converted into an episcopal see, and bestowed on another prelate. His enemies had, probably, reckoned on his disobedience. He had always discovered a marked predilection for this abbey. It had been given to him by Alchfrid, the friend and patron of his youth: its revenues had been increased by his industry; the magnificence of the buildings was the fruit of his liberality and genius; and the monks, the first in the north who had professed the rule of St. Benedict, revered him as their father and benefactor. Urged by these motives, he ventured to refuse; and Aldfrid punished his refusal by reviving the obsolete regulations of Theodore, which had first disturbed the tranquillity of the Northumbrian church. Wilfrid saw with terror the ascendancy of his enemies; and, retiring from the unequal contest, sought an asylum in the kingdom of Mercia. His flight stimulated the exertions of his enemies. Brithwald, the successor of Theodore, was induced to join the

⁵⁵ By most writers Aldfrid is considered as the same person with Alchfrid, the former friend of Wilfrid. But this opinion cannot, I think, be reconciled with the testimony of Bede. That historian uniformly names the one Alchfrid, and the other Aldfrid. Of the former he asserts that he was the son of Oswiu, and brother of Egfrid; of the latter that he was illegitimate, but thought to be the son of Oswiu. (Bed. l. iv. c. 22. Vit. St. Cuth. c. 26.) Alchfrid died before Egfrid, as the latter left neither children nor brother behind him. (Ibid.) Aldfrid was at that time studying among the Scottish monks. (Ibid.) Neither can it be said that Alchfrid had been expelled from his territories by his brother, and compelled to conceal himself till his death. For Bede asserts that the exile of Aldfrid was voluntary, and occasioned by his love of knowledge. *Ob amorem sapientiæ spontaneum passus exilium.* (Vit. St. Cuth. c. 24. See also Bede, l. iii. c. 24; iv. 26; v. 19.)

⁵⁶ See Eddius, (c. 44,) whose account is corroborated by the testimony of Bede. (*Sedem suam et episcopatum, ipso rege invitante, receipt.* Hist. l. v. c. 19.) Cuthbert of Lindisfarne resigned. (Bed. Vit. Cuthb. c. 36.) If Bosa of York, and John of Hexham, did not follow his example, they were deposed. (Smith's Bede, app. xix.) Richard of Hexham, Stubb, and some later writers, have supposed that York was never restored to Wilfrid. See Smith, *ibid.*

victorious party, and to summon a council in Northumbria. But experience had taught them to fear a second appeal to the judgment of the pontiff; and to wrest this powerful weapon from the hands of Wilfrid, became the great object of their politics. He was invited to the synod. "Justice," said the messenger, "shall be done to all your claims, provided you promise to abide by the decision of your metropolitan." "It is my duty and my wish," replied the wary prelate, "to abide by the decision of my metropolitan, if that decision be not contrary to the holy canon, and the previous declarations of the apostolic see." The assembly presented a scene of noise and confusion. The voice of Wilfrid was drowned in the clamours of his adversaries; his contumacy was pronounced worthy of the severest punishment; and as a last and unmerited favour, he was offered the monastery of Rippon, provided he would engage to confine himself within its precincts, and to resign, from that day, the exercise of the episcopal authority. This harsh resolve roused the spirit of the injured prelate. "What!" he indignantly exclaimed, "shall I, who have spent my whole life in the service of religion; I, to whom my country is indebted for the knowledge and practice of the canonical observances, tamely subscribe my own degradation, and, though unconscious of guilt, confess myself a criminal? No, if justice be denied me here, I appeal to a higher tribunal; and let the man who presumes to depose me from the episcopal dignity, accompany me to Rome, and prove his charge before the sovereign pontiff." This bold reply exasperated Aldfrid, who threatened to commit him to the custody of his guard: but the bishops interposed, observing, that to violate the safe conduct which had been granted, would fix an indelible stigma on their proceedings.⁵⁷ The scene of the controversy was now transferred from Northumbria to the court of John, the Roman pontiff. Wilfrid appeared in person; the cause of his opponents was intrusted to a deputation of monks, selected by the care of the metropolitan. If we may judge from the number and duration of the pleadings, both the accusation and defence were conducted with spirit and perseverance. Seventy times the contending parties repeated or enforced their respective arguments, in the presence of the pontiff; and four months elapsed before their eagerness would permit him to pronounce his sentence.⁵⁸ That

⁵⁷ Edd. c. 44, 45.

⁵⁸ Ingenious writers sometimes amuse themselves with filling up the chasms of history, and incautiously deceive the credulity of their readers with the fictions of their own imagination. Of the charges exhibited against Wilfrid, Eddius has preserved no more than one; that he had refused to submit to the judgment of his metropolitan. (Edd. c. 51.) But Henry has supplied the deficiency, on the authority, as he pretends, of Eddius himself. From him we learn, that the bishop was also accused of "refusing to subscribe to the synods of Hertford and Hatfield, and of appealing to a foreign judge, which, by the laws of England, was a capital crime." He had also thought proper to compose an answer for Wilfrid to the first of these charges; "that he was willing to subscribe to these synods as far as they were agreeable to the canons of the church

sentence was most honourable to the innocence of Wilfrid. But the infirmities of age (he had now reached his seventieth year) admonished him to terminate the tedious contest : two journeys to Rome, and twenty years of exile, had taught him to value and desire the enjoyment of tranquillity ; and he proposed a compromise, which, while it resigned to his competitors the larger portion of his diocese, secured to himself the possession of his two favourite monasteries of Rippon and Hexham. The moderation of these terms obtained the approbation of the pope, who recommended them to the notice and endeavours of the primate. Brithwald received the papal mandate with respect, and professed a ready obedience to its contents : but Aldfrid was inflexible. " My brothers," he replied to Wilfrid's messengers, whose friendship he had formerly prized, and whose character he still respected, " ask for yourselves, and you shall not be refused. But ask not for Wilfrid. His cause has been judged by myself, and the archbishop, the envoy of the apostolic see : nor will I change that judgment for the writings, as you call them, of that see." But the death of the king soon revived the hopes of the bishop, and deprived his rivals of their most powerful protector. Osred, an infant, was placed on the vacant throne : and the reins of government were intrusted to the hands of the ealdorman Berectfrid. Encouraged by the change, the primate invited the Northumbrian chieftains to meet him at Nid. The synod was opened by the lecture of the papal mandate, which, for the satisfaction of the secular thanes, was translated into the Anglo-Saxon tongue : the abbess Ælfleda, the depository of the secrets of her brother, declared, that the restoration of Wilfrid had been the last request of the dying monarch : and the thanes, by the mouth of Berectfrid, testified their hearty concurrence. John and Bosa, the opponents of the bishop, were confounded by this unexpected declaration. After a feeble resistance, they prudently yielded to the torrent, and the ratification of the compromise restored tranquillity to the church of Northumbria.⁵⁹

of Rome, and the will of the pope : " but to the second he appears to have been unable or unwilling to form any reply. (Henry, vol. iii. p. 219.) Such fables can claim no other merit than that of injuring the character of Wilfrid, and of supporting the favourite hypothesis of the independence of the Anglo-Saxon church. To truth or probability they have small pretensions. That Wilfrid should refuse to subscribe to the synod of Hertford, to which he had already subscribed by his legates, (Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 5,) or to that of Hatfield, which only published a profession of faith, (Id. l. iv. c. 17,) will not be readily believed ; but that Aldfrid and his bishops should send deputies to Rome, to accuse a prelate of the capital crime of appealing to Rome, is an idea which outrages probability.

Ficta sint proxima veris,

Nec quodcumque volet, poscat sibi fabula credi.

⁵⁹ Ed. c. 52—58. See also note (K.) About the same time, Egwin, bishop of Worcester, appealed to Rome with equal success. Wilk. Con. p. 72. From this period, the use of appeals was established in the Anglo-Saxon church : and among the laws collected by the industry of Archbishop Egbert, for the clergy of York, is preserved a canon, in which their legality is formally recognised. Ibid. p. 104, xlix.

Such was the conclusion of this long and tedious controversy. The cause of Wilfrid was the cause of justice: and the triumph which his perseverance obtained, added to the reputation, and proved the utility, of the supreme jurisdiction of the pontiff.⁶⁰

CHAPTER VI.

Religious Practices of the Anglo-Saxons—Their Sacraments—The Liturgy—Communion—Confession—Penitential Canons—Mitigation of Penance—Absolution.

THE ecclesiastical history of the northern, forms a remarkable contrast with that of the oriental Christians. In the east, the zeal of the orthodox pastors was, during several centuries, employed in opposing the attempts of numerous and often successful innovators: in the north, the voice of religious discord was but seldom heard, and as speedily silenced.¹ Of this difference the cause may be traced to the opposition of their national characters. The eastern Christians were a polished people, whose natural penetration had been sharpened by the disputes of philosophers, and the logic of Aristotle. Not content to believe the truths, they attempted to explore the mysteries of the gospel; they summoned to their aid the faint light of reason, and the

⁶⁰ At the conclusion of this chapter, it may perhaps be asked, why I have omitted to notice the spiritual jurisdiction, which modern writers have sometimes bestowed on the Anglo-Saxon kings. My answer must be, that I did not choose to assert that of which no solid proof can be adduced. Whatever could be said in its favour, has been said long since by Sir Edward Coke, (fifth part of reports:) but neither the authority nor the arguments of that great lawyer have subdued my incredulity. The whole tenor of the Anglo-Saxon history shows, that the spiritual jurisdiction was considered as the exclusive privilege of the bishops, and that their kings were proud to uphold and enforce it with their temporal authority. "It is the right of the king," says Wihtred, king of Kent, (anno 692,) "to appoint earls, ealdormen, shire-reeves, and doomsmen; but it is the right of the archbishop to rule and provide for the church of God." *Eýngar ꝛceolan ꝛettan eorlar. 7 ealdnar-men. ꝛirir-neuan. 7 domeꝛ-menn. 7 aꝛcebircop ꝛceal Froder zelapunge ꝛirꝛian 7 ꝛaðan.* Wilk. Con. p. 57. See also p. 91. 148. 212. Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 5. 17, ep. ad Egb. Ant. p. 310. Alc. ep. ad Athelhard, apud Wilk. p. 160. Leg. Sax. p. 146, 147, i. ii. Sim. Dunel. inter. X. Scrip. p. 78. The king, indeed, is sometimes called the Vicar of Christ: but the old homilist informs us, that this title was given to him, because it was his duty to defend with his army the people of Christ, from the evil designs of their enemies. *Ðæt he hi healdan ꝛceolde mid ðær folcer ꝛultume ꝛið ýfele menn. 7 on ꝛeohende here.* Whelock, p. 151. In the book of constitutions it is said, that the king ought to be as a father to his people, and in watchfulness and care, the vicar of Christ, as he is called. *Eꝛiꝛtenum cýnnige zebýnað ꝛꝛiðe nihte. þ he ꝛý on ꝛaðer ꝛtæle eꝛiꝛtena þeode. 7 on ꝛære 7 on þearde Eꝛiꝛteꝛ zepꝛeliga. eal ꝛpa he zeteald ir.* Leg. Sax. p. 147.

¹ The disputes between the Roman and the Scottish missionaries in England prove, that though they differed in some points of discipline, they agreed in all the articles of their belief. See chapter 1.

doubtful lessons of the ancient sages; and from the monstrous union of the doctrines of philosophy with the tenets of Christianity, engendered those errors, which so long disfigured the beauty of the ancient church. But the converts among the northern nations were more simple, and less inquisitive: without suspicion they acquiesced in the doctrines taught by their missionaries; and carefully transmitted them as a sacred deposit to the veneration of their descendants. When Athelhard, archbishop of Canterbury, demanded from the prelates in the council of Cloveshoe, an exposition of their belief, they unanimously answered: "Know, that the faith which we profess, is the same as was taught by the holy and apostolic see, when Gregory the Great sent missionaries to our fathers."² I shall not, therefore, fatigue the reader with a theological investigation of the doctrines which formed the creed of the Anglo-Saxons. The description of their religious practices is better calculated to arrest attention, and gratify curiosity: and from them their belief may be deduced with less trouble, and with equal accuracy.³

² Notum sit paternitati tuæ, quod sicut primitus a sancta Romana, et apostolica sede, beatissimo papa Gregorio dirigente, exarata est, ita credimus. Wilk. p. 162. Anno 800. The profession of faith, which St. Swithin, bishop of Winchester, made to Archbishop Ceolnoth, is drawn up in the same manner. Illam rectam et orthodoxam fidem, quam priores patres nostri devote servaverunt, cum omni humilitate et sincera devotione, sicut prædecessores mei ipsi sanctæ sedi Dorobernensis ecclesiæ subijuncti sunt, semper servare velle humiliter per omnia profiteor. Textus Roffen. p. 269. Anno 852. In the monk of Winchester, this profession begins thus. Ego Swithunus, *monachus*, servulus servorum Dei, confiteor tibi, reverendissime pater Celnode Archiepiscopo, continentiam meam, *quam prius in professione monachili expressi*, et dilectionem, &c. Hence he infers that St. Swithin was a monk, (Ang. Sac. vol. i. p. 203:) the inference is admitted by the Bollandists, (Jul. tom. i. p. 325;) and by Mabillon he is boldly ranked among the saints of the Benedictine order. (Act. S. S. Bened. sæc. 4, tom. ii. p. 69.) It is a matter of little consequence. But there is reason to believe that the words in italics were artfully added to the original. In the more ancient copy in the Textus Roffensis, the profession begins thus: Ego Swithunus, humilis vernaculus servorum Dei, confiteor tibi Celnothe Archiepiscopo, continentiam meam, et dilectionem, &c. Tex. Rof. p. 269.

³ Yet how shall I pursue this inquiry, without entangling myself in the webs of controversy? It was once the belief of Protestant writers, that the Anglo-Saxon church, from its infancy, was polluted with the damnable errors of popery. Augustinus ad Anglo-Saxones papisticis traditionibus initiandos apostolus primus mittebatur: introduxit altaria, vestes, missas, imagines, &c. &c. Bale, cent. 13, c. 1. Præter pontificum traditiones et humana stercora, (a very delicate expression!) nihil attulit. Id. cent. 8, c. 85. Cæremoniarius profecto hic fuit, Romanorumque rituum non Christianæ fidei aut divini verbi apostolus Anglis, eosque Romanos ac pontificios potius quam Christianos aut evangelicos agere docuit. (Parker, Ant. Brit. p. 35.) But this opinion has been shaken by the efforts of several eminent Saxon scholars, who have ascribed to their favourite study the important discovery, that our forefathers were true and orthodox Protestants. (See Whelock's Bede, passim. Hick's Letters to a Roman Priest, c. iii. Elstob, Saxon homily, pref.) It must be acknowledged, that to their industry Saxon literature is much indebted; but the ardour of discovery seems to have improved their fancy at the expense of their judgment: and a reader must be credulous indeed, to believe with them, that a translation of the Pater noster, and of a few books of Scripture, an exposition of the apostle's creed without any mention of purgatory, an observation that God alone is to be adored, and that the body of Christ, though it be really present in the eucharist, is there after a spiritual and not a corporal manner, are proofs sufficient to establish the existence of a Protestant church more than ten centuries ago.

I. The religion of the Anglo-Saxons was not a dry and lifeless code of morality. A spiritual worship, unincumbered with ritual observances, has been recommended by philosophers, as the most worthy of man, and the least unworthy of God: but experience has shown, that no system of belief can long maintain its influence over the mind, unless it be aided by external ceremonies, which may seize the attention, elevate the hopes, and console the sorrows of its professors. Among our ancestors, religion constantly interested herself in the welfare of her children: she took them by the hand at the opening, she conducted them with the care of a parent, to the close of life. 1. The infant, within thirty days from his birth, was regenerated in the waters of baptism. As a descendant of Adam, he had inherited that malediction, which the parent of the human race had entailed on all his posterity. To cleanse him from this stain, he was carried to the sacred font, and interrogated by the minister of religion, whether he would renounce the devil, his works, and his pomps, and would profess the true faith of Christ. The answer was returned by the mouth of his sponsor; he was plunged into the water; the mysterious words were pronounced; and he emerged, a member of the church, a child of God, and heir to the bliss of heaven.⁴ 2. As he advanced in age, the neophyte was admitted to participate of the celestial sacrifice. In the eucharist he received the body and blood of his Redeemer: and the mystic union bound him to his duty by stronger ties, and gave him a new pledge of future happiness.⁵ 3. Should, however, his passions seduce him from the fidelity, which he had solemnly vowed to observe, penance still offered an asylum, where he might shelter himself from the

⁴ Before baptism, the child was *ƿinfull ƿurh Aðameƿ ƿonƿæƿeðneƿre*: after baptism he became *ƿrodeƿ man 7 ƿrodeƿ beapn*. Hom. Sax. apud Whelock, p. 64. For the renunciation of Satan, and the obligations of the sponsor, (one only seems to have been admitted,) see the council of Calcuith, (Wilk. p. 146,) and the Anglo-Saxon sermon on the Epiphany, (Whelock, p. 180.) From an omission in this sermon, Whelock has rashly inferred, that the ceremonies of the Roman ritual were unknown to our ancestors. But there is sufficient evidence of the contrary. The insufflation is mentioned by Bede, (l. v. c. 6.) the salt by the Saxon pontifical, (Martene, vol. i. p. 38,) the unctions with oil on the breast and between the shoulders, and with chrism on the crown of the head, are noticed by Archbishop Ælfric, (Leg. Sax. p. 172,) and the whole process is described by Alcuin, in his treatise to Adrian, on the ceremonies of baptism. Duchesne, oper. Alc. par. 11. Immediately after baptism the child was ordered to receive the eucharist; the crown of his head was bound with a fillet, which was not removed for the seven following days; and during the same time he was constantly clothed in white. (In albis, Bed. l. v. c. 7, under *erifman*. Ælfric, *ibid.*) On each of these days he was carried to the mass, and received the communion. *And hýz man be ne to mæƿƿan þæt hýz beon gehuƿlode ealle þa vii ðagaƿ þa hƿile hýz unþroge ne beoƿ*. Ælfrici ep. inter Leg. Sax. p. 172. The true meaning of this passage has escaped the penetration of Wilkins, whose translation should be corrected from the writings of the ancient ritualists.

⁵ Eucharistia corpus et sanguis est Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Synod. Calcuith. apud Wilk. p. 169, ii. Sacrificium cœleste. Bed. l. iv. c. 14.

anger, and regain the favour of his Creator. These were styled the three great sacraments, by which the souls of men were purified from the guilt of sin:⁶ there remained four others, which, though of inferior necessity, were considered as highly useful to the Christian, amid the dangers to which he was exposed in his pilgrimage through life. 4. At an early period he was presented to the bishop, and, by the imposition of his hands, received the spirit of wisdom and fortitude, to direct and support him in the combat with his ghostly enemies.⁷ 5. If his inclination led him to the ecclesiastical state, the sacred rite of ordination imparted the graces which were necessary for the faithful discharge of the clerical function.⁸ 6. If he preferred the bond of marriage, his marriage was sanctified by the prayers of the church, and the nuptial benediction.⁹ 7. But the bed of death was the scene in which the religion of the Anglo-Saxons appeared in her fairest form, attended with all her consolations, the friend and the guardian of man. At that moment, when every temporal blessing slips from the grasp of its possessor, the minister of Christ approached the expiring sinner; awakened his hopes by displaying the infinite mercy of the Redeemer; listened with an ear of pity to the history of his transgressions; taught him to bewail his past misconduct; and, in the name of the Almighty, absolved him from his sins. As the fatal moment drew nigh, the extreme unction prepared his soul to wrestle for the last time with the enemies of his salvation. The directions of St. James were religiously observed: the prayer of faith was read over the dying man; and his body was anointed with consecrated oil.¹⁰ To conclude the solemn ceremony, the eucharist was administered, as a viaticum or provision for his journey to a better world.¹¹

⁶ Ðreo healice ðing ƷeƷette Irod mannum to clænƷung. An iƷ fullhut. Oþer iƷ huƷel halgunƷe. Ðriðde iƷ dædbot mid ƷeƷƷicennýƷƷe ýfelra dæda. Ʒ mid biƷeneƷe Ʒodra ƷeoƷca. "Three holy things God has appointed for the purification of man. The first is baptism; the second, the holy communion; the third, penance, with a cessation from evil deeds, and the practice of good works." *Sermo Cath. apud Whel. p. 180.*

⁷ *Bed. vit. Cuth. c. 29, p. 251, c. 32, p. 253. Hom. in psal. xxvi. tom. viii. col. 558. Eddius, vit. Wilf. c. xviii. p. 60. Wilk. Con. p. 252, xvii. Leg. Sax. p. 167, xxxv. Theod. Pœnit. par. i. c. 4.*

⁸ *Ed. vit. Wilf. c. xii. p. 57. Wilk. Con. p. 95, vi. 265, i.*

⁹ *Ibid. p. 106, xc. 217, viii.* The bond of marriage was deemed indissoluble. Not even adultery could justify a second marriage before the death of one of the parties. See the tenth canon of the council of Herutford. *Bed. l. iv. c. 5. Anno 683.*

¹⁰ *Wilk. Con. p. 127, xv. 229, lxx. lxxvi.*

¹¹ *Id. ibid. Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 14. 23. Vit. Cuth. c. 39.* He thus describes the death of St. Cuthbert:

Ecce sacer residens antistes ad altar,
Pocula degustat vitæ, Christique supinum
Sanguine munit iter, vultusque ad sidera et almas
Sustollit gaudens palmas, animamque supernis
Laudibus intentam lætantibus indidit astris.

Bed. vit. Cuth. p. 286.

Thus consoled and animated, he was taught to resign himself to the will of his Creator, and to await with patience the stroke of dissolution.

II. Among the various forms of Christian worship, the precedence is justly claimed by the eucharistic sacrifice. By every religious society, which dates its origin from the more early ages, its superior dignity and efficacy has always been acknowledged: and in the liturgies of the most distant nations we constantly discover it the same, if not in appearance, at least in substance. In the arrangement of the ceremonies, and the composition of the prayers, different models were followed by different churches: but amid these accidental variations, the more important parts, the invocation, the consecration, the fraction of the host, and the communion, were preserved with religious fidelity.¹² By Augustine and his associates, the mass was celebrated at Canterbury, after the Roman method. But in their journey to Britain, they had observed the different rites of the Gauls; and were careful to consult their patron respecting the cause of this diversity. The answer of the pontiff evinces a liberal mind. Though the reformation of the Roman liturgy had obtained a considerable share of his attention, he neither urged the superior excellence of his own labours, nor condemned the rituals of other churches: but advised his disciples to consult the usages of different nations, and to select from each whatever was most conducive to the honour of the Deity. But the judgment of Augustine naturally preferred the discipline to which he had been accustomed: the Roman liturgy was established in the churches founded by his labours; and was spontaneously adopted by the converts of the Scottish missionaries.¹³

Felix, who wrote very soon after Bede, describes the death of St. Guthlake in almost the same words. *Extendens manus ad altare, munivit se communione corporis et sanguinis Christi, atque elevatis oculis ad cælum, extensisque manibus, animam ad gaudia perpetuæ exultationis emisit.* Felix, vit. St. Guth. in Act. SS. April. tom. iii. p. 48. For the viaticum they were accustomed to preserve the eucharist, and renew it every fortnight. (Bede. l. iv. c. 24, and Ælfric's charge to the clergy. Leg. Sax. p. 159.) Though the sick communicated under the form of bread alone, (Ibid. and p. 172,) yet it was still called the viaticum of the body and blood of Christ: (compare two passages in Bede. *ibid.* p. 157, 158.) The place in which the eucharist was preserved was a box or tabernacle, (Ælfric, *ibid.*) which appears to have been fixed on an altar in the church, and occasionally adorned with green leaves or flowers.

Quam fronde coronant,

Dum buxis claudunt pretiosæ munera vitæ.

Elthelwold, de SS. Lindis. c. xiv. p. 314, Note (L).

¹² The numerous mistakes of former writers on this important subject, have been corrected by Renaudot, in his collection of the oriental liturgies. The principal differences are in the preparatory part of the sacrifice: but in the canon, besides the particulars mentioned in the text, they all contain the preface or thanksgiving, the commemoration of the living and the dead, and the Lord's Prayer. Renaud. vol. i. disser. p. xx.

¹³ With the Gregorian chant, the whole of the Roman liturgy appears to have been adopted by the churches of the north. Bede. l. iv. c. 18. If the liturgies of the Italian and Scottish missionaries were not exactly similar, the difference must have been unimportant, as it does not appear to have been mentioned in the disputes which divided

From the works of the Anglo-Saxon writers we may learn the profound veneration with which they had been taught to view this sacred institution. Whenever they mention it, the most lofty epithets, the most splendid descriptions display their sentiments. It is "the celebration of the most sacred mysteries, the celestial sacrifice, the oblation of the saving victim, the renovation of the passion and death of Christ."¹⁴ To assist at it daily, they consider as a practice of laudable piety; to be present on every Sunday and holiday, they pronounce a duty of the strictest obligation.¹⁵ Of all the resources which religion offers to appease the anger of God, it is declared to be the most efficacious: its influence is not confined to the living; it releases from their bonds the souls of the dead.¹⁶ Impressed with these sentiments, all were eager to join in the oblation of the sacrifice, and no cost was spared to testify, by external magnificence, their inward veneration. The decorations of the church, the voices of a numerous choir, the harmony of musical instruments,¹⁷ the blaze

the two parties. Cuminus (anno 657) and Adamnan (anno 680) were abbots of the monastery, from which the Scottish missionaries were sent, and speak of the mass in the same terms as the Roman writers. Cuminus calls it, *sacrificale mysterium, sacra sancti sacrificii mysteria*, (Cumin. edit. Pinkerton, p. 29. 32:) and in the language of Adamnan, to celebrate the mass, is *sacra consecrare mysteria, Christi corpus ex more conficere*, (Adam. edit. Pink. p. 93. 172.) The general conformity of the ancient Roman, Gallic, Gothic, and other western canons, with the present Roman canon, is shown by Georgi, de Litur. Rom. pont. vol. iii. p. xli.

¹⁴ Bed. l. ii. c. v. l. iv. c. 14. 22. 23. Vit. Cuth. p. 242. Vit. Abbat. Wirem. p. 302. Ep. Bug. ad Bonif. p. 45. Sermo de Sac. apud Whel. p. 474.

¹⁵ Sunnan dæg is ƿeorþe healice to ƿeorþian . . . Butan pham gebýrige þ he nýde ƿaran ƿeýle. ðonne mot he ƿƿa riðan ƿƿa ƿopan . . . on ða Ʒerad þ he hiƿ mæƿƿan Ʒehýre. "Sunday is most holly to be kept . . . but if it happen that a man must of necessity travel, he may ride or sail, but on condition that he hear mass." Wilk. Con. p. 273.

¹⁶ Bed. l. iv. c. 22. Sermo de efficacia sanctæ Misæ, apud Whelock, p. 319. Sermo de Sacrif. p. 475.

¹⁷ The Anglo-Saxons were passionately fond of music, and, after their conversion, the national taste displayed itself in the public worship. To attain an accurate knowledge of the Gregorian chant, was deemed an object of high importance: masters were eagerly selected from the disciples of the Roman missionaries; and John, præcentor of St. Peter's in Rome, was long detained in England for the same purpose, (Bed. Hist. l. ii. c. 20, iv. c. 2. 18, v. 20.) Of the proficiency of the Saxons, we are not informed. That they entertained a high opinion of themselves is certain: but so did the Gallic singers of this period, though they were objects of ridicule to those of Italy; quia bibuli gutturis barbara feritas, dum inflexionibus et repercussionibus mitem nititur edere cantilenam, naturali quodam fragore, quasi plaustra per gradus confuse sonantia, rigidas voces jactat, sicque audientium animos, quos mulcere debuerat, exasperando magis ac obstrependo conterbat. Joan. diac. vit. Greg. l. ii. c. 7. Organs were admitted into the Saxon churches at an early period. The first person in the west by whom they were employed, is said by Platina, though with some hesitation, to have been Vitalian, the Roman pontiff, (Plat. in Vital.) If we credit his account, we may suppose that they were introduced into England by Theodore and Adrian, whom that pope sent to instruct our ancestors. At least it is certain, that they were known by St. Aldhelm as early as the close of the seventh century. In his poem de laudibus virginitatis, he tells the admirer of music, who despises the more humble sounds of the harp, to listen to the thousand voices of the organ.

of the lamps and tapers, the vestments of the officiating minister and his attendants, all concurred to elevate the soul, and inspire the most lively sentiments of devotion. At the prayer of consecration it was believed, that the Saviour of mankind descended on the altar, the angels stood around in respectful silence,¹⁸ the spotless Lamb was immolated to the eternal Father, and the mystery of man's redemption was renewed.¹⁹ At length the sacrifice was consummated: a part of the consecrated elements was received by the priest; the remainder was distributed among those whose piety prompted them to approach to the holy table.

The discipline of the church has often been compelled to bend to the weakness of her children. To communicate, as often as they assisted at the sacred mysteries, was a practice introduced by the fervour of the first Christians: and, during several centuries, each omission was chastised by a temporary exclusion from the society of the faithful.²⁰ But with the severity of their morals, their devotion to the eucharist insensibly declined; frequency of communion was left to the choice of each individual; and the precept was confined to the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide.²¹ Still, however, in many churches, the spontaneous devotion of the fervent preserved some vestiges of the ancient discipline: but their example made no great im-

Maxima millenis auscultans organa flabris

Mulceat auditum ventosis follibus iste,

Quamvis auratis fulgescant cætera capsis.—*Bib. Pat.* t. viii. p. 3.

(This passage was first discovered by Mr. Turner, vol. iv. p. 447.) About sixty years afterwards, Constantine, the Byzantine emperor, sent to Pepin an organ of excellent workmanship, which has erroneously been supposed to be the first among the Latins. It is thus described: Quod doliis ex ære conflatis, follibusque taurinis per fistulas æreas mire perflantibus, rugitu quidem tonitruï boatum, garrulitatem vero lyræ vel cymbali dulcedine conquabat. (Monac. Gallen. vit. Caroli mag. c. 10.) The French artists were eager to equal this specimen of Grecian ingenuity: and so successful were their efforts, that in the ninth century the best organs were made in France and Germany. Their superiority was acknowledged by John VIII. in a letter to Anno, bishop of Freisingen, from whom he requested an organ, and a master for the instruction of the Roman musicians. Precamur ut optimum organum cum artifice, qui hoc moderari, et facere ad omnem modulationis efficaciam possit, ad instructionem musicæ disciplinæ, nobis aut deferat aut mittat. Cit. Sandini in vit. Pont. vol. i. p. 241. Soon after this period they were common in England, and constructed by English artists. They appear to have been of large dimensions: the pipes were made of copper, and fixed in frames, that frequently were gilt. (Aldh. ibid. Gale, p. 266. 420.) In the poems of Wolstan, a monk of Winchester, occurs a minute description of the great organ in that cathedral. Of its accuracy there is little reason to doubt, as the poem is dedicated to St. Elphege, the person by whom the organ was erected. It will be found in note (M).

¹⁸ Halga englar ðær abutan hþearriþ. Leg. eccl. Wilk. p. 300.

¹⁹ Dægþamlice biþ hir ðropunge zeedniped ðurh zepinu ðær halgan hupler æt ðære halgan mæþran. "Daily is his passion renewed by the mystery of the holy husel at the holy mass." Sermo de Sac. apud Whel. p. 474. Missarum solemnia celebrantes, corpus sacrosanctum, et pretiosum agni sanguinem, quo a peccatis redempti sumus, denuo Deo in profectum nostræ salutis immolamus. Bed. hom. in vig. Pas. tom. vii. col. 6. Vit. St. Cuth. p. 242.

²⁰ Can. Apost. 10. Con. Ant. can. 2. Bona, rerum liturg. l. i. c. 13.

²¹ Synod. Agath. can. 18.

pression on the majority of the Anglo-Saxons, whose piety was satisfied with an exact observance of the more recent regulation. In justification of their reserve, they urged the sublime dignity of the sacrament. To them the modern doctrine, that the eucharist is the mere manducation of the material elements, in commemoration of the passion of the Messiah, was entirely unknown. They had been taught to despise the doubtful testimony of the senses, and to listen to the more certain assurance of the inspired writings: according to their belief, the bread and wine, after the consecration, had ceased to be what their external appearance suggested; they were become, by an invisible operation, the victim of redemption, the true body and blood of Christ.²² But how, they asked, could sinful man presume, of his own choice, to introduce his Redeemer within his breast? Was it not less hazardous, and more respectful, to remain, on other occasions, at an awful distance, and to communicate on those festivals only, when his temerity might be excused by his obedience? This reasoning, however, did not satisfy the zeal of the venerable Bede, who condemned an humility which deprived the soul of the choicest blessings, and asserted his conviction, that many among his countrymen, in every department of life, were, by their superior virtue, entitled to partake of the sacred mysteries on every Sunday and festival in the year.²³ The sentiments of the pious monk inspired the bishops at the synod of Cloveshoe, and each pastor was commanded to animate the devotion of his parishioners, and to display in the strongest light the advantages of frequent communion.²⁴

In addition to the Roman liturgy, the Anglo-Saxon church had adopted the Roman *course* or breviary.²⁵ Of this compila-

²² *h̅w̅i̅p̅u̅c̅a̅n̅ h̅i̅ b̅e̅o̅þ̅ z̅e̅r̅e̅p̅e̅n̅e̅ h̅l̅a̅f̅ ̅ȝ̅ ̅w̅in̅ æ̅g̅þ̅e̅r̅ z̅e̅ o̅n̅ h̅w̅e̅ z̅e̅ o̅n̅ ̅r̅p̅æ̅c̅c̅e̅. ac̅ h̅i̅ b̅e̅o̅þ̅ ̅r̅o̅þ̅l̅i̅c̅e̅ æ̅r̅c̅e̅r̅ þ̅æ̅r̅e̅ h̅a̅l̅g̅u̅n̅g̅e̅ ̅E̅n̅i̅c̅t̅e̅r̅ l̅i̅c̅h̅a̅m̅a̅ ̅ȝ̅ h̅w̅i̅ b̅l̅o̅d̅. ̅þ̅u̅p̅h̅ ̅z̅a̅r̅t̅l̅i̅c̅e̅ z̅e̅r̅i̅n̅u̅. "Without (externally) they seem bread and wine both in appearance and in taste; yet they be truly, after the consecration, Christ's body and his blood, through a ghostly mystery." Sermo in die Pas. apud Whel. p. 470. See note (N).*

²³ Cum sint innumeri innocentes . . . qui absque ullo scrupulo controversiæ, omni die dominica, sive etiam in natalitiis sanctorum apostolorum sive martyrum, quomodo ipse in sancta Romana et Apostolica ecclesia fieri vidisti, mysteriis cœlestibus communicare valeant. Bed. Epis. ad Egbert. p. 311.

²⁴ Syn. Clon. apud Wilk. p. 98, xxiii. Anno 747.

²⁵ The Roman course had been greatly improved by the care of St. Gregory. It was introduced into England by the missionaries; and was ordered to be used in all churches by the synod of Cloveshoe. (Wilk. Con. p. 96, xiii. 97, xv. xvi.) But the decree of this synod seems not to have been observed in the kingdom of Northumbria. At least the monks of Lindisfarne, on some occasion, adopted the office composed by St. Benedict, and it was retained by the clergy who succeeded them. (Sim. Dunel. edit. Bedford, p. 4. He seems to attribute it to St. Aidan, which is evidently a mistake.) When St. Dunstan restored the monastic order, after the devastations of the Danes, he introduced the Benedictine office with a few additions, but allotted a particular exception to the festival of Easter and its octave, during which he ordered the monks to adopt the same service as the clergy, in honour of St. Gregory. Septem horæ canonicæ a mona-

tion the principal part had been selected from the psalms of David and the writings of the prophets, which abound with the sublimest effusions of religious sentiment. But the fatigue of uniformity was relieved by a competent number of lessons, extracted from the books of the Holy Scriptures, the works of the ancient fathers, and the acts of the most celebrated martyrs: and the different portions of the office were terminated by prayers, of which the noble and affecting simplicity has been deservedly admired. The service of each day was divided into seven *hours*, and at each of these the clergy were summoned to the church to sing, in imitation of the royal prophet, the praise of the Creator.²⁶ The layman was exhorted, but the ecclesiastic was commanded to assist. Of this difference the reason is obvious. The clergy were the representatives of the great body of Christians: they had been liberated from all secular employments, that they might attend, with fewer impediments, to their spiritual functions: it was therefore expected that, by their assiduity, they would compensate for the deficiencies of their less fervent brethren; and by their daily supplications avert the anger, and call down the blessings of the Almighty.

Both the mass and the canonical service were performed in Latin. For the instruction of the people, the epistle and gospel were read, and the sermon was delivered in their native tongue: but God was always addressed by the ministers of religion in the language of Rome. The missionaries, who, from whatever country they came, had been accustomed to this rite from their infancy, would have deemed it a degradation of the sacrifice, to subject it to the caprice and variations of a barbarous idiom; and their disciples, who felt not the thirst of innovation, were proud to tread in the footsteps of their teachers. The practice has been severely reprobated by the reformed theologians: but it was fortunate for mankind, that the apostles of the northern nations were less wise than their modern critics. Had they adopted in the liturgy the language of their proselytes, the literature would probably have perished with the empire of Rome. By preserving the use of the Latin tongue, they imposed on the clergy the necessity of study, kept alive the spirit of improvement, and transmitted to future generations the writings of the classics, and the monuments of profane and ecclesiastical history.

III. In every system of worship, the means of atonement for sin must form an essential part. The first professors of the gospel believed that the Messiah, by his voluntary sufferings, had

chis in ecclesia Dei more canonicorum, propter auctoritatem beati Gregorii celebrandæ sunt. Concor. Monach. apud Reyner, app. par. iii. p. 89, 90. The custom continued till the conquest, when the Norman, Lanfranc, who probably felt less veneration for the apostle of the Saxons, ordered it to be abolished. Constit. Lanfran. apud Wilk. tom. i. p. 339.

²⁶ They were called the uht or morning-song, prime-song, under-song, midday-song none-song, even-song, and night-song. Wilk. p. 97. 252.

paid to the divine justice the debt contracted by human guilt : but at the same time they taught, that the application of his merits to the soul of man was intrusted to the ministry of those to whom he had imparted the power of binding and of loosing, of forgiving and retaining sin.²⁷ To exercise with discretion this twofold jurisdiction, it was necessary to learn the prevarications and disposition of the penitent : and from the earliest ages we behold the faithful Christian at the feet of his confessor, acknowledging in public, or in private, the nature and number of his transgressions.²⁸ With the doctrine of the gospel, the practice of confession was introduced among the Saxons by the Roman and Scottish missionaries.²⁹ They were taught to consider it not merely as a pious observance, which depended on the devotion of each individual, but as an indispensable obligation, from which nothing could release the sinner but the impossibility of the performance. The law by which it was enforced, was construed to extend to every class of Christians: to bind the highest ecclesiastic no less than the meanest layman.³⁰ The sinner, who was desirous to regain the favour of his offended God, was directed to approach the feet of his confessor with humility and compunction, and after professing his belief in the principal truths of Christianity, to unfold all the crimes with which he had contaminated his conscience, by deed, by word, and by thought.³¹

²⁷ John xx. 22, 23.

²⁸ Denis de St. Marthe, traité de la confession. Daillé made thirty feeble attempts to disprove the antiquity of this practice. They may be seen in Bingham, vol. ii. p. 219.

²⁹ But was not auricular confession unknown to the Scottish monks, and their proselytes? Henry (vol. iii. p. 208) has boldly asserted the affirmative: but he was misled by the authority of Inett, to copy whose mistakes he often found a more easy task, than to consult the original writers. The words of Inett are these: "Theodore endeavoured to introduce auricular confession, a usage which, according to the account that Egbert, archbishop of York, gives of it in the beginning of the next century, was unknown to the English, converted by the Scots and Britons." Inett, Hist. of the English Church, vol. i. p. 85. Reader, if you consult the work of Egbert for this account, you will consult in vain. On the introduction of confession, and the manners of the English converted by the Scots and Britons, he is silent: but he observes that, from the time of Theodore, the faithful had been accustomed, during the twelve days before Christmas, to prepare themselves for communion by fasting, confession, and alms, (Egb. de instit. eccl. Wilk. p. 86:) and this observation has been converted, by the imagination of Inett, into an assertion, that before the time of Theodore they were ignorant of the practice of confession. That, however, it was taught by the Scottish monks to their converts, is evident from the zeal of St. Cuthbert, who, long before the arrival of Theodore, spent whole months in preaching, and receiving the confessions of the people, (Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 27. Vit. Cuth. c. 9. 16:) and that they adopted it in their own country, may be proved from the conduct of St. Columba, the founder of the Abbey of Hii, (Adomnan vit. Colum. p. 71. 80. 89.) from the penitentiary of Cuminus, the fifth of his successors, (Mab. vet. anal. p. 17.) and the confession of the Scottish monk related by Bede, (l. iv. c. 25.)

³⁰ Ðeopriþ cýmþ ýmbe twelf monaþ. þ ælc mæn sceal his gecryfte geryrrecan. 7 Trode 7 his gecryfte his gyltas andettan ða ðe he geryrte. "The time of duty comes every twelve months, when every man shall speak to his confessor, and avow to God and his confessor all the sins which he has committed." Egb. peniten. apud Wilk. p. 141.

³¹ Ælce gýnne mon sceal his gecryfte andettan. Ðara ða he

To conclude this humiliating ceremony, he declared his determination to amend his life, and adjured his confessor to bear testimony in the day of judgment, to the sincerity of his repentance.³²

In the language of Catholic theology, the priest is said to preside in the tribunal of penance, as a judge, whose duty it is to pronounce sentence on the accused according to his demerits. But so numerous and so nicely discriminated are the gradations of human guilt, so complicated the circumstances which aggravate or lighten its enormity, that to apportion with accuracy the punishment to the offence, will frequently confound the skill of the most able and impartial casuist. Theodore, however, whether he confided in his superior abilities, or yielded to the necessity of directing his less enlightened brethren, attempted the difficult task, and published a penitentiary, or code of laws, for the imposition of sacramental penance. In it he ventured to deviate from the letter of the ancient canons, whose severity bears testimony to the fervour of the age in which they were framed, and adopted the milder discipline of the Greek church, in which he had imbibed the rudiments of theological science. The success of his endeavours stimulated the timidity of his brethren: and the penitentiaries of Egbert, archbishop of York, and of several other prelates, claim a distinguished place among the ecclesiastical records of Saxon antiquity.³³ Fasting was the principal species of punishment which they enjoined: but its nature and duration were determined by the malignity of the offence. The more pardonable sins of frailty and surprise might be expiated by a

æfre gefremede. oþþe on worde. oþþe on weorce. oþþe on gefohte. "Every sin man shall to his confessor declare, that he ever committed, either in word, or in work, or in thought." *Liber Leg. eccl. apud Wilk. p. 276.*

³² Wilk. p. 231. Whelock is positive that the practice of the Saxons was the same as that of the present established church. They advised, but did not command confession. (*Whel. Hist. Eccl. p. 215, 216, index, art. confessio.*) The very homilies which he published, might have taught him the contrary. I shall transcribe two passages. *Ælome ur læraþ þ halige gefrit þ we fleon to þam lacedome goþre andætnyrre ure gýnna. Forþan we elles ne mazon beon hale buton we andetigan hreorjende þ we to unrihte dýdan Ðurh gýmelýrte. Ælc forgiferenýrre hýhte is on þære andetnýrre. 7 þeo andetnýrre is ðe engla lacedome ura gýnna. mid ðære goþan tædbote.* "The Holy Scripture frequently teaches us to flee to the medicine of true confession of our sins: because we cannot otherwise be healed, except we confess with sorrow what we have unrighteously done through negligence. All hope of forgiveness is in confession. Confession with true repentance is the angelic remedy of our sins." *Whel. p. 341. 343. Ðitodlice ne bezýt nan man hir gýnna forgiferenýrre æt Godde buton he hi sumum Godes men geandette 7 be hir dome gebete.* "Truly no man will obtain forgiveness of his sins from God, unless he confess to some of God's ministers, and do penance according to his judgment." *Sermo de penit. apud Whel. p. 423.*

³³ They may be seen in Wilkins, vol. i. p. 115. 225; vol. iv. p. 751, and the *Codex canonum et constitutionum MSS. Jun. 121.*

less rigorous fast of ten, twenty, or thirty days: but when the crime was of a blacker dye, when it argued deep and premeditated malice, a longer course of mortification was required, and one, five, seven years, or even a whole life of penance, was deemed a cheap and easy compensation. So dreary a prospect might have plunged the penitent into despair or indifference: but his fervour was daily animated by the hopes and fears of religion: his past fidelity was rewarded by subsequent indulgences; and the yoke was prudently lightened the longer it was worn. After a certain period, to the severe regimen of bread and water, succeeded a more nutritious diet, which excluded only the flesh of quadrupeds and fowls: and the fasts that originally had comprised six, were gradually contracted to three or fewer days in the week.³⁴

To these regulations, when they were first enjoined, the sanctity of their authors, and the fervour of the proselytes insured a ready obedience. But nature soon learned to rebel; necessity introduced several mitigations; and the ingenuity of the penitents discovered expedients to elude or mitigate their severity. When the sinner had delayed his conversion, till he was alarmed by the near approach of death, it was idle to enjoin him many years of penance: and he was rather advised, according to the command of the Holy Scriptures, to redeem his sins with works of mercy, and to commute the fasts of the canons for donations to the church, and to the poor. An idea so consonant to the maxims of Saxon jurisprudence, was eagerly adopted, and insensibly improved into a perfect system, which regulated with precision, according to the rank and wealth of the penitent, the price at which the fast of a day, a month, or a year, might be lawfully redeemed. This indulgence, which had originally been confined to the dying, was claimed with an equal appearance of justice by the sick and the infirm; and was at last extended to all, whose constitutions or employments were incompatible with the rigour of a long and severe fast.³⁵ By the rich it was accepted with gratitude; but to the poor it offered an illusory boon, which only aggravated the hardships of their condition. To remove the invidious distinction, a new species of commutation was adopted. Archbishop Egbert, founding his decision on the authority of Theodore, intrusted it to the prudence of the confessor, to enjoin, when the penitent pleaded infirmity or inability, a real equivalent in prayers or money. Thus a new system of canonical arithmetic was established; and the fast of a day was taxed at the rate of a silver penny for the rich, or of fifty pater-nosters for the illiterate, and fifty psalms for the learned.³⁶ That these compensations would accelerate the decline of the primi-

³⁴ *Ibid.* passim.

³⁵ See the chapter, *hu feocman mot his færcan alyran*. Wilk. Con. vol. i. p. 237.

³⁶ Wilk. p. 115. 140. 237.

tive fervour, was foreseen and lamented by the bishops : and the fathers of the council of Cloveshoe made a vigorous but fruitless attempt to uphold the ancient discipline. "It is necessary," they observe to the Saxon clergy, "that the enjoyment of forbidden pleasure should be punished by the subtraction of lawful gratifications. Alms and prayers are undoubtedly useful, but they are designed to be the auxiliaries, not the substitutes of fasting."³⁷ The torrent, however, was irresistible ; and the condemned indulgences were gradually sanctioned, first by the silence, afterwards by the approbation of their successors.

There was another, and a more singular innovation, which equally provoked, and equally survived their censure. Among a powerful and turbulent nobility, it was not difficult to discover men, whose offences were so numerous, that to expiate them according to the letter of the canons, would require a greater number of years, than could probably fall to the lot of any individual. Sinners of this description were admonished to distrust so precarious a resource ; to solicit the assistance of their friends, and to relieve their own insolvency by the vicarious payments of others. In obedience to this advice, they recommended themselves to the prayers of those who were distinguished by the austerity and sanctity of their lives ; endeavoured by numerous benefits to purchase the gratitude of the monks and clergy ; and by procuring their names to be enrolled among the members of the most celebrated monasteries, indulged the hope of partaking in the merit of the good works performed by those societies. But it was not long before a system, which offered so much accommodation to human weakness, received considerable improvements ; and men were willing to persuade themselves that they might atone for their crimes by substituting in the place of their own, the austerities of mercenary penitents.³⁸ It was in vain that the council of Cloveshoe thundered its anathemas against their disobedience : the new doctrine was supported by the wishes and the practice of the opulent ; and its toleration was at length extorted, on the condition, that the sinner should undergo, in person, a part at least of his penance. The thane, who determined to embrace this expedient, was commanded to lay aside his arms, to clothe himself in woollen or sackcloth, to walk barefoot, to carry in his hand the staff of a pilgrim, to maintain a certain number of poor, to watch during the night in the church, and, when he slept, to repose on the ground. At his summons, his friends and dependents assembled at his castle :

³⁷ Id. p. 98. Anno 747.

³⁸ Nuper, say the bishops assembled at Cloveshoe, quidam dives petens reconciliationem pro magno quodam facinore suo citius sibi dari, affirmavit idem nefas juxta aliorum promissa in tantum esse expiatum, ut si deinceps vivere posset trecentorum annorum numerum, pro eo plane his satisfactionum modis, per aliorum scilicet psalmodiam, et jejunium, et eleemosynam persolutum esset, excepto illius jejunio, et quamvis ipse utcumque vel parum jejunaret. Ibid. p. 99.

they also assumed the garb of penitence : their food was confined to bread, herbs, and water : and these austerities were continued, till the aggregate amount of their fasts equalled the number specified by the canons. Thus, with the assistance of one hundred and twenty associates, an opulent sinner might, in the short space of three days, discharge the penance of a whole year. But he was admonished that it was a doubtful and dangerous experiment : and that, if he hoped to appease the anger of the Almighty, he must sanctify his repentance by true contrition of heart, by frequent donations to the poor, and by fervent prayer.³⁹ How long this practice was tolerated, I am ignorant : but I have met with no instance of it, posterior to the reign of Edgar.

While the penitent thus endeavoured to expiate his guilt, he looked forward with anxiety to the day which was to terminate his labours, and restore him to the common privileges of the faithful. At the expiration, often before the expiration of his penance, he sought again the feet of his confessor, and solicited the benefit of absolution. But he was previously interrogated respecting his present dispositions, and the fidelity with which he had observed the injunctions of the canons. If his reply proved satisfactory, if the amendment of his conduct evinced the sincerity of his professions, the priest applauded his obedience, exhorted him to persevere, and, extending his hand, pronounced over him the prayer of absolution. "The Almighty God, who created the heavens, the earth, and every creature, have mercy on thee, and forgive thee all the sins which thou hast committed from the time of thy baptism till this hour, through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁴⁰ The joy of the penitent was complete. Confident that he was now restored to the favour of Heaven, he arose, assisted at the sacrifice of the mass, and sealed his reconciliation by receiving the body and blood of Christ, the sacrament of salvation, and the pledge of a glorious immortality.

³⁹ See the chapter, *Be miltigum mannum* : Wilk. p. 238.

⁴⁰ *Se ælmihtiga Eod þe zerecep heofnar 7 eorþan ƿealle zereafra zemiltga þe. 7 do þe forzýfnýrre ealra þinra sýna þe þu æfre zepohtere fram fremde þinner Eriřtendomeſ op þiř tīde.* MSS. Cott. Tib. A. 3. Did the Saxon Christians attach much importance to this rite of absolution? If we may believe Carte, (*Hist.* vol. i. p. 241,) and Henry, (*Hist.* vol. iii. p. 203,) they did not : but when they submitted to the ceremony of confession, their object was to learn the decision of the penitentiary, not to obtain absolution. Alcuin, however, who may be supposed to have known the doctrine of his countrymen as accurately as any modern historian, was of a different opinion. He informs us, that confession was necessary, because, without it, absolution could not be obtained. *Si peccata sacerdotibus non sunt prodenda, quare in sacramentario reconciliationis orationes scriptæ sunt? Quomodo sacerdos reconciliat, quem peccare non novit? Sacerdotes a Deo Christo cum sanctis apostolis ligandi solvendique potestatem accepisse credimus.* Alc. ep. 71, edit. Duchesne. *Ant. lect. Canisii*, vol. ii. p. 415. "The sinner," says the Saxon homilist, "who conceals his sins, lies dead in the grave ; but if with sorrow he confess his sins, then he rises from the grave like Lazarus, at the command of Christ, and then shall his teacher unbind him from eternal punishment, as the apostles unbound the body of Lazarus. *Ælc sýnfull man ðe hiř*

CHAPTER VII.

Euchological Ceremonies—Benediction of the Anglo-Saxon Knights—Of Marriages—
Ordinations of the Clergy—Coronation of Kings—Dedication of Churches.

I. THE superstition of paganism had peopled the earth with gods; and the sea and the air, every stream, grove, and fountain, possessed its peculiar and tutelary deity. The folly of the gnostics embraced the opposite extreme. In their eyes, the visible creation was the work of the power of darkness: and the saint was frequently compelled, by the unhappy condition of his existence, to an involuntary co-operation with that malevolent being, whom he professed to abhor. To combat these contradictory but popular errors, to teach her children that all things were created by the wisdom, and might be directed to the service of the Almighty, the Christian church was accustomed, from the earliest ages, to invoke, by set forms of prayer, the blessing of Heaven on whatever was adapted to the divine worship, or the support and convenience of man. In this respect her conduct was an exact copy of that which God had recommended to the Jewish legislator; and was justified by the doctrine of the apostle, that "every creature of God is good, being sanctified by the word of God, and by prayer."¹ From the sacramentary of Gelasius, these forms of benediction had passed to the sacramentary of St. Gregory; and from that work they were transcribed into the rituals of the Anglo-Saxon church. The greater part of them would, perhaps, rather fatigue the patience, than interest the curiosity of the reader: these I shall therefore omit, and principally confine myself to the description of such, as had for their object to implore the divine blessing on the different states of society.

1. That there existed among our ancestors from the earliest times, a species of knighthood or military distinction, which was afterwards commuted for the more splendid and romantic chivalry of later ages, has been satisfactorily proved by a recent historian.² But at first it was a mere civil institution, unknown

ŕýnna bediglaþ. he lið deað on býrgene. ac gif he hý
ŕýnna zeandette ðnrh onbrýrdnýrre. ðonne. zæþ he of
ðære býrgene. ꝥa ꝥa Lazarus dýde ða ða Eriht hine
arýran het. ðonne ŕceal ŕe lapeoþ hine unbindan ꝥram ðam
ecan ƿite ꝥa ꝥa ða aƿortoli lichamlice Lazarum alýrdon.
Whel. p. 405. Also Wilk. p. 125. 127. 229. 238. See note (O.)

¹ 1 Tim. c. iv. v. 4, 5.

² Mr. Turner, Hist. of the Angl. Sax. vol. iv. p. 171.

among the rites of ecclesiastical worship.³ Religion was the daughter of peace: she abhorred the deeds of war; and refused to bless the arms which were destined to be stained with human blood. But in the revolution of a few centuries, the sentiments of men were altered. To unsheath the sword against the enemies of the nation; to protect by force of arms the church, the widow, and the infant, were actions which humanity approved: the warrior, who hazarded his life in such laudable pursuits, deserved the blessing of Heaven; and before the extinction of the Saxon dynasty, we behold the order of knighthood conferred with all the pomp of a religious ceremony. The youth, who aspired to this honour, was taught to repair on the preceding day to a priest, to confess his sins with compunction of heart, and to obtain the benefit of absolution. The succeeding night he spent in the church; and by watching, devotion, and abstinence, prepared himself for the approaching ceremony. In the morning, at the commencement of the mass, his sword was laid on the altar. After the gospel, the priest read over it the prayer of benediction, carried it to the knight, and laid it on his shoulder. The mass was then continued; he received the eucharist, and from that moment was entitled to the rank and privileges of a legitimate miles.⁴

For this account we are indebted to the pen of Ingulph, where he relates the exploits of an Anglo-Saxon soldier, whose valour deserved and obtained the honour of knighthood. His name was Hereward. In his youth, the turbulence of his temper had alienated the affections of his family; and by Edward the Confessor he was banished, at the request of his father, from his native country. In Northumberland, Cornwall, Ireland, and Flanders, the bravery of the fugitive was exerted and admired; his fame soon reached the ears of his countrymen; the martial deeds of Hereward formed the subject of the most popular ballads; and his family were proud of the man whom they had formerly persecuted. When William the Conqueror landed in England, he returned to the defence of his country; and at the head of his followers avenged the injuries which his mother had received from the invaders. It was at this period that he repaired to Peterborough, to obtain from the abbot Brand, his uncle, the

³ It seems originally to have been conferred by the sovereign, and perhaps the more distinguished among the thanes. Alfred the Great is said by Malmsbury to have knighted his grandson Athelstan, while he was yet a child. *Quem etiam præmature militem fecerat, donatum chlamyde coccinea, gemmato balteo, ense Saxonico, cum vagina aurea.* Malm. de Reg. p. 49.

⁴ Ingulf. p. 70. I have not met with any Anglo-Saxon ritual, which mentions the prayer used on this occasion. In a MS. copy of the Sarum missal written long after the conquest, it is as follows:—*Deus concede huic famulo tuo, qui sincero corde gladio se primo nititur cingere militari, ut in omnibus galea tuæ virtutis sit protectus: et sicut David et Judith contra gentis suæ hostes fortitudinis potentiam et victoriam tribuisti: ita tuo auxilio munitus contra hostium surorum sævitiam victor ubique existat, et ad sanctæ ecclesiæ tutelam proficiat.* AMEN.

belt of knighthood.⁵ But the sequel proves, that Hereward was little better than a barbarian. His hatred to the Normans was incapable of distinguishing between friend and foe. His uncle died: Turolde, a Norman, was appointed to succeed him; and though Hereward had sworn fealty to the abbey, though the monks were his countrymen, and had been his benefactors, he determined to enrich himself by the plunder of their church. As the gate could not easily be forced, his impatience set fire to the nearest houses; he burst through the flames, despised the tears and supplications of the brotherhood, and carried off the riches of the monastery. The spoils, which he thus sacrilegiously acquired, and the conflagration of the town and abbey, of which only the church and one apartment remained standing, are described with lamentations by the historians of Peterborough.⁶ Courage appears to have supplied the place of every other virtue in the estimation of this Anglo-Saxon knight: and he is, unfortunately, the only one who has been transmitted to posterity in that character.

II. The importance of conjugal fidelity was understood, and enforced by the ancient Saxons, even before their conversion to Christianity. The jealousy of the husband guarded with severity the honour of his bed; and the offending wife was frequently compelled to be herself the executioner of his vengeance. With her own hands she fastened the halter to her neck; her strangled body was thrown into the flames; and over her ashes was suspended the partner of her guilt. On other occasions he delivered her to the women of the neighbourhood, who were eager to avenge on their unfortunate victim, the honour of the female character. They stripped her to the girdle, and scourged her from village to village, till she sunk under the severity of the punishment.⁷ But if the justice of the Saxons was inexorable to the disturbers of connubial happiness, they indulged themselves in a greater latitude of choice than was conceded to the more polished nations, whom the wisdom of civil and religious legislators had restrained from marrying within certain degrees of kindred. The son hesitated not to take to his bed the relict of his deceased father: nor was the widow of the dead ashamed to accept the hand of the surviving brother.⁸ These illicit unions shocked the piety of the first missionaries; and to their anxious inquiries, Gregory the Great returned a moderate and prudent answer. He considered the ignorance of the Saxons as deserving of pity rather than severity; commanded the prohibition of marriage, which was regularly extended to the seventh, to be

⁵ Ing. *ibid.* In the council of London, held by St. Anselm, in 1102, this Anglo-Saxon custom was abolished, and the abbots were forbidden to confer the dignity of knighthood. *Wilk. Con. tom. i. p. 382.*

⁶ *Hug. Cand. p. 48. Chron. Sax. p. 176.*

⁷ *Ep. St. Bonif. ad Ethelbald. apud Wilk. p. 83.*

⁸ *Bed. apud Wilk. p. 20.*

restricted to the first and second generations; and advised the missionaries to separate the converts who were contracted within these degrees, and exhort them to marry again, according to the ecclesiastical canons.⁹ The indulgence of the pontiff alarmed the zealots of Italy; and in a letter to Felix, bishop of Messina, he condescended to justify his conduct, on the ground, that every possible concession ought to be made to the former habits of the proselytes; and that it was his intention to restore the ancient discipline, in proportion as the necessity for its suspension decreased.¹⁰ By the Saxon prelates, the will of the pontiff was understood, and gradually obeyed. In the eighth century, marriages within the fourth degree were strictly forbidden: and by the commencement of the eleventh, the prohibition was extended to the sixth.¹¹ At this point it remained stationary till the Norman conquest.

The age at which marriage might be lawfully contracted, was fifteen years in males, and fourteen in females.¹² As the pecuniary compensations, with which the Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence abounded, were frequently levied on the relatives of the delinquent, the suitor was compelled to obtain the consent, not only of the lady, but also of her family, and to give security by his friends, that "he desired to keep her according to the law of God, and as a man should keep his wife." The pecuniary arrangements next engaged their attention. That the parents bestowed any part of their property on their daughter at her marriage, is not, I believe, hinted by any ancient writer; but there can be no doubt that, at their death, she was equally entitled with the other children to a share in the succession. At first, however, the whole burden was laid on the shoulders of the husband; and in the language of the Anglo-Saxon laws, he is said to buy, and *her* parents are said to sell to him, his wife. In a meeting with her *forspeaker*, he fixed the morgan-gift, or present which he intended to make her for having accepted his offer; assigned a sufficient provision for the maintenance of the children; and determined the value of her dower, if she were to survive him. That dower, adds the law, if they have issue, should be the whole, if they have not, the half of his property.¹³ The matrimonial purchase was now concluded. The bridegroom gave securities for the performance of the several articles; and the family of the bride engaged to deliver her to him, whenever they should be required.

Three days before the day appointed for the consummation of the marriage, the bride and bridegroom, attended by their nearest

⁹ Bed. *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Ep. Greg. ad Fel. apud Smith, app. p. 685.

¹¹ Wilk. Con. p. 121. 301.

¹² Pœnit. Egb. p. 120, xxvii.

¹³ Leges Eadmundi, inter Leg. Sax. p. 75.

relatives, presented themselves at the porch of the church, that the "priest might confirm their union by the blessing of God, in the fulness of prosperity."¹⁴ In his presence they mutually pledged their faith to each other;¹⁵ a ring was blessed and put on her finger; and the priest invoked the Almighty "to look down from Heaven on the holy contract, and pour his benediction on the parties; to bless them as he blessed Tobias and Sarah; to protect them from all evil, grant them peace, and enrich them with every blessing, to the remission of sin, and acquisition of eternal life."¹⁶ He then led them into the church to the chancel. The nuptial mass was celebrated: before the canon they prostrated themselves at the lowest step of the altar; and a purple veil was suspended over their heads. As soon as the pater noster had been recited, the priest turned towards them, and repeated the prayer of benediction. "O God, who by thy power didst create all things out of nothing, and having made man to thy own likeness, didst form woman from the side of man, to show that no separation should divide those who were made of one flesh; O God, who by so excellent a mystery didst consecrate the nuptial contract, making it a figure of the sacrament of Christ and thy church; O God, by whom woman is joined to man, and a blessing has been granted to marriage, which was not taken away either by the punishment of original sin, or the waters of the deluge; look down, we beseech thee, on this thy servant, who begs to be surrounded with thy protection. May the yoke of marriage be to her a yoke of peace and love: may she marry faithful and chaste in Christ: may she imitate the holy women who have gone before her. Let her be lovely as Rachel in the eyes of her husband; wise as Rebecca; long lived and faithful as Sarah. May she remain true, obedient, and bound to one bed. May she flee all unlawful engagements, and, by the power of discipline, strengthen her weakness. Make her fruitful in her offspring, reputable and virtuous in life. Grant that she may arrive at the rest of the saints, and the kingdom of heaven: that she may live to a good old age, and see the children of her children to the third and fourth generation, through Christ, our Lord. AMEN."¹⁷ At the conclusion of the prayer they arose, gave each other the kiss of peace, and received the eucharist. On the third

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ I have not been able to discover the form of words, in which the marriage contract was expressed by the Anglo-Saxons. The most ancient formula, with which I am acquainted, occurs in the constitutions of Richard de Marisco, bishop of Durham, in the beginning of the thirteenth century. At that time the bridegroom was accustomed to say: "I take thee, N, for my wife." To which the bride rejoined: "I take thee, N, for my husband." Const. Rich. de Maris. apud Wilk. tom. i. p. 582.

¹⁶ Ritual. Dunel. MS. A. iv. 19, p. 53. This ritual is very ancient, and contains an interlineary version, which appears to be written by the same person who wrote the interlineary version in the Durham book of Gospels, (British Mus. Nev. D. 4.) If this be true, the ritual must have been in use before the close of the seventh century.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 52.

day they returned to the church, assisted, without communicating, at the mass, and from that hour lived together as husband and wife.¹⁸

III. "He that giveth his virgin in marriage, doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage, doeth better," was the inspired decision of an apostle.¹⁹ If the Anglo-Saxon church was careful to invoke the graces of Heaven on the matrimonial union, she was not less liberal of her benedictions to the virgins, who had preferred an immortal spouse, and resolved to dedicate their chastity to God. The consummation of their sacrifice was conducted with the most impressive solemnity. Monks and nuns might profess their obedience to a particular monastic rule in the hands of the abbot or abbess: but the consecration of a virgin was considered of greater importance; it was exclusively reserved to the ministry of the bishop,²⁰ and attached to the principal festivals of the year; and at Easter, the Epiphany, and on the feasts of the apostles, in the presence of the people, before the altar, and at the feet of the chief pastor, the voluntary victim renounced the pleasures of the world, that she might obtain a future but immortal crown.²¹ The eagerness of youth was, however, repressed by the wisdom of the church; the votary was commanded to wait till the stability of her determination had been proved by experience; and, that she might not afterwards accuse her caprice or temerity, her solemn vow was retarded till she had reached her twenty-fifth year.²² On the appointed day, the habit appropriated to her profession was blessed by the bishop. When he commenced the office of the mass, she dressed herself in a private room; and, at some period before the offertory, was introduced into the church, and led to the foot of the altar. Turning towards her, in a short address he explained the nature of the sacrifice, which it was her intention to make, and admonished her of the obligations which it imposed. If she still persisted, he inquired whether her determination had been sanctioned by the consent of her parents; and having received a satisfactory answer, placed his hands upon her head, and pronounced the prayer of consecration.²³ "Be thou blessed by the Creator of heaven and earth, the Father, God omnipotent, who has chosen thee like the holy Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, to preserve pure and immaculate the virginity, which thou hast promised before God, and his holy angels. Persevere therefore in thy resolution; preserve thy chastity with patience; and keep thyself worthy to receive the crown of virginity."

"Be thou blessed with every spiritual blessing by God, the

¹⁸ Wilk. p. 131, xxi.

¹⁹ 1 Cor. vii. 38.

²⁰ Mart. l. ii. c. vi. p. 111. Spicil. tom. ix. p. 54.

²¹ Excerpt. Egb. apud Wilk. p. 106, xcii.

²² Id. Ibid. xciii.

²³ Martene de Rit. l. ii. c. 6, p. 112.

Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that thou may remain pure, chaste, and immaculate. May the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, the spirit of the fear of the Lord, rest upon thee. May he strengthen thy weakness, and confirm thy strength. May he govern all thy actions, purify thy thoughts, and enrich thee with every virtue. Have always before thy eyes Him whom one day thou wilt have for thy judge. Make it thy care, that when thou shalt enter the chamber of thy spouse, he may meet thee with joy and kindness; that when the dreadful day shall come, which is to reward the just and punish the wicked, the avenging flame may find nothing in thee to burn, but the divine mercy may find much to reward. Serve thy God with a pure heart, that thou may hereafter be associated to the one hundred and forty thousand virgins, who follow the Lamb, and sing a new canticle: and may *he* bless thee from heaven, who vouchsafed to descend upon earth and redeem mankind by dying on a cross, Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

The bishop then placed the consecrated veil on her head with these words: “Receive, daughter, this covering, which thou mayest carry without stain before the tribunal of Christ, to whom bows every knee of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.” As he finished, the church rang with the acclamations of the people, who cried, amen. The mass was continued, she received the holy communion, and at the conclusion the bishop once more gave her his benediction. “Pour forth, O Lord, thy heavenly blessing on this thy servant, our sister, who has humbled herself under thy hand. AMEN. Cover her with thy protection. AMEN. May she avoid all sin, know the good things prepared for her, and seek the reward of thy heavenly kingdom. AMEN. May she obey thy commandments, by thy grace resist the impulse of passion, and bear in her hand the lamp of holiness. AMEN. May she deserve to enter the gates of the heavenly kingdom, in the company of the wise and chaste. AMEN. May *he* grant this, whose empire remains for eternity. AMEN. The blessing of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, remain with thee here, and forever. AMEN.”²⁴

By this ceremony she was said, in the language of the time, to have been wedded to Christ.²⁵ She was called the bride of Christ,²⁶ and as her spouse could not die, the engagement which

²⁴ This account is taken from the pontifical of Archbishop Egbert, transcribed by Martene, *ibid.* p. 116. The original MS. is now in the library of St. Genevieve at Paris. It is described in nearly the same manner in Rit. Dunel. MS. p. 50: and in the Anglo-Saxon pontifical which was preserved at Jumiege, Mart. p. 120. The consecration of a widow was performed with less ceremony. The veil was placed on her head privately by a priest, with the same words as above, *ibid.* and Martene, p. 146.

²⁵ *Lode rýlfum bepeddod.* Pœnit. Egb. p. 136.

²⁶ *Mýnecene ðe Lrober hþýd biþ gehaten.* *Id. ibid.* p. 131.

she had contracted was deemed irrevocable by the laws both of the church and the state. Each violation of chastity subjected her to a course of penance during seven years:²⁷ and if she presumed to marry, the marriage was declared invalid; and the parties were excommunicated, ordered to separate, and to do penance during the remainder of their lives.²⁸ Should they elude the execution of this regulation, another law deprived her of her dower after the death of her reputed husband, pronounced her children illegitimate, and rendered them incapable of inheriting the property of their father.²⁹

IV. Under the Mosaic dispensation, God himself had condescended to describe the various rites, by which Aaron and his sons should be consecrated to his service: in the infancy of the Christian church, a more simple ceremony appears to have been taught by Christ to his apostles, and the dignity and grace of the priesthood were conferred by prayer and the imposition of hands.³⁰ While the number of the converts was small, a single minister was, in many places, sufficient to perform all the duties of religious worship: but with the increase of the faithful, and the influx of wealth, a more numerous and splendid establishment was adopted; and a regular gradation of office conducted the young ecclesiastic from the humble station of porter to the more honourable rank of deacon, priest, or bishop. In each order his fidelity underwent a long probation: but his perseverance was rewarded with promotion; and at each step a new ordination reminded him of his additional obligations, and invoked in his favour the benediction of Heaven. In the Anglo-Saxon church the clergy was constituted after the Roman model: and the hierarchy consisted of porters, lectors, exorcists, acolythists, subdeacons, deacons, and priests. The seventh order (that of the priesthood) was subdivided into two classes, of bishops, who possessed it in all its plenitude, and of priests, whose ministry was restricted to the exercise of those functions, which, from their importance and frequent recurrence, demanded the assistance of numerous co-operators. "The bishop and the priest," says Ælfric in his charge to the clergy, "both belong to the same order: but one is superior to the other. Besides the functions which are common to both, it is the office of the bishop to ordain, to confirm, to bless the holy oils, and to dedicate churches: for it would be too much if these powers had been communicated to all priests."³¹

²⁷ Id. p. 118, xiii.

²³ Id. p. 131, xviii. Conc. Calcuith. p. 149, xvi.

²⁹ Leg. eccles. Ælfrid. p. 192, vi.

³⁰ 1 Tim. iii. 14.

³¹ Ælfric. ep. ad Wulfsin. inter Leg. Sax. p. 155. Ep. ad Wolstan. p. 167. The distinction between bishops and priests is thus drawn in the pontificals:—Presbyterum oportet benedicere, offerre, et bene præesse, prædicare, et baptizare, atque communicare. Episcopum oportet judicare, et interpretari, consecrare et consummare, quin et ordinare, offerre, et baptizare: omnia debet prospicere et ordinare. Pont. Egb. p. 346. Pont. Gemet. p. 356, 357.

In the choice and promotion of the inferior ministers, the judgment of the bishops was guided by the wisdom of preceding ages. Whatever regarded the time and rite of ordination, the age, personal merit, and mental endowments of the candidates, had been foreseen and determined by the decrees of councils, and the usage of antiquity. The time was fixed to the four ember weeks which regularly returned with the four seasons of the year; and on the evening of the Saturday, the bishop commenced the sacred ceremony, the length of which frequently encroached on the following morning.³² The lower orders, which imposed no irrevocable obligation, might be lawfully conferred even on children: for the others a greater maturity of age and judgment was required; and the deacon was expected to have reached his twenty-fifth, the priest his thirtieth year, the time of life at which Jesus was believed to have commenced his evangelical labours.³³ But this regulation was not strictly enforced: and a proper latitude was granted to the discretion of the bishop, who might lawfully dispense in favour of superior merit, or the wants of a numerous people.³⁴ A severe scrutiny preceded admission to the higher degrees of the hierarchy.³⁵ A competency of learning, and the reputation of virtue, were necessary qualifications. Idolatry, witchcraft, murder, fornication, perjury, and theft, though time and repentance might be supposed to have obliterated the former scandal, opposed insuperable impediments to the pretensions of the candidate: and if he succeeded in concealing these crimes at the time of his ordination, yet, the moment they were known, he was deposed from his rank, and condemned to fast and pray in the number of public penitents.³⁶ It was also required, that he were free from every stain which might depreciate him in the estimation of the public, deformity of body, illegitimacy of birth, and servile descent: and if he had been married, he was compelled to prove that his wife was already dead, or had voluntarily embraced a life of perpetual continency.³⁷ To these was added a third requisite, which showed the high importance attached to clerical chastity. A second marriage was deemed to imply a weakness of mind, and a secret propensity to pleasure, incompatible with the austerity of the levitical or sacerdotal character: and the bigamist, though he were a widower, and possessed of every other qualification, was excluded, without the hope of indulgence, from the rank of bishop, priest, or deacon.³⁸

³² Pont. Egb. p. 344. Wilk. Con. p. 107, xcix.

³³ Wilk. p. 106, xciii.; 107, xevii. Fifty years was the age which the canons required for a bishop, according to St. Boniface: but this regulation was seldom observed. Vit. St. Bonif. apud Serrar. p. 267.

³⁴ Ep. Zach. ad Bonif. p. 214. Thus Bede was ordained deacon at nineteen, l. v. c. 24: the Abbot Esterwin received priest's orders at twenty-nine, Ceolfrid at twenty-seven. Bed. Hist. Abbat. p. 296. 302.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 85. Ep. Zach. ad Bonif. p. 215.

³⁶ Wilk. p. 95, 147.

³⁷ Id. *ibid.*

³⁸ Id. *ibid.* p. 103, xxxii. Pontif. Egb. p. 350.

In the Anglo-Saxon pontificals are accurately described the various rites by which the ministers of the church were invested with their respective dignities. The collation of the inferior orders I shall neglect, as of inferior importance:³⁹ that of the higher may be compressed within the compass of a few pages, and will not, perhaps, appear uninteresting to the pious or the curious reader.

1. Previously to the ordination, the candidates were intrusted to the custody of the archdeacon, who inquired into their respective qualifications, and instructed them in the nature and exercise of the offices to which they aspired. At the appointed hour, he introduced them into the church, and in answer to a question from the bishop replied, that he bore, as far as human frailty might presume, a willing testimony to their merit and capacity. The bishop then addressed the congregation. He requested the assistance of their prayers for the important function which it was his duty to perform: exhorted them not to permit the sanctity of the hierarchy to be polluted by the adoption of improper characters; and commanded them, if they were acquainted with a canonical impediment in any of the candidates, to step forward, and declare it with modesty and freedom. If no accusation was preferred, he lay, while the litany was chanted, prostrate at the foot of the altar; and the clerks, who were to be ordained, ranged themselves in the same posture behind him. Rising, he first conferred the degree of deacon, with the following ceremonies. Having placed the stole across the left shoulder of each, as they successively knelt before him, he put in his hand the book of the gospels, saying, "Receive this volume of the gospel; read and understand it; teach it to others, and fulfil it thyself." Then holding his hands over their heads, he thus continued: "O Lord God Almighty, the giver of honours, distributor of orders, and disposer of functions, look with complacency on these thy servants, whom we humbly ordain to the office of deacons, that they may always minister in thy service. We, though ignorant of thy judgment, have examined their lives, as far as we are able. But thou, O Lord, knowest all things; the most hidden things are not concealed from thy eyes. Thou art acquainted with all secrets, thou art the searcher of hearts. But as thou canst examine their conduct by thy celestial light, so canst thou also purify their souls, and grant them the graces necessary for their functions. Send, therefore, on them, O Lord, thy Holy Spirit, that, in the execution of their ministry, they may be strengthened by the seven-fold gift of thy grace. May thy precepts shine in their conduct; may thy people learn to imitate the chastity of their lives; and may their fidelity in their present station raise them to a higher dignity in thy church." He then completed

³⁹ It differed very little from the form in the present Roman pontifical, and may be seen in Martene, p. 346.

the ordination by anointing their hands with oil and chrism, praying, "that through the merits of Christ, whatever they should bless, might be blessed, and whatever they should hallow, might be hallowed."⁴⁰

2. After the ordination of the deacons, followed that of the priests. The preparatory ceremonies were the same; but the stole, which before had been placed on the left shoulder, was now hung over the neck, and permitted to fall down before the breast. The bishop then pronounced aloud the name of the church for which each candidate was to be ordained, and holding his hands over their heads, in which he was imitated by the assistant priests, read or chanted the prayer of consecration. He began by observing, that as Moses in the desert had chosen seventy rulers to assist him in governing the people; as Eleazar and Ithamar were selected to participate with their father Aaron in the functions of the sacred ministry; as the apostles had employed the zeal of their most virtuous disciples in the conversion of nations; so he, their unworthy successor, required the aid of numerous and faithful co-operators. "Give, therefore," he continued, "we beseech thee, Almighty Father, to these thy servants, the dignity of the priesthood; renew in their bowels the spirit of holiness: make them the zealous assistants of our order, and grant them the form of all justice." Here he interrupted his prayer, and requested the congregation to join with him in soliciting the blessing of Heaven on those who had been chosen to labour for their salvation. He then resumed the consecration in the following words: "O God, the author of all sanctity, impose the hand of thy benediction on these thy servants, whom we ordain to the honour of the priesthood. Instructed by the lessons which Paul gave to Timothy and Titus, may they meditate day and night on thy law: may they believe what they read, teach what they believe, and practise what they teach. May their conduct be an example of all virtue, that they may preserve pure and unsullied the gift of thy ministry, transform by an immaculate benediction the body and blood of thy Son, and, growing to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ, appear at the day of judgment with a pure conscience, a perfect faith, and the plenitude of the Holy Spirit." He then clothed them with the chasuble, the garment appropriated to the priests, blessed their hands, "that they might consecrate the sacrifices which were offered for the sins of the people;" and anointed their heads, praying that "they might be consecrated with the celestial blessing in the order of priesthood, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."⁴¹ The latter ceremony seems, originally, to have been peculiar to the Anglo-Saxons: from them it passed to a few churches in Gaul; but was at last abolished by

⁴⁰ Martene, Pontif. Egb. p. 351. Pont. Gemet. p. 362.

⁴¹ Mart. *ibid.* p. 352. 364.

the opposition of the bishops, who were unwilling that the priests should be honoured with a rite, which the Roman church had exclusively attached to the episcopal consecration.⁴²

3. In a preceding chapter has been described the gradual transition of the privilege of nominating bishops, from the provincial bishops, and the suffrage of the clergy and people, to the more venal and interested choice of the prince. Still a shadow of the ancient discipline was respectfully preserved: from the pulpit of the cathedral the name of the clergyman who had been nominated to the vacant see, was announced to the congregation:⁴³ and their acclamations of "many years may he live, may he be pleasing to God, may he be dear to men," were assumed as sufficient evidence of their assent.⁴⁴ A public instrument of his election was composed, and confided to a deputation of the chapter, who presented it to the metropolitan, and solicited him to consecrate the object of their choice.⁴⁵ He appointed the day for the performance of the ceremony. But previously the bishop elect appeared before him, answered his interrogations, and subscribed a declaration of his faith, and profession of obedience.⁴⁶ He then retired to the church, and passed the night before the altar, sometimes employed in private prayer, at others reciting or chanting the office with his chaplains.

A single bishop, attended by his priests, might ordain the inferior ministers: the presence of at least three prelates was required at the consecration of a bishop. From this obligation, Gregory the Great had exempted St. Augustine, and permitted him to perform the ceremony without any assistants: but he added, that this indulgence was to expire with the circumstances which rendered it necessary, and that the ancient discipline was then to be strictly observed.⁴⁷ The consecration was performed in the church, and during the mass. At the appointed time, the bishop elect placed himself on his knees before the prelates, who had assembled for the occasion. Two of them held the book of the gospels on the crown of his head, the others touched it with their hands, and the metropolitan pronounced the form of consecration.

⁴² The delivery of the gospel to the deacons, and the unction of their hands, were also ceremonies peculiar to the Anglo-Saxons, though both the pontificals profess to derive the rites of ordination from the customs of Rome. Mart. p. 314, 315. The first of these is now found in the Roman pontifical.

⁴³ Angl. Sac. vol. ii. p. 107. 198.

⁴⁴ *Vivat, clamitant, episcopis annis innumeris, vivat Deo gratus, vivat hominibus charus.* Vit. St. Elpheg. Ang. Sac. p. 127.

⁴⁵ Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 107. A copy of this instrument may be seen in the same work, vol. i. p. 82. Harpsfield has published that which was presented for the ordination of Ælfric, (Hist. p. 198.) It is expressed in the same words as the former.

⁴⁶ The profession of St. Swithin has already been mentioned; that of St. Boniface may be read in Serrarius, (Ep. St. Bonif. p. 163.) It was written with his own hand, and placed by him on the tomb of St. Peter. Ibid. Several other professions are printed in Ang. Sac. vol. i. p. 78. The first has an erroneous title. Eadulf was bishop, not of York, but of Sydnacester, as appears from the next profession, p. 79.

⁴⁷ Bed. Hist. l. i. c. 27.

Having observed, that the consecration of Aaron was a type of that of the bishops in the new law, he prayed that God would grant to his servant the virtues prefigured by the habit appropriated to the high priest in the Jewish temple:⁴⁸ that he would impart to him the plenitude of the holy ministry, and give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven: that whatever he should bind or loose on earth, might be bound or loosed in heaven: that whose sins he should retain, they might be retained; and whose sins he should forgive, they should be forgiven: that he might never give to evil the appellation of good, or to good the appellation of evil: that he might receive an episcopal chair to rule the church; that God would be his strength and authority, and that his prayer might be heard as often as he implored the mercy of the Almighty.⁴⁹ His hands and head were then anointed with oil; the crosier was delivered into his hand, and the ring put on his finger. Each ceremony was accompanied with a prayer expressive of its meaning; and at the conclusion he was placed on the episcopal throne, with these words: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst choose thy apostles to be our masters, vouchsafe to teach, instruct, and bless this thy bishop, that he may lead a holy and immaculate life. AMEN."⁵⁰

V. The inauguration of princes was originally a civil rite. The emperors of the Romans, and the kings of the barbarians, were alike elevated on a shield, and saluted by the acclamations of the army. But when they had embraced the knowledge of the gospel, they deemed the examples recorded in the Jewish Scriptures worthy of their imitation; even the splendour of royalty might receive addition from the ceremonies of religion; and an anointed king would appear with still greater majesty in the eyes of his subjects. Theodosius the younger was the first, who is recorded to have solicited the royal insignia from the ministers of the church: but his successors appreciated the policy of his conduct, and were careful to receive, with the imperial crown, the benediction of the Byzantine patriarch. In Britain this ceremony was imitated at an early period. No sooner had the emperor Honorius recalled the legions from the island, than the descendants of the ancient kings assumed the sceptre; and their inauguration, as we learn from a native writer, was performed

⁴⁸ In this part of the prayer, the following passage, according to the Anglo-Saxon pontificals, was inserted at the ordination of the Roman pontiff. *Idcirco hunc famulum tuum, ill. quem apostolicæ sedis præsumem et primatem omnium, qui in orbe sunt, sacerdotum, ac universalis ecclesiæ tuæ doctorem dedisti, et ad summi sacerdotii ministerium elegisti, &c.* Pont. Egb. p. 342. Pont. Gemet. p. 368.

⁴⁹ As the book of the gospels was now raised from his head, it was customary for the metropolitan to open it, and read the first passage which presented itself. It was considered as a prophecy respecting the future conduct of the new bishop. Numerous examples occur after the conquest; I recollect but one before it, in the life of St. Wulstan. *Ang. Sac.* vol. ii. p. 252.

⁵⁰ Pont. Egb. p. 340.

with the regal unction.⁵¹ From Britain it seems to have been transmitted to the Christian princes of Ireland: the book of the *ordination* of kings was in the library of the abbot St. Columba; and according to its directions he blessed and *ordained* Aidan, king of the Scots.⁵² It has been said that the Anglo-Saxons were indebted for this right to the policy of an usurper, Eardulf, of Northumbria:⁵³ but the ceremony of the coronation occupied a distinguished place in the pontifical of Archbishop Egbert, which was written many years before the reign of that prince.⁵⁴

The ceremony began with the coronation oath. Its origin may be traced to Anthemius, the patriarch of Constantinople, whose zeal refused to place the crown on the head of Anastasius, a prince of suspicious orthodoxy, till he had sworn to make no innovation in the established religion.⁵⁵ But the oath of the Anglo-Saxons was more comprehensive: it was a species of compact between the monarch and the people, which the bishop, as the representative of Heaven, ratified with his benediction. "I promise," said the king, "in the name of the most holy Trinity, first, that the church of God, and all Christian people, shall enjoy true peace under my government. Secondly, that I will prohibit every kind of rapine and injustice, in men of every condition. Thirdly, that in all judgments I will command equity to be united with mercy, that the most gracious and clement God may, through his eternal mercy, forgive us all. AMEN."⁵⁶ A portion of the gospel was then read: three prayers were recited

⁵¹ Ungebantur reges, says Gildas, et paulo post ab unctoribus trucidabantur. Gild. p. 82, edit. Bertram.

⁵² From Cuminus, who wrote in 607, we learn that St. Columba took with him ordinationis regum librum, et Aidanum in regem ordinavit. Cum. vit. Colum. p. 30, edit. Pinkerton. Adomnan, who wrote thirty years later, adds, imponens manum super caput ejus. Adom. vit. Colum. p. 161.

⁵³ Carte, Hist. vol. i. p. 293. See note (O.)

⁵⁴ This is the most ancient ordo ad benedicendum regem, which is known. From a MS. in the Cotton Library, Mr. Turner has translated the description of the ceremony, as it was performed at the coronation of Ethelred, in 978. (Turner, vol. iv. p. 250.) It is different from that contained in the pontifical of Egbert, but the same as was published by Martene, under the title of ordo ad benedicendum regem Francorum, from a MS. written by order of Ratold, abbot of Corbie, in 980. Was this Anglo-Saxon ordo borrowed from the French, or the French from the Anglo-Saxon? The latter seems to be the truth. In the French ordo, England is several times mentioned; and the transcriber, who appears to have carefully preserved every word of the original, adds, that by England must be understood France. Thus the king is said to be chosen in regnum N. Albionis totius, (videlicet Francorum.) Mart. l. ii. p. 192.

⁵⁵ Evagrius, l. iii. c. 32.

⁵⁶ This oath is translated from that which St. Dunstan exacted from Ethelred at his coronation. Hicks. Gram. præf. But it is much more ancient, and is thus expressed in Egbert's pontifical. "Rectitudo est regis noviter ordinati, et in solium sublevati, hæc tria præcepta populo Christiano sibi subdito præcipere: in primis ut ecclesia Dei, et omnis populus Christianus veram pacem servent in omni tempore. AMEN. Aliud est, ut rapacitates et omnes iniquitates omnibus gradibus interdicit. AMEN. Tertium est, ut in omnibus judiciis æquitatem et misericordiam præcipiat, ut per hoc nobis indulgeat misericordiam suam clemens et misericors Deus. AMEN." Mart. l. ii. p. 188. The same oath occurs in the ancient French pontificals. Ibid. p. 197. 199. 211.

to implore the blessing of God; and the consecrated oil was poured on the head of the king. While the other prelates anointed him, the archbishop read the prayer: "O God, the strength of the elect, and the exaltation of the humble, who, by the unction of oil, didst sanctify thy servant Aaron, and by the same didst prepare priests, kings, and prophets, to rule thy people Israel; sanctify, Almighty God, in like manner this thy servant, that like them he may be able to govern the people committed to his charge."

At the conclusion of the prayer, the principal thanes approached, and, in conjunction with the bishops, placed the sceptre in his hand. The archbishop continued: "Bless, O Lord, this prince, thou who rulest the kingdoms of all kings. AMEN."

"May he always be subject to thee with fear: may he serve thee: may his reign be peaceful: may he with his chieftains be protected by thy shield: may he be victorious without bloodshed. AMEN."

"May he live magnanimous among the assemblies of the nations: may he be distinguished by the equity of his judgments. AMEN."

"Grant him length of life for years: and may justice arise in his days. AMEN."

"Grant that the nations may be faithful to him: and his nobles may enjoy peace, and love charity. AMEN."

"Be thou his honour, his joy, and his pleasure; his solace in grief, his counsel in difficulty, his consoler in labour. AMEN."

"May he seek advice from thee, and by thee may he learn to hold the reins of empire; that his life may be a life of happiness, and he may hereafter enjoy eternal bliss. AMEN."

The rod was now put into his hand, with a prayer, that the benedictions of the ancient patriarchs, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, might rest upon him. He was then crowned, and the archbishop said, "Bless, O Lord, the strength of the king our prince, and receive the work of his hands. Blessed by thee be his land, with the precious dew of the heavens, and the springs of the low-lying deep; with the fruits brought forth by the sun, and the fruits brought forth by the moon; with the precious things of the aged mountains, and the precious things of the eternal hills, with the fruits of the earth, and the fulness thereof. May the blessing of Him who appeared in the bush, rest on the head of the king. May he be blessed in his children, and dip his foot in oil. May the horns of the rhinoceros be his horns; with them may he push the nations to the extremities of the earth. And be He who rideth on the heavens, his helper forever."⁵⁷

⁵⁷ These benedictions are selected from Deuteronomy, c. xxxiii.

Here the people exclaimed thrice, "Live the king forever. AMEN. AMEN. AMEN." They were then admitted to kiss him on his throne. The ceremony concluded with this prayer. "O God, the author of eternity, leader of the heavenly host, and conqueror of all enemies, bless this thy servant, who humbly bends his head before thee. Pour thy grace upon him: preserve him with health and happiness in the service to which he is appointed, and wherever and for whomsoever he shall implore thy assistance, do thou, O God, be present, protect and defend him, through Christ our Lord. AMEN."⁵⁸

VI. Of the manner in which the first Christian oratories were consecrated to the service of God, we are ignorant. The offices of religion were carefully concealed from the notice of the profane; and the converts were too prudent to alarm the jealousy or provoke the avarice of the infidels, by an unnecessary splendour. But as soon as the sceptre had been placed in the hands of Constantine, religious edifices of considerable magnificence arose in every province, and the Christian emperor aspired to equal the fame of David and Solomon. The dedication of the temple of Jerusalem, served as a model for the dedication of the Christian churches: the bishops eagerly assembled to perform the sacred ceremony; and their ministry was joyfully attended by the presence of the great, and the acclamations of the people. Succeeding generations preserved with fidelity the practice of their predecessors; and among the Anglo-Saxons, no solemnity was celebrated with greater pomp than the dedication of a church. Egfrid, king of Northumbria, his brother Ælwin, their ealdormen and abbots, attended St. Wilfrid, when he consecrated the *basilic*, which he had erected at Rippon:⁵⁹ to the dedication of the church at Ramsey, all the thanes of the six neighbouring counties were invited by St. Oswald:⁶⁰ and when the same ceremony was performed in the cathedral of Winchester, after its restoration by St. Ethelwold, it was honoured with the presence of King Ethelred and his court, and of the metropolitan and eight other bishops.⁶¹

The night preceding the ceremony was spent in watching and prayer. On the morning, the prelates, dressed in their pontificals, repaired to the porch of the church; and the principal consecrator struck the door thrice with his crosier, repeating the verse: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the king of glory shall enter in." At the third stroke it was opened: the choir sung the twenty-fourth psalm; and the bishops entered, crying: "Peace to this house, and all who dwell

⁵⁸ Pontif. Egb. p. 186.

⁵⁹ Edd. Vit. St. Wilf. c. xvii.

⁶⁰ Hist. Ram. p. 422.

⁶¹ Wolst. Carmen in Act. SS. Bened. sæc. v. p. 629.

in it: peace to those who enter, peace to those who go out.”⁶² They proceeded to the foot of the principal altar, and lay prostrate before it, while the litany was sung.⁶³ At its conclusion they arose, and one of the bishops, with the end of his crosier, wrote two Roman alphabets on the floor, in the form of a cross. He then sprinkled the altar, the walls, and the pavement with holy water, and standing in the middle of the church, chanted the following prayer. “O blessed and holy Trinity, who purifiest, cleansest, and adornest all things; O blessed majesty of God, who fillest, governest, and disposest all things; O blessed and holy hand of God, who sanctifiest, blessest, and enrichest all things; O God, the holy of holies, we humbly implore thy clemency, that by our ministry thou wouldst purify, bless, and consecrate this church to the honour of the holy and victorious cross, and the memory of thy blessed servant, N.”⁶⁴ Here may thy priests offer to thee sacrifices of praise; here may thy faithful people perform their vows; here may the burden of sins be lightened, and those who have fallen be restored to grace. Grant that all who shall enter this temple to pray, may obtain the effect of their petition, and rejoice forever in the bounty of thy mercy. AMEN.”⁶⁵ The bishops then separated to consecrate the different altars, and other ornaments of the church; mass was celebrated with every demonstration of joy; and the more distinguished visitors retired to the episcopal palace, where they partook of a plentiful and splendid banquet.⁶⁶

⁶² Wolstan, in his poem on the dedication of the cathedral of Winchester, has contrived to shape these words into the form of Latin verse, and hitch them into rhyme:

Incipiunt omnes modulata voce canentes,
Pax sit huic domui, pax sit et hic fidei.
Pax fiat intranti, pax et fiat egredienti;
Semper in hocque loco, laus sit honoque Deo.—*Wolst. ib. p. 632.*

⁶³ The litany was very short. After the usual beginning, followed the invocations of the saints. Three apostles, three martyrs, three confessors, and three virgins, were called on by name: and the following petitions were added: “Ab inimicis nostris defende nos, Christe. Dolorem cordis nostri benignus vide. Afflictionem nostram respice clemens. Peccata populi tui pius indulge. Orationes nostras exaudi, Christe. Hic et in perpetuum nos custodire digneris, Christe. Fili Dei vivi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, &c.” *Pont. Egb. apud Martene, c. xiii. p. 251.*

⁶⁴ From this passage may be collected, in what sense churches were said to be dedicated to saints. The prayer which was then made to the patron of the church, sufficiently indicates the doctrine of the time. Tibi commendamus hanc curam templi hujus, quod consecravimus Domino Deo nostro, ut hic intercessor existas; preces et vota offerentium hic Domino Deo offeras; odoramenta orationum plebis Christianæ in libatorio vasis aurei ad patris thronum conferas, precerisque, quatenus jugi Dominus Deus noster intuitu hic ingredientes et orantes tueri et gubernare dignetur. *Pontif. Anglo-Sax. Gemet. apud Mart. p. 271.*

⁶⁵ *Pont. Egb. p. 253. Pont. Gemet. p. 262.*

⁶⁶ The reader may perhaps be amused with the account of the dinner which *St. Ethelwold* had on one of these occasions prepared for his guests.

Fercula sunt admixta epulis, cibus omnis abundat,
Nullus adest tristis, omnis adest hilaris.
Nulla fames, ubi sunt cunctis obsonia plenis,
Et remanet vario mensa referta cibo.

These ceremonies, attended by such numbers of distinguished personages, afforded the clergy favourable opportunities of obtaining the confirmation of their property and privileges. At the dedication of the church of Rippon, St. Wilfrid read from the altar a schedule of the lands belonging to the abbey, and called on the assembly to bear witness to the legality of the titles.⁶⁷ At Ramsey, the ealdorman Alwin, the founder of the monastery, assembled at an early hour the thanes of the neighbouring counties, read to them the charters of King Edgar and the other benefactors, and invited those who conceived themselves entitled to any of the lands possessed by the monks, to come forward and advance their claim. As no one appeared, "I call then on you all," continued the ealdorman, "to bear witness before God and his saints, that on this day we have offered justice to every adversary, and that no man has dared to dispute our right. Will you after this permit any new claim to be preferred against us?" Several members delivered their sentiments, and the assembly decided unanimously in favour of Alwin. A volume of the gospels was immediately placed in the middle: and the ealdorman putting his right hand on the book, swore that he would maintain, till his death, the monks of Ramsey in the rightful possession of their property. He was followed by his sons; and their example was imitated by every other person in the assembly.⁶⁸

At the dedication of the church of Winchelcomb, a more splendid scene was exhibited. Kenulf, king of Mercia, the founder of the abbey, had invited to the ceremony all the thanes of the kingdom, ten ealdormen, thirteen bishops, the captive king of Kent, and the tributary king of Essex. At the conclusion, Kenulf mounted the steps of the principal altar, and calling for his royal prisoner, liberated him without ransom, in the presence of the assembly. He then displayed his magnificence in distributing presents to those who had obeyed his invitation. To the bishops and the nobility he gave, in proportion to their rank, vessels of gold or silver, and the fleetest horses; to those, who possessed no land, a pound of silver; to each priest, a marc of the purest gold; to every monk and clergyman, a shilling; and a smaller sum to each of the people. All these particulars he enumerates in the charter which he gave on the occasion, and

Pincernæque vagi cellaria sæpe frequentant,
 Convivasque rogant, ut bibere incipiant.
 Crateras magnos statuunt, et vina coronant,
 Miscentes potus potibus innumeris.
 Fœcundi calices, ubi rusticus impiger hausit
 Spumantem pateram gurgite mellifluam,
 Et tandem pleno se totum proluit auro,
 Setigerum mentum concutiendo suum.—*Wolstan*, p. 629.

⁶⁷ Ed. vit. St. Wilf. c. xvii.

⁶⁸ Hist. Ram. p. 422, 423.

declares that he has selected the church of Winchelcomb for the sepulchre of himself and his posterity forever.⁶⁹ But the revolutions of a few years defeated the projects of his vanity. In the next generation his family was extinguished: and within less than a century, the church of Winchelcomb was reduced to a heap of ruins.

CHAPTER VII.

Origin of Prayers for the Dead—Associations for that purpose—Devotions performed for the Dead—Funeral Ceremonies—Places of Sepulture.

By the philosophers of antiquity, the immortality of the human soul was but faintly descried: revelation has withdrawn the veil, and unfolded that system of retribution, which reserves to a future life the rewards of virtue, and the chastisement of vice. But in the scale of merit and demerit, there are numerous degrees: and, if every stain be excluded from the celestial paradise, if the flames of vengeance be kindled for none but deadly offences, what fate, the inquisitive mind will anxiously demand, is allotted to him who, though he presume not to claim the meed of unsullied virtue, has not deserved the severest punishment of vice? To this interesting question our ancestors unequivocally replied, that such imperfect Christians neither enjoyed the bliss of heaven, nor suffered the misery of hell: that, during a limited period, they were detained in an intermediate state of purgation: and that their deliverance might be accelerated by the pious solicitude and devotion of their friends. This was an opinion which interested in its favour, no less the feelings than the judgment of men. The religion which teaches that death removes the soul beyond the influence of human exertion, teaches, at the best, a cold and cheerless doctrine. The mind quits with reluctance the object of its affections; it follows the spirit of its departed friend into the regions of futurity; and embraces with real consolation the means which religion may offer of meliorating its lot.¹ The practice of praying for the dead remounts to

⁶⁹ Monast. Ang. tom. i. p. 189.

¹ Here I cannot refuse to transcribe a part of the beautiful prayer, which St. Augustine composed after the death of his mother. "Ego itaque laus mea, et vita mea, Deus cordis mei, sepositis paulisper bonis ejus actibus, pro quibus tibi gaudens gratias ago, nunc pro peccatis matris meæ deprecor te: exaudi me, per medicinam vulnerum nostrorum, quæ pependit in ligno. Scio misericorditer operatam, et ex corde dimisisse debitoribus suis: dimitte illi et tu debita sua, si qua etiam contraxit per tot annos post aquam salutis. Namque illa, imminente die resolutionis suæ, non cogitavit sumptuose contegi Non ista mandavit nobis, sed tantummodo memoriam sui ad altare tuum fieri desideravit, unde sciret dispensari victimam salutis Sit igitur in pace cum viro, ante quem

the origin of Christianity. That it had been universally adopted before the fourth century, is not denied by the most violent; that it was in general use during the second, is admitted by the more candid of its adversaries.² To the Anglo-Saxons it was taught with the other practices of religion, by the Roman and Scottish missionaries: and the docility of the converts cherished it as an institution acceptable to God, and profitable to man. Its influence on their manners was powerful and extensive: and this chapter will describe—I. Their anxious endeavours to secure the prayers of the faithful after their decease; II. The religious practices which they adopted for the consolation of the dying, and the interment of the dead.

I. From the severity of the penitential canons, they had learned to form the most exalted notion of the justice of God, and of his hatred for sin: compensation they considered as necessary to atone for the transgression of the divine, as well as of human laws; and, while they trembled lest, at the hour of death, their satisfaction should be deemed incomplete, they indulged a consoling hope, that the residue of the debt might be discharged by the charity of those who survived them. To secure the future exertions of his friends, was, in the eyes of the devout Saxon, an object of high importance: and with this view numerous associations were formed, in which each individual bound himself to pray for the souls of the deceased members.³ Nor were these engagements confined to the communities of the monks and clergy: they comprehended persons of every rank in society, and extended to the most distant countries. Gilds were an institution of great antiquity among the Anglo-Saxons; and in every populous district they existed in numerous ramifications. They were of different descriptions. Some were restricted to the performance of religious duties; of others the professed object was the prosecution of thieves, and the preservation of property: but all were equally solicitous to provide for the spiritual welfare of

nulli, et post quem nulli nupta est. Et inspira, Domine Deus meus, inspira servis tuis fratribus meis, ut quotquot hæc legerint, meminerint ad altare tuum Monicae famulæ tuæ, cum Patricio quondam ejus conjugæ.” Confes. l. ix.

² The Catholic may smile, the Protestant may sigh, at the miserable evasions, to which the spirit of system has degraded such writers as Mosheim and Bingham. The former derives the custom of praying for the dead from the impure source of the Platonic philosophy: (Hist. p. 144, 300, 393:) the latter has expended much learning to establish the incredible hypothesis, that when the ancient Christians besought the mercy of God to pardon the sins of the dead, they believed them to be already in a state of rest and happiness. (Antiq. of the Christ. Church, vol. i. p. 758, vol. ii. p. 440.) The fact was, indeed, too evident to be denied; but the theological Proteus could assume every shape to elude the grasp of an adversary. The learned translator of the Saxon councils has been more candid, or less cautious. See Johnson, pref. p. xix. xlvi.

³ See Hicks, Dissert. epis. p. 18. Wanley, MSS. p. 280. With the history of St. Cuthbert, which he had composed, Bede sent the following petition to the monks of Lindisfarne. “Sed et me defuncto, pro redemptione animæ meæ quasi familiaris et vernaculi vestri orare, et missas facere, et nomen meum inter vestra scribere dignemini.” Bed. Vit. St. Cuth. p. 228.

the departed brethren. As a specimen of their engagements, I may be allowed to translate a part of the laws established in the gild at Abbotsbury. "If," says the legislator, "any one belonging to our association chance to die, each member shall pay one penny for the good of the soul, before the body be laid in the grave. If he neglect it, he shall be fined in a triple sum. If any of us fall sick within sixty miles, we engage to find fifteen men, who may bring him home; but if he die first, we will send thirty to convey him to the place in which he desired to be buried. If he die in the neighbourhood, the steward shall inquire where he is to be interred, and shall summon as many members as he can to assemble, attend the corpse in an honourable manner, carry it to the minister, and pray devoutly for the soul. Let us act in this manner, and we shall truly perform the duty of our confraternity. This will be honourable to us both before God and man. For we know not who among us may die first: but we believe that, with the assistance of God, this agreement will profit us all, if it be rightly observed."⁴ The same sentiments are frequently expressed in the numerous letters addressed to St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, and to Lullus, his successor in the see of Mentz, by abbots, prelates, thanes, and princes. Of many, the sole object is to renew their former engagements, and to transmit the names of their departed associates. "It is our earnest wish," say the king of Kent and the bishop of Rochester, in their common letter to Lullus, "to recommend ourselves and our dearest relatives to your piety, that by your prayers we may be protected till we come to that life which knows no end. For what have we to do on earth but faithfully to exercise charity towards each other? Let us then agree, that when any among us enters the path which leads to another life, (may it be a life of happiness!) the survivors shall, by their alms and sacrifices, endeavour to assist him in his journey. We have sent you the names of our deceased relations, Irmige, Norththry, and Dulicha, virgins dedicated to God: and beg that you will remember them in your prayers and oblations. On a similar occasion we will prove our gratitude by imitating your charity."⁵

2. With the same view, the Anglo-Saxons were anxious to obtain a place of sepulture in the most frequented and celebrated churches. The monuments raised over their ashes would, they fondly expected, recall them to the memory, and solicit in their behalf the charity of the faithful.⁶ The earnestness with which they solicited this favour, and the numerous benefactions, with which they endeavoured to secure it, from the gratitude of the

⁴ Monas. Ang. tom. i. p. 278.

⁵ Ep. St. Bonif. 77, p. 108. See also Ep. 74. 95. 103. 109.

⁶ That such was their expectation is clearly expressed by Bede. "Postulavit eum possessionem terræ aliquam a se ad construendum monasterium accipere, in quo ipse rex defunctus sepeliri deberet: nam et seipsum fideliter credit multum juvari eorum orationibus, qui illo in loco Domino servirent." Bed. Hist. l. iii. c. 23, iv. c. 5.

clergy, testify the importance in which it was held. Among the many instances which crowd the Saxon annals, I shall select one from the history of Ely. Brithnod, a warrior whose reputation had been earned in many a well-fought battle, was ealdorman of Essex, perhaps of Northumbria.⁷ In a great victory at Malden he had taught the Danes to respect his valour. The vanquished invaders sailed back to Denmark, recruited their numbers, and returned in search of revenge. They again advanced to Malden, that the place which had witnessed their defeat, might be the theatre of their future triumph. A challenge was sent to Brithnod, which found him unprepared, and attended by few of his retainers. But the high-spirited ealdorman preferred the probability of an honourable death to the disgrace of a refusal. As he passed by Ramsey, Wulsig, the abbot, a prelate as parsimonious as he was rich, invited him to dinner with seven of his officers. "Go, tell thy master," replied the chief to the messenger, "that as I cannot fight, so neither will I dine, without my brave companions." From Ramsey he proceeded to Ely, where his little army was hospitably received, and banished, over a plenteous repast, their recollection of past fatigue, and the thought of future danger. In the morning he entered the chapter-house, returned thanks to the monks for their liberality, and offered them several valuable manors, on condition that, if it were his lot to fall in battle, they should bury his body within their church. The condition was accepted, and he marched towards the enemy. Within the short space of a fortnight, fourteen battles were fought with the most obstinate valour. In the last the men of Essex rushed with impetuosity into the midst of the barbarians: but it was the combat of despair against overpowering numbers. Brithnod was slain: his head was conveyed by the invaders to Denmark as the trophy of their victory: the trunk was discovered among the dead by the monks, and solemnly interred, according to their promise, in the church of the abbey. To honour the memory of her husband, his widow Ethelfleda embroidered in silk the history of his exploits, and gave it, with several other presents, to the monastery, which contained his ashes.⁸

The number of those who were thus interred in the churches, multiplied so fast, as at length to provoke the severity of the bishops. Churches, they observed, were erected to accommodate the living, not to become the repositories of the dead; the privilege of burial within the consecrated walls was reserved for the bodies of the saints; and the public service was ordered to be discontinued in the churches which had been polluted by the

⁷ He is styled ealdorman of Essex by most of the chroniclers, of Northumbria by the monk of Ely, p. 493.

⁸ Hist. Elien. p. 494.

promiscuous interment of all who had requested it.⁹ This prohibition might repress, but it did not abolish the custom.

3. But the more opulent were not content to rest their hopes of future assistance on the casual benevolence of others. They were careful to erect or endow monasteries, with the express obligation, that their inhabitants should pray for their benefactors. Of these an exact catalogue was preserved in the library of each church; the days on which they died were carefully noticed; and, on their anniversaries, prayers and masses were performed for the welfare of their souls.¹⁰ To men of timid and penitent minds this custom afforded much consolation. However great might be their deficiencies, yet they hoped their good works would survive them: they had provided for the service of the Almighty a race of men, whose virtues they might in some respects call their own, and who were bound, by the strongest ties, to be their daily advocates at the throne of divine mercy.¹¹ Such were the sentiments of Alwyn, the ealdorman of East-Anglia, and one of the founders of Ramsey. Warned by frequent infirmities of his approaching death, he repaired, attended by his sons Edwin and Ethelward, to the abbey. The monks were speedily assembled. "My beloved," said he, "you will soon lose your friend and protector. My strength is gone: I am stolen from myself. But I am not afraid to die. When life grows tedious, death is welcome. To-day I shall confess before you the many errors of my life. Think not that I wish you to solicit a prolongation of my existence. My request is, that you protect my departure by your prayers, and place your merits in the balance against my defects. When my soul shall have quitted my body, honour your father's corpse with a decent funeral, grant him a constant share in your prayers, and recommend his memory to the charity and gratitude of your successors." At the conclusion of this address, the aged thane threw himself on the pavement before the altar, and, with a voice interrupted by frequent sighs, publicly confessed the sins of his past years, and earnestly implored the mercies of his Redeemer. The monks

⁹ Wilk. Con. p. 267, ix. The prohibition of burials in churches was very severe in Italy. When the pope granted a written permission for the dedication of such places, it was customary to insert the following clause: "si nullum corpus ibi constat humatum." See many examples in the *liber diurnus Romanorum pontificum*, written in the eighth century, and published by Garner, p. 93. 97. 99.

¹⁰ In the Cotton Library (Dom. A. 7) is a manuscript of the reign of Athelstan, in which the names of the principal benefactors of the church of Lindisfarne are inscribed in letters of gold and silver. The list was afterwards continued, but with less elegance, till the reformation. Wanl. p. 249. In every monastery they also preserved the names of their deceased members, and were careful to pray for them on the anniversaries of their death. Bed. l. iv. c. 14.

¹¹ Thus Leofric established canons at Exeter, and made them several valuable presents, on condition that, in their prayers and masses, they should always remember his soul, "that it might be the more pleasing to God: *þæt hīr ȝaple beo ȝode þe anfeȝne.*" *Monas. Ang. tom. i. p. 222.*

were dissolved in tears. As soon as their sensibility permitted them to begin, they chanted over him the seven psalms of penitence, and the prior Germanus read the prayer of absolution. With the assistance of Edwin and Ethelward he arose; and, supporting himself against a column, exhorted the brotherhood to a punctual observance of their rule, and forbade his sons, under their father's malediction, to molest them in the possession of the lands which he had bestowed on the abbey. Then having embraced each monk, and asked his blessing, he returned to his residence in the neighbourhood. This was his last visit. Within a few weeks he expired: his body was interred with proper solemnity in the church; and his memory was long cherished with gratitude by the monks of Ramsey.¹²

4. The assistance which was usually given to the dead, consisted in works of charity and exercises of devotion. To the money which the deceased had bequeathed for the relief of the indigent,¹³ his friends were accustomed to add their voluntary donations, with a liberal present to the church, in which the obsequies were performed. Freedom was granted to a certain number of slaves; and to render the benefit more valuable, their poverty was relieved by a handsome sum of money. In the council of Calcuith, the prelates unanimously agreed, that at their deaths the tenth part of their property should be distributed to the poor; that all the English bondsmen whom the church had acquired during their administration, should be set at liberty;¹⁴ and that each of the survivors, and every abbot in their dioceses, should manumit three slaves, and divide among them nine shillings of silver.¹⁵

The devotions performed in behalf of the dead, consisted in the

¹² Hist. Rames. p. 427.

¹³ In the gild at London, when any of the members died, each of the survivors gave to the poor a loaf for the good of his soul. (Leg. Sax. p. 68.) This was the origin of doles, of which some instances still remain. Before the distribution, the following prayer was pronounced. "Precamur te, Domine, clementissime pater, ut eleemosyna ista fiat in misericordia tua, ut acceptus sit cibus iste pro anima famuli tui, ill. et ut sit benedictio tua super omnia dona ista." Wanley, MSS. p. 83. Alfred the Great, in his testament, bequeathed two hundred pounds to one of his officers to be distributed to the poor; to the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of Sherburne, London, and Worcester, four hundred marks for the same purpose: two hundred pounds to be divided among fifty priests; fifty shillings to every clergyman in his dominions; fifty shillings to the church in which his body should be buried, and fifty shillings to the poor of the neighbourhood. Test. Ælfredi, apud Walker, p. 195. Wilfrid, archbishop of Canterbury, by his will, left funds for the perpetual support and clothing of twenty-one paupers, and ordered a loaf, some cheese or bacon, and one penny to be given to twelve hundred poor persons on the anniversary of his death. Evidentiæ Ecc. Cant. p. 2017. Also Brihtric's will, apud Stevens, p. 121.

¹⁴ With this regulation Archbishop Ælfric faithfully complied in his testament. *And he pyle þ man pneo ze æfter hī dæge ælene man. þe on hī tinen forþyrt pæne.* Testam. Ælfric, apud Mores, p. 63. Similar directions are given in the will of Athelstan, published at the end of Lye's Saxon Dictionary.

¹⁵ Wilk. Con. 171, x.

frequent repetition of the Lord's prayer, which was generally termed a belt of pater-nosters:¹⁶ in the chanting of a certain number of psalms, at the close of which the congregation fell on their knees, and intoned the anthem, "O Lord, according to thy great mercy give rest to his soul, and, in consideration of thy infinite goodness, grant that he may enjoy eternal light in the company of thy saints;"¹⁷ and in the sacrifice of the mass, which was always offered on the third day after the decease, and afterwards repeated in proportion to the solicitude of the friends of the dead.¹⁸ As soon as St. Wilfrid had expired, Tatbert, to whom he had intrusted the government of his monastery at Rippon, ordered a mass to be said, and a certain quantity of alms to be distributed every day, for the soul of his benefactor. To celebrate his anniversary, the abbots of all the monasteries which he had founded, were summoned to attend. The preceding night was spent in watching and prayer; on the following day a solemn mass was performed; and the tenth part of the cattle belonging to the abbey was divided among the poor of the neighbourhood.¹⁹

During the controversial war, which sprung from the great event of the reformation, when the prejudice of party eagerly accepted every accusation against the clerical and monastic orders, writers were strongly tempted to sacrifice the interest of truth at the shrine of popularity. They then discovered, or pretended to discover, that the practice of praying for the dead originated in the interested views of the clergy, who, while they applauded in public, ridiculed in private, the easy faith of their disciples.²⁰ The idea may be philosophic, but it is pregnant with difficulties. The man who first detected the imposture, should have condescended to unfold the mysteries by which it had been previously concealed. He should have explained by what extraordinary art it was effected, that of the thousands who, during so many ages, practised the deception, no individual in an un-

¹⁶ Id. *ibid.* Hence Mabillon (*Act. Bened. sæc. v. præf. p. lxxx.*) has kindly informed us, that the English word *beads* is a corruption of *belt*. But a foreigner might be allowed to be ignorant that *bead* is the Anglo-Saxon for *prayer*, a word, for which we are indebted to the Normans. The verb *to bid* is still used in the sense of *to pray*, among the inhabitants of the northern countries.

¹⁷ Id. p. 99, xxvii. Anno 747. When St. Guthlake died, his sister Pega recommended his soul to God, and sung psalms for that purpose during three days. *Trium dierum spatii fraternum spiritum divinis laudibus Deo commendavit. Vit. St. Guth. in Act. SS. April. tom. iii. p. 49.*

¹⁸ *Pœnit. Egb. apud Wilk. p. 122.*

¹⁹ *Edd. vit. Wilf. c. 62.* We have been told that the object of these prayers and alms, was to return thanks to God for the happiness enjoyed by the souls of the dead. (*Whelock, p. 297. Inett, Hist. vol. i. p. 227.*) The prelates in the council of Calcuith appear to have been of a different opinion. They command prayers to be said for them after their deaths, ut communis intercessionis gratia, commune cum sanctis omnibus regnum percipere mereantur æternum. *Wilk. Con. p. 171.*

²⁰ See *Whelock's* preface to the *Archaionomia*, post *Bedam*, and in *Wilkins, Leges Saxon. præf. Whel. p. xxi.*; *Tillotson's* sermon on 1 Cor. iii. 15. *Mosheim, sæc. 10, par. ii. c. 3.*

guarded moment, no false brother in the peevishness of discontent, revealed the dangerous secret to the ears of a misguided and impoverished people.²¹ He should have shown why the conspirators preserved, even among themselves, the language of hypocrisy; why, in their private correspondence, they anxiously requested from each other the prayers which they mutually despised; and why they consented to make so many pecuniary sacrifices during life, merely to obtain what they deemed an illusory assistance after death. Till these difficulties can be removed, we may safely acquit the Anglo-Saxon clergy of the charges of imposture and hypocrisy. The whole tenor of their history deposes, that they believed the doctrine which they taught: and if they erred, they erred with every Christian church which then existed, and with every Christian church which had existed since the first publication of the gospel.

II. Of the customs observed by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors at the death and interment of their friends, many have disappeared with the general exercise of their religion: the existence of others, after the lapse of almost eight centuries, may still be traced in those districts in which the practices of antiquity have not been entirely eradicated by the refinement of modern times. At the first appearance of danger, recourse was had to the ministry of the parish priest, or of some distinguished clergymen in the neighbourhood. He was bound to obey the summons; and no plea but that of inability could justify his negligence. Attended by his inferior clergy, arrayed in the habits of their respective orders, he repaired to the chamber of the sick man, offered him the sacred rites of religion, and exhorted him to prepare his soul to appear before the tribunal of his Creator. The first duty, which he was bound to require from his dying disciple, was the arrangement of his temporal concerns. Till provision had been made for the payment of his debts, and the indemnification of those whom he had injured, it was in vain to solicit the succours of religion: but, as soon as these obligations had been fulfilled, the priest was ordered to receive his confession, to teach him to form sentiments of compunction and resignation, to exact a

²¹ The Anglo-Saxon homilists teach in different passages, that after the general judgment, the wicked will suffer everlasting punishment, and the virtuous be rewarded with everlasting happiness. This doctrine has been willingly received by controversial writers, and ingeniously converted into a positive denial of any place of purgation after death. Whelock, præf. *Archaion*. Wanley, MSS. p. 138. How far this inference would have been admitted by the homilists themselves, we may judge from the following passage in the sermon on the dedication of a church. "There are also many places of punishment, in which souls suffer in proportion to their guilt, before the general judgment, and in which some are so far purified, as not to be hurt by the fire of the last day." *Fela riind eac riemendlice rtopa ðe manna raple for heora gymleapre on ðropiaþ. be heora gilta mæþe. ær ðam gemænelicum dome, rpa þ hi rieme beoþ fullice zeclænrode. 7 ne ðurpon naht þropian on þam ropejæden rýre.* Apud Whel. p. 386.

declaration that he died in peace with all mankind, and to pronounce over him the prayer of reconciliation.²² Thus prepared, he might with confidence demand the sacrament of the extreme unction. With consecrated oil the principal parts of the body were successively anointed in the form of a cross; each unction was accompanied with an appropriate prayer; and the promise of St. James was renewed, "that the prayer of faith should save the sick man, and if he were in sins, they should be forgiven him."²³ The administration of the eucharist concluded these religious rites: at the termination of which the friends of the sick man ranged themselves round his bed; received the presents which he distributed among them as memorials of his affection; gave him the kiss of peace, and bade him a last and melancholy farewell.²⁴

The infidel may deride the solicitude which thus dedicates the last moments of life to the exercises of devotion, but to the faithful Christian, who trusts in the promises of his Redeemer, they afford the truest consolation at an hour when every earthly resource deserts him. It was then that the minister of religion was commanded to exert all his zeal and charity in behalf of his dying brother; to soothe his sufferings by the motives of revelation, and to elevate his hopes with the prospect of eternal happiness. The care of the sick was numbered among the most important of the priestly functions: and when the personal attendance of the pastor was prevented by his other duties, his absence was supplied by the presence of some of the inferior clergy.²⁵ At the bedside they recited the service of the day; watched each favourable opportunity of inspiring sentiments of devotion, and recommended with fervent prayer the object of their solicitude to the protection of Heaven. As the fatal moment advanced, they read the gospel of St. John, and chanted the office of the dying.²⁶ As soon as he expired, the bell was tolled.

²² Pontif. Angl. Gemet. apud Martene, p. 117.

²³ St. Jam. c. v. v. 14. The different unctions were made on the eyelids, ears, nostrils, lips, neck, shoulders, breast, hands, feet, and the part principally affected with pain. After each unction a psalm was sung. Pontif. Ang. *ibid.* The prelates frequently admonished the parish priests to be diligent in the administration of this rite. (Wilk. Con. p. 127. 229. 254.) They considered it as a sacrament, to which were attached the most valuable graces. *Ælc ƿæra manna ƿe ƿar ƿerulhte hæfð. hir ƿapl biþ ƿelice clæne æfter hir forðgriðe. eal ƿra þ cild biþ ƿe æfter hir fulluhte ƿona ƿeruc.* Penit. Egb. p. 127, xv. It appears, however, to have been sometimes received with reluctance by the illiterate, from an idea that it was a kind of ordination, which induced the obligation of continency and abstinence from flesh on those who afterwards recovered. The clergy were ordered to preach against this erroneous notion. Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 170.

²⁴ In Cuthbert's letter may be read the account of the presents which Bede made before his death to the priests of his monastery, with a request that they would remember him in their prayers and masses. Smith's Bed. p. 793.

²⁵ Martene, de ant. Rit. l. iii. p. 543.

²⁶ Bed. vit. Abbat. p. 299. In the monasteries the monks assembled in the church, and spent sometimes both the day and night in recommending the soul of their expiring brother to the mercy of God. Bed. *ibid.* et vit. St. Cuth. c. xxxvii. Edd. vit. St. Wilf. c. lxii.

Its solemn voice announced his departure to the neighbourhood, and exhorted his Christian brethren to deprecate in his favour the justice of the Almighty. Some were content to perform in private this charitable office; others repaired to the church, and joined in the public service.²⁷

In the mean time, the friends of the deceased were busily employed in preparing the body for burial. The Greek and Roman Christians had not scrupled to retain many of the customs of their ancestors; and from them they had descended to the Anglo-Saxon converts. The corpse was first carefully washed, and then clothed in decent garments.²⁸ Many were solicitous to prepare, during their health, the linen in which they wished to be buried: by others, the richest presents which they had received from the affection of their friends, were destined for the performance of this last office;²⁹ and it frequently happened that the magnificence of the dead surpassed that of the living. The distinctions of society were preserved on the bier and in the grave: and the remains of kings and ealdormen, of bishops, abbots, priests, and deacons were interred in the ornaments of their respective dignities.³⁰ To satisfy affection or curiosity, the face and neck remained uncovered; and, till the hour of burial, the corpse was constantly surrounded by its attendants. In the monasteries the monks divided themselves into different bodies, which, in rotation, entered the chamber of the deceased, and either watched in silent prayer, or chanted the service of the dead: but in the houses of the laity, this solemn ceremony degenerated into a scene of riot and debauchery, which provoked and defied the severity of the bishops. By Ælfric, in his charge to the clergy, the disedifying custom is described as a remnant of the super-

²⁷ The bell on these occasions appears to have been tolled in a particular manner. "Audivit," says Bede, "subito in aere *notum* campanæ sonum, quo ad orationes excitari vel convocari solebant, cum quis eorum de sæculo fuisset evocatus." Hist. l. iv. c. 23. This has been considered as the most ancient passage (anno 674) in which the word *campana* occurs: but it is used by Cuminius, abbot of Icolmkill, who wrote before Bede. Vit. S. Columbæ, c. 22. 25. Alfred translates it *cluzza*, a clock, (p. 595;) and the same term, with the Latin terminations, is frequently used by the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany, (Ep. St. Bonif. 9. 89.) It is also to be found in the French and German writers of these ages. See the lives of St. Liudger, and St. Angilbertus. Act. SS. Bened. Sæc. iv. tom. i. p. 33. 57. 116. Also in Adomnan, l. i. c. 8. l. iii. c. 23. Ethelwold, an Anglo-Saxon poet, mentions the materials of which the bells were made:

Nec minus ex cipro sonitant ad gaudia fratrum
Ænea vasa, cavis crepitant quis (quæ) pendula sistris.
Ethel. c. xiv. p. 314.

²⁸ Bed. Vit. St. Cuth. c. xlv. Edd. Vit. St. Wilf. c. xliii. The body was dressed honorifice, in linteis. Ibid. Wilk. Con. p. 229, lxx. They even put shoes on the feet. Bed. Vit. St. Cuth. c. xlv. Anon. Vit. St. Cuth. apud Bolland. 20 Mart.

²⁹ Bed. Vit. St. Cuth. c. xxxvii.

³⁰ Anon. Vit. St. Cuth. apud Bolland. 20 Martii. Edd. Vit. St. Wilf. c. xliii. When the tomb of Archbishop Theodore was opened in 1091, the body appeared to have been dressed in the pontifical ornaments, with the pallium, and the cowl of a monk. Gotælin, cit. Smith, p. 189.

stitution of their pagan forefathers. "Ye shall not," says he, "make merry over the dead, nor resort to a corpse, unless invited. Then shall ye forbid the heathenish songs of the laymen, and their loud shouts: and neither eat, nor drink, where the body lies, lest you partake in the superstitions which are practised on such occasions."³¹

When the necessary preparations were completed, the body of the deceased was placed on a bier, or in a hearse. On it lay the book of the gospels, the code of his belief, and the cross, the signal of his hope. A pall of silk or linen was thrown over it, till it reached the place of interment.³² His friends were summoned; strangers deemed it a duty to join the funeral procession. The clergy walked before, or on each side, bearing lighted tapers in their hands, and chanting a portion of the psalter.³³ They entered the church. If it were in the evening, the night was passed in exercises of devotion. In the morning, the sacrifice of the mass was offered for the departed soul: the body was deposited with solemnity in the grave, the sawshot paid, and a liberal donation distributed to the poor.³⁴

The good sense of the Roman missionaries had induced them to prohibit the interment of the dead among the habitations of the living:³⁵ and several generations passed before any attempt was made to violate their prohibition. Augustine and his five immediate successors were buried without the walls of Canterbury; but, as a mark of particular respect, their remains were deposited in the northern portico of the church, dedicated to the

³¹ Wilk. Con. p. 255. The custom of watching over the dead is still retained in several places, and in the north of England is called lakewake, from the Saxon, lice-pæcce, or corpse-watch.

³² Feretrum sacrosanctis evangeliis et crucibus armatum. Wolstan, Vit. St. Ethel. in act. Bened. Sæc. v. p. 623. Palliorum velamentis ornatum. Ibid.

³³ Accensis luminaribus, et hymnis celestibus, atque psalmodum concentibus. Ibid. Mention is also made of the singing, but not of the lights, at the burials of St. Cuthbert, (Vit. c. xl,) of Ceolfrid, (Vit. abbat. p. 302,) and of St. Wilfrid, (Vit. c. lxiii.) The attendants sometimes beat their faces in token of their grief. Facies suas dissecantes, sese ferientes, et amaribus vocibus clamantes. Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 119.

³⁴ Some of their coffins were of lead. (Sarcophagum plumbeum. Felix, Vit. S. Guthl. Lel. Itiner. vol. iv. app. p. 111.) They were more frequently made of a large stone, in which was hollowed a space sufficient to contain a human body. A cushion was placed under the head. Bed. l. iv. c. 11. 19. Vit. St. Cuth. c. xl. By Alfred, in his version, these are always called troughs. *Ѡрун*. p. 580. 588. When stone coffins could not be procured, they were content to make them of wood. Bed. l. iii. c. 11. iv. c. 30. In the Anglo-Saxon language they were called chests. *сѣрце*. Alfred. vers. p. 535. 608.

³⁵ Dicebant Romani primi in Angliam missi, civitatem non esse mortuorum sed vivorum. Gervase, p. 1641. The ancient form of consecrating burial grounds is described in the pontifical of Archbishop Egbert. The bishop, attended by his clergy, walked in procession round the cemetery, repeating the psalm Miserere, and then read five prayers, one in each of the four corners, and one in the middle. The purport of all was nearly the same: that God would preserve the bodies of those buried in that place from violation, and raise them up at the last day, to enjoy everlasting glory. Martene, tom. iii. p. 361.

apostles St. Peter and Paul : around which lay the bodies of the monks, the clergy, and the inhabitants of the city.³⁶ The first exemption was granted in favour of Archbishop Theodore. At his death the portico was full : to inter him in the cemetery, among the promiscuous multitude, appeared indecorous ; and it was determined to honour his merit with a place of sepulture within the church.³⁷ What had been conceded to him, could not with propriety be refused to his successors ; and the innovation proved most advantageous to the temporal interests of the monastery. The Anglo-Saxons were eager to offer up their devotions near the ashes of their former metropolitans : and numerous donations were made to the monks, for the sake of those whose bodies they possessed. Cuthbert, the tenth archbishop, saw with jealousy the superior reputation of his neighbours, and complained that a private monastery in the suburbs had usurped the pre-eminence, which belonged to his church, the first in dignity among the churches of Britain. Eadbyrht, king of Kent, gave a willing ear to his suggestions ; the pontiff (if we may believe his friends, for it is denied by his enemies³⁸) approved his intention ; and, on his death-bed, he summoned his monks and clergy around him, and commanded them to inter his body in secrecy and silence within the walls of his cathedral. The command was cheerfully obeyed ; and three days elapsed before his death was announced. At the sound of the funeral bell, Janbyrht, abbot of the monastery, assembled his monks, and walked with them in procession to the archiepiscopal residence, to demand the body. They were informed, that their services were unnecessary ; the ridicule of their opponents sharpened the sting of disappointment ; and they vented their indignation in menaces, remonstrances, and protests. But menaces, remonstrances, and protests were fruitless ; the charm of ancient custom was broken ; and the succeeding archbishops, with a single exception, were buried in their own cathedral.³⁹

When once the churches had been opened for the sepulture of the dead, the progress of innovation was rapid, and the honourable distinction was successively extended from metropolitans and princes, to bishops, abbots, ealdormen, and thanes. But an extraordinary distinction was allotted to those whose reputation could challenge for them the honours of extraordinary sanctity. The bodies of their brethren, whose virtue had been more dubious or less renowned, were permitted to moulder in the earth : those of the saints were raised from their graves, and richly enshrined in the interior of the church. Of this species of canon-

³⁶ Bed. l. ii. c. 3.

³⁷ Id. *Ibid.*

³⁸ By Gervase, the monk of Christchurch, it is positively asserted, (*X Script.* p. 1641;) by Thorne, the monk of St. Augustine's, it is as positively denied. (*X Script.* p. 1774.)

³⁹ See *Decem. Script.* p. 1295. 1641. 1772. 2210.

zation, the only one practised at that period, numerous instances occur in the works of our more early writers. It was generally, perhaps always, preceded by a petition to the bishop, and sanctioned by his approbation. Ten or twenty years after the death of the man, the object of their veneration, when it might be presumed that the less solid parts of the body had been reduced to dust, the monks or clergy assembled to perform the ceremony of his elevation. A tent was pitched over the grave. Around it stood the great body of the attendants, chanting the psalms of David: within, the superior, accompanied by the more aged of the brotherhood, opened the earth, collected the bones, washed them, wrapped them carefully in silk or linen, and deposited them in a mortuary chest.⁴⁰ With sentiments of respect, and hymns of exultation, they were then carried to the place destined to receive them; which was elevated above the pavement, and decorated with appropriate ornaments. Of the shrines, the most ancient that has been described to us contained the remains of St. Chad, the apostle of Mercia: it was built of wood, in form resembled a house, and was covered with tapestry.⁴¹ But this was in an age of simplicity and monastic poverty: in a later period, a greater display of magnificence bespoke the greater opulence of the church; and the shrines of the saints were the first objects which invited the rapacity of the Danish invaders.

To conclude this chapter, I shall present the reader with an extract from a curious document. At the commencement of the twelfth century, four hundred and eighteen years after the death of St. Cuthbert, the monks of Durham opened his sepulchre. A narrative of the discoveries made on this occasion, has been transmitted to posterity by the pen of an eyewitness, probably the historian Simeon: and his work is interesting, as it serves to illustrate the ancient customs of the Anglo-Saxons in the interment of the dead.

William, the second bishop of Durham after the conquest, had collected for the service of his cathedral a society of monks, and, dissatisfied with the low and obscure church of his predecessors, had laid the foundations of a more spacious and stately fabric. In the year one thousand one hundred and four, it was nearly completed: and the twenty-ninth of August was announced as the day on which the incorrupt body of St. Cuthbert would be transferred from the old to the new church. The nobility and clergy of the neighbouring counties were invited to the ceremony; and Richard, abbot of St. Alban's, Radulfus, abbot of Seez in Normandy, and Alexander, brother to the king of Scots, had ar-

⁴⁰ Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 19. 30. Vit. St. Cuth. c. xlii. Act SS. Bened. Sæc. iv. tom. i. p. 310. Sæc. v. p. 735.

⁴¹ Bed. l. iv. c. 3. Coopertus. mid hrægele zegearrod. Ælf. ibid. p. 570. Over the tomb of St. Oswald was suspended his standard of purple and gold. Bed. l. iii. c. 11.

rived to honour it with their presence. But among this crowd of learned and noble visitors the whispers of incredulity were heard; the claim of the monks was said to rest on the faith of a vague and doubtful tradition; and it was asked, where were the proofs that the body of the saint was entire, or even that his ashes reposed in the church of Durham? Who could presume to assert that, at the distance of four centuries, it still remained in the same state as at the time of Bede?⁴² or that, during its numerous removals, and the devastations of the Danes, it had never perished by the negligence or flight of its attendants? These reports alarmed the credulity of the monks; and that alarm was considerably increased by the intelligence that the bishop himself was among the number of the skeptics. With haste and secrecy the brotherhood was summoned to the chapter-house; the advice of the more discreet was asked and discussed; and, after a long and solemn consultation, it was determined that Turgot, the prior, with nine associates, should open the tomb in the silence of the night, and make a faithful report concerning the state of its contents.

As soon as their brethren were retired to rest, the ten visitors entered the church. After a short but fervent prayer that God would pardon their temerity, they removed the masonry of the tomb, and beheld a large and ponderous chest, which had been entirely covered with leather, and strongly secured with nails and plates of iron. To separate the top from the sides, required their utmost exertions; and within it they discovered a second chest, of dimensions more proportionate to the human body, and wrapped in a coarse linen cloth, which had previously been dipped in melted wax. That it contained the object of their search, all were agreed: but their fears caused a temporary suspension of their labours. From the tradition of their predecessors they had learned, that no man had ever presumed to disturb the repose of the saint, and escaped the instantaneous vengeance of Heaven. The stories of ancient times crowded on their imaginations: engaged in a similar attempt, they expected to meet each moment with a similar punishment; the silence of the night, the sacredness of the place, the superior sanctity of their patron, aided these impressions, and at last an almost general wish was expressed to abandon so dangerous an experiment. But Turgot was inflexible. He commanded them to proceed; and, after a short struggle, the duty of obedience subdued the reluctance of terror. By his direction they conveyed the smaller chest from behind the altar, to a more convenient place in the middle of the choir; unrolled the cloth; and with trembling hands raised up the lid. But instead of the remains of the saint, they found a copy of the gospels, lying on a second lid, which had not been nailed, but rested on three transverse bars of wood. By the help

⁴² See Bede Hist. l. iv. c. 30. Vit. St. Cuth. c. xlii.

of two iron rings, fixed at the extremities, it was easily removed; and disclosed the body lying on its right side, and apparently entire. At the sight, they gazed on each other in silent astonishment; and then, retiring a few paces, fell prostrate on the floor, and repeated in a low voice the seven psalms of penitence. Gradually their fears were dispelled: they arose, approached the body, lifted it up, and placed it respectfully on a carpet spread on the floor. In the coffin they found a great number of bones wrapped in linen, the mortal remains of the other bishops of Lindisfarne, which, to facilitate the conveyance, the monks had deposited in the same chest, when they were compelled to leave their ancient monastery. These they collected, and transferred to a different part of the church; and, as the hour of matins approached, hastily replaced the body in the coffin, and carried it back to its former situation behind the altar.

The next evening, at the same hour, they resumed the investigation; and the body was again placed on the floor of the choir. They discovered that it had been originally dressed in a linen robe, a dalmatic, a chasuble, and a mantle. With it had been buried a pair of scissors, a comb of ivory, a silver altar, a patine, and a small chalice, remarkable for the elegance and richness of its ornaments.⁴³ Having surveyed the body till their veneration and curiosity were satisfied, they restored it to the tomb in which it had formerly reposed, and hastened to communicate the joyful intelligence to their anxious and impatient brethren.

The following morning, the monks were eager to announce the discovery of the preceding nights, and a solemn act of thanksgiving was performed, to publish their triumph, and silence the doubts of the incredulous. But their joy was soon interrupted by the rational skepticism of the abbot of a neighbouring monastery. Why, he asked, was the darkness of the night selected as the most proper time to visit the tomb? Why were none but the monks of Durham permitted to be present? These circumstances provoked suspicion. Let them open the coffin before the eyes of the strangers who had come to assist at the translation of the relics. To grant this, would at once confound their adversaries: but to refuse it, would be to condemn themselves of imposture and falsehood. This unexpected demand, with the insinuations by which it was accompanied, roused the indignation of the monks. They appealed to their character, which had

⁴³ The very ancient and anonymous author of the life of St. Cuthbert published by the Bollandists, says that the eucharist was enclosed in the chalice, *oblatis super sanctum pectus positis*. Apud Bolland. 20. Martii. The altar was a flat plate of silver, on which it was customary to consecrate the eucharist. A similar altar made of two pieces of wood, fastened with silver nails, and bearing the inscription, *Alme trinitati. agie. sophie. Sanctæ Mariæ*. was found on the breast of Acca, bishop of Hexham, when his tomb was opened about the year 1000. Sim. Dunel. de gestis regum, p. 101. The scissors and comb buried with the body, were probably those which had been used at the bishop's consecration.

been hitherto unimpeached: they offered to confirm their testimony with their oaths: they accused their opponent of a design to undermine their reputation, and then to seize on their property. The altercation continued till the day appointed for the ceremony of the translation: when the abbot of Seez prevailed on the prior Turgot to accede to so reasonable a demand. To the number of fifty they entered the choir: the chest which enclosed the remains was placed before them, and the lid was removed; when Turgot stepped forward, and, stretching out his hand, forbade any person to touch the body without his permission, and commanded his monks to watch with jealousy the execution of his orders. The abbot of Seez then approached, raised up the body, and proved the flexibility of the joints, by moving the head, the arms, and the legs. At the sight every doubt vanished; the most incredulous confessed that they were satisfied; the *Te Deum* was chanted, and the translation of the relics was immediately performed with the accustomed ceremonies.⁴⁴

CHAPTER IX.

Veneration and invocation of the Saints—Relics—Miracles—Pictures and Images—Pilgrimages—Travels of St. Willibald—Ordeals.

THE invocation of the saints is a religious practice, which may be traced back to the purest ages of Christianity. The first proselytes to the gospel were wont to revolve with pride and exultation, the virtues, the sufferings, and the heroism of their apostles. To celebrate their memory, was to celebrate the triumph of religion: hymns were composed, churches dedicated, and festivals established in their honour. From the veneration of their virtues the transition was easy to the invocation of their patronage. When the pious Christian, in the fervour of devotion, cast an eye towards his heavenly country, he beheld it inhabited by men who, like himself, had been forced to struggle with the difficulties of life. They were still his brethren: could they be indifferent to his welfare? They were the favourites of God; could *he* refuse to grant their petitions?⁴ Such was the reasoning of ancient piety: that reasoning was justified by the testimony

⁴¹ Translat. St. Cuth. in Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. 2, p. 294. Nobis, says the historian Simeon, speaking of this translation, *incorruptum corpus ejus, quadringentesimo et octavo decimo dormitionis ejus anno, quamvis indignis divina gratia videre et manibus quoque contrectare donavit.* Hist. Eccl. Dunel. p. 53. The festival of St. Cuthbert, formerly kept on the fourth of September, refers, not to this, but to a more ancient translation, made by order of the bishop Aldhune in the year 999.

¹ St. Hieron. adver. Vigil. tom. ii. p. 159. Colon. 1616.

of the inspired writings: and throughout the whole Christian church, from the western coast of Ireland, to the farthest mountains of Persia, the faithful confidently solicited the patronage and intercession of the saints.²

Among those who claimed the peculiar veneration of the Anglo-Saxons, a high pre-eminence was given to the virgin mother of the Messiah. That her influence with her son was unrivalled, might be justly inferred from her maternal dignity; and the honours which were paid to her memory, had been sanctioned by her own prediction.³ Her praises were sung by the Saxon poets;⁴ by their preachers her prerogatives were extolled;⁵ and the principal incidents of her life were commemorated by the four solemn festivals of the nativity, the annunciation, the purification, and the assumption.⁶ After the virgin, the next rank was occupied by St. Peter. The belief that he had been raised to the dignity of prince of the apostles, and that to his custody was intrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven, was deeply impressed on their minds, and strongly influenced their conduct. Clergy and laity were equally solicitous to secure his patronage. Altars and churches were dedicated to his memory;⁷ pilgrimages were made to his tomb; and presents were annually transmitted to the church which had been enriched with his earthly remains. Particular honours were also paid to the saints, Gregory and Augustine. To the charitable zeal of the former, and the laborious exertions of the latter, the Anglo-Saxons were principally indebted for their conversion to Christianity: the affection which these prelates had formerly testified for the natives, could not be extinguished by their removal to a better world: they were therefore revered as the patrons of England; their festivals were celebrated with extraordinary solemnity, and the aid of their intercession was confidently implored.⁸ Equally

² Consult Du Pin, cent. iii. p. 182.

³ Luke c. i. v. 48.

⁴ St. Adhel. de Virg. in Bib. Pat. tom. viii. p. 14. Alcuin, Ant. Lect. Canis. tom. ii. par. ii. p. 471. A hymn was sung in her honour every evening. Bed. oper. tom. vii. col. 148. In the Anglo-Saxon pontificals are preserved the same hymns as occur at present in the Roman breviary. See Wanley, MSS. p. 184. 244. 280.

⁵ In the collections of Saxon homilies are several for the festivals of the blessed virgin. Wanley, p. 11. 17. 35. 59, &c. Some extracts from them have been published by Whelock, p. 314. 448, 449. See also Bede, tom. vii. col. 147. 212. 468.

⁶ Bede's Martyrology, edit. Smith, p. 340. 352. 407. 419. Daclery, Spicil. tom. x. p. 126. St. Boniface, in his Constitutions, omits the annunciation. Spicil. tom. ix. p. 67.

⁷ Of the first Anglo-Saxon churches a great number were dedicated in honour of St. Peter. Bed. l. ii. c. 14; iii. 6. 17; iv. 3. 18; v. 1. 17. His festival, with that of St. Paul, was celebrated during eight days; the last of which was kept with great solemnity. Bed. Martyrol. p. 39. Ritual. Dunel. MS. A. iv. 19, p. 27. It was a day of public communion: *mīð Ʒepinum*. Martyrol. apud Wanley, p. 110.

⁸ Their festivals were ordered to be kept as holidays on the 12th of March and 26th of May, by the synod of Cloveshoe in 747. (Wilk. Conc. p. 97.) Soon after, St. Boniface was added as the third patron of England. In generali synodo nostra, ejus diem

prompted by hope and gratitude, each particular nation honoured the memory of its apostle; and the bishops Aidan, Birinus, and Felix were severally venerated as the protectors of the countries which had been the theatres of their piety, their labours, and their success.

From saints of foreign extraction, the Anglo-Saxons were soon encouraged to extend their devotion to men who had been born and educated among them. Of the converts, many had deeply imbibed the spirit, and faithfully practised the precepts of the gospel. To that ferocity which formerly marked their character, had succeeded the virtues of meekness, humility, and patience; the licentiousness of desire they had learned to repress by the mortification of the passions; and their labours in propagating the doctrines of Christianity, had been pushed with the zeal and perseverance which formed a striking feature in the national character. Their contemporaries applauded the virtues which they had not the resolution to imitate; and the preternatural cures which were believed to have been wrought at their tombs, augmented their reputation. By the voice of the public, and the authority of the bishops, they received the honours of sanctity;⁹ the respect which their countrymen paid to their virtues, was quickly imitated by foreign nations; and England was distinguished with the flattering title of the island of the saints.

But the reputation of the dead is frequently affected by the vicissitudes to which human opinion is subject. The men whom our ancestors revered as the glory and pride of their country, are generally considered by modern writers as objects of contempt or abhorrence. Their fame had withstood the shock of the Norman revolution, and the conquerors joined with the conquered in celebrating their memory: but at the reformation, a race of innovators arose, who, considering them as the patrons of their adversaries, were eager to tear the laurel from their temples, and to apologize by calumny for the brutality which violated their sepulchres, and scattered their ashes to the winds. From the altar that witnessed the unhallowed union of Luther with his

natalitii statuimus annua frequentatione solemniter celebrare: utpote quem specialiter nobis cum beato Gregorio et Augustino et patronum quærimus, et habere indubitanter credimus coram Christo Domino. See the epistle of Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, to Lullus, the successor of St. Boniface. Ep. St. Bonif. 70, p. 94.

⁹ During the period of which I am writing, the power of canonizing saints was exercised by the provincial bishops and national councils. The first instance of a solemn canonization by the pope, (the opposite arguments of Benedict XIV. do not appear convincing, *De Canon. l. i. c. 7.*) occurs in the year 993, when John XV., after a diligent inquiry into the life and virtues of Ulric, bishop of Augsburg, enrolled him among the saints. (*Bullar. tom. i. p. 44.*) It was not, however, till the beginning of the twelfth century, that the privilege of canonization was reserved to the Roman see, by Alexander III. (*Bull. tom. i. p. 67.*) From that period to the accession of Clement XIII. in 1758, one hundred and fifteen persons had been solemnly canonized. See the catalogue in Sandini, *Vit. Pontif. vol. ii. p. 760.*

beloved Catharine,¹⁰ a strong ray of religious light seems to have burst on this island. It was then discovered that, during nine centuries, our ancestors had been plunged in the thickest darkness, unable to distinguish vice from virtue, insanity from devotion: and from that period to the present, the Saxon saints have repeatedly been described, either as fanatics, who owed their canonization to the ignorance of the age, or as profligates, who by their benefactions had purchased that honour from the policy or the gratitude of the monks.¹¹ Of fanaticism we are accustomed to judge from the notions which we have previously imbibed. With different persons the term assumes different significations, and what to one seems the pure doctrine of the gospel, by another is deemed folly and superstition.¹² To appreciate the merit of those whom the Anglo-Saxons revered as saints, we should review their sentiments and their conduct. The former may be learned from their private correspondence, the latter from the narratives of contemporary historians. Their letters (of which some hundreds are extant)¹³ uniformly breathe a spirit of charity, meekness, and zeal; a determined opposition to the most fashionable vices; and an earnest desire of securing by their virtue the favour of Heaven. Of their conduct the general tendency was, to soften the ferocity of their countrymen, to introduce the knowledge of the more useful arts, to strengthen by religious motives the peace of society, to dispel the darkness of paganism, and to diffuse the pure light of the gospel. If this be fanaticism, the Anglo-Saxon saints must abandon their defence, and plead guilty.

Their adversaries, however, have not been content with stripping them of their virtues, they have even accused them of several vices. But to me the very arguments, by which the charge has been supported, appear the fairest evidence of their

¹⁰ In his forty-fifth year, Luther married Catharine Boren, a professed nun. He was at no loss to justify his conduct. *Ut non est in meis viribus situm, ut vir non sim; tam non est etiam mei juris, ut absque muliere sim. Nec enim libera est electio aut consilium, sed res natura necessaria.* *Serm. de Matrim.* tom. v. p. 119.

¹¹ See Sturges, *Reflections*, p. 7. 27. 31; Rapin, *Hist.* vol. i. p. 80. 116.

¹² It is probably to their austerities that the charge of fanaticism is attached. But they must share the reproach with the first Christians, whom they endeavoured to follow in the path of mortification, though at a considerable distance. To excuse their inferiority, they were accustomed to allege the severity of a northern climate, which was incompatible with a life of rigorous abstinence. *Ðær eard nīr eac ealles ƿƿa mægenfært heƿ on uteƿeardan þære eorþan bradnýrre. ƿƿa ƿƿa heo is to middeƿ on mægenfærtum eardum. Þær man mæg færtan ƿreopliceoƿ þonne heƿ.* *Homil. 34,* apud *Whel.* p. 228. See also *Bede*, *Vit. St. Cuthb.* c. vi.

¹³ Those of St. Boniface and his correspondents, are published by Serrarius, (*Ep. St. Bonif. Moguntia*, (1629,) and Martene, (*Thesaur. Anecd.* tom. ix. ;) of Bede, in different parts of his works; and of Aleuin, by Duchesne, (*Opera Alc.* par. iii.,) Canisius, (*Ant. lect.* tom. ii.,) and Mabillon, (*Anal. vet.* p. 398.) See also Leland's *Collectanea*, vol. i. p. 392.

merit. Though the records of antiquity have been searched with the keen eye of criticism and suspicion, curiosity has been defeated; and no fact has hitherto been adduced which, in its natural shape, can impeach the purity of their morals.¹⁴ They have passed through the dangerous ordeal without a stain; and their innocence has compelled their calumniators to descend to the unworthy artifice of imputing virtuous conduct to vicious motives, and of describing every Saxon, whose piety excited admiration, as indebted for his reputation to his hypocrisy. But the reader will pause before he assents to so unfounded an inference. This hypocrisy was invisible to the contemporaries of those to whom it is objected: and we may rationally suspect the mysteries of an art which professes at the present day to unfold the views and motives of men whose ashes have been, during more than ten centuries, mingled with the dust.

But were not the honours of sanctity bestowed without discrimination on the benefactors of monasteries, as a lure to attract the donations of opulence and credulity? The question may excite a smile or a sigh in the uninformed reader; but the ungenerous insinuation can hardly survive the test of inquiry. To search in the Anglo-Saxon menology for the most distinguished patrons of the monastic profession, will prove a fruitless labour. Neither Ina, nor Offa, nor Ethelwold, nor Alfred,¹⁵ were ever enrolled in the calendar: even Edgar, though more than forty monasteries owed their existence to his favour and liberality, was left in the crowd of uncanonized benefactors. His virtues, indeed, they praised: but they were not blind to his vices: and both have been transmitted, by the impartiality of their historians, to the knowledge of posterity. In the Saxon chronicle may be seen his character, portrayed by the pencil of a monk, his contemporary. With fidelity he describes the faults as well as the virtues of his patron; and concludes with a wish that does honour to his gratitude and sincerity. "God grant," he exclaims, "that his good deeds overbalance his evil deeds, to shield his soul at the last day."¹⁶

2. "The festivals of the saints," observes an Anglo-Saxon manuscript, "are established, that we may obtain the benefit of

¹⁴ I trust I shall not be referred to Henry's story of the award by Edward the Confessor, (Henry, vol. iv. p. 344,) or Mr. Turner's romance concerning St. Dunstan. (Turn. vol. iii. p. 140.) The former is a mistake: (See Gale, Hist. Rames. c. 113, p. 456:) the latter will be noticed in one of the following chapters.

¹⁵ Voltaire (Hist. Generale, vol. i. p. 214) asserts that Alfred was refused the honour of canonization, because he had founded no monastery. The fact, however, is, that he built the abbey of Athelney for monks, and that of Shaftesbury for nuns, and annually made numerous and valuable donations to different churches. See Spelman's Life of Alfred, edit. Hearne, p. 164—171.

¹⁶ *Eroð him zeunne þæt hīr gode dæda ryppa pearþan þonne myrdæda. hīr pæple to zereyldneffe on langruman ryðe.* Chron. Sax. p. 116.

their prayers, and be excited to the imitation of their virtues."¹⁷ These were the great objects of the veneration which our ancestors paid to departed sanctity. But in the creed of modern historians, to offer any species of religious honour to a created being, is a deadly act of idolatry. When they contemplate the Saxon invoking the patronage of the saints, their piety is, or affects to be, alarmed: and they exclaim, in the language of horror and indignation, that the worship of the Deity was supplanted by the worship of his creatures.¹⁸ But a short acquaintance with ancient literature will prove, that our ancestors were too well instructed, to confound man with God. They knew how to discriminate between the adoration due to the Supreme Being, and the honours which might be claimed by the most holy among his servants: and while they worshipped him as the author of every blessing, they paid no other respect to them, than what was owing to those whom they considered as *his* favourites, and *their* advocates. Whoever shall attentively peruse the works of the Saxon writers, or the acts of the Saxon councils, from the era of their conversion, to what is deemed the darkest period of their history, will observe this important distinction accurately marked, and constantly inculcated. When the poet sang the praises of his patron, he sought neither to interest his mercy, nor deprecate his justice: to obtain the assistance of his intercession, to be remembered by him at the throne of the Almighty, was the sole object of his petition.¹⁹ If the preacher from the pulpit exhorted his hearers to solicit the prayers of their more holy brethren, he was careful to inculcate, that they should adore God alone, as their true Lord and true God.²⁰ If the Christian, when he rose from his bed, was accustomed to beg the protection of the saints, he was yet commanded in the first

¹⁷ *Festivitates sanctorum institutæ sunt, vel ad excitandam imitationem, vel ut meritis eorum consociemur, atque orationibus adjuvemur.* MS. apud Wanley, p. 148.

¹⁸ Hume, *Hist. c. 1, p. 42.*

⁹ See Alcuin's address to the Virgin Mary.

Tu mundi vitam, totis tu gaudia sæclis,
Tu regem cæli, tu dominum atque Deum
Ventris in hospitio genuisti, virgo perennis,
Tu precibus nobis auxiliare tuis.

Alcuin. apud Can. tom. ii. par. ii. p. 471.

Also St. Aldhelm, de Virgin. Bib. Pat. tom. viii. p. 22, and Bede Vit. St. Cuth. p. 291.

²⁰ The Saxon homilist is very accurate in his expressions. To him anum þe ꝥceolan uꝛ Ʒebiddan. he ana uꝛ Ʒoþ hlaƷorþ Ʒ Ʒoþ Ʒrod. þe biddaþ þingunga æt halgum mannum þ hi ꝥceolan uꝛ þingian to heora drihtne Ʒ to urum drihtne. Ne Ʒebidde þe na ðeah hƷæþene uꝛ to him ƷƷa ƷƷa þe to Ʒrode doþ. "Him alone shall we adore. He alone is true Lord and true God. We beg the intercession of holy men, that they would intercede for us to their Lord and our Lord. But nevertheless we do not pray to them as we do to God." Homil. Sax. apud Whel. p. 283. "Nulli martyrum," says the MS. quoted above, "sacrificamus, quamvis in memoriis martyrum constituamus altaria." Ibid.

place, to worship with bended knees the majesty of his Creator.²¹ These distinctions were too easy to be mistaken. The idea of intercession necessarily includes that of dependence: and to employ the mediation of his favourites, is to acknowledge the superior excellency of the Deity.²²

3. With the invocation of the saints is naturally connected the veneration of their remains. The man who had been taught to respect their virtues and to implore their patronage, would not hesitate to honour their ashes with a decent monument, and with a distinguished place in the assembly of the faithful. In the book of the apocalypse, the martyrs are represented as reposing beneath the altar;²³ and, before the death of its author, we behold the Christians of Rome offering the sacred mysteries on the tombs of the holy apostles Peter and Paul.²⁴ When the martyr Ignatius had been devoured by the wild beasts of the amphitheatre, the fragments of his bones were collected by his disciples, and carefully conveyed to the capital of the east, where the Christians received them as an invaluable treasure, and deposited them with honour in the place appropriated to the divine worship.²⁵ Succeeding generations inherited the sentiments of their fathers: the veneration of relics was diffused as far as the knowledge of the gospel; and their presence was universally deemed requisite for the canonical dedication of a church or an altar.²⁶ With this view, Gregory the Great, as soon as he heard of the success of the missionaries, was careful to send them a supply of relics;²⁷

²¹ Hw ꝛeppende anum zereophodon. he cleopie to Grode halzum. ꝛ bidde ꝥ hig him to Grode ðingien. æroꝛc to ꝛancan Mærian ꝛ ꝛiþþan to eallum Grodeꝛ halzum. "Having worshipped his Creator alone, let him invoke God's saints, and pray that they would intercede for him to God; first the Holy Mary, and then all the saints of God." Lib. Leg. eccles. apud Wilk. p. 272.

²² Thus, in the Saxon homilies, the preacher points out the difference between the intercession of the saints, and the mediation of Christ, when he exhorts his auditory to solicit the intercession of the Virgin Mary, *with Christ, her Son, her Creator, and her Redeemer*. Ucan ꝛe biddan nu ꝥ eadize ꝛ ꝥ zereælize mæden Mæria. ꝥ heo hw ꝛeþingie to hwa ægenum ꝛuna. ꝛ to hwa ꝛeppend hælend Ehwꝛc. Sermon in Annunc. St. Mariæ, apud Wanley, p. 11. See note (P).

²³ Revel. c. iv. v. 9.

²⁴ See in St. Cyril, (cont. Julian. p. 327. 334.) the testimony of the emperor Julian. He probably possessed more authentic information than the modern writers, who date the veneration of relics from the commencement of the fourth century.

²⁵ Θεσσαυρος ἀιμαίος. Act. St. Ignat. c. vi. Compare this passage with that in the Acts of St. Polycarp. Τιμιώτερα λείπον πομπήων και δοκιμώτερα υπερ χριστων. Act. c. xviii.

²⁶ Bed. l. v. c. 12. Wilk. Con. p. 169.

²⁷ Hence we are informed by Carte, that the veneration of relics was introduced into England by the Roman missionaries, but was unknown to the Scottish bishops, Aidan, Finan, and Colman, (Carte, Hist. vol. i. p. 241.) Yet Finan ordered the bones of his holy predecessor to be taken out of his tomb, and placed on the right side of the altar, juxta venerationem tanto pontifice dignam: (Bed. l. iii. c. 17:) and Colman, at his departure, carried with him into Scotland a part of the relics of the same saint. (Bed. l. iii. c. 26.) See also Bede on St. Oswald, l. iii. c. 11, 12.

and scarce a pilgrim returned from Gaul or Italy, who had not procured, by entreaty or purchase, a portion of the remains of some saint or martyr. But the poverty of the Saxon church was quickly relieved by the virtues of her children; and England became a soil fertile in saints. Scarcely was there a monastery that did not possess one or more of these favourites of heaven: their bodies lay richly entombed in the vicinity of the principal altar; and around were suspended the votive offerings of the multitudes who had experienced the efficacy of their intercession. In the hour of distress or danger, the afflicted votary threw himself at the foot of the shrine with an avowal of his unworthiness, but expressed an humble confidence that the Almighty would not refuse to the merits of the patron, what he might justly deny to the demerits of the suppliant.²⁸ Success often attended these petitions: the clergy of each community could appeal to a long list of preternatural cures, owing to the intercession of the saints, whose bodies reposed in their church; and the crowds of visitants, whom these miracles attracted, added to their reputation and importance.²⁹

4. That the Deity has, on particular occasions, inverted or suspended the ordinary laws of nature, is a truth unequivocally admitted by all who profess to believe in the gospel. But whether these celestial favours were confined to the fervour of the first Christians, or continue to be bestowed on their less worthy successors, is a point which has been fiercely argued by religious controvertists. Without engaging rashly in the dispute, I may be allowed to observe, that it must be extremely difficult to assign any period at which the gift of supernatural powers was withdrawn from the church. The testimony of each particular generation as forcibly claims our assent, as that of the preceding; and no argument can demonstrate, that if miracles were necessary at the commencement, they became inexpedient during the progress of Christianity. To have doubted their continuance at the period when England was converted, would have exposed the skeptic to the severest censures: the supernatural privilege was confidently claimed by the missionaries; and the voice of the people sanctioned the belief that it had descended to the more holy among their successors. The works of the Saxon writers are embellished, and sometimes disfigured with

²⁸ Bed. l. iv. c. 31.

²⁹ Hence, if we may believe Dr. Henry, arose a new species of monastic excellence, entirely unknown to the founders of the order. To become a perfect monk, it was necessary to acquire dexterity in the art of stealing relics; and he who had been so fortunate as to purloin the little finger of a celebrated saint, was esteemed the greatest and happiest man among his brethren. (Henry, vol. p. 305.) This information he professes to derive from the life of St. Aldhelm, by Malmesbury. Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 39. But if the reader consult the original, his curiosity will be disappointed. He will only learn that when the treasures of Queen Emma were pillaged, one of her servants secreted the head of St. Owen, and afterwards scrupling to retain it, deposited it with his brother, a monk of Malmesbury. Ang. Sac. *ibid.*

narratives of extraordinary events, which their piety taught them to consider as evident interpositions of the Divinity. Of these there are many which it will require no small share of ingenuity to disprove, and of incredulity to discredit:³⁰ but there are also many which must shrink from the frown of criticism. Some may have been the effects of accident or imagination; some are more calculated to excite the smile than the wonder of the reader; and some, on whatever proof they were originally admitted, depend at the present day on the distant testimony of writers not remarkable for sagacity or discrimination. But are we then to ascribe the belief of these miracles to the policy and artifices of the clergy, anxious to extend their influence over the minds, and to enrich themselves by nourishing the credulity of their disciples? The odious charge has often been advanced, but cannot be supported by the authority of any ancient writer: nor were it difficult to derive the easy faith of our ancestors from a more natural and a less polluted source. Man is taught by nature to attribute every event to a particular cause; and when an occurrence cannot be explained by the known laws of the universe, it is assigned by the illiterate, in every age, and under every religion, to the operation of an invisible agent. From this persuasion arose the multitude of deities with which the ignorance of mankind had crowded the pagan mythology. The principle was not extirpated, it was improved by the knowledge of the gospel. From the doctrine of a superintendent providence the converts were led to conclude that God would often interfere in human concerns; to him they ascribed every unforeseen and unusual event; and either trusted in his bounty for visible protection from misfortune, or feared from his justice that vengeance which punishes guilt before the great day of retribution. Men impressed with these notions, would rather expect than dispute the appearance of miraculous events. On many occasions they would necessarily prove the dupes of their own credulity, and ascribe to the beneficence of the Deity, and the intercession of

³⁰ Even an adversary must pity the perplexities into which the miracles of St. Augustine have plunged the skepticism of Dr. Enfield. That both St. Gregory and St. Augustine ascribed the success of the mission, in a great measure, to the miracles which had been wrought in its favour, he willingly acknowledges: that any miracles had really been performed, he as confidently denies. In the search of expedients to reconcile these apparent contradictions, he dances from one unsatisfactory hypothesis to another, till at last he rests, though with some reluctance, in the idea that the pontiff and the missionary had engaged in a conspiracy to deceive the Saxons by the artifice of imaginary miracles. (Aikin's Gen. Biog. vol. i. p. 474.) But in such a supposition, would not these religious jugglers have dropped the mask in their private correspondence? Would Gregory have so earnestly and pathetically warned his disciple against the suggestions of vanity and presumption? Was it necessary that the deception should be propagated as far as Alexandria, and that Gregory should acquaint the patriarch of that metropolis with the signs and wonders which accompanied the preaching of the missionaries? *Tantus miraculis vel ipse vel hi, qui cum eo transmissi sunt, in gente eadem coruscant, ut apostolorum virtutes in signis, quæ exhibent, imitari videantur.* Greg. epist. vii, 30.

their patrons, those cures which might have been effected by the efforts of nature, or the powers of the imagination. It was their misfortune, that their knowledge was not equal to their piety: of their censors perhaps it may sometimes be said, that their piety is not equal to their knowledge.

5. The mortal remains of the saints are necessarily confined to particular places: their likenesses, by the aid of the pencil or the chisel, may be multiplied to gratify the curiosity and animate the piety of thousands. But the innocence and utility of employing paintings and images in religious worship, has been often doubted and as often maintained by hostile controvertists. To determine with precision the limits of that liberty which should be granted or denied to the imagination of the multitude, is certainly a matter of no small difficulty. A worship which appeals not to the senses, must insensibly sink into languor and indifference; and too studied an attention to ceremony may give birth to superstition and idolatry. To hold with a steady hand the balance between deficiency and excess is the duty of those to whom is intrusted the government of the church; and their conduct should be guided by the genius of the people, the circumstances of the times, and the method of public instruction.³¹ During the three first centuries of the Christian era, images and paintings were but sparingly admitted into the assemblies of the faithful: and this caution was justified by the apprehension that the proselytes might easily revert to their former habits, and transfer their homage from the Creator to the creature. As idolatry declined, pictures and statues met with greater indulgence: they spoke a language which was intelligible to the meanest capacity; they instructed the ignorant, and stimulated the languid: they preserved the memory of virtue, and pointed out the path which conducted to the rewards of sanctity. At the period in which Augustine attempted the conversion of England, the churches of the east and the west, the almost insulated Christians of Caledonia, no less than the immediate disciples of the Roman pontiff, had adopted this doctrine: and the Saxons, instructed by their example, hesitated not to perform their devotions before the representations of Christ and his saints. As the cross was the instrument of their redemption, it was always considered as the distinguishing symbol of Christianity. A cross was borne in the front of the missionaries, when they announced the doctrine of the gospel to Ethelbert;³² a cross was erected by Oswald, the exiled king of Northumbria, and venerated by his

³¹ Sed illud ante omnia constituendum, imagines ex illorum per se genere esse, quæ ad substantiam ipsam religionis non attinet, sed in potestate sunt ecclesiæ, ut ea vel adhibeat vel abieget, pro eo atque satius esse decreverit. Petav. de Incarn. l. xv. c. 13, n. 1.

³² Bed. l. i. c. 25.

followers, before they ventured to face the numerous and victorious host of the Britons:³³ a cross in many districts supplied the place of an oratory, and around it the thane and his retainers frequently assembled to perform their devotions:³⁴ and in the principal churches a cross of silver was displayed on the altar, and proclaimed the victory of Christ over the gods of paganism.³⁵ At first, few pictures or statues were possessed by the Saxons. They were ignorant of the arts of sculpture and painting: but the exertions of the pilgrims supplied the deficiency, and foreign models were successfully imitated by the ingenuity of native artists. In the writings of Bede is preserved a catalogue of the paintings with which the pious liberality of Bennet Biscop decorated the church of his monastery.³⁶ The nave was occupied by the portraits of the Virgin and the twelve apostles: the southern aisle exhibited a series of pictures representing the most remarkable facts recorded in the gospels: while the northern struck the eye with the terrific visions described by St. John, in the book of Revelations. "The most illiterate peasant," adds the devout monk, "could not enter the church without receiving the most profitable instruction. He either beheld with pleasure the amiable countenance of Christ and his faithful servants; or studied the important mysteries of the incarnation and redemption; or, from the spectacle of the last judgment, learned to descend into his own breast, and to deprecate the justice of the Almighty."³⁷

³³ Bed. l. iii. c. 2.

³⁴ Sic mos est Saxonice gentis, quod in nonnullis nobilium bonorumque hominum prediis, non ecclesiam sed sancte crucis signum Deo dicatum, cum magno honore altum, in alto erectum, ad commodam diurne orationis sedulitatem solent habere. Vit. St. Willibaldi, apud Can. Lect. ant. vol. ii. par. ii. p. 107.

³⁵

Quin etiam sublime crucis radiante metallo

Hic posuit trophæum.

Bed. l. v. c. 19.

See also Alcuin de Pontif. lin. 1225. 1496. Malm. de Pont. l. iii. f. 162.

³⁶ Other churches were adorned in a similar manner. From a fragment of a Latin poem, composed for the dedication of a church built by Bugge, (she was daughter to Centwin, king of Wessex, in 644. Lel. Collect. vol. iii. p. 117,) we learn that the portraits of the three apostles, Peter, Paul, and Andrew, were suspended over the high altar.

Hic Petrus et Paulus, quadrati lumina mundi,

Absidam gemino tutantur numine lautam;

Nec non Andreas.

Cam. Ant. Lect. tom. ii. par. ii. p. 181.

³⁷ Bed. Vit. abbat. Wirem. p. 295. Hom. in nat. Divi Bened. tom. vii. col. 465. It has been industriously inculcated that the respect which the Anglo-Saxons in later ages paid to religious paintings, was an innovation imported from Rome long after their conversion. The merit or infamy of the new doctrine has been ascribed to Egwin, bishop of Worcester; and to give a colour of truth to the story, a synod has been described as assembled at London, and approving the worship of images. The forgery has even been honoured with a place in both the editions of the British Councils. (Tali modo cultus imaginum Anglicanis ecclesiis auctoritate antichristi et illusionibus diabolicis est obrutus, paucis piis frustra gementibus et contradicentibus circiter annum 712 aut 714. Spel. p. 216. Wilk. p. 73.) The imposture, however, was soon detected and exposed both by foreign and native writers. Spelman abandoned it to its

Confined to a remote corner of the west, the Anglo-Saxons were scarcely acquainted with the violent disputes which agitated the eastern Christians, and at last severed Rome from the dominion of the Byzantine emperors. In the year seven hundred and twenty-five, Leo the Isaurian proclaimed himself the enemy of the holy images; under his son and successor Copronimus, a synod of three hundred and thirty-eight obsequious prelates declared the will of the prince to be the doctrine of Christ; and during thirty years, the creed of the Iconoclasts was propagated with the instruments of persecution, the scourge, the sword, and the halter. The inhabitants of Italy, alarmed for the integrity of their faith, withdrew themselves from the obedience of the empire; and the churches of the east and the west appeared on the eve of an eternal separation, when the second council of Nice restored to the images their ancient honours, and smothered, during a temporary pause, the embers of discontent. But the revival of religious concord between Rome and Constantinople, was the signal of religious discord among the lately converted nations. A spurious copy of the canons of Nice was forwarded to Charlemagne, and transmitted by him to the pre-

fate: but he abandoned it with a sigh, and to supply its place left a long and elaborate note. In this he acknowledges that the converts employed, but denies that they worshipped religious images; and asserts that no instance of such worship is recorded by Bede or any contemporary writer. (Spelm. *ibid.*) If by worship he mean the adoration due to the Supreme Being, he is certainly accurate; but if he mean an inferior respect, which may be shown to the likeness for the sake of the original, he has only proved that the most learned antiquaries are sometimes subject to error. "Ne Beda quidem ipse," says Spelman, "unius (quod sciam) meminit, qui vel crucem adoravit vel imaginem." Yet Bede expressly says of Ceolfrid, before his departure from Wearmouth, "*crucem adoravit, equum ascendit et abiit.*" Bed. vit. Abbat. p. 301. In other places he often mentions the pilgrims, who travelled "ad videnda atque *adorandu* apostolorum et martyrum limina." Bed. l. v. c. 9, p. 293. 301. To Bede I may add several others. St. Aldhelm wrote before Bede, and frequently styles the Christians *crucicolæ*, or worshippers of the cross. St. Aldhelm de Laude Virg. p. 291. 330. The same expression is used by the author of the life of St. Willibald, who also observes, that great honour was paid to the cross: "magno honore alium." Vit. Willib. p. 107. Alcuin was always accustomed to bow to the cross, and repeat this prayer: "Tuam crucem *adoramus*, domine, tuam gloriosam recolimus passionem: miserere nostri." Vit. Alc. in Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. i. p. 156: and in his poem on York, he puts the following *popish* language into the mouth of King Oswald,

"Prosternite vestros

Vultus ante crucem, quam vertice montis in isto

Erexi, rutilat Christi quæ clara trophæo,

Quæ quoque nunc nobis præstabit ab hoste triumphum."

Alc. de Pont. l. 246.

That the worship or respect which is mentioned in these passages was not idolatrous, is plain from the prayer composed by Alcuin and mentioned above, and from a passage in the Saxon homilies. To ðærne rode þe ur gebiddaþ. na ƿpa ðeah to ðam tpeope. ac to ðam Ælmihtigan ðrihtne þe on ðærne halgan rode ƿop ur hangode. "We bow ourselves to the cross: not indeed to the wood, but to the Almighty Lord who hung on it for us." Hom. Sax. apud Wilk. p. 165.

lates of the Germans, the Franks, and the Anglo-Saxons. Their piety was alarmed at the impious assertion attributed to Constantine, bishop of Cyprus, that the sacred images were to be honoured equally with the persons of the adorable Trinity.³⁸ Alcuin was commissioned to refute the blasphemy of the Greeks:³⁹ and the synod of Frankfort equally condemned the heresy of the Iconoclasts, and the supposed decision of the Nicene fathers.⁴⁰ The Roman pontiffs, whose legates had presided in the council, were forced to temporize: they prudently postponed the confirmation of its decrees: and endeavoured, by successive explanations, to silence the murmurs, and to appease the jealousy of the northern prelates. After the lapse of forty years, the adversaries of the council were formidable in number and talents. They acknowledged, indeed, the supreme authority of the successor of St. Peter, and professed their readiness to obey his decisions: but at the same time they requested permission to lay their difficulties at his feet;⁴¹ and in the Caroline books, the acts of the council of Frankfort, and the letters of the synod of Paris, they collected every argument, which their learning or ingenuity could suggest. It was boldly asserted, that under the mask of an orthodox definition,⁴² the Greeks had endeavoured to conceal the idolatry

³⁸ *Suscipio et amplector sanctas et venerandas imagines secundum servitium adorationis, quod consubstantiali et vivificatrici trinitati emitto.* Carol. i. iii. c. 17. That this was an error appears from the original acts, in which the contrary is asserted. *Δεχόμενος και ασταζόμενος τας αγίας και σεπτάς εικονας: και την κατά λατρίαν προσκυνησιν μόνη τη υπεροσσω και ζωηρχική τριάδι αναπέμπω.* Binii, Con. tom. 5, p. 605. The same mistake was transmitted from France to England. Carolus rex Francorum misit librum synodalem ad Britanniam, in quo veræ fidei multa reperta sunt obvia, et eo maxime, quod pene omnium orientalium doctorum unanimi assertione est definitum, imagines adorari debere, quod omnino ecclesia Catholica execratur. Mat. West. p. 146, an. 793. If, in the time of Matthew of Westminster, the Catholic church execrated the adoration of images, how are we to account for the general assertion of modern writers, that it had been established in England from the close of the eighth century? Must they not have confounded two things, which he was careful to distinguish, religious respect and divine worship?

³⁹ Mat. West. *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Lib. Carol. iii. 17.

⁴¹ Romana sedes nullis synodicis constitutis cæteris ecclesiis prælata est, sed ipsius domini auctoritate primatum tenet . . . omnes Catholicæ debent observare ecclesiæ, ut ab ea post Christum ad muniendam fidem adjutorium petant. Lib. Carol. i. 6. A vestra sanctitate petimus, ut sacerdotibus nostris liceret quærere et colligere, quæ ad eandem rem definiendam veraciter convenire potuissent . . . Ea vestræ sanctitati legenda et examinanda mittere curavimus . . . Quos (legatos) non ad hoc ad vestræ almitatis præsentiam misimus, ut hic docendi gratia directi putarentur. Ep. Imper. ad Eug. Pap. in actis synodi Paris. I should not have loaded the page with these quotations, had we not been repeatedly told by modern writers, that in this dispute the northern bishops bade defiance to the authority of the Roman pontiffs.

⁴² The definition was, that an honorary worship might be given to images, but not that true worship which belongs only to the divine nature: *τιμηθῆναι προσκυνησιν, ου μὲν ἴνυ κατά πίστιν ἡμῶν ἀληθινῆ λατρίαν, ἢ πρὸς μόνη τη θεῷ φυσῆ.* Bin. Con. tom. 5, p. 198. The application of the hand to the mouth, in token of respect, gave birth to the two words *προσκυνῆναι* and *adorare*. Whether this worship be such as should only be given to the Deity, must depend on the intention. Otherwise, how are we to excuse

which lurked in their breasts : that their secret intentions had been betrayed by the indiscreet declaration of the bishop of Cyprus ; and that the permission of tapers, incense, and salutation, spoke, more forcibly than his words, the real tendency of this heathenish worship.⁴³ Notwithstanding the authority and representations of the pontiffs, their suspicions were for a time kept alive by the embassies of the Byzantine emperors, who favoured the party of the Iconoclasts ; but in the lapse of a few years, the Gallic prelates became divided in sentiment ; by degrees they consented to a silent acquiescence in the doctrine of the council ; and, at last, the ceremonies, approved by the popes, were adopted in the churches of Gaul, Germany, and England.⁴⁴

5. At the present day, the thirst of curiosity prompts the man of letters to visit the scenes of ancient wisdom and ancient glory : in former times it conducted the pious Christian to the places which had been consecrated by the triumphs of religion. To the adventurous spirit of the northern nations, the practice of pilgrimage offered inestimable attractions : and the Anglo-Saxons were particularly distinguished by their attachment to this devotion. In estimating the respective merits of different countries, none could challenge, in their opinion, an equality with Palestine : there the religious wanderer might visit the cave in which the Saviour was born, might follow him in the course of his mission, might climb the mountain on which he suffered, and kiss the sepulchre in which his body was deposited. But the perils of the enterprise were sufficient to appal the most resolute courage. Jerusalem groaned beneath the yoke of the infidels : it lay at the distance of more than three thousand miles,⁴⁵ and imagination multiplied the dangers of navigating an unknown sea, and of travelling through nations of different languages, manners, and religions. Yet the bold temerity of some adventurers was crowned with success ; and they returned, after an absence of several years, to relate to their astonished countrymen the wonders which they had witnessed. Of these, the most ancient recorded in history, is St. Willibald, whose long peregrination has been faithfully related by the pen of a female writer.⁴⁶ Her

the Protestant, who kneels before the sacrament, the mere symbol of Christ ; or the bridegroom, who, in the ceremony of marriage, says to the bride—with my body I thee worship ?

⁴³ These honours were first paid by the Greeks to the statues of the emperors : from them they passed to the pictures or representations of Christ and the saints. See Mabillon, Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. i. præf. p. xviii. xix.

⁴⁴ See note (Q).

⁴⁵ According to the Roman Itineraries, the road from Sandwich to Jerusalem, was 3566 Roman, or 3271 English miles. See Gibbon's Decline and Fall, c. 2.

⁴⁶ She was a nun of Heidenheim, and a relation of St. Willibald. She wrote as he dictated, and appeals for her veracity to his deacons. "Ab ipso audita et ex illius ore dictata præscripsimus, testibus mihi diaconis ejus." Hodoep. Will. inter. lect. ant. Canis. edit. Basnage, tom. ii. p. 106.

narrative I shall abridge: nor will the reader perhaps refuse to follow through a few pages the first of his countrymen, who ventured to approach the court of the caliphs, and penetrated as far as the holy city.

The father of Willibald had determined to visit, in company with his children, the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul. He died at Lucca; and the pilgrims, after paying the last duties to their deceased parent, continued their journey. At the sight of Rome they experienced emotions to which hitherto they had been strangers: and the different monuments of piety, with which that capital abounded, successively awakened their devotion and admiration. The curiosity of Willibald was enlarged; his imagination wandered to the places which had been consecrated by the corporal presence of the Redeemer; and the fearless pilgrim resolved to visit the land of promise, the theatre on which God had displayed the wonders of his power and his mercy. But the zeal of Winibald and Walburge, his brother and sister, was less fervid, or more prudent: they refused to accompany him; and he was compelled to seek among the other Saxon pilgrims for associates of similar views, and equal resolution.

In the year 721, soon after the feast of Easter, Willibald departed from Rome with only two companions: but his example excited the enthusiasm of his countrymen, and during his journey their number increased to eight.⁴⁷ The time was favourable to their design. Though the Spanish Moslems were constantly at war with their Christian neighbours, the trade of the Mediterranean was undisturbed, and the eastern subjects of the caliphs occasionally visited the ports of Greece and Italy. At Naples, the good fortune of the pilgrims conducted them to an Egyptian merchant, who willingly received them on board his vessel: but their speed was retarded by the delays of commerce, and a circuitous navigation: and fourteen months expired before they reached the coast of Syria. From Naples they successively sailed to Reggio in Calabria; to Catania in Sicily, where the inhabitants were accustomed to oppose the veil of St. Agatha to the fiery eruptions of the neighbouring mountain; to Manifasia; to the islands of Coos and Samos; and, at last, after a long and tedious voyage, arrived in safety in the port of Ephesus. During the several weeks which they spent on the coast of Natolia, they had much to suffer from fatigue and hunger; but they satisfied their curiosity by visiting the most celebrated cities, and their piety by offering up their prayers at the shrines of the most celebrated saints. Paphos, in the island of Cyprus, next attracted their no-

⁴⁷ He left Rome cum duobus sociis, (Hodoep. p. 109. Itiner. p. 118:) when he arrived in Syria, erant cum St Willibaldo septem contribules ipsius. (Hodoep. p. 110. Itiner. p. 119.)

tice. There they rested to celebrate the festival of Easter, and afterwards repaired to Constantia, the ancient Salamis, to venerate the relics of St. Epiphanius. From the west of the island, to the opposite coast of Syria, the passage was short; they landed at Tharratæ, a port belonging to the Moslems, and walked as far as Emessa, the residence of the caliph. At the entrance of the city they were stopped by the guard, and conducted by the order of a magistrate to the palace.

Four years before this period, the Moslems had been compelled to retire with disgrace from the siege of Constantinople. Jealous of the designs of the imperial court, the caliph treated Willibald and his companions as spies in the pay of the Greeks, and commanded them to be detained in close confinement. It was in vain that a Christian merchant offered a considerable sum for their ransom: his zeal could obtain no more than a mitigation of their sufferings. With a handsome present he purchased permission to conduct them twice in the week to the public baths, and on the Sundays to the church of the Christians. As they passed through the bazaar, the inhabitants assembled to see the strangers; and, if we may believe the national vanity of their female historian, it was their youth, their beauty, and the elegance of their dress, that attracted the curiosity of the infidels.⁴⁸

The subjugation of Spain, by the arms of the Moslems, had established a frequent communication between that country and the court of Syria; and the natives were occasionally compelled to pay their homage to the successor of Mahomet. A Spanish Christian, whose brother possessed a considerable employment at court, listened with pity to the history, and eagerly espoused the protection, of the pilgrims. Having discovered the captain, who had landed them at Tharratæ, he obtained an audience of the caliph, and explained the real intentions of the prisoners. The prince heard him with kindness; and, when he understood, that they came from the extremity of the west, from an island beyond which no land was known to exist,⁴⁹ he declared himself satisfied, ordered them to be liberated without paying the customary fees, and gave them a written permission to pursue their journey to Jerusalem.

With lightsome hearts the pilgrims departed from Emessa. A tedious road of a hundred miles conducted them to Damascus; and a week was spent in visiting the curiosities of the royal city. They were now on the confines of Palestine. After crossing the Libanus and the higher Galilee, they arrived at Nazareth, the ancient residence of the parents of the Messiah. Over the reputed

⁴⁸ *Cives urbium curiosi jugiter illic venire consueverant illos speculari, quia juvenes, et decori, et vestium ornatu bene induti erant. Hodoep. p. 110.*

⁴⁹ *De occidentali plaga, ubi sol occasum habet, isti homines venerunt. Nos autem nescimus terram ultra illos, et nil nisi aquam. Ibid.*

spot, on which the archangel announced his future birth to the virgin, the Christians had built a magnificent church: but its riches tempted the avarice of the Moslems, and expensive presents were necessary to restrain their rapacity.⁵⁰ Cana, distinguished by the first miracle of Jesus, exhibited to their view six earthen vessels, ranged under the altars, which they were assured had been used at the marriage feast. Thence they climbed the steep mountain of Thabor; and a monastery at the summit dedicated to Christ, Moses, and Elias, recalled to their minds the glorious mystery of the transfiguration. They descended to the city of Tiberias: the Christian inhabitants were numerous; and a synagogue of Jews preserved the memory of the ancient Rabbins. Curiosity led the travellers to the sources of the Jordan. Ascending the Anti-libanus they were shown two springs, distinguished by their respective names of Jor and Dan, which united their streams in the valley, and gave their common appellation to the river. On the declivity of the mountain were numerous herds of cattle, remarkable for their size, the shortness of their legs, and the length of their horns. Cæsarea, built at the union of the two streams, was principally inhabited by Christians. Following the course of the river, they arrived at the place where tradition reports that Christ was baptised. The water had retired to a distance;⁵¹ but a small rivulet still occupied the ancient channel; and a wooden cross, erected in the middle, pointed out the spot. A church had been raised over it, for the celebration of baptism, and to satisfy the devotion of the crowds, who on the feast of the Epiphany were eager to wash in the river. Its waters were believed to confer health to the infirm, and fecundity to the barren. As they passed by the city of Jericho, they admired the fertility which was imparted to the neighbouring country, by the fountain of Elias; and, after visiting an ancient monastery, beheld at a distance the venerable remains of Jerusalem. With tears of joy and gratitude, the pilgrims entered the holy city. The first object which arrested their attention, was the basilic, founded by Constantine the Great, on the spot where the true cross had been discovered by his mother St. Helena. At the eastern front were erected three crosses, to perpetuate the memory of the event. In the neighbourhood stood the church of the resurrection, which contained the sepulchre of Christ, an invaluable treasure in the estimation of Christian piety. Originally it

⁵⁰ The wealth of the Christians, or the forbearance of the infidels, was at last exhausted. The church was destroyed, and afterwards rebuilt. Mariti, vol. ii. p. 162.

⁵¹ According to Maundrell, (Journey from Aleppo, p. 82,) the river at this place has retreated at least a furlong from its ancient boundary. But Mariti informs us, that in the rainy season, its waters overflow their banks, swell to the breadth of four miles, and often, on account of the inequality of the ground, divide themselves into different streams.

had been a vault, hewn in the solid rock: in the church it rose high above the pavement, was of a square figure, and terminated in a point. The entrance was on the eastern side, and an opening on the right hand introduced the pilgrim to the chamber which had received the dead body of the Redeemer. The inside of the sepulchre was lighted by fifteen golden lamps;⁵² and near the door lay a large stone, in memory of that which had formerly closed the entrance.

After visiting, with sentiments of the most lively devotion, the other religious monuments contained within the walls of Jerusalem, they crossed the valley of Josaphat, and repaired to the mount of Olives. On it stood two churches, of which one marked the garden, that had witnessed the agony of Jesus before his passion; the other occupied the summit, from which he ascended into heaven. In the centre of the latter, the spot which had received the impression of his last footsteps, was surrounded with a circular rail of brass; in the roof of the church was left a large opening, and two lofty columns of marble represented the two angels, that attended at his ascension. A lamp, surrounded with glass, was always kept burning in the aperture.⁵³

I shall not follow the pilgrims in their subsequent excursions, which their historian has reduced to a barren catalogue of names. They traversed Palestine in every direction, till their curiosity was exhausted; and fatigue and infirmity admonished them to return to Europe. But to leave, was as difficult as to enter, the territory of the Moslems: and the companions of Willibald were compelled to make a second journey to Emessa, to solicit from the justice or caprice of the caliph, the permission to revisit their native country. The prince was absent: but their request was granted by one of his ministers. When they had returned to Jerusalem, they were joined by Willibald, and bade a last farewell to the holy city. Their route led them through Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, to the opulent city of Tyre, where their baggage was strictly examined. The ignorance or experience of antiquity had ascribed to the opobalsam the most salutary virtues; and the exportation of this valuable medicine was severely forbidden by the jealousy of the caliphs.⁵⁴ But the ingenuity of Willibald eluded the prohibition. To a gourd filled with the precious liquid, he had joined another gourd filled with petroleum: both

⁵² Arcuulph, a Gallic prelate, had some time before visited the Holy Land. Bede abridged his narrative, which in some points differs from that of St. Willibald. He tells us, that the sepulchre was round, that the number of lamps was only twelve, and that of these, four burnt in the inside, and eight were fixed on the roof. See Bede de locis sac. c. ii. p. 616.

⁵³ When Maundrell visited the mountain, no part of the church remained, except an octagonal cupola, which the Turks used as a mosch, p. 104.

⁵⁴ On the balsam extracted from the balm, which grows in the plains of Jericho, see Bede, (de loc. sac. c. ix. p. 320,) and Mariti, (p. 344.)

were so artfully united, as to exhibit the appearance of one vessel : and the contrivance of the pilgrim defeated the curiosity of the Mohammedan officers.⁵⁵

In his return, Willibald spent two years at Constantinople ; visited the volcanic eruptions in the islands of Lipari ; ascertained the origin of the pumice stone, which was so useful to the monastic writers ; and at last retired to the celebrated monastery of Cassino. At the request of his relative, St. Boniface, he was drawn from this retirement by Gregory, the Roman pontiff, and sent into Germany, where he laboured zealously in the diffusion of religious knowledge, and died at an advanced age, bishop of Aichstad, in the year 786.

But it was given to few to display the courage, and to experience the good fortune of Willibald.⁵⁶ Rome lay at a shorter distance than Jerusalem ; and presented numerous attractions to the piety of the pilgrims. It was the residence of the sovereign pontiff : its inhabitants boasted that they were the descendants of the first Christians : the mortal remains of St. Peter and St. Paul reposed within its churches ; and its catacombs contained the relics of innumerable martyrs. Yet, to travel at this period from England to Rome, was an attempt of no small difficulty and danger. The highways, which formerly conducted the traveller in security to the capital of the empire, had been neglected and demolished during the incursions of the barbarians : and, if the constitution of the pilgrim could bid defiance to the fatigue of the journey, and the inclemency of the weather,⁵⁷ he was still exposed to the insults of the banditti who infested the passes of the Alps, and of the marauders who were kept in the pay of turbulent and seditious chieftains.⁵⁸ Hospitality was, indeed, a favourite virtue among the northern nations ; and religion offered her protection to the person and property of the itinerant

⁵⁵ Hodoep. p. 113, 114.

⁵⁶ If, as history assures us, Alfred corresponded with the patriarch of Jerusalem, and sent alms as far as the Indies, it is not improbable, that his messengers visited the holy land. (Chron. Sax. p. 86. Malm. de Reg. l. ii. c. 4, f. 24. Wise's Asser. p. 58.) By the conversion of the Hungarians in the tenth century, the length of the journey was shortened, and its danger diminished. Wythman, abbot of Ramsey, in the reign of Canute, made a successful pilgrimage to Jerusalem ; (Hist. Ram. p. 436 ;) and his example was followed by the historian Ingulf, who joined the retinue of several German princes, and was so fortunate as to escape the sword and the pestilence which devoured one-third of his companions. "Tandem de triginta equitibus, qui de Normannia pingues exivimus, vix viginti pauperes peregrini, et omnes pedites, multa macie attenuati, reversi sumus." Ingul. p. 74.

⁵⁷ Elsin, archbishop of Canterbury, was frozen to death in the Alps. His companions had recourse to the unusual expedient of ripping open the belly of a horse, and plunging his feet into it. Malm. de Pont. l. i. f. 114. Osbern, Vit. St. Odonis, p. 86.

⁵⁸ See the life of St. Boniface by St. Willibald, c. v. St. Elphege was robbed as soon as he entered Italy, (Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 129 :) the bishop of York, Wells, and Hereford, and the earl of Northumberland, in their return. Malm. f. 154. In the years 921 and 922, two caravans of Anglo-Saxon pilgrims were surprised and massacred in the Alps. Baron. ex Flodoard. an. 921, xiii.

devotee: but the mountaineers respected neither the dictates of humanity, nor the decrees of councils; and of the numbers, who braved the difficulties of the journey, many lived not to revisit their homes; while of the rest, the greater part returned sickly, despoiled, and emaciated.⁵⁹ Charlemagne, at the solicitation of Offa,⁶⁰ Conrad, at that of Canute,⁶¹ had promised protection to the English pilgrims: but it was proved by experience, that the sincerity or the power of these princes was not equal to their engagements or inclinations. The fate, however, of former adventurers, proved a useless lesson to their countrymen, and the objections of prudence were silenced by the impulse of devotion or curiosity. To behold the ancient capital of the world, and receive the benediction of the successor of St. Peter, kings abandoned their thrones, and bishops intrusted to others the care of their flocks: clergy and laity, monks and nuns, followed their example: and even the lower classes of the people were eager to gratify their wishes, by obtaining a place in the retinue of their superiors.⁶² The manners of the present age have branded their conduct with the name of superstition; but candour must extort the confession, that their motives were innocent, their labours useful. It was difficult to assign a reason, why it should be more lawful to visit the scenes of ancient literature, than those of religious virtue: and he who has experienced the enthusiasm which is kindled in the mind by viewing the former residence of heroes and legislators,⁶³ will easily conceive with what force the chains, the tombs, and the relics of the martyrs, spoke to the hearts of these foreign Christians. In a political view, the travels of the pilgrims were highly serviceable. They contributed to connect the independent nations, which had divided among them the fragments of the empire; to dissipate the prejudices of national partiality; and to diffuse the knowledge of the arts and the sciences. Rome, though she had suffered severely from the ravages of the barbarians, was still the centre of knowledge, and the repository of whatever was elegant in the west. The riches, the ruins of the imperial city, astonished the strangers: they returned with ideas more enlarged, and views more elevated: attempts were made to imitate at home, what they had admired abroad: and to

⁵⁹ In the ancient life of St. Winibald, it is remarked, that strangers were generally subject to a fever at their arrival in Rome. *Magna febris fatigatio advenas illic venientes visitare seu gravare solet.* Vit. St. Winib. apud Canis. p. 126.

⁶⁰ Ep. Car. Magni, apud Mat. Par. p. 978.

⁶¹ Ep. Canut. apud Wilk. p. 298.

⁶² *Romam adire curavit, quod eo tempore magnæ virtutis æstimabatur.* Bed. l. iv. c. 23. *Quod his temporibus plures de gente Anglorum, nobiles, ignobiles, laici, clerici, viri ac femine certatim facere consuerunt.* Id. l. v. c. 7. Also West. an. 738, p. 140. St. Bonif. ep. 20. 40. 51. 69.

⁶³ "Naturane," says Cicero, "nobis datum dicam, an errore quodam, ut cum ea loca videamus, in quibus memoria dignos viros acceperimus multos esse versatos, magis moveamur, quam quando eorum ipsorum aut facta audiamus aut scriptum aliquod legamus." De Fin. l. v.

their observation and industry England was indebted for almost every improvement which she received before the conquest.⁶⁴ Yet, even when pilgrimages were most fashionable, there were many, who, though they dared not to condemn a devotion consecrated by the practice of ages, justly contended that their countrymen carried it to excess.⁶⁵ They complained that, by the absence of bishops, the interests of the church were abandoned; by that of princes, the tranquillity of the state was endangered: that journeys of devotion were undertaken to elude the severity of the penitential canons: and that the morals of the travellers were often impaired, instead of being improved. The last charge is forcibly corroborated by the conduct of several among the female pilgrims. Their beauty proved fatal to their chastity: amid strangers, without a friend, perhaps without the means of subsistence, they sometimes fell victims to the arts of seduction: and the apostle of Germany confesses, in the anguish of his zeal, that there were few cities in Lombardy or Gaul, which had not witnessed the shame of some of his itinerant countrywomen.⁶⁶ But his remonstrances were not more successful than those of St. Jerome and St. Gregory had been in preceding ages:⁶⁷ the stream of pilgrimage was still directed towards the Vatican: the practice was defended by curiosity, and sanctioned by example; and during the existence of the Saxon dynasty, Rome almost annually saw a crowd of English travellers offer their devotions at the shrine of St. Peter.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ The improvements introduced by St. Wilfrid, and St. Bennet Biscop, have been already noticed. The latter, however, seems to have disapproved of pilgrimages, when they were not justified by the prospect of great advantage. He was careful to procure masters and books for his monks, that they might not be tempted to make pilgrimages, but be willing *intra monasterii claustra quiescere*. Bed. hom. in natal. Bened. abbat. tom. vii. col. 465.

⁶⁵ The abbess Bugge was desirous to visit Rome, but so many objections were raised by her friends, that she wrote to St. Boniface for his advice. "*Scimus quod multi sunt, qui hanc voluntatem vituperant, et hunc amorem derogant, et eorum sententiam his astipulationibus confirmant, quod canones synodales præcipiant, quod unusquisque in eo loco ubi constitutus fuerit, et ubi votum suum voverit, ibi maneat et Deo reddat vota sua.*" Ep. Bonif. 38, p. 50. The archbishop answered, that it were better to remain in her monastery, unless the vexatious exactions of her enemies compelled her to leave it. Ep. 20, p. 28.

⁶⁶ Ep. Bonif. 105, p. 149. Wilk. p. 93.

⁶⁷ St. Greg. Nys. tom. iii. ap. p. 72. St. Hieron. ep. 13.

⁶⁸ The Saxon Chronicle remarks, as something extraordinary, that in the year 889, no pilgrims went to Rome, and Alfred's letters were sent by two messengers. Chr. Sax. p. 90. On the subject of pilgrimage, Henry has made an important discovery: that the Saxons considered it as the only, or, at least, the most efficacious method of securing their salvation. In support of this assertion, he adduces a letter of Canute the Great, in which he makes the king say, that, "on account of St. Peter's influence in heaven, he thought it *absolutely necessary* to obtain his favour by a pilgrimage to Rome." (Henry, vol. iv. p. 303.) But Henry could seldom translate an ancient writer, without adding a few improvements. In the original, the king is silent respecting the necessity of a pilgrimage to Rome, but says that "he thought it very useful to solicit the patronage of St. Peter with God." *Ideo specialiter ejus patrocinium apud Deum expetere, valde utile duxi.* Ep. Canut. apud Wilk. p. 297.

6. Before I conclude this chapter, I must notice an extraordinary practice, which united the most solemn rites of religion with the public administration of justice. To elicit, in judicial proceedings, the truth from a mass of unsatisfactory and often discordant evidence, demands a power of discrimination, and accuracy of judgment, which it were in vain to expect from the magistrates of a nation just emerging from ignorance and barbarity. The jurisprudence of an illiterate people is generally satisfied with a shorter and more simple process: and, in doubtful cases, an appeal to the equity of the Deity exonerates the conscience of the judge, and establishes the guilt or innocence of the accused. While the Anglo-Saxons adored the gods of their fathers, the decision of criminal prosecutions was frequently intrusted to the wisdom of Woden: when they became Christians, they confidently expected from the true God, that miraculous interposition which they had before sought from an imaginary deity. He was a being of infinite knowledge and infinite power: he was the patron of virtue, and the avenger of crimes: could he then remain indifferent when he was solemnly invoked, and permit falsehood to triumph over truth; innocence to be confounded with guilt?⁶⁹ This reasoning, though false, was plausible, and it made a deep impression on the minds of the illiterate. By Gregory the Great it is said to have been condemned:⁷⁰ but if his disapprobation was known to the missionaries, the authority of the pontiff was borne down by the torrent of national manners; and during six centuries, appeals to the judgment of God were authorized and commanded by the jurisprudence of the Saxons.

The time, the nature, and the ceremonies of these appeals were defined by the legislature with the minutest exactitude. To employ in judicial trials the days particularly consecrated to the Divine service, was deemed indecorous: and on festivals and fast-days, ordeals were strictly prohibited.⁷¹ Nor were they indiscriminately permitted in all cases, or left to the option of the parties. In civil suits the law had pointed out a different process: in criminal prosecutions, when the guilt or innocence of the accused could be proved by satisfactory evidence, they were unnecessary.⁷² But if the arguments on each side were nearly balanced, if the prisoner could not claim the privilege of canonical purgation,⁷³ or procure a competent number of compurgators, recourse was had to the judgment of God. The accuser swore to the

⁶⁹ *Missa judicii*, apud Spelm. *Glos. voce Ordalium*.

⁷⁰ *Decret. par. 11, caus. 11, quæs. 5, cap. Men.* The second part of the chapter, which contains the prohibition, does not occur in St. Gregory's works.

⁷¹ *Leg. Sax. p. 53. 188. 121. 131.*

⁷² *Ibid. p. 26. Wilk. Gloss. p. 422.*

⁷³ If a clergyman or monk was accused of a crime, and the evidence against him was not conclusive, he was permitted to exculpate himself by the eucharist, or by his oath. *Wilk. p. 82. 300.* "That we may not by a too great severity oppress the innocent," says Archbishop Egbert, "let him place the cross on his head, and swear by Him who

truth of the charge, the accused by oath attested his innocence, and the necessary preparations were made for the ordeal.

As the discovery of the truth was now intrusted to the decision of Heaven, the intermediate time was employed in exercises of devotion. Three nights before the day appointed for the trial, the accused was led to the priest: on the three following mornings he assisted, and made his offering at the mass: and during the three days, he fasted on bread, herbs, salt, and water.⁷⁴ At the third mass the priest called him to the altar before the communion, and adjured him by the God whom he adored, by the religion which he professed, by the baptism with which he had been regenerated, and the holy relics that reposed in the church, not to receive the eucharist, or go to the ordeal, if his conscience reproached him with the crime of which he had been accused.⁷⁵ He then gave him the communion, with these words: "may this body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be to thee a proof of innocence this day." As soon as the mass was finished, the prisoner again denied the charge, and took the following oath: "In the Lord, I am guiltless, both in word and deed, of the crime of which I am accused." He was then led to the trial.⁷⁶

Of these trials there were four different kinds. 1. The *corsned* was a cake of barley bread, of the weight of one ounce; and seems to have been instituted in imitation of the water of jealousy mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures. Over it a prayer was pronounced by the priest, in which he begged that God would manifest the truth between the accuser and the accused: that if the latter were guilty, when he took the cake into his hands, he might tremble and look pale; and when he attempted to chew it, his jaws might be fixed, his throat contracted, and the bread be thrown out of his mouth. It was then given to him to eat, and the event decided his guilt or his innocence.⁷⁷ 2. In the ordeal of cold water, the prisoner was stripped of his clothes, his hands and feet were bound; the cross and the book of the gospels were given him to kiss, and blessed water was sprinkled on his body. A cord, of the length of two ells and a half, was then

lives forever, and who suffered for us on the cross, that he is not guilty of the crime of which he is accused." *Ibid.* p. 82.

⁷⁴ *Leg. Sax.* p. 61.

⁷⁵ *Ic eop halrige on fæder nama. ⁊ on sunu nama þ̅r̅ iſ ure drihten hælende Eriſc. ⁊ on þ̅er halgan garter. ⁊ for þ̅ære criſtneſſe ðe ze undeſſengan. ⁊ for ðe halgan þ̅rimere þ̅ ze to þ̅ur hyle ne zangen na to þ̅am ordele. zif ze feylð on eop riten ð̅ær ðe eop man tihth oððe on zeporcum oððe on zepitcenyſſe.* *MS. Ritual. Dunel. A. iv. 19, f. 55.*

⁷⁶ *Corpus hoc et sanguis Domini nostri Jhesu Christi, sit vobis (vel tibi) ad probationem hodie.* *Miss. Judic. apud Spelm. voce Ordal. Also Leg. Sax. 61. 64.*

⁷⁷ *Exorcism. panis Ordeacii, apud Spelm. voce Ordal.* Sometimes cheese was substituted. *Ibid.*

fastened to his waist, and he was thrown into the water. If he sunk, he was immediately liberated; if he floated on the surface, he was delivered to the officers of justice.⁷⁸ From these two trials it seems probable, that the guilty would have little to fear: from the other two it is difficult to conceive how the innocent could escape. 3. For the ordeal by hot water, a fire was kindled under a caldron in a remote part of the church. At a certain depth below the surface of the water, which was augmented in proportion to the enormity of the offence,⁷⁹ was placed a stone, or a piece of iron. Strangers were excluded, and the two parties, each attended by twelve friends, proceeded to the trial. These were ranged in two lines, on each side of the fire. After the litanies had been said, the accuser and the accused deputed one of their companions to examine the water, and when they agreed that it had acquired the greatest possible heat, the latter plunged his naked arm into the caldron, and took out the stone. The priest immediately wrapped the arm in a clean linen cloth, and fixed on it the seal of the church. At the expiration of three days, the bandage was unfolded, and the fate of the accused was determined by the appearance of the wound. If it were not perfectly healed, he was presumed to be guilty.⁸⁰ 4. In the ordeal by hot iron, the same precautions were observed with respect to the number and position of the attendants. Near the fire was measured a space equal to nine of the prisoner's feet, and afterwards divided into three parts. By the first stood a small stone pillar. As soon as the mass was begun, a bar of iron, of the weight of one or three pounds, according to the nature of the accusation, was laid on the coals. At the last collect it was taken off, and placed on the pillar. The prisoner instantly took it in his hand, made three steps on the lines previously marked, and threw it down. The treatment of the burn, and the indications of guilt, were the same as in the trial by hot water.⁸¹ To these four ordeals, a fifth was added by most of the continental nations; that of duel, or private battle. To the Anglo-Saxons it was unknown till after the Norman conquest. Of all, it was the most absurd: and of all, is the only one which modern wisdom has thought proper to perpetuate.

⁷⁸ *Adjuratio aquæ*, *ibid.* Leg. Sax. p. 26. 61.

⁷⁹ In the ordeals by hot water and hot iron, the trial for greater crimes was called the *threefold*, that for smaller, the *one-fold* ordeal. The former was ordered for the crimes of sacrilege, treason, murder, idolatry, and magic. In the threefold ordeal the depth of the stone was equal to the distance between a man's elbow and the end of his finger, and the weight of the hot iron was three pounds. Leg. Sax. p. 27.

⁸⁰ Leg. Sax. p. 26. 61. *Adjuratio aquæ ferventis*, *apud* Spelm. voce *Ordal*.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* I have not mentioned a species of the ordeal by fire, which consisted in walking on the hot iron, instead of carrying it in the hand. I do not recollect any mention of it before the conquest, except in the story of Queen Emma: a story which deserves little credit, as it appears to have been unknown to those who ought to have been best acquainted with it; Ingulf, Aelred, Malmesbury, Hoveden, Huntingdon, and the author of the Saxon Chronicle.

The different issues which attended the ordeals, present a subject of ingenious speculation. That all were not proved innocent by the corsned, and the immersion; nor all guilty by the hot water, and the hot iron, is evident: otherwise these appeals to the justice of God must have soon sunk in the public estimation. The effect of the corsned may be ascribed to the terrors of a guilty conscience, and a heated imagination: but to account for that of the other three, is a task of considerable difficulty. Some may, perhaps, be inclined to think, that God might, on particular occasions, interpose in favour of innocence: others, that the culprit was often indebted for his escape to his own dexterity, or the assistance of a robust constitution. But modern writers generally suppose, that the clergy were possessed of a secret, by which, as they saw convenient, they either indurated the skin before the ordeal, or afterwards healed the wound within the space of three days. This opinion, however, is unsupported by any contemporary voucher, and must appear at the best highly improbable. This secret, so widely diffused through almost every nation of Christendom, and constantly employed during more than six centuries, could not have been concealed from the knowledge of the public: and if it were known, how can we believe that legislators would have still persisted to enforce the trial by ordeal, for the conviction of guilt, and the acquittal of innocence. In the laws of the Anglo-Saxon princes, it is repeatedly approved: and we are indebted for its abolition, at a later period, not to the wisdom of the legislature, but to the remonstrances of the clergy. By the Roman pontiffs it was often condemned as superstitious: these condemnations were inserted in the collection of the canon law: and Henry III., to satisfy the scruples of his bishops, consented to suspend the use of the ordeals, in the third year of his reign.⁸² Though his proclamation did not amount to an absolute prohibition, they do not appear to have been afterwards revived.⁸³

⁸² See the rescript of Henry III. in Selden's *Spicilegium ad Eadm.* p. 204.

⁸³ We must except the ordeal by cold water, which was employed for the conviction of witches, till a very late period.

CHAPTER X.

Literature of the Anglo-Saxons—Learning of Theodore and Adrian—Libraries—Theology—Classics—Logic—Arithmetic—Natural Philosophy—Learned Men—St. Aldhelm—Bede—Alcuin.

THE conquests of the northern nations arrested the progress of human knowledge, and replunged the greatest part of Europe into the barbarity and ignorance from which it had slowly emerged during the lapse of several centuries. If the fall of the empire did not totally extinguish the light of science, it is to religion that we owe the invaluable benefit. The expiring flame was kept alive by the solicitude of the churchmen: and their industry collected and multiplied the relics of ancient literature.

The functions of the priesthood require a considerable portion of learning: and the daily study of the sacred writings, and of the ecclesiastical canons, has always been recommended to the attention of the clergy. By the monks, knowledge was originally held in inferior estimation. They were laymen, and preferred the more humble employments of agriculture and the mechanical arts, as better adapted to the life of penitence, to which they had bound themselves. The disciples of the saints Anthony and Pachomius spent a great part of their time in the manufacture of mats and baskets: and their example was so approved by the patriarch of the western monks, that he enjoined his followers to devote at least seven hours of the day to manual labour.¹ The veneration, which religious orders usually retain for the memory of their founders, enforced a temporary observance of this regulation: but when monasteries were endowed with extensive estates, and the monks could command the labour of numerous families of slaves, it was insensibly neglected; and the study of the sciences appeared a more useful and more honourable employment. The propriety of this innovation was sanctioned by the necessities of religion. The sword of the barbarians had diminished the numbers of the clergy: and the monks were invited to supply the deficiency, as ministers of the public worship, and the apostles of infidel nations. To understand the Latin service, it became necessary to acquire a competent knowledge of that language: and the duty of instruction induced them to peruse the writings of the ancient fathers. Under the influence of these motives, schools were opened in the monastic as well as in clerical communities; and the rewards of

¹ Reg. St. Bened. c. 48.

reputation and honour were lavishly bestowed on the faintest glimmerings of science. When a thirst for knowledge is once excited, it is seldom satisfied with its original object. From the more necessary branches of religious learning, the students wandered with pleasure to the works of the poets and philosophers of Greece and Rome: and their curiosity eagerly, but often injudiciously, devoured whatever had escaped the ravages of their ancestors. In these literary pursuits, the Saxon clergy and monks acquired distinguished applause. Their superiority was, for more than a century, felt and acknowledged by the other nations of Europe: and when the repeated invasions of the Danes had unhappily cut off every source of instruction in England, the disciples of the Saxon missionaries in Germany maintained the reputation of their teachers, and, from their monastery at Fulda, diffused the light of knowledge over that populous and extensive country.²

For this advantage our ancestors were principally indebted to the talents and industry of Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury; and of Adrian, abbot of St. Peter's, in the same city. The latter was a native of Africa, the former of Tarsus, in Cilicia: both were eminently versed in the languages of Greece and Rome, and perfect masters of every science which was known at that period. Compassionating the ignorance of the converts, they dedicated their leisure hours to the instruction of youth; their lessons were eagerly frequented by pupils from every Anglo-Saxon kingdom; and masters formed under their inspection, were dispersed among the principal monasteries. Their exhortations and example excited an ardour for improvement, which was not confined to the cloister, but extended its influence to the castles of the nobility, and the courts of the kings. The children of the thanes educated in the neighbouring monasteries, imbibed an early respect, if not a passion, for literature; and several of the princes condescended to study those sciences on which their barbarous, but victorious fathers, had trampled with contempt; others, by rewards and donations, endeavoured to distinguish themselves as the patrons of the learned.³ Even the women caught the general enthusiasm: seminaries of learning were established in their convents: they conversed with their absent friends in the language of ancient Rome; and frequently exchanged the labours of the distaff and the needle, for the more pleasing and more elegant beauties of the Latin poets.⁴

² See Mabillon, *Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. i. p. 188. Tom. ii. p. 23. Macquer, Histoire Ecclesiastique, vol. i. p. 551.*

³ *Bed. Hist. i. iv. 2, l. v. c. 12. Abbat. Wirem. p. 300.*

⁴ St. Aldhelm wrote his treatise *De laudibus Virginitatis*, for the use of the abbess Hildelith and her nuns. The style in which it is composed, shows that, if he wished them to understand it, he must have considered them as no mean proficient in the Latin language. From this treatise we learn, that nuns were accustomed to read the

In modern times the art of printing, by facilitating the diffusion, has accelerated the progress of knowledge: but, at the period of which we are speaking, the scarcity of books was an evil deeply felt and lamented by these ardent votaries of science. Literature declined and fell with the power of Rome: and the writings of the ancients were but slowly multiplied by the tedious labour of transcribers. To discover and obtain these remains of ancient knowledge, were among the principal objects which prompted so many Anglo-Saxons to visit distant countries:⁵ by the acquisition of a few books, they considered their labours as amply repaid: and in their estimation, a single volume was often of equal value with an extensive estate.⁶ But necessity soon taught them to adopt a method by which the number of copies was more nearly proportioned to the increase of readers. In every monastery a considerable portion of time was daily allotted to the humble, but useful occupation, of transcribing ancient manuscripts: and so efficient was the resource, that when Charlemagne meditated the revival of letters in Gaul, he was advised to solicit assistance from the treasures accumulated in the Saxon libraries.⁷ Of these repositories of science, the most ancient was that of Canterbury, which owed its establishment to the provident care of Gregory the Great, but had been considerably augmented by the zeal and industry of Archbishop Theodore.⁸ Another numerous collection of books was possessed by the monastery at

Pentateuch, the books of the prophets, and the New Testament, with the commentaries of the ancient fathers; and to study the historical, tropological, allegorical, and anagogical senses of the different passages; profane history, chronology, grammar, orthography, and poetry, also employed their attention. *St. Aldhel. de laud. Virg. p. 294.* See also *Annal. Bened. vol. ii. p. 143.* Of their proficiency, several specimens are still extant. The lives of *St. Willibald* and *St. Wunebald*, were both written in Latin by an Anglo-Saxon nun. Several letters in the same language, by English ladies, are preserved among the epistles of *St. Boniface*. In some of them are allusions to the Roman poets; and in one, a few verses composed by *Leobgytha*, who was then learning the rules of metre from her mistress, *Eadburga*. *Ep. Bonif. 36, p. 46.*

⁵ Thus *Alcuin* says of his master, *Egbert*:

Non semel externas peregrino tramite terras
Jam peragravit ovans, sophiæ ductus amore;
Si quid forte novi librorum aut studiorum
Quod secum ferret, terris reperiret in illis.

De pont. Ebor. v. 1454.

⁶ A treatise on cosmography was sold to *Aldfrid*, king of Northumbria, for an estate of eight hides of land, which appears to have been considered as its real value. *Bed. vit. Abbat. p. 300.*

⁷ *Alc. ep. 1.* *Malm. de Reg. f. 12.* Some years after, *Lupus*, abbot of *Ferrieres*, wrote to *Altsig*, abbot in the church of *York*, to lend him several books to be transcribed, and promised they should be faithfully restored. *Annal. Bened. tom. ii. p. 684.* *Bib. Pat. tom. ix. Lup. ep. 2.*

⁸ *Bed. Hist. l. 1. c. 29.* In the appendix to *Smith's Bede*, p. 690, is an ancient account of the books brought into England by *St. Augustine*. One of them, a MS. of the gospels, is said by *Wanley* (p. 151) to be preserved in the library of *Corpus Christi college* at *Cambridge*, l. 15. *Godwin* mentions a MS. of *Homer*, brought to

Weremouth, the fruit of the labours of St. Bennet Biscop, whose five journeys to the continent, and indefatigable exertions, have been gratefully recorded by the pen of the venerable Bede.⁹ But of all the seminaries which flourished in England, that belonging to the clergy of York appears to have enjoyed the most valuable and extensive library : and in the imperfect catalogue of volumes, which Alcuin has inserted in his writings, we find the names of almost every Greek and Roman writer, who had distinguished himself either in profane or in sacred literature.¹⁰

In the system of education established by Theodore, and zealously propagated by his disciples, religious knowledge and moral improvement were pronounced the two great objects of study. To the influence of the sciences in softening the manners, and multiplying the comforts of society, they appear to have been indifferent or insensible : but they endeavoured to rouse the ardour of their pupils, by promising them a more distinct view of the economy of religion, and a more extensive acquaintance with the works of the Creator. The life of man, they observed, was short ; his time too precious to be thrown away on pursuits unconnected with his welfare in a future existence.¹¹ Hence of the various branches of knowledge, Theology (under

England by Theodore, which was so beautifully written, as scarcely to be equalled by any other manuscript or printed copy. (God. de præs. p. 41.)

⁹ Bed. Vit. abbat. Wirem. p. 295. 299.

¹⁰ Ælbert, archbishop of York, left to Alcuin the care of his library, his *caras super omnia gazas* (Alc. de Pont. et Sanct. Ebor. eccl. v. 1526.) That writer has given the following account of the books contained in it :

- Illic invenies veterum vestigia patrum,
 Quidquid habet pro se latio Romanus in orbe ;
 Græcia vel quidquid transmisit clara latinis ;
 Hebraicus vel quod populus bibit ore superno ;
 540 Africa lucifluo vel quidquid lumine sparsit.
 Quod pater Hieronymus, quod sensit Hilarius, atque
 Ambrosius præsul, simul Augustinus, et ipse
 Sanctus Athanasius, quod Orosius edit avitus,
 Quidquid Gregorius summus docet, et Leo papa :
 1545 Basilius quidquid, Fulgentius atque coruscant.
 Cassiodorus item, Chrysostomus atque Joannes.
 Quidquid et Athelmus docuit, quid Beda magister,
 Quæ Victorinus scripsere, Boetius, atque
 Historici veteres, Pompeius, Plinius, ipse
 1550 Acer Aristoteles, rhetor quoque Tullius ingens :
 Quid quoque Sedulius, vel quid canit ipse Juvencus,
 Alcuinus et Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator,
 Quid Fortunatus vel quid Lactantius edunt,
 Quæ Maro Virgilius, Statius, Lucanus, et auctor
 1555 Artis grammaticæ, vel quid scripsere magistri,
 Quid Probus atque Phocas, Donatus, Priscianusve,
 Servius, Euticius, Pompeius, Comminianus.
 Invenies alios perplures.

Alc. de Pont. et Sanc. Ebor. eccl.

¹¹ See Aldhelm's letter to his pupil Adilwald. Malm. l. v. de Pont. p. 340.

that name were comprised the dogmata of faith, and the principles of morality) assumed the highest place in their estimation; and the other sciences were only valued as the humble handmaids of this superior acquirement. Its excellence and utility are the constant theme of their eloquence: it was recommended to the attention of laymen and of females; and if the young student was exhorted to learn the rules of grammar, and the figures of elocution, it was that he might understand with greater facility the volumes that contained this important science.¹² Of the scholastic divinity, which so universally prevailed in succeeding ages, they were ignorant; and whatever theological learning they acquired, they professed to derive from two collateral streams, the inspired writings, and the works of the fathers.¹³ The inspired writings they studied assiduously from their infancy; but, considering them as a region overspread with darkness, they hesitated to advance a step without the aid of a guide, and scrupulously pursued the track which had been first opened by the labours of the most ancient of the Christian doctors. Bede and Alcuin, the brightest luminaries of the Saxon church, in expounding the sacred volumes, shine principally with borrowed light: they scarcely presume to express a sentiment of their own; their works are frequently a chain of quotations from more ancient writers; and to obviate the possibility of error, they anxiously point out to the reader every line which is the offspring of their own judgment or imagination.¹⁴

But though a decided preference was given to theological knowledge, the other departments of science were not neglected. The number of classic allusions which occur in their writings and private correspondence, demonstrate their acquaintance with the most eminent writers of Rome and Greece; and we are assured, that many among them could speak the languages of these two countries, with no less fluency than their native tongue.¹⁵ But experience has shown, that nations only acquire a taste for elegant literature by the progressive improvements of

¹² *Ibid.* Aldh. de Virg. p. 292. 294. Smith's Bed. p. 796. Ep. Alc. 32. 49. In another work Alcuin exhorts his disciples to study, "propter Deum, propter puritatem animæ, propter veritatem cognoscendam, etiam et propter se ipsam, non propter humanam laudem, vel honores sæculi, vel etiam divitiarum fallaces voluptates." *Can. Ant. Lect.* tom. 2, p. 506.

¹³ Of the Latin fathers, St. Gregory indulges the most frequently in allegorical interpretations. Gratitude taught the Saxons to admire and imitate his writings. They adopted this mode of explication; and as France and Germany received from them their most eminent teachers, they introduced it among the learned of those countries, by whom it was universally followed for several centuries. See Fleury's fifth discourse, (art. xi.)

¹⁴ See Alc. præf. in Evan. Joan. Mabillon's eulogium of Bede (Smith's Bede, p. 798.) Bed. Epis. ad Accam. tom. v. col. 2, 177. On the different versions of the scriptures used by the Anglo-Saxons, see note (R).

¹⁵ Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 2. On their pronunciation of Greek, see note (S).

succeeding generations. Though the Anglo-Saxons, in the course of their reading, frequently conversed with the great geniuses of antiquity, they caught few sparks of the fire which still lives in their immortal writings. Their attempts at composition are, with some exceptions, languid and incorrect; expressed in barbarous language, and disfigured by low or turgid metaphors. They studied, indeed, the laws of poetry and rhetoric; they were acquainted with the different poetic feet and their various combinations, with the lessons of the ancient rhetoricians, their tropes and figures: but, unassisted by the taste of a judicious master, they expended their industry in the pursuit of unnatural ornaments, while real elegance was entirely neglected.¹⁶ To have compressed their language, however mean or incorrect, within the compass of legitimate metre, appears to have been the highest praise to which many of their Latin poets aspired. Even the compositions of Bede are disgraced by this common defect; and can be considered as little better than simple prose, divided into hexameter verse. But an honourable exception must be admitted in favour of Alcuin, in whose poetic effusions are passages which may be read with pleasure; and of St. Aldhelm, who assumed a more lofty and a more animated tone than any of his countrymen. His diction is often pompous; his imagery elevated; and from the wild exuberance of his fancy, now and then may be culled a flower of exquisite fragrance.¹⁷ But all of them appear to have considered difficulty of composition as a sufficient apology for the absence of every excellence: and the laborious trifles, the stultus labor ineptiarum, which, during the decline of taste, exercised the ingenuity of the Greek and Latin writers, were seriously cultivated and improved by the most eminent of the Saxon scholars. In their works we meet with acrostics composed of the initial and final letters of each line, to be read sometimes in a descending, and sometimes in an ascending direction:¹⁸

¹⁶ Read St. Aldhelm's description of his studies. *Poetica septenæ divisionis disciplina, hoc est, acephalos, procilos cum cæteris qualiter varietur; qui versus monoschemi, qui pentaschemi, qui decaschemi certa pedum mensura terminantur; et qua ratione catalectici, et brachycatalectici, et hypercatalectici versus colligantur.* Malm. de Pont. p. 341.

¹⁷ See his poem *De laude Virginum.* Bib. Pat. tom. xiii. p. 3.

¹⁸ See St. Aldhelm *De laude Virgin.* p. 3. *Ænigmata*, p. 13. St. Boniface's letters, p. 3. I shall subjoin a double acrostic by St. Aldhelm:

“Arbiter, æthereo Jupiter qui regmine sceptra
 Lucifluumque simul cœli regale tribunaL
 Disponis, moderans æternis legibus illuD,
 Horrida nam mulctans torsisti membra BehemotH
 Ex alta quondam rueret dum luridus arcE,
 Limpida dictanti metrorum carmina præsuL
 Munera nunc largire: rudis quo pandere reruM
 Versibus ænigmata queam clandestina fatU,
 Si deus indignis tua gratis dona rependiS,” &c.—p. 21.

with couplets in which the first half of the hexameter constantly forms the second half of the pentameter verse;¹⁹ and with poems in which the natural difficulty of the metre is increased, by the addition of middle and final rhymes.²⁰ Sometimes, however, they ventured to emancipate themselves from the shackles of their Roman masters: the measure of their verse was determined by a certain number of syllables; and their ears were satisfied with the frequent recurrence of alliteration, and the constant jingle of rhyme.²¹

In the pursuit of eloquence, as of poetry, the Saxon students frequently permitted themselves to be led astray by a vitiated taste. Desirous to surprise and astonish, they transferred to their Latin prose all the gorgeous apparatus of their vernacular poetry. In their more laboured compositions, splendour is substituted for elegance; a profusion of extravagant metaphors bewilders the understanding of the reader; and, as if the Latin tongue possessed not sufficient beauties, their language is constantly bespangled

¹⁹ Bede's hymn on St. Ædithryda is of this description. It begins thus :

“Alme Deus Trinitas, quæ sæcula cuncta gubernas,
Adnue jam cœptis, alme Deus Trinitas.
Bella Maro resonet, nos pacis dona canamus :
Munera nos Christi, bella Maro resonet,” &c.

Bede. Hist. l. iv. c. 20.

²⁰ In the poems of Bede and Alcuin occur many verses with double rhymes. I shall subjoin an example, a riddle by St. Aldhelm.

“LEBES.

“Horrida, curva, rapax, patulis fabricata metallis,
Pendeo, nec cœlum tangens, terramve profundam ;
Ignibus ardescens, necnon et gurgite fervens,
Sic vario geminas patior discrimine pugnans,
Dum lymphæ latices tolero, flammasque feroces.”

Bib. Pat. vol. 8, p. 28.

²¹ Of this species of composition, several examples may be found among the letters of St. Boniface, p. 3. 44. 75. 84. Each verse consists of eight syllables: but the alliteration is generally better supported in the first than in the second line of the couplet. The following specimen is taken from a poem composed by a disciple of St. Boniface, in honour of St. Aldhelm :

“Summo satore sobolis
Satus fuisti nobilis,
Genorosa progenitus
Genetrice expeditus,
Statura spectabilis,
Statu et forma agilis.
Caput candescens crinibus
Cingunt capilli nitidis :
Lucent sub fronte lumina
Lati ceu per culmina
Cœli candescunt calida
Clari fulgoris sidera.

Ep. St. Bonif. p. 91.

On the vernacular poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, see note (T).

with expressions from the Greek. But to write in this manner, demanded leisure and application: and on ordinary occasions, and in long compositions, they were compelled to adopt a language more simple and intelligible. Bede, though he admired,²² did not attempt this inflated style; and his example was followed by the good sense of Alcuin: but Aldhelm surpassed all his competitors, though from the letters of St. Boniface we may infer there were many willing to dispute with him the palm of excellence.²³

From the study of the languages, the Saxon was conducted to that of philosophy, after having acquired the preliminary and necessary sciences of logic and numbers.²⁴ His acquaintance with the former, he was advised to derive from the writings of Aristotle and his disciples. The precepts of that acute philosopher were studied with avidity: they were thought to impart the power of discovering truth and detecting falsehood; and the young logician was initiated in the art of disputation by committing to memory the categories, the laws of syllogisms, the doctrine of inventions, and the subtleties of the *periermenia*.²⁵

²² Speaking of St. Aldhelm's character as a writer, he calls him *sermone nitidus*; (l. v. c. 18;) which Ælfred has properly translated on *þorðum hluccon 7 ꝛeicnende*. a glowing and splendid writer, p. 636.

²³ As a specimen of Aldhelm's style, I shall subjoin the following passage from his letter to the monks of St. Wilfrid, in which he calls their attention to the respect which bees pay to their king. "Pendant quæso, quomodo examina apum, calescente cœlitus caumate, ex alveariis nectare fragrantibus certatim emergant, et earum autore linquente brumalia mansionum receptacula, densarum cavernarum cohortes, rapido volatu ad æthera glomerante, exceptis duntaxat antiquarum sedium servatricibus ad propagationem futuræ sobolis relictis, inquam mirabili dictu, rex earum spissis sodalium agminibus vallatus, cum hyberna castra gregatim egreditur, et cara stipitum robora rimatur, si pulverulenta sabulonis aspergine præpeditus, seu repentinis imbribus cataracta Olympi guttatim rorantibus retardatus fuerit, et ad gratam cratem sedemque pristinam revertatur, omnis protinus exercitus consueta vestibula perrumpens, prisca cellarum claustra gratulabundus ingreditur." Gale, p. 340. In a similar style his disciple Ædilwald describes the instructions which he had received from him, and then proceeds thus. "Quibus ad integram exuberantis ingenii epulis ambronibus siticulosæ intelligentiæ faucibus avide absumptis, meam adhuc pallentem hebetudinis maciem largissima blandæ sponsonis epimenia affluenter refocillabat, pollicitans omni me desideratæ lectionis instrumento, quo potissimum meæ mediocritatis industriam satis inhiantem agnoverat, libenter edocendo imbueri." St. Bonif. ep. p. 76. To these may be added an example from St. Boniface. Speaking of misers, he says; "Hac de re universi aurilegi ambrones apoton grammaton agion frustratis afflictî inservire excubiis, et fragilia arenarum incassum ceu flatum tenuem sive pulverem captantia tetendisse retia dignoscuntur: quia kata Psalmistam, *Thesaurizant, et ignorant cui congregent illa*, et dum exactrix invisî Plutonis, mors videlicet, cruentatis crudeliter infrendens dentibus in limine latrat, tum tremebundi," &c. (Ep. Bonif. p. 2.)

²⁴ According to Alcuin, a course of liberal education should comprise grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astrology. Alc. Gram. apud Canis. tom. ii. par. i. p. 508. St. Aldhelm adds the study of logic. De laud. Vir. p. 331.

²⁵ Id. ibid. Alc. de Pont. Ebor. v. 1550. Ingulf. f. 513. Alcuin's treatise on logic is divided into five parts. Isagogæ, Categoriarum, Syllogismi, Topica, and Periermenia. Canis. ibid. p. 483.

The science of numbers equalled that of logic in importance, and surpassed it in difficulty of attainment. The celebrated St. Aldhelm, though the success of his former attempts had taught him to conceive a favourable notion of his abilities, was overwhelmed with unexpected difficulties, when he first applied himself to the different combinations of numbers; and lamented in forcible language his disappointment and despondency.²⁶ The reader, perhaps, will be tempted to smile at the pusillanimity of the monk; but let him pause to reflect on the many disadvantages, against which our ancestors were condemned to struggle. The Arabic figures, which the Christians received from the Mohammedans of Spain, about the close of the tenth century, have so facilitated the acquisition of this science, as to render it familiar even to children; but the Saxons were ignorant of so valuable an improvement, and every arithmetical operation was performed with the aid of the seven Roman letters, C, D, I, L, M, V, X.²⁷ With them, in the solution of long and tedious problems, it was almost impossible to form the necessary combinations; and frequently the embarrassed calculator, instead of employing numerical signs, was compelled to write at length the numbers which he wished to employ. But if he descended to the fractions of integers, his difficulties were multiplied; and the best expedient which human ingenuity had hitherto devised, was to conceive every species of quantity divisible into twelve equal parts, the different combinations of which were called by the same names, and computed in the same manner as the uncial divisions of the Roman As.²⁸ The inconvenience of these methods was severely felt by the learned; and an inadequate remedy was provided by the adoption of a species of manual arithmetic, in which, by varying the position of the hands and fingers, the different operations were more readily performed. Meanly as we may be inclined to estimate the services of this auxiliary, it deserved and obtained the praise of utility from the venerable Bede, who condescended to explain its nature for the use of his countrymen.²⁹

When the perseverance of the student had conquered the difficulties of this science, he ventured to apply to the study of natural philosophy. The guides whom he was principally advised to follow, were Aristotle and Pliny; and to the knowledge

²⁶ *Tantæ supputationis imminens desperatio colla mentis oppressit.* See Aldhelm's letter to Hedda, (Malm. p. 339.) He was at last so fortunate as to master every difficulty and understand even the rules of fractions, *calculi supputationes, quas partes numeri appellant.* (Ibid.)

²⁷ *Bed. oper. Bas. anno 1563, tom. i. col. 115.*

²⁸ *Ibid. col. 147.*

²⁹ See Bede's treatise *De Indigitatione*, (tom. i. col. 165.) The numbers from 1 to 100 were expressed by the fingers of the left hand: from 100 to 10,000 by those of the right: from 10,000 to 100,000 by varying the position of the left; and from 100,000 to 1,000,000 by varying that of the right hand.

which he derived from their writings, was added the partial information that might be gleaned from the works of the ecclesiastical writers. Among the philosophical treatises ascribed to Bede, there are two, commented by Bridferth, the learned monk of Ramsey, which are undoubtedly genuine, and from which may be formed a satisfactory notion of the proficiency of our ancestors in astronomical and physical knowledge.³⁰ The reader will not, perhaps, be displeased, if I devote a few pages to this curious subject.

The origin of the visible universe had perplexed and confounded the philosophers of antiquity; at each step they sunk deeper into an abyss of darkness and absurdity; and the eternal chaos of the stoics, the shapeless matter of Aristotle, and the self-existent atoms of Democritus, while they amused their imagination, could only fatigue and irritate their reason. But the Saxon student was guided by an unerring light; and in the inspired narrative of Moses, he beheld, without the danger of deception, the whole visible world start into existence at the command of an almighty Creator. Of the scriptural cosmogony, his religion forbade him to doubt: but, in explaining the component parts of sensible objects, he was at liberty to indulge in speculation. With the Ionic school, Bede admitted the four elements; of fire, from which the heavenly bodies derive their light; of air, which is destined for the support of animal existence; of water, which surrounds, pervades, and binds together the earth on which we dwell; and of the earth itself, which is accurately suspended in the centre, and equally poised on all sides by the pressure of the revolving universe. To the different combinations of these elements, with the additional aid of the four primary qualities of heat and cold, moisture and dryness, he attributed the various properties of bodies, and the exhaustless fecundity of nature.³¹

Pythagoras had taught, though the conclusion was deduced, not from the observation of the phenomena, but from the principles of a fanciful and erroneous theory, that the centre of the world was occupied by the sun, round which the celestial spheres performed their revolutions.³² But the truth of his opinion was too repugnant to the daily illusions of the senses, to obtain credit; and the majority of philosophers, for many centuries, adopted that arrangement of the heavenly bodies, which forms the basis

³⁰ *De Natura Rerum*, tom. ii. p. 1. *De Temporum ratione*, tom. ii. p. 49. These treatises are acknowledged by Bede himself, at the end of his ecclesiastical history, (l. v. c. 24.) Leland highly admired the commentaries of Bridferth; *veluti avidus helluo totum profecto devoravi*. *Lel. Comment. de scrip. Brit.* edit. Hall, p. 171.

³¹ *Bed. de Nat. Rer.* c. 1—4.

³² According to the mysteries of his numerical system, it was necessary that the fiery globe of unity should be placed in the midst of the elements. See *Arist.* tom. i. p. 363. *Laert.* l. viii. 85.

of the Ptolemean system. From them it was received by the Christians, and adjusted, with a few modifications, to their religious opinions. According to Bede, the terrestrial atmosphere is immediately surrounded by the orbits of the seven planets, and the firmament of the fixed stars: on the firmament repose the waters mentioned in the Mosaic cosmogony:³³ and these are again encircled by the highest and ethereal heaven, destined for the residence of the angelic spirits. From the diurnal motion of the stars, which describe concentric circles of a smaller diameter as they approach towards the north, he infers, that this immense system daily revolves with amazing rapidity round the earth, on an imaginary axis, of which the two extremities are called the northern and southern poles.³⁴

In the present advanced state of astronomical knowledge, we are tempted to smile at the idea of the Grecian philosopher, who conceived the stars to be so many concave mirrors, fixed in the firmament to collect the igneous particles which are scattered through the heavens, and to reflect them to the earth.³⁵ From the assertion of Bede, that they borrow their brilliancy from the sun, we might naturally infer that he had adopted the opinion of Epicurus: but his commentator, the monk of Ramsey, informs us, that he considered them as bodies of fire, which emitted a light too feeble to affect the organs of vision, except when it was strengthened by the denser rays of the sun. That they were not extinguished in the morning, and rekindled each evening, as had been taught by Xenophanes, was proved by their appearance during the obscurity of a solar eclipse: and of their influence on the atmosphere no one could remain ignorant, who had remarked the storms that annually attend the heliac rising of Arcturus and Orion, and had felt the heat with which the dog-star scorches the earth.³⁶

The twofold and opposite motions, which seem to animate the planets, could not escape the knowledge of an attentive observer: but satisfactorily to account for them, as long as the earth was supposed immoveable, baffled all the efforts of human ingenuity. The Saxons justly considered the natural direction of their orbits to lie from west to east; but conceived that their progress was constantly opposed by the more powerful rotation of the fixed stars,

³³ See Genesis, (c. i. v. 67.) "How," exclaims Bridferth of Ramsey, the commentator of Bede's philosophical works, "can the waters rest on the firmament without falling to the earth? "I know not," he replies, "but the authority of the Scriptures must silence the objections of reason." (Glos. in c. viii. p. 9.) The ancient author of the elements of philosophy, published under the name of Bede, is justly dissatisfied with this answer, and explains the passage in Genesis, of the waters which are separated by evaporation from the ocean, and suspended in the atmosphere. (De elem. l. ii. p. 320.)

³⁴ Bed. de Nat. Rer. c. v.—viii.

³⁵ This was one of the opinions of Epicurus. Laert. l. x. 91.

³⁶ Bed. de Nat. Rer. c. xi.

which compelled them daily to revolve round the earth, in a contrary direction. In their explanation of the other phenomena, they were equally unfortunate. The ingenious invention of epicycles was unknown, or rejected by them: and they ascribed most of the inequalities observed in the planetary motions to the more or less oblique action of the solar rays, by which they were sometimes accelerated, sometimes retarded, and sometimes entirely suspended. Yet they were acquainted with the important distinction between real and apparent motion. Though they conceived the planetary orbits to be circular, they had learned from Pliny that each possessed a different centre; and thence inferred that in the perigeum their velocity must be apparently increased, in the apogeum apparently diminished.³⁷

Among the planets, the first place was justly given to the sun, the great source of light and heat. They described this luminary as a globular mass of fiery particles, preserved in a state of ignition by perpetual rotation. Had it been fixed, says Bede, like the stars in the firmament, the equatorial portion of the earth would have been reduced to ashes, by the intensity of its rays. But the beneficence of the Creator wisely ordained, that it should daily and annually travel round the earth; and thus produce the succession of the night and day, the vicissitudes of the seasons and the divisions of time. Its daily revolution is completed between midnight and midnight: and is usually divided into twenty-four hours, each of which admits of four different subdivisions, into four points, (five in lunar computations,) ten minutes, fifteen parts or degrees, and forty moments. Its annual revolution through the twelve signs of the zodiac, which it divides into two equal parts, forms the solar year; and consists of three hundred and sixty-five days.³⁸ As it recedes towards the brumal solstice, its rays, in the morning and evening, are intercepted by the convexity of the equator, and their absence prolongs the duration of darkness, and favours the cold of winter: but in proportion as it returns towards the tropic of Capricorn, the days gradually lengthen, and nature seems re-animated by the constant accumulation of heat.³⁹ But here a rational doubt will occur. If the rays, which daily warm and illuminate the earth, be emitted from the sun, is there no reason to fear, that, after a certain period, the powers of that luminary may be totally ex-

³⁷ Bed. de Nat. Rer. c. xii. xiv.

³⁸ Bed. Op. tom. ii. 26. 53. 208.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 105. 121. 125. As Bede has been censured by Feller (*Dict. Hist. art. Virgile*) for asserting the earth to be flat, I may be allowed to transcribe a passage, which evidently shows this learned monk to have been well acquainted with the general figure of our globe. "Orbem terræ dicimus, non quod absolute orbis sit forma in tanta montium camporumque disparilitate, sed cujus amplexus, si cuncta linearum comprehendantur ambitu, figuram absoluti orbis efficiat." *De Nat. Rer. c. 44, p. 43. De Temp. rat. p. 125.* The work to which Feller refers, is not among the writings of Bede.

hausted? Bede readily answered, that its losses were quickly repaired from the numerous exhalations of the ocean, situated under the torrid zone.⁴⁰ To feed the sun with water, is an idea which will probably appear ludicrous to the reader: but it originated from the tenets of Thales, the parent of the Grecian philosophy; and had been consecrated by the general adoption of his successors.⁴¹

The regular increase and decrease of the moon have always called the attention of the learned to the phenomena of that planet. Respecting its magnitude, the Saxons followed two opposite opinions. Some, on the authority of Pliny, maintained that it was larger, others, with greater truth, conceived that it was smaller, than the earth.⁴² Its phases they justly ascribed to the ever varying position of the illuminated disk;⁴³ nor were they ignorant that its orbit was subject to several anomalies, which defied the precision of the most exact calculator.⁴⁴ Bede explains with sufficient accuracy the causes of the solar and lunar eclipses, and observes, that their recurrence at each conjunction and opposition, is prevented by the obliquity of the moon's orbit.⁴⁵

That curiosity, which prompts us to search into the secrets of futurity, and the ancient notion that the heavenly bodies were animated by portions of the divine Spirit, gave birth to the pretended science of judicial astrology. The influence of the sun and moon on the vegetable productions of the earth, was universally acknowledged: and the accidental coincidence of certain extraordinary events with particular configurations of the planets, encouraged the belief that they were conscious of future events, and regulated the destinies of mankind. By the pagan philosophers the astrological art was eagerly studied and practised: and from them it was transmitted to the professors of Christianity. The Saxon Aldhelm inform us, that he learnt the difficult computation of horoscopes in the school of the Abbot Adrian; and Bede, though he pronounces the study to be false and pernicious, sufficiently discovers his acquaintance with it in different parts of his works.⁴⁶ But calculations of a more useful description generally occupied the leisure of literary men. From the letters of Alcuin it appears, that he spent a considerable portion of his time in calculating the orbits of the planets, and pre-

⁴⁰ Bed. de Nat. Rer. c. 19, p. 26.

⁴¹ Arist. Met. l. i. c. 3. Cic. de nat. Deor. l. i. c. 10.

⁴² Bed. de rat. Tem. p. 111. Bridferth's comments, p. 112, 113.

⁴³ De Nat. Rer. c. 20, p. 26. De rat. Temp. c. 23, p. 107.

⁴⁴ Ibid. c. 39, p. 143.

⁴⁵ De Nat. Rer. c. 22, 23, p. 28, 29. De Tem. rat. c. 5. p. 62.

⁴⁶ Malm. de Pont. l. v. p. 339. It is possible, that by horoscope in this passage, St. Aldhelm may mean a species of dial formerly known by that name. (See Bede de temp. p. 121.) But there are many other passages, which prove the Anglo Saxons to have been acquainted with the mysteries of astrology. Ibid. p. 53.

dicting the phenomena of the heavenly bodies : and Bede, in his treatise *De ratione Temporum*, accurately explains the rules for computing the age of the moon, its longitude, the hours at which it rises and sets, and the duration of its daily appearance above the horizon. To satisfy the curiosity of those who were ignorant of the science of numbers, this learned monk composed tables, which supplied the place of modern ephemerides; and his example was followed by other philosophers, who were accustomed to inspect and revise their respective calculations. At the same time they were careful to observe the heavens, and faithfully recorded every new and unexpected appearance.⁴⁷

From their insular situation, the Saxons could not be ignorant of the interesting phenomena of the tides : and Bede seems to have suspected the existence of that cause, the discovery of which has contributed to immortalize the name of Newton. The ebb and flow, he observes, so accurately correspond with the motions of the moon, that he is tempted to believe the waters are attracted towards that planet by some invisible influence, and, after a certain time, are permitted to revert to their former situation.⁴⁸ He does not, however, venture to speculate on the nature of this attraction, but confines himself to the following enumeration of the particulars, in which the motions of the moon and of the ocean appear to coincide. As the moon daily recedes twelve degrees from the sun, so, on an average, the tides are daily retarded four points (eight-and-forty minutes) in their approach to the shore. Some days before the conjunction and opposition, they begin to increase : and from the fifth to the twelfth, from the twentieth to the twenty-seventh day, they continually diminish. But the gradations of increase and decrease are not perfectly regular, and these anomalies may be ascribed, perhaps, to the impulse or resistance of the winds, more probably to the agency of some unknown power. The Anglo-Saxon, however, was able to correct an erroneous opinion of former philosophers. It had been pretended, that in every part of the ocean the waters began to rise at the same moment : but daily observation authorized him to assert, that on the eastern coast of Britain, the tide was propagated from the north to the south, and that it reached the mouth of the river Tyne, before it washed the coast of the Deiri.⁴⁹

In meteorological science, the fame of Aristotle was long un-

⁴⁷ See Bede *de ratione Temporum*, (c. 15. 23, p. 95—107,) and the letters of Alcuin. (*Ant. lect. Can. tom. ii. p. 394, et seq.*) From them we learn that Mars disappeared from July 709 to June 710. (*Ibid. p. 401, and note.*)

⁴⁸ *Tanquam lunæ quibusdam aspirationibus invitatus protrahatur, et iterum ejusdem vi cessante in propriam mensuram refundatur.* Bed. *de rat. Tem. c. 27, p. 116.* Sim. *Dunelm. de Reg. p. 112.*

⁴⁹ Bed. *ibid. p. 117.*

rivalled; and his four books on meteors have deserved the applause of modern philosophers. To them and the writings of Pliny, the Saxons were indebted for the knowledge which they possessed on this subject. Yet it hardly required the assistance of a master to discover that the winds are currents of air; that the vapours rise from the earth, coalesce into clouds, and fall in rain; and that, in the colder regions of the atmosphere, they sometimes assume the soft form of snow, and at others are, during their descent, congealed into hail:⁵⁰ but in explaining the more awful phenomena of lightning and thunder, the genius of Aristotle had failed; and his Saxon disciples, compelled to wander from one hypothesis to another, attributed their production, either to the sudden generation of wind, which burst into fragments the collection of vapours that enclosed it; or to the violent shock of clouds meeting in opposite directions; or to the conflict of the aqueous and igneous particles, which, in immense quantities, were supposed to float in the atmosphere.⁵¹ The brilliant meteor of the rainbow also engaged their attention. Aristotle had considered the drops of rain as so many convex mirrors, which remit the colours, but are too minute to reflect the image of the sun: and his explication was improved by Possidonius, who, to account for its arched appearance, contended that it could be produced only in the bosom of a concave cloud. Bede was satisfied with this hypothesis; and, by his approbation, recommended it to his countrymen, with this unimportant alteration, that he ventured to add the purple to the red, the green, and the blue, the three colours observed by the Greek philosophers.⁵²

From this view of the state of science among the Anglo-Saxons, the reader will have observed, that their knowledge was blended with numerous errors; but his candour will attribute the cause, not to their indolence, but to the ignorance of the times. From Thales to Bede, during the lapse of more than twelve centuries, philosophy had received very few improvements. It was reserved for the learned of more modern times, to interrogate nature by experiment. Former students were satisfied, when they had observed the more obvious phenomena, and hazarded a few conjectures respecting their probable causes. Hence their ingenuity was expended in framing fanciful explications; and each hypothesis, sanctioned by the authority of an illustrious name, was received with the veneration due to truth. If the Saxons exercised their own judgment, it was only in adopting the most probable among the contradictory opinions of their predecessors. To invent or improve, was not their object. They felt, that they were scarcely emerged from the ignorance of bar-

⁵⁰ De Nat. Rer. c. 26, p. 31, c. 32—35, p. 36.

⁵¹ Ibid. c. 28, 29, p. 33, 34.

⁵² Ibid. c. 31, p. 35.

barism, and possessed not the presumption to think that they could discover truths which had escaped the penetration of their masters. To learn whatever had been formerly known, was their great ambition; and this they nearly accomplished. Whoever reads the treatise of Bede de ratione Temporum, in which he explains the nature of the Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, and Saxon years, must view with astonishment the deep and extensive erudition of a monk who never passed the limits of his native province, but spent the whole of his days among the half-civilized inhabitants of Northumbria.⁵³

But the men of letters among the Anglo-Saxons did not confine their efforts to the mere study of ancient science. The desire of diffusing knowledge, or of acquiring reputation, induced several to assume the office of teachers, and to transmit with their works their names to posterity. Catalogues of the Saxon writers have

⁵³ Bed. Op. tom. 2, p. 49. Dr. Henry asserts (vol. iii. p. 43) that the Saxons entirely neglected the study of natural philosophy and morals, and insinuates (p. 86) that they gave very little attention to physic, geography, and law. 1. To their application to natural philosophy, the preceding pages have borne sufficient testimony; and the study of morals was united with that of divinity. 2. Nor were they entirely ignorant of physic. Archbishop Theodore taught the art of medicine at Canterbury, (Bed. Hist. l. v. c. iii. :) Bede was acquainted with the works of Hippocrates, whom he calls *αρχιαιτρος*, and from whose writings he translates a long passage, (De rat. Tem. c. 28, p. 119 :) Kyneard, bishop of Winchester, possessed some treatises on physic, and desired his friend the archbishop of Mentz to procure him others, (Ep. St. Bonif. 74, p. 104;) and several Anglo-Saxon MSS. on the same subject are still preserved. (They are described by Wanley, p. 72. 75. 176. 180.) 3. Bede's knowledge of geography cannot be doubted by him who has read his forty-seventh chapter De Natura Rerum, and thirty-first De Temporum ratione, his Libellus de Locis Sanctis, his treatise De Nominibus Locorum, (Bed. Oper. tom. v. col. 920,) and his account of the travels of Arcuulphus. (Hist. l. v. c. 16.) Aldfrid of Northumbria bought a treatise of cosmography from the monks of Weremouth; and Cœna speaks of several books on the same subject, in his letter to Archbishop Lullus. (St. Bonif. ep. 99, p. 130.) 4. That they also studied the Roman law is evident from p. 227, of the first volume of this work. Bede mentions Justinian's code; and the name of pandects, which he gives to the Scriptures, (Bed. p. 299,) will perhaps justify a suspicion, that he was acquainted with the pandects of that emperor. Of the sciences studied in the school at York, Alcuin has left us the following account:—

- His dans Grammaticæ rationis graviter artes,
 1435 Illis Rhetoricæ infundens refuamina linguæ,
 Istos juridica curavit cote poliri;
 Illos Aonio docuit concinnere cantu,
 Castalida instituens alios reasonare plantis,
 Et juga Parnassi lyricis percurrere plantis.
 1440 Ast alios fecit præfatus nosse magister
 Harmoniam cœli, solis lunæque labores;
 Quinque poli zonas, errantia sidera septem,
 Astrorum leges, ortus simul atque recessus;
 Aerios motus pelagi, terræque tremorem,
 1445 Naturas hominum, pecudum, volucrumque ferarum,
 Diversas numeri species, variasque figuras,
 Paschaliq̄ue dedit sollemnia certa recursu,
 Maxime scripturæ pandens mysteria sacræ.

Alc. De sanc. Ebor. p. 728.

been collected by the industry of Leland, Bale, and Pits: but of many we know little more than their names; and the works ascribed to the majority are either lost or spurious. The three whose superior fame recommends them to the notice of the historian, are St. Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin.

I. Of the Saxon monks, the first who distinguished himself by his writings was St. Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury, and afterwards bishop of Sherburne. In his youth he had attended the lessons of Maidulf, a Scottish monk: but the superior reputation of the school at Canterbury drew him to that capital, where he studied with unwearied application at the feet of the abbot Adrian. He soon felt, or thought he felt, the inspiration of the muses: his Saxon composition obtained the applause of his countrymen: and, at the distance of two centuries, Alfred the Great pronounced him the prince of the English poets.⁵⁴ Successful in this attempt, he aspired to higher excellence, and was able to boast, that he had been the first of his countrymen, who had enrolled himself among the votaries of the Roman muse.⁵⁵ His reputation rapidly increased; it was soon diffused over the neighbouring nations; and even foreigners were eager to submit their writings to the superior judgment of Aldhelm.⁵⁶ From this circumstance we might be inclined to form an exalted notion of his literary merit: but the principal of his works, which are still preserved, show that he owed his fame rather to the ignorance than to the taste of his admirers. With an exception in favour of some passages in his poems, they are marked by a pompous obscurity of language, an affectation of Grecian phraseology, and an unmeaning length of period, which perplexes and disgusts. As a writer his merit is not great: but if we consider the barbarism of the preceding generation, and the difficulties with which he was surrounded, we cannot refuse him the praise of genius, resolution, and industry.⁵⁷

II. While the people of Wessex gloried in the fame of Aldhelm, another and greater scholar was gradually rising into notice from an obscure corner of Northumbria. Bede, whom posterity has honoured with the epithet of the venerable, was born in a village between the mouth of the Wear and the Tyne.⁵⁸

⁴ Malm. l. v. De Pont. p. 342.

⁵⁵ Mihi conscius sum illud me Virgilianum posse jactare:
Primus ego in patriam mecum modo vita supersit,
Aldhelmus rediens deducam vertice musas.—*Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Among others were several of the Scottish scholars, who sent their writings to him, ut perfecti ingenii lima scabredo eraderetur Scotica. *Ibid.* His works were much esteemed in Spain. *Annal. Bened. tom. ii. p. 25.*

⁵⁷ His writings were devoted to the cultivation of literature, and the advancement of virtue. They are entitled *De Metro, De Schematibus, De Laude Virginium, De Ænigmatibus, &c.* He died in 719.

⁵⁸ He was born, according to his own account, in the territory (the *sundorland*, Ælfred's version, p. 647) of the united monastery of Weremouth and Jarrow. He generally resided at the latter place. *Ann. 672.*

At the age of seven he was intrusted to the care of the monks lately established by St. Bennet Biscop, at Weremouth and Jarrow: and the gratitude of the disciple has immortalized the fame of the monastery and its founder. Endowed with natural talents, and ambitious of excellence, he applied without intermission to the study of the sciences: and towards the close of his life he informs us, that he had devoted two-and-fifty years to what he considered as the most delightful of all pursuits, his own improvement, and the instruction of his pupils.⁵⁹ With no other help than what the library of the monastery afforded, and amid the numerous and fatiguing duties of the monastic profession,⁶⁰ his ardent and comprehensive mind embraced every science which was then studied: and raised him to a high pre-eminence above all his contemporaries. Had he yielded to the suggestions of his own modesty, his name had probably been lost in oblivion: but the commands of his superiors, and of Acca, bishop of Hexham, urged him to write; and he sought an apology for his presumption in the hope that, by his works, he might abridge and facilitate to his countrymen the acquisition of knowledge.⁶¹ In his own catalogue of books which he had composed, and which for the most part are still extant, we find elementary introductions to the different sciences, treatises on physics, astronomy, and geography; sermons, biographical notices of the abbots of his own monastery, and of other eminent men, and commentaries on most of the books of Scripture. But his ecclesiastical history of the Anglo-Saxons, is the most celebrated of his works. The idea of it was suggested by Albin, abbot of St. Augustine's at Canterbury, and a disciple of Theodore and Adrian. All the English prelates approved the design, and communicated to the historian whatever information they could acquire: and with the same view Gregory the Third permitted the records of the apostolic see to be searched by Northelm, a presbyter of the church of London.⁶² The work was completed two years before the death of its author. It was received with universal applause: by succeeding generations it was piously preserved as a memorial of the virtue of their ancestors; and by Alfred the Great was translated into Saxon for the instruction of his more illiterate countrymen.⁶³ That it is a faithful record of the times, has never been doubted: and if to some critics the credulity of the writer with respect to miracles appear a blemish, yet his candour,

⁵⁹ Semper aut discere aut docere aut scribere dulce habui. Bed. Hist. l. v. c. 24.

⁶⁰ According to his own expression, the innumera monasticæ servitutis retinacula. Bed. Ep. ad Accam.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Hist. præf. p. 37, 38.

⁶³ Some doubt was formerly entertained respecting the author of this version: but the testimony of Ælfric has restored it to the king. *Irtonia Anglorum þa þe Ælfræd cýning of læden on Englyre aþend.* Elstob's Sax. Hom. p. 2.

sincerity, and piety must please and edify every reader. The style is easy and perspicuous: and though far inferior to that of the great masters of antiquity, may justly claim higher praise than any other specimen of the age. Bede died as he had lived, in the prosecution of his studies, and the practice of devotion. During his last illness he had undertaken an Anglo-Saxon translation of the gospel of St. John, and had reached the sixth chapter on the evening of his death. "Dear master," said one of his disciples, "one sentence is not yet written." "Then write it quickly," replied Bede. The young man, soon after, said it was finished. "Truly," exclaimed the dying monk, "it is finished! Hold my head in thy hands, for it is a pleasure to me to sit opposite the holy place, in which I have been accustomed to pray. There let me invoke my Father." He was placed on the pavement of his cell, repeated the *Gloria Patri*, and expired.⁶⁴

The reputation of Bede survived and grew after his death. The Saxons were proud, that their nation had produced so eminent a writer: the monks of Weremouth and Jarrow were harassed with solicitations for copies of his works;⁶⁵ and, at the distance of a hundred years, the prelates of the Franks, in the council of Aix la Chapelle, numbered him among the fathers of the church, and styled him the venerable and admirable doctor.⁶⁶ If the improvements of modern times have diminished the value of his writings, this circumstance ought no more to detract from his merit, than it does from that of the philosophers of Greece and Rome. Bede was a great man for the age in which he lived: he would have been a great man had he lived in any other age.

III. The loss which Anglo-Saxon literature had suffered by the death of Bede, was quickly repaired by the abilities of Alcuin. Alcuin was descended from an illustrious family, and born within the walls, or in the vicinity of York.⁶⁷ The great school in that city had lately attained a high degree of reputation by the exertions of Archbishop Egbert, a prelate who, under the tuition of Bede, had imbibed a passion for learning, and who, notwithstanding his royal birth and elevated station, was proud to impart the rudiments of knowledge to the noble youth that where

⁶⁴ Ep. Cuth. apud Sim. Dun. p. 78. An. 735.

⁶⁵ Ep. Bonif. p. 12, 13. 120. 124. 130. 152. 231. "Et rectum quidem mihi videtur," says the abbot Cuthbert, "ut tota gens Anglorum, in omnibus provinciis ubicumque reperti sunt, gratias Deo referant, quia tam mirabilem virum illis in sua natione donavit." Ibid. p. 124.

⁶⁶ Quid venerabilis, et modernis temporibus doctor admirabilis, Beda presbyter sentiat, videamus. Con. Aquisgran. ii. præf. l. iii.

⁶⁷ As a descendant of the same family as St. Willibrord, he inherited the monastery of St. Mary, built by the father of that missionary, near the mouth of the Humber. Annal. Bened. tom. ii. p. 322. In the poem on the saints of York, the author describes himself as a native of that city. (v. 16, 1653.) There is sufficient internal evidence that this poem should be assigned to the pen of Alcuin. The inferiority of the poetry may be excused by the youth of the poet.

educated in the episcopal monastery.⁶⁸ To his care Alcuin was intrusted at an early age; and the talents, virtue, and docility of the pupil soon attracted the notice, and secured the affection of the master. At his death Egbert bequeathed to him his library, and selected him to succeed to the important office of teacher. The abilities of the new professor justified the partiality or the judgment of his patron; his reputation added to the ancient celebrity of the school; and students from Gaul and Germany crowded to the lectures of so renowned a master.⁶⁹

Egbert was succeeded by his kinsman Ælbert, who had formerly taught in the same seminary. Like his predecessor, he was eager to honour the merit of Alcuin. He sent him on an important mission to the court of France; confided to his care and that of Eanbald the erection of the new church; and, by his will, left to him "the most valuable of his treasures," the numerous volumes, which he had collected in different journeys to Gaul and Italy.⁷⁰

To procure the pallium for Eanbald, the next archbishop, Alcuin visited Rome; and in his return, at Pavia, was introduced to Charlemagne. That prince was then in the zenith of his power. But to the glory of a conqueror, he was desirous to add the fame of a patron of learning; the revival of literature in his extensive dominions had long engaged his attention, and he seized the favourable moment to solicit the assistance of the Anglo-Saxon in so laudable a project. The ambition of Alcuin was awakened; and he promised to return, if the king of Northumbria, and the archbishop of York, would give their con-

⁶⁸ Egbert, the brother of the king of Northumbria, had been educated under venerable Bede. Penetrated with respect for the memory of his master, he closely imitated his manner of teaching. He rose at daybreak, and, when he was not prevented by more important occupations, sitting on his couch, taught his pupils successively till noon. He then retired to his chapel, and celebrated mass. (Sanctificabat eos, offerens corpus Christi et sanguinem pro omnibus. Vit. Alc. p. 149.) At the time of dinner, he repaired to the common hall, where he ate sparingly, though he was careful that the meat should be of the best kind. During dinner a book of instruction was always read. Till the evening he amused himself with hearing his scholars discuss literary subjects. Then he repeated with them the service of complin, called them to him, and, as they successively knelt before him, gave them his benediction. They afterwards retired to rest. These particulars Alcuin used to relate to his friends. Vit. Alc. in Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. i. p. 149.

⁶⁹ Eo tempore in Eboracica civitate famosus merito scholam magister Alcuinus tenebat, undecunque ad se confluentibus de magna sua scientia communicans. Vit. St. Liudgeri in Act. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. i. p. 37.

⁷⁰ Alc. de Pont. Ebor. Eccl. v. 1525. Alcuin thus laments the death of his patron:

"O pater, O pastor, vitæ spes maxima nostræ,
Te sine nos ferimur turbata per æquora mundi:
Te duce deserti variis involvimur undis,
Incerti qualem mereamur tangere portum.
Sidera dum lucent, trudit dum nubila ventus,
Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt."

Ibid. v. 1596.

sent. Their consent was given, and the promise was fulfilled.⁷¹ Charles immediately enrolled himself in the number of his disciples; every nobleman and clergyman, who courted the favour of the prince, followed his example; and distinction in the school of Alcuin became the surest path to civil and ecclesiastical honours. From the palace the spirit of improvement diffused itself over the more distant provinces: laws were published for the encouragement of learning; schools were opened in the principal of the clerical and monastic establishments; and the efforts of the Anglo-Saxon, seconded by the influence of his patron, restored the empire of learning in Gaul and Germany.⁷²

Charles was not ungrateful to his teacher. He constantly retained him near his person, honoured him with peculiar distinctions, and gave him the revenues of the abbeys of Ferrieres and St. Martin's. But neither the favour nor the presents of the French monarch could wean the affections of Alcuin from Britain. He still considered himself as an honourable exile; and frequently, but ineffectually, solicited the permission to revisit his native country. The reluctance of Charles was not to be softened by entreaties: at last it was subdued by political considerations.

The French monarch had commissioned Gerwold, the abbot of Fontanelles, and collector of the customs,⁷³ to negotiate a marriage between his son Charles and a daughter of Offa, king of Mercia. The pride of the Mercian might have been flattered by the alliance of so potent a sovereign: but he determined to treat on a footing of equality, and in return demanded, as the price of his consent, the hand of a French princess for his son Egferth. Charles was irritated at the manner in which his proposal had been received; and the merchants of each prince were respectively forbidden to trade with those of the other. It is probable, that the interests of Gerwold suffered from this interruption of commerce. He artfully contrived to mollify the resentment of his sovereign; and Alcuin was selected to be the bearer of

⁷¹ Vit. Alc. in Act. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. i. p. 153. Alcuin alludes to the same event in one of his letters to Charles. "Ex diversis mundi partibus amatores illius vestræ bonæ voluntatis convocare studuistis. Inter quos me etiam infimum ejusdem sanctæ sapientiæ vernaculum de ultimis Britannicæ finibus adsciscere curastis." Alc. ep. 23.

⁷² A German poet has thus expressed his gratitude to Alcuin and his countrymen:

"Hæc tamen arctois laus est æterna Britannis.
Illa bonas artes et Graiæ munera lingue
Stellarumque vias, et magni sidera cœli
Observans, iterum turbatis intulit oris.
Quid non Alcuino facunda Lutetia debes ?

Apud Cam. tom. i. p. 166.

⁷³ Fontanelles was an abbey in the diocese of Rouen, afterwards called St. Wandrille's. The principal port, in which Gerwold collected the customs, was Cwentawic, now Estaples. It carried on a great trade with England. (Chron. Fontanel. c. 15.) Near the town stood the monastery of St. Josse, which Charles afterwards gave to Alcuin, for the convenience of the Anglo-Saxon travellers.

friendly proposals to Offa.⁷⁴ Though we have no positive proof, it can hardly be doubted, that he actually executed this commission. Certain it is, that he visited England at this period; and that peace and amity were restored between the two nations.⁷⁵

Alcuin was in no haste to leave his countrymen: and though he was repeatedly importuned by the solicitations of Charles, three years elapsed before he returned to France. He was received with honour by his patron, resumed his former occupations, and was preferred to the abbeys of St. Josse, at Cwentawic; and St. Martin, at Tours. For several years he remained at the court, caressed and respected by the prince and his favourites: but, as he advanced in age, he grew weary of the honours he enjoyed, and earnestly sighed after the tranquillity which he had tasted in his former retirement at York. Had he been able to obtain the consent of Charles, it was his intention to end his days among his brethren, the clergy of that city:⁷⁶ and when this was refused, he requested permission to retire to the monastery, which his countryman St. Boniface had founded at Fulda.⁷⁷ But Fulda was at too great a distance from the royal residence; and his abbey of St. Martin's was at last selected for the place of his retreat. There he resigned his benefices to his favourite disciples; and spent in exercises of devotion, and his usual occupation of teaching, the remaining years of his life. His diet was sparing, his prayer frequent, and he assisted daily in quality of deacon at a mass, which was celebrated in his private chapel, by one of his disciples. His numerous charities excited the applause and gratitude of the inhabitants of Tours, and a hospital which he founded for the reception of the poor and of travellers, was long preserved under the tuition of his successors, the abbots of St. Martin's. To prepare himself for death became the great object of his thoughts; and that he might frequently reflect on that hour, he composed his own epitaph, selected a place for his grave without the church, and often visited it, accompanied by his pupils.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ I have been rather circumstantial in relating this affair, as the cause of the dissension between Charlemagne and Offa has eluded the diligence of our national historians, from Malmsbury to Mr. Turner. It is related by the chronicler of Fontanelles, in his account of the abbot Gerwold. Chron. Fontanel. c. 15. Annal. Bened. tom. ii. p. 287. Alcuin mentions the report that he was to be sent to Offa, in his letter to Colcus apud Malm. de Reg. l. i. c. 4, f. 17.

⁷⁵ Charlemagne's letters to Offa, after their reconciliation, may be seen in Malmsbury, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Malm. de Reg. l. i. c. 3. In a letter to the clergy of York, Alcuin thus expresses himself. "Ego vester ero sive in vita, sive in morte. Et forte miserebitur mei Deus, ut cujus infantiam aluistis, ejus senectutem sepeliatis. Et si alius corpori deputabitur locus, tamen animæ, qualemcumque habitaturæ, erit per vestras sanctas, Deo donante, intercessionis requies." Ep. 98.

⁷⁷ His biographer informs us, that if this had been granted, he meant to have become a monk. Vit. Alc. p. 154.—After his departure from the court, the care of the palatine school was intrusted to Clemens, a native of Ireland. Mabil. præf. sæc. iv. Bened. 181.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 156. 161. His epitaph may be seen, note (U).

He did not, however, neglect his favourite occupation; and his school at Tours was equal in reputation to that which he had established in the court. Foreigners, and particularly his countrymen,⁷⁹ crowded to his retreat, to enjoy the benefit of his conversation: and the emperor and his family frequently honoured him with their visits.⁸⁰ Thus he lived, respected by Charlemagne and his court: and, when he died, was lamented as the pride of his age, and the benefactor of the empire.⁸¹

The pen of Alcuin was seldom idle. For the use of his pupils he wrote, in the form of dialogues, elementary treatises on most of the sciences; compiled, at the solicitation of his friends, the lives of several eminent men; and occasionally proved his devotion to the muses, by the composition of smaller poems. His letters are numerous, and will be read with interest, from the fidelity with which they describe the views, manners, and employments of the most distinguished characters of the age. To him the Caroline books, and the canons of the council of Frankfurt, have been generally ascribed: and his writings against Felix and Elipandus exposed the errors, and confounded the audacity

⁷⁹The Chronicle of Tours, and most writers assert, that Alcuin introduced canons into St. Martin's. Mabillon thinks he can prove, that the monks continued there till his death. However that may be, the clergy of Tours were jealous of the great number of Anglo-Saxons who visited Alcuin. His biographer has preserved the following anecdote on this subject. As Aigulf, an English priest, entered the monastery, four of the French clergy were standing by the gate, and one of them exclaimed in his own language, supposing it unknown to the stranger, "Good God! When will this house be delivered from the crowds of Britons, who swarm to that old fellow, like so many bees." Aigulf held down his head, and entered: but Alcuin immediately sent for them, told them what he had heard, and requested them to sit down, and drink the health of his countryman in a glass of his best wine. Vit. Alc. p. 157.

⁸⁰When Charlemagne could not visit his old master, he was careful to write to him. The following verses do honour, if not to his abilities as a poet, at least to his affection as a friend:

"Mens mea mellifluo, fateor, congaudet amore,
 Doctor amate, tui: volui quapropter in odis,
 O venerande, tuam musis solare senectam:
 Jam meliora tenes sanctæ vestigia vitæ,
 Donec ætherii venias ad culmina regni,
 Congaudens sanctis, Christo sociatus in ævum.
 Meque tuis precibus tecum rape, quæso, magister,
 Ad pia, quæ tendis, miserantis culmina regis."

Alc. Epigram. 185.

⁸¹Alcuin died about the year 810. Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. p. 182. He never received any higher order than that of deacon. Both he himself, and the Anglo-Saxons, who followed him into Gaul, were canons. Reyner, indeed, is positive, and Mabillon would fain persuade himself, that Alcuin was a monk. (Act. Bened. p. 163.) But their arguments are weak, and positively contradicted by the testimony of the monk, who wrote his life from the relation of his favourite disciple, Sigulf. "Sequantur vestigia, Benedicti scilicet monachis, Alcuini per omnia canonicis, imitatione digna." P. 146. "O vere monachum, monachi sine voto." P. 150. "Vita denique ejus non monastice inferior fuit. Nam qualis in patribus superius nominatis (Egberto et Ælberto) præcesserat, talis et in illo durabat." P. 154.

of those innovators. Like Bede, he wrote comments from the works of the fathers, on several books of Scripture; and his last labours were employed on a subject of the highest importance to religion, a revision of the text of the Latin Vulgate. As a scholar, Alcuin claims a high superiority over all his contemporaries: but his principal merit must be derived from the ardour with which he propagated the love of knowledge, from the Gallic Alps to the banks of the Loire, the Rhine, and the Elbe.

The reader who has been taught to despise the literature of the middle ages, will perhaps conceive that I have ascribed to our ancestors more than they justly deserved. But in estimating the respective merits of writers, who have lived at different times, it would be unfair to judge all by the same standard. If we compare the literary characters of the seventh and eighth centuries, with those of a later period, the distance between them will, in several respects, appear immense: but their claims to our applause will converge more nearly to a point, when we reflect, that the latter have been assisted by the collective wisdom and experience of successive generations; whereas the former were but just emerging from a state of ignorance and barbarism. The obstacles which the Saxon students had to overcome, were numerous and formidable: and their industry and perseverance demand our admiration. They performed whatever it was possible for men in their circumstances to perform. They collected every relic of ancient literature: they undertook the most perilous and laborious journeys in pursuit of knowledge: they studied every species of learning, of which they could discover the rudiments in books; and there is reason to believe, that they possessed most of the sciences as perfectly as they were known, when their forefathers made themselves masters of Britain. In purity and elegance of style, they were undoubtedly deficient: but taste had been on the decline from the age of Augustus, and had gradually sunk with the prosperity of the empire. The Latin writings of the fourth and fifth centuries show, that the language of Rome was no longer the language of Cicero and Virgil, and its deterioration was rapidly accelerated by the conquests of the northern nations, who adulterated it by the admixture of barbarian idioms. This defect, then, will appear to the candid critic a subject of regret, rather than of blame: and when he observes the Saxon writers often equal, and sometimes superior, to many who lived before the dismemberment of the empire, instead of despising, he will approve and value their exertions.

CHAPTER XI.

Descents of the Danes—Destruction of Churches and Monasteries—Prevalence of Ignorance and Immorality—Efforts to restore the Clerical and Monastic Orders.

IN the preceding chapters we have observed the introduction and diffusion of Christianity among our ancestors; the faith, discipline, and morals of their monks and clergy; their modes of religious worship, and their ardour in the pursuit of science. From the contemplation of this tranquil scene, the invasions of the Danes summon us to witness the horrors of barbarian warfare, the conflagration of churches, the downfall of the monastic, and the decline of the clerical orders. During the whole of the first, and the greatest part of the second century after the mission of St. Augustine, the Anglo-Saxon church was conspicuous for the virtues and the knowledge of many among its members. Christianity had given a new direction to the efforts of the converts; and though the contending politics and ambition of their petty sovereigns might occasionally retard, they did not, on the whole, prevent the progress of religious and civil improvement. In the year 800, Egbert ascended the throne of Wessex. His superior fortune or superior abilities, soon crushed the power of his rivals; and the friends of religion flattered themselves that a long period of tranquillity would atone for the disturbances of former times, and that the church might repose in security under the protection of one supreme monarch. But their hopes were fallacious. A storm was silently gathering in the north, which, after a short respite, burst on the eastern coast, and involved, during more than half a century, the whole island in ruin and devastation.

It were, however, inaccurate to suppose that the fervour of the first converts had been perpetuated till this period, without suffering any diminution. Nations, like individuals, are subject to vicissitudes of exertion and depression. As long as the impulse communicated by the first missionaries continued, the Anglo-Saxon Christians cheerfully submitted to every sacrifice, and embraced with eagerness the most arduous duties of religion. But after a certain period, the virtues which had so brilliantly illuminated the aurora of their church, began to disappear; with the extirpation of idolatry, the vigilance and zeal of the bishops were gradually relaxed; and the spirit of devotion, which had formerly characterized the monks and clergy, insensibly evapo-

rated in the sunshine of ease and prosperity. Even the love of science, which so often survives the sentiments of piety, was extinguished. Malmsbury laments, though he allows of some exceptions, that the knowledge of the Saxons was buried in the same grave with the venerable Bede :¹ and Alfred informs us, that among the more distant successors of that learned monk, few were able, if they had been willing, to understand the numerous authors that slept undisturbed in the tranquillity of their libraries.² This degeneracy of his countrymen was remarked and lamented by Alcuin. With every argument that his eloquence could suggest, he attempted to awaken their emulation : and his frequent letters to the kings of Northumbria and Mercia, the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the monks of Hexham, Lindisfarne, and Jarrow, are honourable monuments of his zeal.³ "Think," he writes to the latter, "on the worth of our predecessors, and blush at your own inferiority. View the treasures of your library, and the magnificence of your monastery, and recall to mind the rigid virtues of those by whom they were formerly possessed. Among you was educated Bede, the most illustrious doctor of modern times. How intense was his application to study ! How great in return is his reputation among men ! How much greater still his reward with God ! Let his example rouse you from your torpor : listen to the instructions of your teachers, open your books, and learn to understand their meaning. Avoid all furtive revelings, and leave to the world the vain ornaments of dress. What becomes you, is the modesty of your habit, the sanctity of your life, and the superiority of your virtue."⁴ Such were the arguments of Alcuin. That they would have proved successful, may reasonably be doubted : but the experiment was prevented by the calamity of the times ; and the decline of piety and knowledge, which had originated in the indolence of the natives, was rapidly accelerated by the exterminating sword of the Danes.

During the eighth and ninth centuries, the peninsula of Jutland, the islands of the Baltic, and the shores of the Scandinavian continent, were parcelled among a number of petty and independent chieftains, who sought no other occupation than war, and possessed no other wealth than what they had acquired by the sword. Their children, with the exception of the eldest, were taught to depend for fame and power on their own abilities and courage : their ships were the only inheritance which they derived from their fathers : and in these they were compelled to sail in pursuit of adventures and riches.⁵ No injury was

¹ Malm. de Reg. l. i. p. 12.

² *Spīðe lýcle þeopme þara boca witon forþam þe hi hira nan þinge ongitan ne mihton. forþam þe hi næron on hira azenge þeode arwitone.* Ep. Ælf. ad Wulst. apud Walk. vit. Alf. p. 196.

³ Ep. Alc. 28, 29. 32. 49, 50.

⁴ Ep. Alc. 49.

⁵ Wallingford, p. 533. Spelm. Vit. Ælf. edit. Walk. p. 14, not.

necessary to provoke their enmity. The prospect of plunder directed their attack; and carnage and devastation were the certain consequences of their success. They could conceive no greater pleasure than to feast their eyes with the flames of the villages, which they had plundered, and their ears with the groans of their captives, expiring under the anguish of torture.⁶ The northern seas were originally the theatre of their courage and cruelty. At last they ventured to try their fortune against the more opulent nations of the south: and, during more than two centuries, the maritime provinces of Gaul and Britain were continually pillaged and depopulated by these restless barbarians.

It is uncertain whether their first descent in England was the effect of accident or design. They quickly retired to their ships: but the plunder was sufficiently rich to invite a repetition of the attempt.⁷ In the year seven hundred and ninety-three, the inhabitants of Northumbria were alarmed by the appearance of a Danish armament near the coast. The barbarians were permitted to land without opposition. The plunder of the churches exceeded their most sanguine expectations: and their route was marked by the mangled carcasses of the nuns, the monks, and the priests, whom they had massacred. But historians have scarcely condescended to notice the misfortunes of other churches: their attention has been absorbed by the fate of Lindisfarne. That venerable pile, once honoured by the residence of the apostle of Northumbria, and sanctioned by the remains of St. Cuthbert, became the prey of the barbarians. Their impiety polluted the altars, and their rapacity was rewarded by its gold and silver ornaments, the oblations of gratitude and devotion. The monks endeavoured by concealment to elude their cruelty: but the greater number were discovered, and were either slaughtered on the island, or drowned in the sea. If the lives of the children were spared, their fate was probably more severe than that of their teachers: they were carried into captivity.⁸

The news of this calamity filled all the nations of the Saxons with shame and sorrow. Lindisfarne had long been to them an object of peculiar respect: and the Northumbrians hesitated not to pronounce it the most venerable of the British churches.⁹

⁶ Mat. West. p. 388. Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 135.

⁷ On hīr ȝagum cƿomon aƿeƿc in ƿeƿu Noƿðmanna
 Ðac ƿeƿon ƿa æƿeƿtan ƿeƿu Deniƿca monna þe Angel-cinney
 lond ȝeƿohton (Chr. Sax. p. 64.) In this passage the appellations of Danes and
 Northmen are used indiscriminately for the same people. Yet in another passage they
 are distinguished as two different nations; (æȝðeƿ ȝe Engliƿce ȝe Deniƿce
 ȝe Noƿðmen ȝe oðƿe. Chron. Sax. p. 110.)

⁸ Sim. Dunel. edit. Bedford, p. 87. Hoved. f. 405. Ep. Alc. cit. Malm. de Pont. l. iii. f. 157.

⁹ Locus cunctis in Britannia venerabilior. Ep. Alc. cit. Malm. l. iii. f. 157.

Alcuin received the account at the court of Charlemagne, and evinced, by his tears, the sincerity of his grief. But while he lamented the present, his mind presaged future and more lasting calamities to his country. Prompted by his fears, he wrote to the bishop of Lindisfarne, to his brethren the clergy of York, and to the monks of Weremouth and Jarrow. "Who," he observes to the last, "must not tremble, when he considers the misfortune which has befallen the church of St. Cuthbert? Let the fate of others be a warning to you. You also inhabit the sea-coast: you are equally exposed to the fury of the barbarians."¹⁰ The event verified his foresight. Within a few months from the date of the letter, a Danish squadron entered the mouth of the Tyne, and the monasteries of Jarrow and Weremouth, the noble monuments of Benedict's zeal and Egfrid's munificence, were reduced to ashes. The pirates, however, did not escape with impunity. Scarcely had they left the harbour, when their ships were dashed by a storm against the rocks. Numbers were buried in the waves: the few who swam to the shore were immolated to the vengeance of the inhabitants.¹¹

From this period, during the lapse of seventy years, the Anglo-Saxons were harassed by the incessant depredations of the Northmen. Each bay and navigable river was repeatedly visited by their fleets: the booty acquired by the adventurers stimulated the avarice of their brethren; and armament after armament darkened the shores of Britain. I shall not follow them in these desultory and destructive expeditions, which could only fatigue and disgust the mind of the reader with the unvaried picture of carnage, pillage, and devastation. The wealth of the churches continued to allure their rapacity: each succeeding year was marked by the fall of some celebrated monastery; and the monks, in sorrowful astonishment, bewailed the rapid depopulation of their order.

About the middle of the ninth century, Ragnar Lodbrog, a vikingr renowned for courage and cruelty, who had led his followers to the walls of Paris, and had wrung from the pusillanimity of Charles the Bald the most valuable of his treasures, was shipwrecked on the coast of Northumbria. Undismayed at his misfortune, the intrepid barbarian collected the remains of his troops, and had begun to plunder the nearest villages, when Ælla, the usurper of the Northumbrian sceptre, advanced to chastise his insolence. The pride of Ragnar refused to retire before a superior enemy. He fought, was taken, and by his death paid the forfeit of his temerity.¹² The Danes could not reasonably

¹⁰ Alc. Ep. 49. Ann. 794.

¹¹ Chr. Sax. p. 66. Walling, p. 533. Sim. Dun. p. 88.

¹² The adventures of Ragnar are but obscurely hinted in our national writers: the industry of Mr. Turner has collected the particulars from the northern historians. Hist. vol. ii. p. 115.

accuse the severity of the conqueror. Had the chance of battle delivered Ælla into the hands of the vikings, he would have inflicted a similar fate. But his sons (they were ten in number) vowed to revenge the death of their father: the pirates of the north crowded to their standard; and the most formidable fleet which had ever sailed from the harbours of Scandinavia, steered to the coast of the East-Angles. By the terror of their name and numbers, they extorted from the king a reluctant permission to land; and, during the winter, were supported at the expense of the inhabitants.¹³ The return of spring summoned them to the work of vengeance. From the banks of the Ouse, the flames of war were spread to the river Tyne: the towns, churches, and monasteries were laid in ashes; and so complete was their destruction, that succeeding generations could with difficulty trace the vestiges of their former existence.¹⁴ Ælla, and his competitor Osbert, forgetting their private quarrel, united in defence of their country. But the latter was slain in the field: the former fell into the hands of his enemies, and the torments, which he was made to suffer, gratified, but did not satiate their resentment.¹⁵ Intimidated by the fate of their princes, the inhabitants to the north of the Tyne endeavoured, by a timely submission, to avert the arms of the invaders. But Halfdene had tasted the fruits of sacrilege; and after an uncertain delay of eight years, he crossed the river with a strong division of the army, and levelled to the ground every church in the kingdom of Bernicia. The abbey of Tynemouth first attracted his rapacity. From its smoking ruins he directed his march towards the island of Lindisfarne. The monastery had risen from its ashes, and was again peopled with a numerous colony of monks. By the approach of Halfdene, they were plunged into the deepest consternation and perplexity. The fate of their predecessors warned them to retire before the arrival of the barbarians: piety forbade them to abandon to insult the body of St. Cuthbert. From this distressing dilemma they were relieved by the recollection of an aged monk, who reminded them of the wish expressed by the saint at his death, that if his children should be obliged to quit the island, his bones might accompany their exile.¹⁶ The shrine which contained his body, with the remains of the other bishops of Lindisfarne, was instantly removed from the altar; and the most virtuous among the clergy were selected to bear it from the monastery, to a place of security. With tears the monks bade a

¹³ Anno 866.

¹⁴ Cruore atque luctu omnia replevit: ecclesias longe lateque et monasteria ferro atque igne delevit, nil præter solos sine tecto parietes abiens reliquit, in tantum ut illa quæ præsens est ætas, ipsorum locorum vix aliquid, interdum nullum, antiquæ nobilitatis possit revisere signum. Sim. Dunel. Hist. Eccl. Dun. p. 93.

¹⁵ Chron. Sax. p. 79. Anno 867.

¹⁶ Bed. Vit. St. Cuth. c. xxxix.

last adieu to the walls in which they had devoted themselves to the monastic profession: the loftiest of the Northumbrian mountains screened them from the pursuit of the infidels; and the people crowded for protection to the remains of their patron. The abbey was pillaged, and given to the flames.¹⁷

From Lindisfarne, the pursuit of plunder led Halfdene to the walls of Coldingham. Of the nuns of this monastery a story has been related, which, though its truth may be problematical,¹⁸ is not repugnant to the stern virtue of the cloister, or the national enthusiasm of the Anglo-Saxons. Æbba, whose maternal authority the sisterhood obeyed, was not ignorant of the character of the chief or his followers. She had learned that their impiety devoted to instant death the ministers of religion; and that the females were invariably the victims, first of their lust, and then of their cruelty. Alarmed at their approach, she hastened to the chapter-house, assembled the trembling sisters, and exhorted those, who valued their honour to preserve it from pollution by the sacrifice of their beauty. At that instant, drawing a knife from her bosom, she inflicted a ghastly wound on her countenance: and the nuns, with pious barbarity, followed the example of their mother. The gates were soon forced: the Danes turned with horror from the hideous spectacle: and these martyrs to chastity perished in the flames which consumed their monastery.

Seven years were devoted by the barbarians to the acquisition of plunder; nor did they sheathe the sword till the general devastation bade defiance to their rapacity. During this period, the monks of Lindisfarne wandered from mountain to mountain, to elude the vigilance of their enemies: but their labours were sanctified in their eyes, by the merit of preserving from insult the body of their patron: and they fondly compared themselves to the Israelites, who conveyed through the wilderness, to the land of promise, the bones of the patriarch Joseph. The lot of the seven individuals who carried the shrine, was the object of general envy; their families thought themselves ennobled by the privilege; and their descendants, through many generations, claimed a superiority over the rest of the natives.¹⁹ At the return of tranquillity, the survivors, descending from the mountains, solicited the protection of the conquerors. By the Danes it was

¹⁷ Ann. 875. Sim. Dunel. p. 95.

¹⁸ The first writer by whom it is known to have been mentioned, is Matthew of Westminster. Though he may be considered as one of our more modern chroniclers, yet his authority is not contemptible. His history, in the passages which can be compared, is generally a transcript or abridgment of the Saxon chronicle, and the most early writers: whence it may be fairly inferred, that in the composition of the remainder, he consulted other ancient records, which have perished in the revolutions of so many centuries. The same remark will apply to Malmsbury, Hoveden, Huntingdon, &c.

¹⁹ Sim. Dunel. p. 113.

willingly granted: the body of the saint was deposited at Conchester;²⁰ and new honours were paid to his memory.

The ravages of Halfdene inflicted a deadly wound on the monastic institute in the kingdom of Northumbria. Within the short space of seven years, all the abbeys which ancient piety had founded, were swept away; and of their inhabitants, the few who had survived the general calamity were unable or unwilling to procure proselytes. With them the order of Northumbrian monks may be said to have expired. A constant succession is, indeed, asserted to have watched at the shrine of St. Cuthbert: but we are also assured, that their number never exceeded three individuals at any one time, during the long lapse of two hundred and eight years.²¹ It was not till the reign of William the Conqueror, that the institute was revived by the industry of Aldwin, a monk of Evesham, who collected a small colony from the southern monasteries, and fixed his residence amid the ruins of Jarrow, from which he shortly migrated to the new church of Durham.²²

In the annals of northern piracy, all the leaders are equally cruel, and equally versed in the arts of devastation. While Northumbria was abandoned to the fury of Halfdene, five Danish kings, with as many jarls, led their retainers across the Humber, to the opposite coast of Lincolnshire.²³ The abbey of Bardney was the first to experience their barbarity. It was pillaged, and then consumed over the mangled bodies of its inhabitants. From Bardney they passed the Witham, into the country of the Girvii: but their progress was retarded by the opposition of a determined, though inconsiderable band of patriots. Algar, the ealdorman, had summoned the neighbouring thanes to his standard: Theodore, the abbot of Croyland, sent to his assistance two hundred veterans, under the command of Tolius, then a monk, but formerly an officer of distinction in the armies of Mercia: and the courage of the soldiers was stimulated by the dangers of a defeat, the tears of their families, and the prayers of the religious. Their first essay was successful; and the death of three of their kings taught the barbarians to respect the valour of their adversaries. During the night the Danes recalled their detachments, and consoled themselves with the hopes of revenge: a panic struck the Christians, and, under the covert of darkness, three-fourths of the

²⁰ Now Chester-le-street. It was called Conchester, from the small river Con. Lel. Itin. vol. ix. p. 61.

²¹ Sim. Dunel. p. 99.

²² *Plane a tempore, quo a paganis ecclesiæ in provincia Northanhymbrorum eversæ et monasteria sunt destructa atque incensa, usque ad tertium annum præsulatus Walchelini, quando per Aldwinum in ipsam provinciam venientem, monachorum in illa cepit habitatio reviviscere, ducenti et octo computantur anni.* Id. p. 207.

²³ An. 870.

army silently withdrew from the scene of danger.²⁴ Their retreat irritated, but did not dismay the few who remained: the intermediate hours were dedicated to the exercises of religion; and each man devoutly received the viaticum from the hands of the officiating priest. At the dawn of light they repaired to their posts, and foiled with the most patient courage the successive assaults of their numerous enemies. At sunset the Danes appeared to retire: with shouts of victory the Christians rushed to the pursuit; and by their imprudence forfeited the reward due to their valour. The flight was only a feint. The fugitives turned against their pursuers: and the small and unconnected bands of the Saxons quickly disappeared beneath the swords of the multitude.

It was midnight when the melancholy tidings reached the abbey of Croyland. Theodore and his monks were employed in the church, in chanting matins: but the cries of the messengers summoned them from the duties of religion to the care of their own safety. The younger part of the brotherhood were ordered to secure their charters, relics, and jewels, to cross the lake, and to conceal themselves in a distant wood; while Theodore himself, in company with the children and the more aged of the monks, awaited the arrival of the barbarians. The old man was unwilling to abandon his monastery, without making an attempt to avert its fate: and he cherished a fallacious hope, that the innocence of the children and the gray hairs of his brethren (several had passed their hundredth year) would awaken sentiments of pity, even in the breasts of the Danes. While the necessary arrangements were made, the flames from the neighbouring villages gradually approached, and the shouts of the barbarians admonished the fugitives to depart. With heavy hearts the two companies embraced, and separated forever.²⁵

From the beach the junior monks, to the number of thirty, steered across the lake to the place of concealment: Theodore, with the companions of his fortune, returned to the choir, resumed the matins, and celebrated mass. Just as he had communicated, the Danes arrived. The solitude and silence of the cloisters would have induced a belief that the inhabitants had fled, had not the distant chant of the monks directed the barbarians to the church. The gates were forced without difficulty: and Osketul, the Danish chieftain, rushing into the choir, seized the abbot by the hair, and struck off his head at the foot of the altar. The officiating ministers were despatched by the swords of his

²⁴ In the printed copies of *Ingulf*, the Christians are said to have dwindled from 800 to 200, (*Ing. inter. scrip. post Bed. f. 492. Rer. Anglii. scrip. tom. i. p. 21:*) in the chronicle of Peterborough, with greater probability, from 8000 to 2000. (*Chron. Abb. de Burg. p. 16, edit. Sparke.*)

²⁵ *Ing. p. 22.*

followers: but the children and the more aged of the monks were reserved for the torture. It was expected that pain and fear would easily extort a discovery of the concealment of their treasures, and the retreat of their brethren. But the constancy of their minds was superior to the weakness of their bodies; and their sufferings were soon terminated by the impatience of the barbarians. One victim alone was spared; a boy of ten years of age, and distinguished by his beauty. His name was Turgar. He had accompanied the sub-prior Lethwin to the refectory; stood by him till he expired under the daggers of his murderers; and eagerly solicited the favour of sharing the fate of his tutor. The heart of the younger Sidroc, the Danish jarl, relented. He tore the cowl from the head of the boy, threw a cloak over his shoulders, and bade him to be careful to follow his footsteps.²⁶

As soon as the barbarians had glutted their appetite for blood, they abandoned themselves to the pursuit of plunder. Every recess was burst open, and every corner was searched with the eye of desire and suspicion. Their avarice violated even the mansions of the dead. Around the shrine of St. Guthlake stood a range of marble monuments, in which were entombed the mortal remains of the saints and benefactors of the abbey. These the infidels defaced and demolished, scattered the bones on the pavement, and raked in the dust for the chalices, rings, and trinkets, which our ancestors were accustomed to bury with the body. Three days were employed in these researches: on the fourth they set fire to different parts of the building, and directed their march towards Medeshamstede.

Medeshamstede, afterwards called Peterborough, was an abbey of royal foundation, and had been enriched by the profuse donations of several princes. It possessed a library to which few others were equal; the magnificence of the fabric was the pride of Saxon architecture; and the church, dedicated to the prince of the apostles, was, if we may believe a suspicious charter, exempted from the jurisdiction of the diocesan, and endowed by the favour of Pope Agatho with the privileges which distinguished St. Peter's at Rome.²⁷ Within its walls the inhabitants of the neighbourhood sought protection from the arms of the infidels; and the issue of the first assault seemed to justify their hopes. In the second, a stone from an unknown hand wounded the brother of Hubba, a Danish king. Eager for revenge, the barbarian redoubled his efforts: and the garrison shrunk in despair from the defence of the principal gate. Resistance ceased with the entrance of the enemy. The fury of the

²⁶ Ing. p. 22.

²⁷ Chr. Sax. p. 35, 36. Wilk. p. 44. Hugo Cand. p. 4, edit. Sparke.

soldiers was satisfied with the slaughter of the crowd of strangers : a long train of more distinguished victims was reserved for the vengeance of the king ; and Hubba with his own hand immolated the abbot, and eighty-three monks, to the shade of his brother. His barbarity was rewarded with spoils more numerous than those of Croyland. The monks had not removed their treasures : and the imprudence of the neighbouring inhabitants had deposited with them their most valuable effects. After the division of the plunder the monastery was burnt. The conflagration lasted fifteen days.²⁸

Turgar, the boy of Croyland, had hitherto preserved his life under the protection of Sidroc. But his situation now became more dangerous, and he was admonished by his patron to avoid the eyes of the implacable Hubba. Alarmed at the advice, he embraced a favourable moment to secrete himself from the view of the Danes ; and travelling all night through the woods, reached his former residence early in the morning. His arrival was just preceded by that of the younger monks, who had ventured to leave their concealment, and were beginning to extinguish the flames. The sight of Turgar revived their hopes ; his faithful narrative realized their fears. The fate of Theodore and their brethren was heard with the deepest anguish : they forgot the object of their labours ; and, seated amid the smoking ruins, abandoned themselves to the lamentations of sorrow and despair. From this inactivity they were at length awakened by the necessity of their situation. To supply the place of Theodore, Godric was chosen, a monk distinguished among his brethren for his superior wisdom and piety. By his direction they made it their first care to drag from the ruins the half-burnt bodies of their brethren, and to commit them with decent solemnity to the grave. Scarcely had they completed this pious ceremony, when they were requested by the hermits of Ancarig to perform the same office for the monks of Medeshamstede. With painful research they collected their bodies ; dug before the entrance of the church a deep and spacious grave ; deposited in the centre the mangled corpse of the abbot ; and placed around him the remains of his eighty-three companions. To perpetuate their memory, Godric built over the tomb a pyramid of stone, on which was rudely engraved the history of this bloody catastrophe ; and opposite to the pyramid he raised an image of Christ nailed to the cross. The public road lay between them ; and the pious abbot hoped that the presence of the crucifix would prevent travellers from profaning so sacred a spot, and the figures on the monument induce them to offer up a prayer for those whose ashes reposed beneath it. As for himself, these victims of

²⁸ Ing. p. 23.

Danish barbarity were never absent from his recollection. Annually, as long as he lived, on the anniversary of their massacre, he visited the cemetery, pitched his tent over the grave, and spent two days in celebrating masses, and performing the other devotions to which Catholic charity has attributed the power of benefiting the souls of the departed.²⁹

From Medeshamstede, the Danes directed their march to the isle of Ely, in which was situated a great and opulent monastery, originally founded by Edilthryda, the pious queen of Northumbria. The elevated rank, and edifying sanctity of the abbesses, by whom it was first governed, had raised it to a high pre-eminence among the southern convents; and its cloisters were still crowded with the most noble and most virtuous of the Saxon ladies. It might have been expected, that to these female recluses, the fate of Croyland and Medeshamstede would have furnished a useful lesson. Some, indeed, listened to the suggestions of prudence, and shunned by flight the approach of the barbarians. But the greater part refused to abandon their convent: and their determination was confirmed by the afflux of the neighbouring inhabitants, who conveyed their families and effects to Ely, as to a secure asylum. The extensive lake by which the monastery was surrounded, presented a formidable obstacle to the approach of an enemy: and those who were not encouraged by the sanctity, trusted at least to the natural strength of the place. Perhaps, if their efforts had been directed by an intelligent leader, or if their foe had been less determined, they would have had no reason to condemn their confidence: and their example might at a later period have stimulated the band of patriots, who, in the same place, bade defiance, during several years, to all the power of the Norman conqueror.³⁰ But the Danes, with the prospect of accumulated plunder before their eyes, were not to be retarded by the appearance of difficulties: in spite of every opposition they transported their army across the water, and effected a landing on the island. From this instant, submission or resistance was equally fruitless: the massacres of Croyland and Medeshamstede were renewed; the abbey was burned; and the nuns, after suffering indignities worse than death, ultimately perished by the sword or in the flames.³¹

From these instances we may learn to estimate the sufferings of the monastic and clerical orders during the long period of Danish devastation. Each kingdom in succession became the theatre of their fury. The subjection of East Anglia was secured by the captivity of its monarch; and his unprovoked murder

²⁹ . . . *Omni anno quamdiu vixit semel visitans, supra petram suum tentorium figens pro animabus ibidem sepulchrorum misas per biduali devotione continua celebravit.* Ing. p. 24.

³⁰ Ang. Sac. vol. i. p. 609.

³¹ Ing. p. 24.

showed, that to the barbarians the blood of kings was as grateful a spectacle as that of monks. Burreth of Mercia exhibited at first a vigour worthy of his exalted station : but his spirit sunk with repeated defeats ; he abandoned the crown which he was unable to retain ; and the victors placed it on the head of the traitor Ceolwolp.³² This shadow of a king was only the sport and victim of their caprice. Within twelve months he was conducted from the throne to the prison, restored to the regal power, and then deprived of the sceptre and life. The Thames alone separated the barbarians from the more opulent provinces on the southern coast : they passed that river, subdued the feeble kingdoms of Kent and Sussex, and compelled the West Saxons, after an obstinate struggle, to shrink from the contest. Free from apprehension, they abandoned themselves, during several months, to the licentiousness of victory : and indulged without remorse their passion for bloodshed and plunder. But security relaxed their vigilance ; and Alfred, who had secreted himself among the morasses of Somersetshire, started, at a favourable moment, from his concealment, and surprised his enemies in their camp.³³ This success was the prelude to more important victories : the king improved every advantage ; and the invaders were compelled either to retire from the island, or to acknowledge themselves the vassals of the conqueror. Many years, however, elapsed before tranquillity was restored. Hordes of barbarians successively landed on the coast, and solicited by promises and threats the wavering fidelity of their countrymen. But their insolence was severely chastised by Alfred and his successors, and at last all the tribes of the Danes, as well as of the Saxons, submitted to the crown of Wessex.

At this period the English church offered to the friends of religion a melancholy and alarming spectacle. 1. The laity had resumed the ferocity of their heathen forefathers : 2. The clergy were dissolute and illiterate : 3. And the monastic order was in a manner annihilated.

1. The numerous massacres of the war had considerably thinned the population of the country ; and to supply the deficiency, Alfred had adopted an obvious but inadequate expedient, in the naturalization of several thousand Danes. In every country the strangers were intermixed with the natives : in East Anglia and Northumbria, their numbers greatly exceeded the descendants of the ancient inhabitants. If the sacred rite of baptism had entitled the barbarians to the appellation and privileges of Christians, their manners and notions still reduced them to a level with their pagan brethren. The superstition of Scandinavia was in many places restored. The charms and incantations of magic

³² Ann. p. 874.

³³ Ann. 878.

amused the credulity of the people; the worship of Odin was publicly countenanced, or clandestinely preserved: and oaths and punishments were often employed in vain to extort from these nominal converts an external respect for the institutions of Christianity. The morals of many among the Anglo-Saxons were scarcely superior to those of the naturalized Danes. During the long and eventful contest, the administration of justice had been frequently suspended: habits of predatory warfare had introduced a spirit of insubordination: and impunity had strengthened the impulse of the passions. To the slow and tranquil profits of industry, were preferred the violent but sudden acquisitions of rapine: the roads were infested with robbers; and the numbers and audacity of the banditti compelled the more peaceful inhabitants to associate for the protection of their lives, families, and property. The dictates of natural equity, the laws of the gospel, and the regulations of ecclesiastical discipline were despised. The indissoluble knot of marriage was repeatedly dissolved at the slightest suggestion of passion or disgust: and, in defiance of divine and human prohibitions, the nuptial union was frequently polluted and degraded by the unnatural crime of incest. To reform the degeneracy of his subjects, Alfred published a new code of laws, extracted from those of his predecessors and of the Jewish legislator: and the execution of forty-four judges in one year shows both the inflexible severity of the king, and the depravity of those whose duty it was to be the guardians of the national morals.³⁴ That his efforts were attended with partial success is not improbable; but from the complaints and improvements of later legislators, it is evident that it required a succession of several generations before the ancient spirit of licentiousness could be suppressed and extinguished.³⁵

2. In the preceding pages the reader will have observed the degeneracy of the Anglo-Saxon scholars, after the death of Bede and his disciples. If the learning of their predecessors cast a feeble ray of light on the close of the eighth century, it was entirely extinguished by the devastations of the Northmen, and quickly succeeded by a night of the profoundest ignorance. This lamentable change is amply and feelingly described by the pen of a royal witness. "There was a time," says Alfred in his letter to Wulsige, "when foreigners sought wisdom and learning in this island. Now we are compelled to seek them in foreign lands. Such was the general ignorance among the English, that there were very few on this side the Humber, (and I dare say not

³⁴ *Miroir des justices*, c. v. cit. Walker in vit. *Ælfr.* p. 82.

³⁵ This account of the immorality of the Saxons, after the Danish invasion, is extracted from the letter of Fulco to Alfred, noticed by Flodoard, (l. iv. c. 5, p. 612,) the epistle of Formosus, (Wilk. p. 200,) the laws of Alfred and his successors, (Wilk. leg. p. 28—64,) and the *judicia civitatis Londoniæ*, (ibid. p. 66.)

many on the other,) who could understand the service in English, or translate a Latin epistle into their own language. So few were they, that I do not recollect a single individual to the south of the Thames who was able to do it, when I ascended the throne."³⁶ To revive the study of literature became one of the first objects which inflamed the ambition of the monarch: he solicited the assistance of the most distinguished scholars in the neighbouring nations; and Wales, Flanders, and Germany saw themselves deprived of their brightest lights, by his promises and presents.

In the year 883, an honourable embassy of thanes, bishops, priests, and deacons, sailed from England to France. The object of their mission was to solicit teachers from the Gallic churches. From one of the two monasteries that bore the name of Corbie, they procured the presbyter John, a native of Old Saxony: from Fulco, archbishop of Rheims and abbot of St. Bertin's, the provost Grimbald, a monk renowned for his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and his proficiency in the science of music.³⁷ Soon after, Asser, a canon of St. David's in Wales,

³⁶ Hu man ut on borðe wīrdom 7 lare hider on lande sohte. 7 þe hi nu fceoldan ute bezitan. 7if þe hi habban fceoldan. Spa clæne heo wæs oðfealle on Anglcygne. þ fwiðe fepa wæron beheonan Humbre þe hira þenunge cuðon underftandan on Enghyr. oððe an ærendgeþrūt of lædene on Enghyr afeccan. 7 ic wene þ naht monige bezeondan Humbre wæron. Spa feapa heora wæron. þ ic furðon anne ænleþne ne mæg zeþencan beruðan Thamyr. þa þa ic to rice feng. Ælf. ep. apud Walk. vit. Ælf. p. 196. Wise's Asser, p. 82.

³⁷ Wise's Asser, p. 47. 62. 123. Among the learned foreigners whom the liberality of Alfred drew around him, a place has been allotted to Joannes Scotus Erigena, a bold metaphysical writer of the ninth century. Mr. Turner has mentioned him with peculiar distinction in his history, and labours to prove that he is the same person with John, abbot of Athelney, mentioned by Asser. But I think it clear from the testimony of Asser, that they were different persons. 1. Scotus is universally acknowledged to have been a native of Ireland: the abbot of Athelney was born among the Saxons of Germany, (Eald-Saxonum genere. Asser, p. 61.) 2. Scotus was neither a priest nor a monk, (Mabil. sæc. iv. Bened. tom. ii. p. 510:) the abbot of Athelney was both a priest and a monk, (presbyterum et monachum. Asser, p. 47. 61.) I even think it may be doubted whether Scotus ever came to England. The passage in Ingulf (de veteri Saxoniam Johannem, *cognomine Scotum, acerrimi ingenii philosophum*. Ing. p. 27) is evidently taken from Asser, and the apparent contradiction which it contains, provokes a strong suspicion that the words in italics were added to the original text by the officiousness of some blundering copyist. But what answer can be made to the consentient authority of Malmsbury, (De Reg. l. ii. c. iv. f. 24. De Pont. l. iv. p. 360.) Simeon, (De Reg. p. 148,) Hoveden, (f. 240, anno 883,) and Westminster? (p. 171, anno 883.) As the three latter have done no more than transcribe Malmsbury, the whole account must rest on his authority: and from the hesitation with which he speaks, (creditor . . . sub ambiguo. De Reg. f. 24,) joined to the silence of Asser, when he mentions the literary characters at the court of Alfred, it may be fairly inferred, that the claims of Scotus are built on a very treacherous foundation. Malmsbury indeed refers to Alfred's works, for the proof that Scotus was his master, (ut ex scriptis regis intellexi. De Reg. f. 24. De Pont. p. 361.) But if I have not mistaken the pas-

visited Alfred at the royal city of Dene, and was requested by the king to fix his residence in England. The pride of the Welshman was flattered; but he hesitated to abandon the church in which he had been educated and ordained. After a short struggle his scruples were silenced: he consented to divide the year between the English court and the monastery of St. David, and his compliance was munificently rewarded by the gratitude of his patron.³⁸ To these learned foreigners, Alfred joined the priests Werewulf and Ethelstan, and the bishops, Plegmund of Canterbury, and Werfrith of Worcester; invited the nobility and clergy to profit by their instructions, and endeavoured to stimulate by his own example the industry of his subjects. The fruit of his application is manifest in the numerous translations which he published; and his letter to Wulsige proves, that it was not vanity, but the purest patriotism, which guided the pen of the royal author.³⁹ Alfred lived to see the result of his efforts, and was enabled to boast that knowledge was once more decorated with the episcopal mitre. Yet his success was only partial. After his death literature languished, perhaps declined, till the accession of Edgar, when it received a new stimulus from the zeal and industry of Archbishop Dunstan.

Amid the horrors of a destructive war, the issue of which involved the very existence of their country, the vigilance of the prelates might, perhaps, be expected to slumber: but the passions of their inferiors were awake, and actively employed in undermining the strongest pillars of ecclesiastical discipline. From the arrival of St. Augustine, to the devastations of the Danes, a married priest was an anomalous being, unknown to the constitution of the Saxon church.⁴⁰ But during this eventful period there arose men, whose ignorance could not comprehend, or whose passions refused to obey, the prohibitory statutes of their ancestors: the celibacy of the clergy was openly infringed; and impunity promoted the diffusion of the scandal. Of this bold innovation, the first hint occurs in the writings of a foreign prelate. Fulco, archbishop of Rheims, in a letter to the English monarch, congratulates him on the election of Plegmund to the see of Canterbury, a prelate whose vigour will quickly suppress the impiety, that teaches the lawfulness of matrimony both in

sage to which he alludes, it must prove the contrary. "I learned the Latin language," says the king, "from Plegmund, my archbishop, Asser, my bishop, and Grimbald and John, my mass-priests." *Ep. Ælf. ad Wuls. p. 196.* But Scotus, as I observed before, was not a priest, and the John alluded to by the king, must have been John, the native of Old Saxony.

³⁸ Asser, p. 50.

³⁹ *Apud Walk. vit. Ælf. p. 196.* Alfred translated Bede's Ecclesiastical History, Orosius, Bætius, St. Gregory's pastorals, part of the psalms, and selections from the works of St. Augustine. He also wrote other works, which are lost or unknown.

⁴⁰ See Chap. 2.

priests and bishops.⁴¹ The latter part of the charge may be ascribed to the treacherous voice of fame, as it is unsupported by the testimony of any other more ancient or more recent writer: the origin of the former may be fairly deduced from the ignorance and the iniquity of the times. Repeated massacres had almost extinguished the higher orders of the hierarchy: in several places the parochial and cathedral clergy had entirely disappeared: and necessity compelled the bishops to select candidates for the priesthood from the inferior clerks, of whom many, without infringing the ecclesiastical canons, had embraced the state of marriage.⁴² Perhaps the bishops, conceiving themselves justified by the pressure of circumstances, and the example of the primitive church, exacted from them no promise of continency: perhaps it was sometimes exacted, but not always observed: and an acquaintance with the records of the age will show, that these suppositions have not been hastily assumed.⁴³ Certain, however, it is, that from this period we observe married clergymen performing the functions of the priesthood in the Saxon church; and, though the ancient prohibitions were frequently enforced, under the penalty of the loss of ecclesiastical benefices, and the deprivation of Christian burial, the disease was too deeply rooted in the human constitution, to be eradicated by the severest remedies. Though often suppressed, it as often reappeared. I must, however, add, that after the most minute investigation, I cannot discover the married clergy to have been as numerous as the policy of some writers has prompted them to assert; nor do I believe that the Anglo-Saxon history, even in the most calamitous periods, can furnish a single instance of a priest who ventured to marry after his ordination.⁴⁴

A second and almost incurable wound was inflicted on the discipline of the age, by the dissolution of the clerical monasteries and the conversion of the conventual clergy into secular canons. By living in communities, and regulating their conduct according to the decisions of certain rules, the ecclesiastics had been with-

⁴¹ See Flodoard, l. iv. c. 5, p. 612, 613.

⁴² Such appears to have been the situation of the clergy of Lindisfarne. They were reduced at last, to the few clerks who carried the body of St. Cuthbert, and these were afterwards raised to the priesthood. Compare p. 107. 113. 143. St. Epiphanius assigns the same reason for the toleration of married priests, in some dioceses of the ancient church. *τὸ οὐκ ἔστιν ἰσχυρὸν τὸ κανὼν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὸν ἰσχυρὸν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ κληρὸν εὐθυμίσασαν διανοιαν, καὶ τὸ πλῆθος ἐπέκειν, μὴ ὀρίσκειμένης ὑπερβολῆς.* *Hæres.* 59, p. 496.

⁴³ Wilk. p. 225. 229. 233. Sim. p. 170.

⁴⁴ In the *Antiquitates Britannicæ Ecclesiæ*, of Archbishop Parker, and the *Præsules Anglicani*, of Bishop Godwin, the eye is fatigued with the constant repetition of *Sacerdotes in conjugio legitimo pie viventes*; and Spelman and Wilkins are careful to prefix so grateful a phrase to the title and prefaces of the charters which they have published. They should, however, to prevent mistakes, have informed their readers, that this expression is of modern date, and has been recently prefixed to ancient records, in order to supply the deficiency of the original text.

drawn from the commerce of the world, and more strictly confined to the discharge of their religious duties. By the invasion of the Danes most of these confraternities were dispersed; and their members, in the families of their friends and relatives, acquired a love of pleasure, a spirit of independence, and a contempt of regular discipline. Of the younger clerks, some adopted the married state, nor was there any canon which condemned their conduct: others plunged with precipitation into the vices of the age, and by their licentiousness shocked the piety of their more fervent brethren. The restoration of tranquillity invited the survivors to return to their monasteries: but the yoke which their virtue had formerly rendered light, now pressed on the shoulders of many as an intolerable burden. In several instances they ventured to emancipate themselves from the restraints of ancient discipline, divided among themselves the revenues of their churches, lived in separate families, and confined themselves solely to the obligation of assisting daily in the choir during the public worship. Even this obligation was soon despised: they accepted the vicarious services of others; and retired to the farms attached to their respective prebends. To indulge in ease and indolence seemed to be their principal object: and the care of serving the Almighty was abandoned to the industry of mercenary substitutes.⁴⁵

3. While the reputation of the clergy was thus obscured by their ignorance and degeneracy, the monastic profession had rapidly sunk into insignificance and contempt. There was scarce a monastery, which had escaped the visits of the invaders; and the devastation which had been begun by the rapacity of the Danes, was completed by the policy of the Saxon princes. To replenish their treasuries, exhausted by the continuance of the war, the monastic possessions presented an easy and adequate expedient; and while a considerable portion was annexed to the royal domains, the remainder was divided among the retainers of the prince.⁴⁶ Of the monks who had survived the ruin of their convents, many engaged in secular professions, some re-

⁴⁵ See the Saxon Chronicle, (p. 117,) Osbern, (Vit. Duns. p. 112,) Eadmer, (Vit. Duns. p. 219,) Annales Ecclesiæ Wintoniæ, (p. 288.)

⁴⁶ The torch of Hymen has enabled Archbishop Parker to discover secrets, placed far beyond the unassisted ken of mortals. He gravely informs his readers, that the destruction of the monasteries was ordained by Providence, as a punishment for the diabolic superstition of the monks: and that the prosperity enjoyed by Alfred and his immediate successors, was granted by Heaven, as a reward for the pious marriages of the clergy. (*Hæc licuit in medium proferre ut occultum Dei judicium in obruendis monachorum cultibus superstitiosis et diabolicis . . . probe animadvertamus. Monachorum loco succedebant presbyteri, qui in conjugio legitimo pie vivebant. Tunc vero Deus Opt. Max. prebuit se magis mitem atque placabilem erga Anglicanam gentem.* Ant. Brit. fol. 72, 73.) It was unfortunate for the primate, that he could not change the fate of Edwin, the patron of the clergy, for that of Edgar, the protector of the monks. But all parties have had their bigots.

tired to the churches which were still served by the clergy, and a few endeavoured to re-establish and perpetuate the institute.⁴⁷ But their efforts were ineffectual: and poverty, or the difficulty of procuring proselytes, compelled them to relinquish the fruitless object.⁴⁸ The days were past, when kings were ambitious to exchange the crown for the cowl. That ferocity of manners, which constant habits of warfare had inspired, equally despised the milder pleasures of society and the duties of religion: no profession could command respect but that of arms; and the monastic institute was condemned, as calculated only for mercenaries and slaves.⁴⁹ When Alfred re-ascended the throne, he endeavoured to raise the order from the obscurity in which it languished; and selected for the attempt the memorable spot, which had concealed him from the pursuit of the Danes. But it was easier to found the monastery of Ethelingeay, than to people it with inhabitants. Among his subjects no one would condescend to put on the monastic habit.⁵⁰ He was compelled to collect a colony of monks from the monasteries in Gaul, and to the strangers he added a competent number of foreign children, who by their education might acquire a predilection for the institute, and by their future choice might ensure its existence.⁵¹ Whether the success of the king was answerable to his zeal, we are not informed: but circumstances have transpired to justify a suspicion that some of the foreigners soon resigned, perhaps never possessed, the true spirit of their profession. Their superior was John of Old Saxony, a priest of distinguished talents, and one of the royal instructors. His prudent severity incurred the hatred of the more worthless among his subjects: two of the number formed the horrid design of murdering their abbot; and some of their countrymen, who were servants in the monastery, engaged to be the ministers of their vengeance. At the hour of midnight, the old man arose in silence according to his custom, entered the choir by a private door, and threw himself on his knees before the altar. This was the opportunity which the assassins expected. While his attention was absorbed in prayer, they darted on their unsuspecting victim, and plunged their dag-

⁴⁷ Ingul. p. 27. 32.

⁴⁸ The monks of Croyland amounted to thirty, after the retreat of the Danes. Instead of multiplying, they gradually dwindled away by desertion and death, till, in the reign of Edred, the whole community consisted of the abbot and two monks. Id. p. 29.

⁴⁹ Nullum de sua propria gente nobilem ac liberum hominem, qui monasticam voluntarie vellet subire vitam, habebat. Nimirum quia per multa retroacta annorum curricula monasticæ vitæ desiderium ab ea toto gente desierat Propter divitiarum abundantiam multo magis id genus despectum monasticæ vitæ fieri existimo. Asser, p. 62.

⁵⁰ Asser, *ibid.*

⁵¹ Comparavit etiam quamplurimos ejusdem gentis Gallicæ, e quibus quosdam infantes in eodem monasterio edoceri imperavit, et subsequenti tempore ad monachicum habitum sublevari. Id. *ibid.*

gers in his body. His cries alarmed the monks: they crowded to the church; and discovered their abbot weltering in blood. The murderers had escaped to the neighbouring woods. They were pursued, and, together with their employers, received the punishment due to their crime.⁵²

By the death of Alfred the monastic order lost a powerful and zealous protector. During the reigns of his immediate successors, some feeble attempts were made to restore the order to its former celebrity; and the origin of several monasteries is referred by their respective historians to this doubtful period. But their existence is denied by the positive testimony of King Edgar: and unless we accuse that prince of sacrificing the truth to his vanity, we must believe that under the reigns of his predecessors every monastic establishment was abolished.⁵³ The Anglo-Saxons, who, before the time of St. Dunstan, aspired to the merit of monachism, either contented themselves with receiving the habit from the hands of a bishop, and leading an anachoretical life amid the ruins of some deserted abbey, or quitted their native country, and in the most celebrated of the foreign monasteries laboured to imbibe the spirit, and practise the duties of their profession. Fleury was their principal resort: and when the order was afterwards revived in England, from that monastery were imported most of the regulations and the teachers of monastic discipline.⁵⁴

The communities of religious women had not suffered less than those of the men from the ravages of the barbarians: but they were restored with greater success under the patronage of Alfred and his queen, Alswitha. The nunnery of Shaftesbury was founded by the prince: that of St. Mary at Winchester by his royal consort. To people these houses, it was not necessary to solicit the assistance of foreigners. The Saxon ladies viewed

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *Temporibus antecessorum meorum, regum Anglorum, monasteria tam monachorum quam virginum destructa (et) penitus rejecta in tota Anglia erant.* Wilk. p. 239. Asser informs us, that in his days no one observed the monastic rule, (nullo tamen regulam illius vitæ ordinabiliter tenente. Asser, p. 62.) And Wolstan, the contemporary author of the life of St. Ethelwold, observes, that when that prelate was made bishop of Winchester, the only monks in England were those whom St. Dunstan had established at Abingdon and Glastonbury. (Nam hactenus ea tempestate non habebantur monachi in gente Anglorum, nisi tantum qui in Glestonia morabantur et Abbandonia. Wolst. in Act. Bened. sæc. v. p. 615.)

⁵⁴ Hist. Abend. p. 165. The saints, Dunstan, Oswald, &c., were educated at Fleury, familiari per id tempus Anglis consuetudine, ut si qui boni afflati essent desiderio in beatissimi Benedicti monasterio cœnobiale suscepissent habitum, a quo religionis hujuscemodi manavit exordium. Malm. de Pont. l. iii. f. 153. Does the relative *quo* refer to St. Benedict or the monastery? The claims of each antecedent have been fiercely maintained. Those who admit the antiquity of the Benedictine institute, have decided in favour of the saint: its adversaries are equally positive for the monastery, (Broughton, p. 420.)

Non nostrum est tantas componere lites.

the retirement of the cloister with less prejudice than the men : and the birth, as well as the virtues, of the first abbesses cast an inviting lustre on the profession. As soon as Alfred had completed the convent at Shaftesbury, his daughter, Ethelgeova, assumed the government of the infant establishment ; and several females of the first distinction hastened to profess themselves her disciples.⁵⁵ Alswitha envied the tranquil situation of her daughter : at the death of Alfred she retired to the abbey of St. Mary, and her declining years were solaced by the company and the rising virtues of her grand-daughter, Eadburga. The history of Eadburga is curious. It was the early wish of her father, King Edward, to devote her to the cloister : but to consign to perpetual confinement an infant who was yet unable to choose for herself, was an idea that staggered his resolution.⁵⁶ He hesitated, and, after some deliberation, committed the decision of his scruples to a singular and most uncertain experiment. Eadburga (she was but three years old) was conducted into a chamber, in one corner of which had previously been placed a collection of female trinkets, in another a chalice with the book of the gospels. It so chanced that the child ran to the latter ; and her father, clasping her in his arms, exclaimed, "Thou shalt receive the object of thy choice ; nor will thy parents regret, if they yield to thee in virtue." She was intrusted to the care of the nuns at Winchester, with whom she spent a long course of years, eminent among her sisters for her tender piety, and extraordinary self-abasement.⁵⁷

In the succeeding reigns the number of convents continually increased. The deportment of the nuns was regular and edifying : but the quality of the abbesses, and the riches they possessed, induced them to assume a pomp which ill accorded with the ideas of those who admired the poverty of the ancient monks. When Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester, was labouring to revive the original discipline of the Benedictine institute, he saw at court the abbess Editha, daughter of King Edgar. Her dress was splen-

⁵⁵ In quo monasterio propriam filiam Æthelgeovam devotam Deo virginem Abbatisam constituit : cum qua etiam aliæ multæ nobiles moniales in monastica vita Deo servientes in eodem monasterio habitant. Asser, p. 64.

⁵⁶ The custom of offering children to be devoted for life to the monastic or clerical profession, was early adopted in the Christian church, in imitation of the oblation of the prophet Samuel, in the temple of Jerusalem. The idea that the determination of his parents was no less binding on the child, than the voluntary profession of adults, was first embraced in the sixth century, (Bing. vol. i. p. 255,) and followed till the pontificate of Celestin III., who, according to the more ancient discipline, permitted the child at a certain age to decide for himself. (See Mabillon vet. anal. p. 157. Excerpt. Egb. apud Wilk. p. 107. Nat. Alex. tom. vi. p. 102. 143. 591.) Numerous examples of this practice occur in our ancient writers. (See Bede, l. iii. c. 24. Alc. de Pont. Ebor. v. 1416. Hist. Ram. p. 495. 497. 499.) The ceremony of the oblation may be seen in St. Benedict's Rule, (c. 59,) and Lanfranc's Constitutions. (Wilk. p. 355.)

⁵⁷ Malm. de Reg. l. ii. c. xiii. f. 50. De Pont. l. ii. f. 140.

did, and shocked the austere notions of the prelate. "Daughter," he observed to her, "the spouse whom you have chosen, delights not in external pomp. It is the heart which he demands." "True, father," replied the abbess, "and my heart I have given him. While he possesses it he will not be offended with external pomp."⁵⁸ Editha might with justice be permitted to make the reply. Within the walls of her convent she was distinguished by the austerity of her life; and her profuse donations to the indigent demonstrated the solidity of her virtue. After her death the Saxon church enrolled her name in the catalogue of the saints. Nor has her reputation been confined within the limits of her own country: she is commemorated with peculiar praise in the Roman martyrology.

⁵⁸ Malm. de Reg. l. ii. c. xiii. f. 50. Gotselin. vit. St. Eadgithæ apud SS. Bened. sæc. v. p. 637.

CHAPTER XII.

Restoration of Ecclesiastical Discipline—St. Dunstan—he is raised to the See of Canterbury—reproves Edgar—opposes the Pontiff—restores the Monks—reforms the Clergy—Council of Calne.

To have been praised by the monastic historians is, in the estimation of modern writers, the infallible criterion of demerit: and their superior discernment has politely divided the whole body of our Catholic ancestors into two classes—of knaves, who, under the mask of sanctity, sought to satisfy their avarice; and of fools, who credulously condescended to be the dupes of their hypocrisy. Among the former they have allotted a distinguished place to the celebrated St. Dunstan. He was long revered as the ornament and pride of the Anglo-Saxon nation: and the laurels which the gratitude of his contemporaries had planted on his grave, were, during more than six centuries, respected by the veneration of their posterity. But since the era of the reformation, his fame has been repeatedly assailed by a host of writers, who, if we may believe their confident assertions, have torn away the veil, which he had artfully thrown over his real character, and have proved it to be a compound of fraud, ambition, and injustice.¹ The merit of their discoveries I shall have occasion to discuss in the sequel of this chapter, which is designed to review the conduct of Dunstan in his attempts to revive the study of literature, to reform the national manners, and to restore the monastic order. In describing his actions I shall follow no other guide than his ancient biographers: with the secret history of his breast I have not, like modern historians, the good fortune to be acquainted. My narrative will prove, perhaps, less amusing: it will not be less accurate. The writer who indulges his fancy in speculations on the unknown motives of ancient characters,² will frequently wander from the boundaries of truth, till he is bewildered in the mazes of fiction.

¹ See Rapin, (Hist. vol. i. p. 104. 107.) Carte, (vol. i. p. 327.) Hume, (vol. i. p. 78.) and Henry, (vol. iii. p. 102, 267.) With these writers I am sorry to number the recent historian of the Anglo-Saxons. As, in other parts of his history, he excels all his predecessors in industry and accuracy; so, in his account of St. Dunstan, he has improved their incoherent fables into a well-connected romance. Turner, vol. iii. p. 132—191.

² "The life of Dunstan appears an interesting subject for philosophic contemplation." Id. vol. ii. pref. p. viii. The most ancient account of St. Dunstan was written by a contemporary author, the initial of whose name was B. Mabillon conjectures him to have been Bridferth, the monk of Ramsey. He published the prologue or dedication to Archbishop Ælfric, from a MS. belonging to the monastery of St. Vedast, at Arras. Act. Bened. sæc. v. p. 654. The whole work was afterwards published by the

I shall not retard the curiosity of the reader by transcribing the miraculous circumstances with which the pen of Osbern has adorned the birth of his hero. The merit of Dunstan requires not the aid of fable. His family was noble, and claimed a remote alliance with the kings of Wessex. From the Irish clergymen, who served the church of Glastonbury, he received the first rudiments of learning;³ and at an early period of life discovered those abilities, which afterwards raised him to so high a pre-eminence above his contemporaries. Before he quitted the roof of his instructors, he was possessed of every acquirement which that age thought honourable or fashionable. To the familiar use of the Latin tongue he joined a competent knowledge of philosophy: the Holy Scriptures and the works of the ancient fathers were the subjects of his assiduous meditation: and his proficiency in the various arts of music, painting, engraving, and working in the metals, as it was more easily appreciated, was universally and deservedly applauded.

With these accomplishments, Dunstan was introduced by his uncle Athelm, archbishop of Canterbury, to the notice of king Athelstan.⁴ His conduct at court did not obscure his former reputation: but the favour of the prince alarmed the jealousy of his competitors: suspicions injurious to his character were whispered in the royal ear; and after a short struggle he was compelled to retire from the prospect which had just opened to his ambition, and to conceal himself in the house of his relation, Elphege, bishop of Winchester. During his disgrace, the unsuccessful courtier had leisure to meditate on the instability of his former pursuits, and to fix the plan of his future conduct. His choice was anxiously suspended between the two opposite states of celibacy and marriage; whether he should make a second attempt to obtain distinction in the world, or embrace, with its austerities, the abject profession of a monk. It is on the bed of sickness that the hopes and fears of religion most powerfully exert their influence. The irresolution of Dunstan was protracted till a severe indisposition led him to the brink of the grave: but the prospect of death added new weight to the arguments in favour of a religious life: and at his recovery he received from the hands of the bishop the order of priesthood with the monastic habit, and was appointed by him to officiate in the

Bollandists, Maii, tom. iv. p. 346. The same life is in a MS. of the Cotton library, Cleop. B. 13.

³ MS. Cleop. B. 13. Osbern vit. Duns. p. 91. The monk adds a curious observation respecting the frequent peregrinations of the Irish. "Hicque mos cum plerosque tum vehementer adhuc manet Hibernos: quia quod aliis bona voluntas in consuetudinem, hæc illis consuetudo vertit in naturam." Ibid.

⁴ This circumstance, which is attested by Adelard and Osbern, proves that he must have been born before the accession of Athelstan, though the contrary is asserted by the Saxon Chronicle, (p. 111,) and Osbern, (p. 90.)

the church in which he had spent the earlier portion of his youth.⁵

At Glastonbury his life was that of a man, who devotes his whole attention to the faithful discharge of his duties, and looks for the only reward of his piety in the testimony of his own conscience, and the approbation of the Supreme Being.⁶ His reputation, however, reached the ears of Ethelfleda, a widow lady of royal descent, and extensive property. She visited the recluse, was charmed with his conversation, and learned to revere his virtues. He was soon intrusted with the direction of her conscience, and at her death was left the heir to her property. Had the mind of Dunstan thirsted after riches, it might now have been satisfied. The wealth of Ethelfleda had already raised him to an equality with the proudest of his former opponents, when the decease of his father Heorstan, placed at his disposal the patrimonial estates of his family. But his retirement from the world had subdued his passions. The profession of poverty, which he had embraced, was sacred in his eyes; and he scrupulously divided both his own patrimony, and the property of Ethelfleda, between the church and the poor.⁷

Soon after the death of Athelstan, Dunstan was drawn from the obscurity of his cell. At the prayer of Edmund, the next king, he condescended to visit and edify the court: his compliance was rewarded by the gift of the royal palace and manor of Glastonbury: and the establishment of a colony of monks showed the purity of his views, in the acceptance of the present.⁸ The friendship of Edmund was surpassed by the veneration of

⁵ In the history of the Anglo-Saxons, this determination is ascribed to ambition. Unsuccessful in the world, Dunstan resolved to try his fortune in the church; and, to conceal his views from the curiosity of the public, assumed the garb of superior sanctity. The long train of reasoning, by which the writer endeavours to support this hypothesis, is ingeniously, but fancifully deduced from this simple circumstance, that Dunstan's cell at Glastonbury was narrow, dark, and inconvenient. See Mr. Turner, vol. iii. p. 146.

⁶ The story of the nocturnal conflict with the devil, was unknown to the contemporary writer of his life. (MS. Cleop. B. 13.) It is first related by Osbern, an injudicious biographer, whose anile credulity collected and embellished every fable. (Osb. p. 96.) It is repeated by Mr. Turner, (vol. iii. p. 146:) but that historian has artfully woven it into his own system, by representing it as a contrivance, by which Dunstan hoped to attract notice. He has, however, forgotten to inform the reader, that this part of his narrative rests not on ancient, but on his own authority.

⁷ MS. Cleop. B. 13. Osb. p. 98, 99. So niggard is Mr. Turner of his praise, that even this action cannot extort his approbation. His sagacity suspects that it was merely a bait to catch applause; (vol. iii. p. 147.)

Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcumque infundis, acescit.

⁸ Osb. p. 101. MS. Cleop. p. 72. The manner of his induction is thus related by a writer, who was almost his contemporary. Rex apprehensa ejus dextera, causa placationis seu etiam dignitatis osculatus est illum, ducensque ad sacerdotalem cathedram, et imponens illum in eam, dixit: esto sedis istius princeps, potensque inceptor. Ibid. He introduced the Benedictine rule, and was the first English abbot. Primus abbas Angliæ nationis enituit. Ibid.

Edred, his brother and successor. To the prudence of Dunstan, that prince resigned the government of his conscience, his finances, and his kingdom: and to reward his services, offered him the rich and important bishopric of Winchester. The motives of his refusal did honour to the modesty of his virtue. He feared, was his reply, the severe responsibility attached to the episcopal dignity, and dared not accept an office, the obligations of which he could not accurately discharge, as long as he retained his situation near the king.⁹ Edred admired his humility, and reluctantly yielded, not to his reasons, but to his entreaties.

Edred was succeeded by Edwin, a boy whose age had not yet reached the sixteenth year, but whose character was already marked by the impetuosity of his passions. On the day of his coronation, when the nobility and clergy had been invited to partake of the royal feast, he abruptly rose from table, and precipitated himself into a neighbouring apartment, where he was expected by two ladies, Ethelgiva and Elgiva, the mother and the daughter.¹⁰ If we may listen to the scandal of the age, chastity was not their favourite virtue: nor did their visit to the royal youth originate in the most delicate motives.¹¹ A general murmur spoke the indignation of the company: at their request, the abbot of Glastonbury, with the prelate Kynsey, entered the chamber; and the unwilling prince was persuaded or compelled to resume his seat. By the language of modern prejudice, the share which Dunstan bore in this transaction, has been magnified into an attempt to subdue the spirit of the king, and a daring insult to the regal authority: more moderate readers may, perhaps, feel inclined to applaud the promptitude, with which he endeavoured to smother the first sparks of discontent, and taught his pupil to respect the laws of decorum.¹²

⁹ MS. Cleop. Osb. p. 103. If on this occasion Dunstan could deceive the king, he was unable to deceive Mr. Turner, who has discovered that he refused the bishopric, because Canterbury and not Winchester was the object of his ambition. Vol. iii. p. 150. Yet most of the archbishops of that period were translated to the metropolitanical, from an inferior see.

¹⁰ The name of the mother was *Æthelgiva*, (sic erat nomen ignominiosæ mulieris. MS. Cleop. p. 76.) That of the daughter was *Elgiva*, as will appear from the sequel.

¹¹ *Huic quædam natione præcelsa, inepta tamen mulier per nefandum familiaritatis lenocinium sectando inhærebat, eotenus videlicet quo sese vel etiam natam suam sub conjugali titulo illi innectendo sociaret. Quas ille, ut aiunt, alternatim, quod jam pudet dicere, turpi palpatu et absque pudore utriusque libidinose tractavit—Repente prosiluit lascivus ad prædictum scelus lenocinii—invenerunt illum inter utrasque volutantem. MS. Cleop. p. 76. Duarum feminarum illic eum opperientium stupri ardore succensus. Osb. p. 83. In complexum ganæ devolutus. Malm. l. ii. c. vii. f. 30.* The reader must excuse these quotations. It was necessary to oppose them to the contrary assertions of modern writers.

¹² In support of this statement I have to contend against Carte, who has brought into the field a formidable auxiliary, William of Malmesbury. But if I can divest the monk of his modern armour, his efforts will be harmless. Let the reader compare the Latin original with Carte's English translation. The ambiguous expression, *proxime cognata*

From this day the influence of Dunstan rapidly declined. The prodigality of Edwin regretted the treasures which, during the last reign, had been expended in religious foundations: his restless spirit bore with impatience the restraint of his tutor; and his impetuosity was stimulated by the enmity of Ethelgiva. Dunstan was suddenly deprived of his offices at court, and banished to his monastery. But this disgrace did not satisfy the resentment of the woman. The monks of Glastonbury were urged to rebel against their abbot; threats of personal violence were sounded in his ears; and it was with difficulty he eluded the keen pursuit of his enemies.¹³ Arnulf, earl of Flanders, received and protected the fugitive. With his permission Dunstan retired to the monastery of St. Peter's at Ghent, whose inhabitants were flattered by the choice of their guest, and long cherished the remembrance of his virtues.

The vengeance of Ethelgiva was ingenious and persevering. In his retreat Dunstan was secure from the sword of the assassin; but he could feel the ruin of the societies which he had so earnestly laboured to establish. His two abbeys of Glastonbury and Abingdon were dissolved; and the monks whom he had carefully trained to the duties of their profession, were cast on the world without friends or support. But her triumph was quickly terminated by the disgrace of exile, and, after a short period, by the pangs of a cruel death. The respect due to her birth had long been effaced by the licentiousness of her conduct; and the great council of the nation had endeavoured to interrupt her familiarity with the king, by the threat of the most ignominious punishment.¹⁴ Their admonitions she despised, and bade defiance to their resentment. Her connexion with the royal youth continued till she was seized by a party of soldiers, branded in the forehead with a hot iron, and conveyed out of the kingdom.¹⁵ Her disgrace, however, did not correct the vices of Edwin. The public discontent was daily augmented by his follies and extravagance: all the provinces to the north of the

tam invadens uxorem ejus formæ (vel forma) deperibat, Carte boldly renders, "the king had married a wife nearly related to him:" the decisive line, *prorupit in triclinium in complexum ganæ devolutus*, is softened into an innocent visit "to the queen's apartment:" *lascivientem juvenem*, means no more than "playing at romps with his wife and her mother:" and *pellicem repudiare* is improved into a "divorce from his wife." (Carte, vol. i. p. 325. Malm. l. ii. c. 7, f. 30.) Hume condescended to re-echo the opinions of this historian; Henry inherited his art of translation.

¹³ *Parentela mulieris prosequens Sancti oculos eruere disponebat.* Wallingford, p. 543, MS. Cleop. p. 77.

¹⁴ *Suspendii comminatione percussat.* Osb. p. 83. The *witena gemot* was the supreme judicial tribunal among the Saxons.

¹⁵ That this punishment was inflicted in consequence of a judicial sentence is obscurely hinted by the historian, (*perpetua exilii relegatione*, Osb. p. 84,) though he ascribes it to Archbishop Odo: probably because, in the absence of the king, that prelate presided in the assembly of the nobility and clergy.

Humber transferred their allegiance to his brother Edgar; and none but the men of Kent and Wessex were willing to draw the sword in his favour.¹⁶ While the country was ravaged by the flames of civil war, Ethelgiva ventured to return; but she chose an inauspicious moment, when her lover was fleeing with precipitation from the pursuit of the insurgents. It was her misfortune to fall into their hands; and they, abusing the license of victory, cruelly cut the nerves and muscles of her legs, which speedily occasioned her death.¹⁷

The dispute between the royal brothers was at last terminated in an assembly of the witan; and the rivers Thames and Severn were selected for the boundary of their respective dominions.¹⁸ But Edwin did not long survive the partition; and at his death the whole Anglo-Saxon monarchy was united under the government of Edgar.¹⁹ He was careful to recall the abbot of Glastonbury from banishment, received him with expressions of the warmest friendship, and gradually advanced him to the highest ecclesiastical dignities.²⁰ In contrasting the past with the subsequent

¹⁶ Who were the authors of the insurrection? *Odo and the monks*, exclaim a host of writers, whose credulity condescends to re-echo a calumny, sprung from the rancour of religious controversy. That the sufferings of the monks might teach them to wish for a change of government, is not unnatural: that they excited or abetted the revolt, cannot be deduced from the narrative of any ancient writer. The order at this period was fallen too low to effect so important a revolution; and the only monks in England, whose existence is certain, (*Wolst. vit. Ethel. p. 615. Ang. Sac. vol. ii. p. 105.*) and whose wrongs are recorded, were those of Abingdon and Glastonbury, monasteries situated in the provinces which continued faithful to Edwin. The framers of the accusation should at least inform us, by what strange fatality it happened, that the insurrection burst out in the provinces in which its authors possessed no influence, and did not exist in those in which they did. As for Odo, I know not why his name is added, except because it is enrolled in the calendar of the saints. He lived and died the subject of Edwin.—The most ancient account of the origin of the insurrection is comprised in these words. *Factum est autem ut rex præfatus in prætereuntibus annis penitus a brumali populo relinqueretur contemptus, quum in commisso regimine insipienter egisset, sagaces et sapientes odio vanitatis disperdens, et ignaros quosque sibi consimiles studio dilectionis adsciscens.* MS. Cleop. p. 78.

¹⁷ I am not disposed to apologize for the assassins of Ethelgiva, or to justify her death: though I believe that, according to the stern maxims of Saxon jurisprudence, a person returning without permission from banishment, might be executed without the formality of a trial. But is it evident that the primate, as is generally asserted, was privy to her death? Osbern, from whom alone posterior writers derive their information, in his life of Odo says she was taken and hamstrung by his retainers: in his life of Dunstan he attributes it solely to the insurgents of Mercia. If the first account be true, it does not convict, if the second, it acquits the archbishop. See note (V).

¹⁸ *Sicque universo populo testante publica res regum ex definitione sagacium segregata est, ut famosum flumen Tamese regnum disterneret amborum.* MS. Cleop. p. 78. Wallingford, p. 543. *Mat. West. an. 957.* These passages might, perhaps, have relieved the doubts, in which the partition of the kingdom has involved the casuistry of Collier. *Church Hist. vol. i. p. 183.*

¹⁹ *Ab utroque populo electus suscepti.* MS. Cleop. p. 78.

²⁰ Henry is so desirous that the blame of the insurrection should attach to Dunstan, that he represents him as returning from exile before this period, and placing Edgar by his intrigues on the throne of Mercia. (*Hist. vol. iii. p. 103.*) Yet every ancient writer asserts that he did not return, till Edgar had obtained the undisputed possession

conduct of Dunstan, his ambition has been severely lashed by the zeal or the intemperance of several modern writers. But it does not necessarily follow, that the man acts inconsistently, who at one period of life accepts an office, which at another he had refused : and the apparent change in his sentiments may be fairly ascribed to the revolutions of the system in which he finds himself placed. The modesty of Dunstan yielded to the importunity of the king, or the necessities of the church : as they became vacant, he accepted the bishoprics of Worcester and of London ; and from them ascended, by the forced or voluntary retreat of Archbishop Brihtelm, to the metropolitan throne of Canterbury.²¹ This rapid acquisition of wealth and power did not relax that vigour of character, which had distinguished Dunstan in an inferior station. Faithful to what he conceived to be the true interests of religion, he permitted no consideration to allure him from the strict line of duty ; and on more than one occasion compelled both the king and the pontiff to recede from their pretensions, and bend to the equity of his decisions. The passions of Edgar were not less violent, though perhaps less obstinate, than those of his unfortunate brother. The monkish writers, whose credit has been impeached by modern prejudice, but whose veracity is strongly supported by the fidelity with which they record the vices of their greatest patron, have transmitted to us the history of his amours : and the efforts of the archbishop to restrain and to correct the passions of his sovereign, do honour to his courage and his virtue. In the convent of Wilton, Edgar had dared to violate the chastity of a noble female, who resided with the nuns, and who, to elude his passion, had covered herself with the veil of one of the sisters. The infamy of the royal ravisher was speedily divulged ; but, confident in his own power, he affected to despise the censure of the public. Dunstan received the news with the keenest anguish. As the guardian of religion, and the keeper of the royal conscience, he repaired to the court ; represented in strong but respectful language the enormity of the sin ; and demanded satisfaction for the insult which had been offered to the sanctity of the cloister. The heart of Edgar was softened : with tears he acknowledged his guilt, and professed himself ready to perform whatever penance the prelate might impose. That penance was severe.²² During seven years he laid aside his crown, the

of the crown. MS. Cleos. p. 79. Chron. Sax. p. 117. Osb. p. 107. Wigorn. p. 605. West. p. 196.

²¹ Post hunc Byrhtelmus, Dorsatensium provisor, Dorobernensis præsul eligitur, qui nimis mansuetus pro reprimendis malis, jussus est a rege relictam dignitatem rursus recipere providendam. MS. Cleop.

²² If the reader wish to see a specimen of historical accuracy, he may consult the account of this transaction in Hume, (c. 2. p. 86.) "Edgar," says that writer, "broke into a convent," (he went there on a visit. Eadem. p. 218,) "carried off Editha," (her name

ensign of his dignity, and exhibited to his subjects the edifying spectacle of a penitent king : he observed a rigorous fast twice in each week; distributed to the poor the treasures which he had inherited from his father ; and, to atone for the scandal which he had given, erected and endowed an opulent monastery for religious virgins. Dunstan had added two other conditions, with which he also complied ; that he should publish a code of laws for the more impartial administration of justice, and transmit, at his own expense, to the different counties, copies of the Holy Scriptures for the instruction of the people.²³

In this transaction it may, perhaps, be said, that Dunstan acted merely from the respect which he bore his own character. But the purity of his motives may be lawfully inferred from the uprightness of his conduct on other occasions, when, without the prospect of glory or the fear of infamy, he hesitated not to dare the resentment of the pontiff as freely as that of the king. A nobleman, distinguished by rank and opulence, had taken to his bed a near relation ; and Dunstan had repeatedly admonished him to dissolve the incestuous connection. It was in vain that the marriage was annulled, and the sentence of excommunication excluded the culprit from the society of the faithful. Secure behind the protection of Edgar, he despised the thunders of the metropolitan, and appealed from the injustice of the Saxon, to the equity of the Roman bishop. The credulity of the pontiff was surprised, and Dunstan received a papal mandate to revoke his censures, and restore the offender to his former privileges. "I will obey," was the reply of the inflexible prelate, "when I shall see him sorry for his crime. But God forbid that I consent to transgress the divine law for the love or fear of any mortal man, or the preservation of my life." The firmness of this answer astonished and overcame the nobleman. He separated

was Wulfrith ; her daughter by Edgar was Editha. Malm. de Reg. l. c. 8. f. 33,) "a nun," (she was pupil to the nuns. Inter sanctimoniales non velata nutriebatur. Eadm. p. 218. Certum est non tunc sanctimoniale fuisse sed puellam laicam. Malm. ibid. et de Pon. l. ii. f. 143,) "by force, and even committed violence on her person. That he might reconcile himself to the church, he was obliged, not to separate himself from his mistress," (they did separate, and Wulfrith became a nun in the same convent. Malm. de Pont. l. ii. f. 143. Gotselin. in vit. Edith. p. 637,) "but to abstain from wearing his crown during seven years, and to deprive himself so long of that vain ornament:" (that this was but the smallest part of his penance may be seen above.) The historian may have been misled in some of the circumstances by an ambiguous expression of Malmsbury, (ibid. f. 33 :) but it was his duty to have collated the different passages ; and not to have incautiously imposed on himself, and insulted the credulity of his readers.

²³ If this be true, I do not see why the papistic prelate Dunstan has not as good a claim to the honours of a *reformer* as either Alfred or Ælfric. See the curious remark of Wise in his letter to Mores, Comment. de Ælfr. p. xxix. But I suspect the true reading in Osborn to be ; *justas legum rationes sanciret, sancitas conscriberet, scriptas per omnes fines imperii sui populis custodiendas mandaret*, instead of *sanctas conscriberet scripturas*, as the words stand in the printed copies.

from the object of his passion, and submitted to ask forgiveness in a public synod. The primate, charmed with his obedience and the sincerity of his repentance, raised him from the ground, gave him the kiss of peace, and admitted him to the participation of the sacraments.²⁴

It could not be expected, that, under a metropolitan of this unbending character, the vices of the clergy would be suffered to escape unnoticed or unpunished. It was, probably, during his banishment, that he first conceived the idea of restoring among his countrymen the severity of the ancient discipline. At that period the prelates of Flanders were industriously engaged in similar attempts; and he had the opportunity of witnessing the success of their exertions. The very monastery in which he resided at Ghent, had, only a few years before, belonged to a society of secular canons: but the irregularity of their conduct had awakened the zeal of the abbot Gerard, and they had been compelled to yield their places to a community of Benedictine monks, who, by their rule, were bound to a greater austerity of life, and by the fate of their predecessors were impelled to a more scrupulous observance of the duties of religion.²⁵ As soon as Dunstan saw himself at the head of the Saxon church, he determined to pursue the same plan: but the ardour of his zeal was tempered by the suggestions of prudence. His first essay was to raise the monastic order from that depreciated state into which it had fallen. At his own expense he founded a convent at Westminster: the monks, who had been expelled by the vengeance of Edwin, were invited to return to the abbeys of Glastonbury and Abingdon: and the zeal of the opulent and the pious was carefully directed to the restoration of the old, and the erection of new monasteries. The most eminent of the order were gradually raised to the highest dignities in the church; and the bishopric of Sherburne was bestowed on Wulfsine, abbot of Westminster, and that of Wells on Brithelm, a monk of Glastonbury. But the two whom he principally honoured with his confidence, were Oswald and Ethelwold. The former, a man of the strictest integrity, was nephew to the late Archbishop Odo, and after resigning the rich deanery of Winchester, had embraced the monastic profession at Fleury in France. At his return his reputation recommended him to the notice of Dunstan, who admired his piety, and resigned to him the bishopric of Worcester. Ethelwold was his beloved disciple. He had imbibed the first rudiments of monastic virtue under the care of

²⁴ Eadm. vit. Dun. p. 215.

²⁵ Eliminata abinde clericorum irreligiositate, licet jactarent sese ventosa nobilitate, melioratis quibusque cœnobitarum religionem non distulit subrogare. Vit. St. Gerar. in Act. Bened. sæc. v. p. 272. It is recorded to the praise of the abbot Gerard, that he reformed in this manner no less than eighteen monasteries. Ibid. p. 273.

Dunstan at Glastonbury: his rapid proficiency was rewarded with the superintendence of the monks at Abingdon; and he was now selected as the most proper person to govern the important see of Winchester.

Though the archbishop could depend on the co-operation of these prelates, he foresaw that the opposition of either the king or the pontiff would prove fatal to his success. But these apprehensions were soon removed. The messengers, who had been despatched to Rome, returned with a favourable answer:²⁶ and Edgar readily promised his protection to an enterprise which he was taught to consider as glorious to himself, and beneficial to his people. Armed with the papal and regal authority, Dunstan summoned a national council, in which the king pronounced (if ever he pronounced) the discourse preserved by the abbot of Rieval.²⁷ With a considerable display of eloquence, he described to the members the degeneracy of the clergy belonging to some of the principal sees; lamented the misapplication of the revenues which the piety of his ancestors had bestowed upon the church; exhorted the prelates to punish the guilty with all the severity of ecclesiastical discipline; and offered to support their decisions with the whole power of the crown. Before the council separated, it was enacted that every priest, deacon, and subdeacon, should be compelled to live chastely, or to resign his benefice: and the execution of this law was intrusted to the zeal of Dunstan, Oswald, and Ethelwold.²⁸ It is, however, observable, that from this moment the archbishop disappears from the scene, and relinquishes to his two associates the whole glory of conducting and completing the enterprise. Whether it was, that the clergy of Canterbury were exempt from the vices ascribed to many of their brethren, or that they were too powerful to be attacked with impunity, he made no effort to expel them from the possession of his cathedral. It was, principally, in the dioceses of Worcester and Winchester that the subjects of complaint existed: and in them the reformers first endeavoured to execute their commission.

Oswald was a prelate of a mild disposition: his heart revolted at the idea of violence, and suggested in its place an innocent but successful artifice. In the vicinity of the cathedral he erected a church to the honour of the virgin Mary, which he intrusted to the custody of a community of monks; and which he frequented himself for the celebration of mass. The presence of the bishop attracted that of the people: the ancient clergy saw their church

²⁶ *Fretus auctoritate Johannis apostolicæ sedis antistitis apud regem obtinuit, quatenus canonici, qui caste vivere nollent, ecclesiis depellerentur, et monachi loco eorum intromitterentur.* Eadm. p. 219. See also his life of St. Oswald, p. 200.

²⁷ *Int. Dec. Scrip. p. 360.* I should rather think it was a declamation composed by some monk, in imitation of the ancient historians.

²⁸ *Eadm. vit. Oswal. p. 200. Wilk. p. 239. 247.*

gradually abandoned ; and after some delay, Wensine, their dean, a man advanced in years, and of an unblemished character, took the monastic habit, and was advanced to the office of prior. The influence of his example, and the honour of his promotion, held out a strong temptation to his brethren. Each week the number of the canons was diminished by repeated desertions ; and at last the principal of the churches of Mercia was transferred, without violence or dispute, from its ancient possessors to the Benedictine monks. The policy of the bishop was admired and applauded by the king.²⁹

To the zeal of Ethelwold was opposed a more vigorous and determined resistance. The clergy of Winchester were the sons of noble families, who discovered an equal reluctance to surrender their pleasures or their preferments. Depending on the influence of their friends, they secretly derided the impotent menaces of the bishop, and publicly eluded his urgent exhortations by repeated but insincere professions of amendment. Still the irregularity of their conduct was such, as would have justified the severest treatment. The ample revenue of their benefices they spent in idleness and luxury : the decorations of the church were neglected ; the celebration of the public worship was abandoned to the zeal of mercenary substitutes : and some, if we may believe the scandal of the times, lived in the open violation of the canons respecting clerical celibacy.³⁰

Ethelwold at last, impatient of delay, requested the royal permission to introduce in their place a colony of monks ; but the conscience of Edgar was, or appeared to be, alarmed : he refused to deprive the clergy of their ancient property ; and advised the bishop to remove the more incorrigible of the canons, and bestow their benefices on those whom they had hitherto procured to perform their duties.³¹ This expedient, however, produced but a temporary amendment. So partial a punishment was, perhaps, regarded as a victory : the new canons adopted the manners of their predecessors : and Edgar at last abandoned them to the severity of their bishop. On a Saturday in lent, during the celebration of mass, Ethelwold, attended by a royal deputy, entered the choir, and throwing on the ground a bundle

²⁹ Edm. p. 202. Hist. Rames. p. 400.

³⁰ Clerici illi, nomine tenus canonici, frequentationem chori, labores vigiliarum, et ab ecclesiæ conspectu plerumque absentis septennio, quidquid de præbendis percipiebant, locis et modis sibi placitis absumebant. Nuda fuit ecclesia intus et extra. Annal. Winton. p. 289. The character given to them by Wolstan, their contemporary, is equally unfavourable. Erant canonici nefandis scelerum moribus implicati, elatione et insolentia, atque luxuria præventi, adeo ut nonnulli eorum dignarentur missas suo ordine celebrare, repudiantes uxores, quas illicite duxerant, et alias accipientes, gula et ebrietati jugiter dediti. Wolstan. vit. Ethel. p. 614.

³¹ Malens per canonicos, quam per aliud genus arctioris religionis, ministrari negotium, ablatas quibusdam eorum præbendas contulit vicariis. Annal. Winton. p. 290.

of cows, addressed the astonished canons :—"The time is come," he exclaimed, "when you must finally determine. Put on the monastic habit, or depart: you have no other choice." Their murmurs were silenced by the presence of the officer, and three reluctantly consented to change their profession.³² The rest retired on sullen discontent. But the humanity of Ethelwold did not abandon them to the privations of poverty: from the episcopal domain he selected the richest and most convenient manors, and assigned them for the support of the ejected clergy.³³ Their places were supplied by a confraternity of monks from the monastery of Abingdon.

Animated by their success, the two prelates proceeded rapidly in the work of reformation and expulsion. At Winchester, the new minster, which had been founded by Alfred the Great, and completed on a more extensive plan by Edward, his successor, was still inhabited by the clergy: but after a decent respite of twelve months, they received an order to depart; and the additional establishment of two abbeys, one for monks, and a second for nuns, confirmed the reign of monachism within the walls of the royal city. The clerical monasteries of Chertsey and Middleton soon shared the same fate: and the abbeys of Ely, Thorney, and Medeshamstede rose from their ashes, and recovered their ancient splendour.³⁴ The services of Ethelwold were not forgotten by the veneration of his brethren. His name was enrolled in the calendar of the saints; his festival was celebrated with every testimony of veneration; and Ælfrie and Wolstan, two monks of Winchester, were employed to pour in his praise the muddy stream of their eloquence.

In the diocese of Worcester, Oswald had recourse again to his favourite artifice; and the canons of Winchelcombe saw themselves gradually moulded into a community of monks. Six other monasteries he erected within the limits of his bishopric; founded with the assistance of the ealdorman Alwyn, the opulent abbey

³² For this transaction see Wolstan, (Vit. S. Ethel. p. 614;) Annales Winton, (p. 289;) Eadmer, (Vit. S. Dunst. p. 219;) Malmesbury, (De Reg. l. ii. c. vii. f. 31; De Pont. l. ii. f. 139.) and Rudborne, (Hist. Mag. p. 218.) The Saxon chronicle only observes, that the canons were ejected because they refused to observe any rule. *fornðan þ hi nolðon nan þezul healban.* Chron. Sax. ann. 963. p. 117.

³³ Malm. de Pont. l. ii. f. 139. Ethelwold was distinguished by his charities. During a destructive famine he employed his servants to discover and support the sufferers; distributed relief to all who were in want; and sold in their favour the plate belonging to the altar, and the silver ornaments of the church. Wolst. p. 617. He was also a great benefactor to his cathedral, which he in a great measure rebuilt, in the year 980. Ibid. p. 621. He afterwards laid the foundations of an additional chapel at the east end, (Nam fundamen ovans a cardine jecit *ooo.* Wolst. Carm. p. 630;) but he lived not to complete it. The work was continued by Elphege, his successor, who added the crypts, which still remain. See a very circumstantial account of both buildings in Wolstan's poem, out of which I shall transcribe the description of the tower and vane erected by Elphege, as a favourable specimen of the abilities of the poet. Note (X).

³⁴ Chron. Sax. ann. 963, 964. p. 117, 118, 122. Wolst. p. 615, 616.

of Ramsey; and restored the ancient discipline in those of St. Alban's and Beamflete.³⁵ The vigour of Oswald and Ethelwold stimulated the tardiness of the other bishops; and Edgar was enabled to boast, that, during the first six years of his reign, no less than seven-and-forty monasteries had been peopled with monks.³⁶

In the language of rival parties, vice and virtue frequently exchange their respective appellations: and the same conduct which has extorted the applause of Rome or Paris, has been as loudly condemned at London and Geneva. By the admirers of monachism, the names of Dunstan, Oswald, and Ethelwold, are still pronounced with reverence and gratitude: and their efforts in support of the order, are considered as proofs of their attachment to the true interests of religion. The praise of the Catholic has provoked the censure of the Protestant historians. With the name of monk, they have sought to associate the ideas of hypocrisy and fraud: and while they indiscriminately condemn the patrons, they canonize, with equal partiality, the enemies of the institute. The avarice of the eighth Henry prompted him to dissolve the numerous monasteries in his dominions; and though he suborned the voice of calumny to sanctify the deeds of oppression,³⁷ though the revenues of the innocent sufferers were speedily absorbed by the extravagance of the king and the rapacity of his courtiers, writers have been found eager to celebrate his conduct. Dunstan, with his two associates, expelled from a few churches a race of men, whose vices were a disgrace to their profession: and though their hands were not contaminated with sacrilegious plunder; though in the place of the ejected clergy they introduced men of stricter morals, and more religious deportment, the same writers have unblushingly accused them of partiality, injustice, and tyranny. But to form an accurate notion of their conduct, we must transport ourselves from the present to the tenth century. In the preceding chapters we have observed the original severity, and the rapid decline of the discipline prescribed to the conventual clergy: we have seen the canons of several churches (for the degeneracy was not universal) abandon their religious duties, indulge their passion for dissipation and pleasure, and, by their scandalous immorality, ex-

³⁵ Ead. Vit. St. Oswal. p. 200, 201. Hist. Rames. p. 400.

³⁶ Ingulf. f. 502. Malm. de Pont. l. ii. f. 139. Wilk. tom. i. p. 239.

³⁷ "This would not have satisfied the ends of himself, and his covetous and ambitious agents. They all aimed at the revenues and riches of the religious houses, for which reason no arts nor contrivances were to be passed by that might be of use in obtaining those ends. The most abominable crimes were to be charged upon the religious, and the charge was to be managed with the utmost industry, boldness, and dexterity. And yet, after all, the proofs were so insufficient, that, from what I have been able to gather, I have not found any direct one against any single monastery. Hearne, Preliminary Observations to the View of Mitred Abbeys, by Browne Willis, p. 84.

cite the tears of the virtuous, and the ridicule of the profane.³⁸ In the invectives of the monastic writers, candour will, indeed, attribute much to the prejudice of rivals; yet it must require no common share of incredulity to read the charters and writings of the age, and maintain that the canons were guilty of no crime but that of *living piously in legitimate marriage*.³⁹ Had the bishops been content to sit down the idle spectators of the disgrace of their clergy, they might have escaped the censures of modern prejudice, but their conscience would have reproached them with betraying the most sacred of their duties. They acted as honour and religion called on them to act: they exhorted and conjured the canons to reform: from exhortations they proceeded to threats: and at length punished by expulsion that obstinacy which could neither be softened by entreaty, nor subdued by terror.

To secure the permanency of these infant establishments was the next object which engaged the attention of the reforming prelates. Of the charters which, at their solicitation, Edgar granted to the different monasteries, many are still extant; and are filled with the most dreadful anathemas against those whose impiety should presume to molest the monks in the possession of their new habitations. To the temporal authority of the king were superadded the spiritual censures of the bishops: and their conduct was approved by the rescripts of the sovereign pontiff. Yet the prudence of Dunstan foresaw, that the time might arrive, in which these precautions would prove feeble barriers against the attempts of superior power; and the clergy, under the protection of the king and the bishops, might resume possession of the churches, from which they had been expelled. To remove, as far as it was possible, the probability of such an event, a council was summoned to meet at Winchester, in which it was proposed to invest the monks with the right of choosing the bishop of the vacant see, and to bind them to select the object of their choice from their own or some neighbouring monastery. By the patrons of the measure it was urged, that in the conventual cathedrals the bishop occupied the place and the authority of the abbot: that it was his duty, in this capacity, to inspect the morals of his monks, and enforce the observance of their rule: and that to intrust so important a charge to a man who had not been educated in the monastic discipline, would infallibly open a way to innovation and degeneracy. The reasoning was plausible: it satisfied the judgment of the king and the prelates; and the proposition was unanimously adopted. Thus a certain number of voices was secured in the episcopal college; and in every emergency the monks might look up with confidence to the

³⁸ Wilk. p. 246.

³⁹ In legitimo matrimonio pie viventes. Parker, Godwin, passim.

bishops, whom they had chosen, and whom affection and gratitude would urge to espouse the interests of the order.⁴⁰

In the same assembly was adopted another regulation, which, while it aspired to the merit of introducing uniformity among the different monasteries, possessed the superior advantage of more closely connecting all the members of the monastic body. At the recommendation of the king, who probably was no more than the echo of the archbishop, the customs of the celebrated monasteries of Fleury and Ghent were ingrafted on the original rule of St. Benedict: and to these were added some of the observances which had distinguished the Saxon cœnobites before the Danish invasions.⁴¹ The concord of the English monks (so it was termed) is still extant; but an abstract of it would probably be uninteresting to the reader.⁴² It is wholly confined to a variety of regulations respecting the minutiae of the monastic service, and a few fanciful practices of devotion, which, however, it is left to the discretion of the superior to adopt or reject, as he may think most conducive to the interest of virtue and piety.⁴³

⁴⁰ Selden's Eadmer, not. p. 150. *Apost. Bened.* app. 3, p. 78. It is observable that the monks were to choose the bishop according to the direction of their rule respecting the election of abbots, but with the consent and advice of the king. (*Regis consensu et concilio. Ibid.*) This regulation was soon violated, and clergymen were elected to the episcopal dignity in the churches possessed by monks, though Benedict XIV. has inadvertently asserted the contrary. *De Syn. Dioc.* vol. iii. p. 344.

⁴¹ *Honestos hujus patriæ mores ad Dominum pertinentes, quos veterum usu didicimus, nullo modo abjicere, sed unidique corroborare decrevimus, Apost. Bened.* p. 85. St. Ethelwold composed a small treatise *De diurna consuetudine Monachorum*. It is extant in MS. Cotton, Tib. A. 3. Wanley, p. 92. The daily allowance of his monks at Abingdon is described in the *Monasticon Anglicanum. Tom. i.* p. 104.

⁴² The preface is published by Selden among his notes on Eadmer, in Latin and Saxon, (p. 145:) and the whole work in Latin by Reyner, in his third appendix to the *Apostolatus Benedictinorum*, (p. 77.) Though it seems to comprehend all the monasteries in England, Turketul, the abbot of Croyland, did not conceive himself bound by its regulations, but ordered the ancient customs of his monastery to be inviolably observed. The monks were divided into three classes. The first comprised those who had not spent four-and-twenty years in the abbey; and these were subject to all the duties imposed by the rule of St. Benedict. After the expiration of that term, and during the next sixteen years, they belonged to the second class, and were exempted from the more tedious observances, and permitted to discharge by deputies their respective employments. From the fortieth to the fiftieth year they enjoyed still greater indulgences, and the only duty required from them was a daily attendance at the high mass. If they survived this period, they were entirely freed from restraint. A chamber was allotted to each, with a servant to wait on him, and a young monk for his companion. See *Ingulf*, p. 48—50.

⁴³ *Hæc inserenda curavimus, ut si quibus devotionis gratia placuerint, habeant in his unde hujus rei ignaros instruant: qui autem noluerint, ad hoc agendum minime compellantur.* (*Apost. Ben.* p. 86.) A curious ceremony was recommended for the feast of Easter. Towards the close of matins, a monk retired into a species of sepulchre prepared in the church, and three others with thuribles in their hands, and their eyes fixed on the ground walked slowly along the choir. After some delay, a voice issued from the sepulchre, chanting the anthem, "Whom do you seek?" They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." "He is not here," resumed the voice, "he is risen as he said. Go and tell his disciples. (*Mat. xxviii. 6.*)" Turning towards the choir, they immediately sang

Alfred the Great had attempted to restore the empire of letters after the devastations of the Danes: but his success was temporary, and the Saxons speedily relapsed into their former ignorance. The spirit of Alfred seemed to be revived in Dunstan: and the labours of the bishop were more fortunate than those of the king.⁴⁴ Long before he ascended the metropolitan throne, as soon as he could command the obedience of a small society of monks, he meditated the revival of learning: the knowledge which he had acquired from the Irish ecclesiastics, he liberally imparted to his pupils; and from his monastery, Glastonbury, diffused a spirit of improvement through the Saxon church. Ethelwold imbibed the sentiments of his master: and the bishop would often descend from his more important functions, to the humble employment of instructing children in the first rudiments of grammar, and of interrogating them respecting their progress in the knowledge of the Latin tongue.⁴⁵ From his school, at Winchester, masters were distributed to the different monasteries: and the reputation of their disciples reflected a lustre on their talents and industry. In times of ignorance, no great portion of knowledge is required to excite admiration: but we should judge of the merit of men by comparing them with their contemporaries, not with those who have lived in happier times. Yet among the Anglo-Saxon scholars of this period, there were some who have merited no vulgar praise. The commentaries of Bridferth, the monk of Ramsey, display an extent of reading, and an accuracy of calculation, which would have done honour to the most eminent philosophers of former ages: and the name of Ælfric, the disciple of Ethelwold, has been rendered more illustrious by the utility of his writings, than by the archiepiscopal mitre with which he was honoured.

It had been the frequent complaint of Alfred, that every species of learning was concealed under the obscurity of a foreign language: and Ælfric, after the example of the king, laboured to instruct the ignorance of his countrymen, by translating and

the anthem, "The Lord is risen, &c." when they were recalled by the voice to the sepulchre, with the words of the angel, "Come and see the place where the Lord lay. (Mat. Ibid.)" They entered, and returned bearing before them a winding sheet, and singing, "The Lord is risen from the grave." The prior in thanksgiving intoned the Te Deum, and the office was continued in the usual manner. *Apost. Ben.* p. 89.

⁴⁴ *Iƿ nu ƿorþi zoder þeopum ƿ mýnƿter mannum zeorne to ƿarriſenne þ ƿeo halige lap on urum daſum ne accolize oþþe acceopize. ƿƿa ƿƿa hit ƿær zedon on Anſelecýnne oð. þ dunſtan aƿcebyrcop ƿ aþelpold byrcop eƿc ða lape on munclýfum aƿærþdon. Ælf. in prol. ad Gram. apud Spel. vol. i. p. 618.*

⁴⁵ Dulce erat ei adolescentes et juvenes semper docere, et latinos libros anglice eis solvere, et regulas grammaticæ artis et metricæ rationis tradere, et jocundis alloquiis ad meliora hortari: unde factum est ut per plures ex discipulis ejus fierent sacerdotes, atque abbates, et honorabiles episcopi, quidam etiam archiepiscopi in gente Anglorum. *Wolst. Vit. St. Ethel.* p. 617.

publishing several treatises in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Of these the most celebrated are his versions of different parts of the Holy Scriptures, and his three books of Catholic homilies. As a translator, he cannot claim the praise of fidelity. Many passages of the original he has thought proper to omit: some he has endeavoured to improve by explanatory additions: and in others, where he conceives the Latin text to be obscure, he has not scrupled to substitute his own interpretation for the expressions of the inspired writer. Through the whole of the work he appears to have been alarmed, lest his illiterate countrymen should assume the conduct of the ancient patriarchs, as a justification of their own irregularities. To prevent so dangerous an error, he anxiously inculcates the difference between the Old and New Testament; remarks that the former was a figure of the latter; and exhorts his reader to observe the law of Moses according to the spirit, that of Christ according to the letter.⁴⁶ His homilies were written with the benevolent intention of assisting those clergymen who were too indolent or too illiterate to compose sermons for themselves. They are not original compositions. The only merit to which he aspires, is that of selecting from preceding writers, passages appropriate to the gospel of the day; and of presenting them in a language adapted to the capacity of his hearers.⁴⁷ As soon as the work was finished, he dedicated it

⁴⁶ See his preface to the book of Genesis, (Heptat. Anglo-Sax. edit. Thwaites, p. 2,) and conclusion of that of Judges, (Ibid. p. 161.) Many of the Anglo-Saxons had endeavoured to transfer different parts of the Scriptures into their native idiom. Of these the first, with whom we are acquainted, was Cædmon, a monk of Whitby, who died in 680. But his was not properly a translation. It was rather a poetic paraphrase of the book of Genesis, and the most remarkable histories contained in the inspired writings. (Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 24.) Poems of this description under the name of Cædmon, were published by Junius at Amsterdam in 1655. In 735 Bede undertook to translate the gospel of St. John "for the advantage of the church;" but he had only proceeded as far as the beginning of the sixth chapter, when he died. (Ep. Cuthb. Smith's Bede, p. 793.) The same was the fate of King Alfred, who began an Anglo-Saxon version of the book of Psalms, but died soon after he had finished the first part. (Malm. de Reg. l. ii. f. 24.) In his laws he had translated many passages from the twentieth, and the two following chapters of Exodus. (Wilk. p. 186.) In the eighth century lived the priest Aldred, who wrote an interlineary version of the four gospels in the celebrated MS. belonging to the bishops of Lindisfarne, which is still preserved in the Cotton library. Nero D. iv. This translation is now published by Mr. Henshall. Farmer and Owun, the other two glossators mentioned by Marshall, (Evang. Anglo-Sax. p. 492,) appear to have lived at a later period. Ælfric's versions comprehended the Pentateuch, the books of Judges, Esther, Judith, part of the books of Kings, and the two first of the Maccabees (Mores, Comment. de Ælf. p. 29.) They are all of them designedly abridged (on þe pīpan ꝛeoþlice. Ælf. de vet. Testam. p. 22.) But besides these translators, there were many others, whose names are unknown: though copies of some of their works are still extant in MS. (Wanley's MSS. passim.) The custom of making interlineary versions contributed to multiply the number of translations; as the scarcity of copies rendered it frequently a more easy task to compose a new, than to transcribe a more ancient version.

⁴⁷ Besides Ælfric, Wulstan, archbishop of York, was the author of several sermons, under the name of Lupus. (Wanley, MSS. p. 148.) Many others, of which the writers are unknown, occur in our libraries.

to the archbishop Sigeric, and humbly desired him to correct every error which his superior learning might discover.⁴⁸ The labours of Ælfric were not unrewarded. From the monastery of Abingdon he was transferred to the school at Winchester, and was successively made visiter of Cernley, abbot of St. Alban's, bishop of Wilton, and archbishop of Canterbury.⁴⁹

The expulsion of the refractory canons, and the restoration of the monastic order, did not satisfy the zeal of the three bishops: the great body of the clergy still retained their benefices; and the irregularity of many among them reflected disgrace on the religion of which they professed themselves the ministers. To compose a new code of discipline was unnecessary, perhaps had been dangerous: but the laws which the Anglo-Saxon church had formerly acknowledged, were revived in the national synods; and the ecclesiastics were required to conform to the equitable demand of the archbishop, that they should submit to regulations which had been sanctified by the observance of their predecessors. This scheme of reformation was received with joy by the friends of religion, whose impatience already hailed the return of ancient fervour: but it was resolutely opposed by the more wealthy and dissipated of the clerical order. From the writings of Ælfric, we may collect the arguments of the adverse parties. The canon, which excluded female servants and female relatives from the habitations of the clergy, was condemned as imposing a superfluous and barbarous restraint, which would deprive them both of the society of those to whom they were most dear, and of services which, on many occasions, were absolutely indispensable. Against the injunction of celibacy, it was urged, that the permission which had been granted to the priests of the old, had descended, with their other privileges, to those of the new law: and that to deny the propriety of such an institution, was to dispute the wisdom of the Saviour himself, who had raised St. Peter, a married man, to the dignity of prince of the apostles. To these reasons Ælfric condescended to reply, that the canons which were most loudly opposed, had, in former times, been accurately observed in the Anglo-Saxon church; and that his contemporaries, if they possessed the virtue, would willingly imitate

⁴⁸ *Precor modo obnixè almitatem tuam, mitissime pater Sigerice, ut digneris corrigere per tuam industriam, si aliquos nævos malignæ heresis aut nebulosæ fallaciæ in nostra interpretatione reperias.* Preface to the first volume in Wanley's MSS. p. 153. He began the second in the same manner. *Hoc quoque opus commendamus tuæ auctoritati corrigendum quemadmodum præcedens, precantes obnixè, ne parcas obliterare, si aliquas malignæ hæresis maculas in eo reperies.* *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ See Mores, Comment. p. 21—65. He died in 1005. *Chron. Sax.* p. 134. The most celebrated of Ælfric's scholars was another Ælfric surnamed Bata. He was abbot of Egnesham, prior of Winchester, and afterwards archbishop of York. His principal works are a life of St. Ethelwold, mentioned by Mabillon, (*Act. Bened. Sec. v.* p. 606,) and two letters to Archbishop Wulstan, which have been frequently quoted in the preceding chapters. His death happened in 1051. *Mores*, p. 65.

the obedience of their predecessors. The marriage of the clergy he treated as a late and profane innovation, derogatory from the sanctity, and repugnant to the functions of the priesthood. Celibacy had been recommended to the ministers of the altar by Christ himself, when he required of his disciples to be willing to relinquish every object for his sake; and had been enjoined by the fathers of the great council of Nice, when they ordered the *εισενακτοι* to be ejected from the houses of the clergy.⁵⁰ If, under the Mosaic dispensation, the priests were permitted to marry, it should be remembered, that the sacred functions were then confined to a certain number of families, and that the immolation of animals required a less degree of purity than the oblation of the holy husel.⁵¹ The example of St. Peter was, he contended, a confirmation of his opinion. He had, indeed, been married before his vocation to the apostleship; but from the moment in which he attached himself to Christ, he had abandoned all commerce with his wife, and practised that chastity which he learned from the doctrine and example of his master.⁵² The sentiments which Ælfric has expressed in his writings, he had imbibed in the monastery of Winchester: they were enforced by the strong arm of authority; and each successive council commanded the clergy to observe the chastity of their profession.⁵³ By an easy metaphor, the engagement which the priest contracted at his ordination, was likened to that of matrimony: his church was considered as his only lawful wife: and to admit any woman, under whatever title, to his bed, was to charge his soul with the guilt of a spiritual and sacrilegious adultery.⁵⁴ The more virtuous of the clergy readily yielded to the commands of their superiors:

⁵⁰ Wilk. Con. p. 250, 251. Leg. Sax. p. 167.

⁵¹ Ælfric Bata, in his epistle to Wulstan, says that the priests in the old law, were obliged to a temporary chastity before they offered sacrifice. The same appears to have been recommended by the heathens.

Vos quoque abesse procul jubeo; discedite ab aris,

Queis tulit hesternæ gaudia nocte Venus.

Casta placent superis; casta cum mente venite

Et puris manibus sumite fontis aquam.

TIBULLUS.

⁵² Leg. Sax. 154. 162. 167. Ælf. præf. in Gen. p. 2. He also wrote a treatise on the celibacy of the clergy, which is unpublished in the Cotton library, Faust. A. 9. (Mores, Com. p. 45.) It was formed into a sermon, and read in the church. (Wanley, MSS. p. 199.)

⁵³ Presbyteros summopere obsecramus, ut caste et continenter Domino jugiter servientes, a connubiis se femineis omnino abstineant: sicque Domini iram devitent. Con. Ænnam. p. 293. Full *georne huz pican. þ huz nægon mid rihte ðurh hæmed ðinge piþer zemanan.* Leg. eccl. Can. p. 301. vi.

⁵⁴ *Ða findon þa æþbrýcan þe þurh heahene had ciric æpe underpenzon 7 þ riððan abræcan. Cirice is facerdor æpe. nah he mid rihte ænige oðre. Nif nanum peofed þegne aliþed þ he pifian mote.* Lib. Const. apud Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 150, 151. See also Edgar's Canons in Wilkins, (Conc. vol. i. p. 225, viii. 229, lx.)

but many listened with greater docility to the suggestions of passion; and, during the century of confusion which preceded the extinction of the Saxon dynasty, derided the severe but impotent menaces of the canons. In a charge to his clergy, Wulstan, archbishop of York, laments that the iniquity of the times prevented him from chastising the contumacy of the rebels: but his duty impelled him to admonish them of the obligations of chastity, and to invite them to observe it by every motive which religion could inspire.⁵⁵

During the long reign of Edgar, the ejected clergy were condemned to bewail in silence the loss of their possessions: but their present discontent was soothed with the hope of obtaining ample indemnity from the equity or weakness of his successor. That successor was a boy: and an ambitious stepmother attempted to transfer the crown from his temples to those of her own son. This season of confusion and doubtful loyalty appeared propitious to their design. Alfero, duke of Mercia, was the first to unfurl the standard of the clergy. Their adherents, moved by compassion, or allured by presents, were eager to copy his example: and in several provinces the monks were ignominiously expelled from their convents by the swords of their enemies.⁵⁶ But army was soon opposed to army: and Alwine, duke of East Anglia, his brother Alfwold, and the earl Brithnode, declared themselves the protectors of the monks. The kingdom was menaced with the horrors of a civil war, from the passions of the opposite parties, when their chieftains were induced to argue the merits of their respective claims in a council at Winchester. The issue proved unfavourable to the clergy. The efforts of Dunstan and the bishops had succeeded in fixing the crown on the head of Edward, the eldest son of the deceased monarch; and their preponderance insured to the monks an easy victory.⁵⁷ Scarcely, however, had four years elapsed, when the complaints of the clergy, and the clamours of their friends, were revived, and another council was summoned to meet at Calne. But, in the heat of the debate, the floor of the room sunk under the weight of numbers; the whole assembly, except the

⁵⁵ L. þe ne maƷon eoƷ nu neaðunƷe nýðan to clænneƷƷe ac þe mýnƷiað eoƷ ƷƷa ðeah. þ Ʒe clænneƷƷe healdan ƷƷa ƷƷa CƷriŷter þeƷnar feulon. Apud eund. p. 167.

⁵⁶ Wigor. ad ann. 975. Hoved. ad ann. 975. f. 245. Ingulf, p. 54. In the Saxon chronicle the sufferings of the monks afford the subject of a short poem, (Chr. Sax. p. 123.)

⁵⁷ In this or some other council held at Winchester, (for historians do not agree respecting the time,) it is said that a voice issued from a crucifix, exclaiming, "All is well: make no change." Mr. Turner, with his usual fidelity and candour, describes this voice as an artifice of the primate: I would rather say that the whole history is no more than a popular tale, adopted, and perhaps improved, by later writers. It was unknown to the more ancient historians.

archbishop, who fortunately held by a beam, were precipitated to the ground; and amidst the ruins and the confusion many were dangerously wounded, and others lost their lives. This melancholy event decided the controversy. The pious credulity of the age ascribed the fall of the floor, and the preservation of Dunstan, to the interposition of Heaven: and the clergy at length desisted from a contest in which they believed that both God and man were their adversaries.

Such is the plain, unvarnished history of the synod of Calne: but on this narrow basis a huge superstructure of calumny and fable has been raised by religious prejudice. Dunstan, if we may credit the recent historian of the Anglo-Saxons,⁵⁸ harassed by the repeated attempts of the clergy, trembled for the permanency of his favourite establishments, and resolved to terminate the quarrel by the destruction of his opponents. By his order, the floor of the room destined to contain the assembly was loosened from the walls; during the deliberation, the temporary supports were suddenly removed; and in an instant the nobles, the clergy, and the other members were promiscuously cast among the ruins; while the archbishop, secure in his seat, contemplated with savage satisfaction the bloody scene below. This is the substance of the tale which has lately been presented to the public; but I may be allowed to pause, before I subscribe to its truth. The atrocity of the deed, the silence of his contemporaries, the impolicy of involving in the same fate his friends as well as his adversaries, must provoke a doubt in favour of the primate: and even those who have been taught to think disadvantageously of his character, will, at least, before they venture to condemn him, demand some evidence of his guilt. But no such evidence has been, or can be, produced by contemporary and succeeding writers. The fall of the floor was attributed to accident, or the interposition of Heaven: the sanguinary contrivance of Dunstan was a secret, which, during almost eight centuries, eluded the observation of every historian, and was first, I believe, revealed to the skepticism of Hume, who introduced his suspicion to the public under the modest veil of a possibility.⁵⁹ But suspicion has quickly ripened into certitude; and the guilt of the archbishop has been pronounced without doubt or qualification. Nor (the omission is inexplicable) has his accuser claimed the merit of the discovery; but left his incautious readers to conclude, that he had derived his information from the respect-

⁵⁸ Hist. of the Anglo-Sax. vol. iii. p. 190, 191.

⁵⁹ Hist. c. 2. Should, however, any friend of Archbishop Parker assign to that primate the merit of the discovery, I shall not dispute the priority of his claim. This, at least, is certain, that he ascribed the misfortune at Calne to a conspiracy between the devil and the monks. *Humana fraude et ope diabolica carere non potuit.* Antiquit. p. 87.

able authorities to whom he boldly appeals.⁶⁰ Yet they appear to have been ignorant of the charge, and contented themselves with translating the simple narrative of the Saxon Chronicle, the most faithful register of the times. "This year the principal nobility of England fell, at Calne, from an upper floor, except the holy Archbishop Dunstan, who stood upon a beam. And some were grievously hurt, and some did not escape with their lives."⁶¹

From the council of Calne till the Norman conquest, during a period of about ninety years, the Anglo-Saxon church presents few objects worthy the attention of the historian. The horrors which had marked the greater part of the ninth century, were renewed. The assassination of the young king Edward, the indolence and pusillanimity of Ethelred, and the treachery of the Saxon nobles, invited Swegen, of Denmark, to retrace the bloody footsteps of his fathers: his immature death did not arrest the victorious career of his followers; and his son and successor, Canute, refused to sheathe the sword till he had mounted the throne of England. From the history of their devastations, I may be allowed to select the calamitous fate of Canterbury.⁶² The citizens, impelled by repeated injuries, had killed the brother of Edric, a name infamous in the annals of domestic treason. The policy or justice of Ethelred refused to punish the murderers; and Edric, in the pursuit of revenge, joined with his retainers the enemies of his country. As the army of the barbarians approached, the citizens surrounded Elphege, their archbishop, and entreated him to provide for his security by a timely retreat. "It is the duty of the shepherd to watch by his flock," was his intrepid reply. On the twentieth day of the siege, the traitor, Ælmer, set fire to a quarter of the city: and as the garrison deserted the walls to save their wives and children, the Danes, snatching the favourable moment, forced their way through the nearest gate. With tears of anguish and indignation, the Anglo-Saxon writers describe the miseries which the barbarians inflicted on this devoted city. Other cruelties may be supplied by the imagination of the reader: but it was their

⁶⁰ Malm. p. 61. Flor. Wig. p. 361. Sim. Dun. p. 160.

⁶¹ On þýrrum gear ealle þa ýldeŕtan Anŕeleýnner ƿitan ge-ƿeollan æt Calne of anre up-flopan butan ŕe halŕan Dunŕtan Ancebyŕcop. ana ærtod uppon anum beame. 7 ŕume þær ƿriþe gebruceode ƿæron. 7 ŕume hŕc ne gebygdan mid þam liŕe. Chron. Sax. p. 124. I shall add Huntingdon's translation. Omnes optimates Anglorum ceciderunt a quodam solio apud Calne præter sanctum Dunstanum, qui trabe quadam apprehensa restitit. Unde quidam eorum valde læsi sunt, quidam vero mortui. Hunting. l. v. f. 204.—St. Dunstan died ten years after this event, in 988. Godwin (p. 53) informs us that some centuries elapsed before his canonization. This is a mistake. Within fifty years his festival was ordered to be kept on the thirtieth of May. Wilk. p. 303.

⁶² Anno 1011.

amusement, their own writers attest it,⁶³ to toss the infants of their captives on the points of their spears, or to crush them beneath the wheels of their wagons.⁶⁴ The archbishop, solicitous for his flock, and forgetful of his own danger, tore himself from the hands and entreaties of his monks, and rushing into the midst of the carnage, besought the barbarians to spare his defenceless countrymen. His voice and gestures attracted their notice. He was seized, bound as a captive, and dragged to behold the ruin of his cathedral. Within this venerable church were collected the monks, the clergy, and a crowd of inhabitants. The sanctity of the place might, perhaps, arrest the fury of the Danes: or its strength might protract their fate till the enemy should listen to the suggestions of humanity. These hopes were fallacious. A pile of dry wood was raised against the wall: with shouts of joy the fire was kindled: the flames ascended the roof; and the falling timbers and melted lead compelled the fugitives to abandon their asylum. As they appeared, they were massacred before the eyes of the archbishop.

Towards the evening, Elphege was conducted by his guards to the northern gate, the rendezvous of those whom the victors had destined to be sold or ransomed. The sight of their archbishop renewed the sorrows of the captives; and a general exclamation announced their anguish. He attempted to speak: but a stroke from a battle-axe compelled him to be silent. The Danes numbered the captives. They amounted to eight hundred. Seven thousand men, besides women and children, had perished in the sack of the city. Of forty monks, four only remained.

The life of the archbishop had been spared by the avarice of the Danes; and the price of his ransom was fixed at three thousand pounds of silver. Had he exhorted the neighbouring clergy to surrender their sacred ornaments, the sum might probably have been raised: but to the urgent requisitions of the barbarians he answered, that the life of a decrepit old man was of little value; and the obstinacy of his refusal increased the severity of his treatment. Seven months he was confined in prison, or compelled to follow their camp: and on the vigil of Easter was informed, that within eight days he must either pay the money, or forfeit his life. On the following Saturday he was conducted before the army. "Bishop," exclaimed a thousand voices, "where is your ransom?" The old man, to recover from his fatigue, sat down in silence. After a short pause he arose: "I have no other gold or silver," said he, "to offer you, than the knowledge of the true God. Him it is my duty to preach to you: and if you are deaf to my voice, you will

⁶³ Bartholin, p. 457.

⁶⁴ *Osb. vit. St. Elpheg.* p. 135. *Wigorn.* p. 614. Anno 1011. *Hoved. f.* 247. Anno 1011.

experience the effects of his justice." He could proceed no farther. Rushing from their seats, the Danish chieftains beat him to the ground: the multitude copied the fury of their leaders; and in a few minutes the body of the archbishop was buried under a heap of stones.⁶⁵ At the close of the tragedy, Thrum, a Dane, whom he had baptized and confirmed on the preceding day, ventured to approach. He found him still breathing; and, to put an end to his pain, clove his skull with a battle-axe. The body was conveyed the next morning to London, and interred by the bishops Eadnoth and Ælfhune, in the church of St. Paul.⁶⁶

During this turbulent and calamitous period, the vigilance of the bishops was employed to prevent the decline of ecclesiastical discipline; and the regulations which they published in the national synods, would have done honour to the most fervent era of their church. The laity were exhorted to despise the superstition of the pagan Danes, and to practise the virtues of the gospel: the parochial clergy were admonished in detail of their numerous and important duties: to the monks was recommended the exact observance of their rule; and the discipline which had formerly distinguished the canons, was accurately described, and at times severely enforced. They were commanded to serve the Lord in chastity; to attend in the choir at the seven hours of the divine service; to eat daily in the common refectory; and to sleep each night in their own dormitory. If in any churches these practices had been omitted, they were to be resumed: and the incorrigible members were to be expelled in favour of others more willing to comply with the duties of their profession.⁶⁷

The rivalry, which the reformation of St. Dunstan had excited between the clergy and the monks, was still kept alive by occasional occurrences: and the fortunes of each party varied with the power or the fancy of its protectors. Ælfric, the primate, established a colony of Benedictines in the cathedral of Canterbury, and his conduct was confirmed by a charter of King Ethelbert:⁶⁸ for the clergy, who served the church of St. Edmund's, Canute substituted a confraternity of monks:⁶⁹ Leofric, earl of Coventry, built and endowed several monasteries; and the

⁶⁵ Osbern, p. 140. Hoveden, Florence of Worcester, and the Saxon Chronicle add bones, and the skulls of oxen. The Danish army had just dined, and were intoxicated with mead or wine. Chron. Sax. p. 142. Hoved. f. 247. Floren. Wig. p. 614. The archbishop was killed at Greenwich. Ang. Sac. tom. i. p. 5. Thorn. p. 1781.

⁶⁶ These particulars are related by the contemporary writer in the Saxon Chronicle, (ibid.) and by Osbern, who received them from the mouths of Alfwald and Godric, the former a disciple of St. Dunstan, the latter of St. Elphege. Osbern, p. 145.

⁶⁷ Con. Ænham. p. 292.

⁶⁸ Wilk. p. 282. 284. Mores, Comment. p. 84. 88.

⁶⁹ The body of St. Edmund was translated from Hoxton to Bury, and a monastery of canons erected over it in the reign of Canute. Lel. Itiner. vol. ix. p. 5. Monast. Ang. tom. i. p. 285.

magnificent remains of the abbey of Westminster still proclaim the munificence of Edward the Confessor. On the other hand churches were frequently transferred by the partiality of their patrons from the Benedictines to the clergy:⁷⁰ the massacres of the Danes compelled the monks of Canterbury to solicit the assistance of the canons: several abbeys were reduced by the barbarians to the lowest degree of poverty; and some, with their inhabitants, were committed to the flames.⁷¹ The Norman invasion terminated these disputes. The petty jealousies of party were absorbed in the general confusion: and both monks and clergy, instead of contending against each other, were eager to unite their influence, in order to preserve their respective property from the rapacious gripe of the conquerors.

⁷⁰ See the council of Ænham, (p. 292.) *Si autem cujuspiam Monachorum monasterium, velut plerumque mutata temporum vicissitudine contingere solet, cum canonicis constitutum sit.* In this case the ejected monk was to appear before his bishop, and promise to observe chastity, wear the monastic habit, and persevere in his profession till death. The last instance of the kind which I can find is that of Leofric, bishop of Crediton, who translated his see to Exeter, ejected the religious, and introduced a society of canons, that followed the rule of St. Chrodogand of Metz. *Qui contra morem Anglorum, ad formam Lotharingiorum, uno triclinio comederent, uno cubiculo cubitarent.* (Malm. l. ii. f. 145.) Had the historian never seen the canon of the council of Ænham, which is referred to in page 328?

⁷¹ Ingulf, f. 506, 507.

CHAPTER XIII.

Missions of the Anglo-Saxons—St. Willibrord—St. Boniface—St. Willehad—St. Sigifrid in Sweden—Conversion of Denmark—Of Norway.

IN the preceding pages I have endeavoured to convey to the mind of the reader a satisfactory notion of the discipline, polity, and principal revolutions of the Anglo-Saxon church: in the present chapter I shall attempt to describe the spiritual conquests of her children in the conversion of foreign and idolatrous nations. Scarcely had Christianity assumed a decided superiority in England, when many of the converts felt themselves animated with the spirit of the apostles. The north of Germany, inhabited by kindred tribes of barbarians, presented an ample field to their exertions: the merit of rescuing them from the dominion of paganism, inflamed their zeal: and they eagerly devoted to the pious enterprise their abilities, fortunes, and lives. The success of their labours was answerable to the purity of their motives: and within little more than a century from the mission of St. Augustine, the rays of the gospel were reverberated from the shores of Britain to the banks of the Weser, the Rhine, and the Danube.

The first of the Anglo-Saxons who preached on the continent, was the celebrated St. Wilfrid. When the injustice of his enemies compelled him to abandon his native country, he prudently avoided the hostile ports of Gaul, and landed on the more friendly coast of Friesland. Adalgise, the king, received the stranger with kindness, and gave him his hand as a pledge of his protection. Prevented from prosecuting his journey by the early inclemency of the winter, and encouraged by the friendship of the king, Wilfrid announced the truths of the gospel to the Frisians; and several chieftains, with some thousands of their retainers, received from his hands the sacrament of baptism. When Ebroin (he was mayor of the palace to the king of Neustria and Burgundy, and the personal enemy of Wilfrid¹) learned his arrival in Friesland, he despatched a messenger to demand the fugitive, and promised the king a sack of gold, as the reward of his perfidy. The

¹ Dagobert, the lawful heir to the crown of Austrasia, had in his youth been compelled to seek an asylum in Ireland. After an interval of some years his friends determined to place him on the throne. At their request Wilfrid discovered the royal exile; and assisted him, probably with money or troops, to regain possession of his kingdom. (Edd. vit. Wilf. c. 27.) As Ebroin was the great adversary of Dagobert, he was naturally the enemy of Wilfrid; and at the solicitation of the king of Northumbria had undertaken to arrest him in his journey to Rome. Edd. c. 24.

Frisian received the proposal with indignation. In the presence of his chieftains, the Anglo-Saxon, and the ambassadors, he read the letter of Ebroin, and tearing it in pieces, exclaimed: "So may the Creator divide the kingdom of that prince, who perjures himself to God, and violates his promise to man." Wilfrid remained in safety under the protection of Adelgise; and, with the return of spring, resumed his journey.²

The preaching of Wilfrid may be ascribed to accident rather than design: and the merit of establishing the missions in Germany must be allotted to Egbert, a Northumbrian priest of noble extraction. The monasteries of Ireland and the western isles were filled, at this period, with men, whose well-earned reputation was acknowledged by the other Christian nations of Europe. The praise of their virtue and learning had been the favourite theme of Aidan, Finan, and Colman, the three first bishops of Lindisfarne: and the desire of improvement induced a crowd of noble youths to cross the sea, and assist at the lessons of these foreign masters. In Ireland the hospitality of the natives gained the affection of the strangers; and the advantages which they enjoyed, attached them to their voluntary exile.³ Of the number was Egbert. His application was unwearied; in the course of a few years he saw himself surrounded with disciples; and his reputation drew to his school many of his countrymen. It was then he formed the design of diffusing the light of the gospel through the north of Germany, and selected for his associates the most learned and zealous of his hearers. But the loss of the ship destined to transport the missionaries, retarded his departure: a dream, or the advice of his friends, suggested an improvement of the original plan. The personal exertions of Egbert were confined to the inhabitants of the western islands; and the foreign missions were allotted to the zeal of his more robust disciples. As their precursor, Wigbert was sent to Friesland, to sound the dispositions of the natives. Two years of fruitless labour exhausted his patience, and he returned to relate a lamentable tale of the indocility of Radbode, the successor of Adelgise, and of the ferocity of his subjects.⁴ But Wigbert had scarcely reached Ireland, when the Franks, under the conduct of Pepin of Heristal, wrested from the Frisian prince the southern part of his dominions. The news revived the hopes of Egbert. Pepin was a Christian: his authority would second the exertions of the missionaries: and twelve Anglo-Saxons, with Willibrord at their head, sailed from the coast of Ireland to the mouth of the Rhine.⁵

Willibrord was a native of Northumbria. His education had been intrusted to the care of the monks of Rippon; and in that

² Edd. c. 25, 26. Ann. 675, 676.

⁴ Ibid. l. v. c. 9.

³ Bed. Hist. l. iii. c. 27.

⁵ Ann. 690. Bed. l. v. c. 10.

seminary he received the clerical tonsure and the monastic habit. But the fame of Egbert excited the emulation of the young monk; his thirst after knowledge could not be satisfied with the instructions of an inferior master; and, at the age of twenty, he sailed, with the permission of his abbôt, to the eastern coast of Ireland. Egbert was charmed with the modesty, application, and virtue of his disciple: and hesitated not to appoint him, when he had scarcely attained his thirty-second year, the superior of the mission in Friesland. By the natives he was received with welcome. His views were sanctioned by the approbation of Pepin, and of the Roman pontiff: and his labours, with those of his associates, were rewarded with a plenteous harvest. The multitude of the converts compelled him to receive the episcopal dignity. He was consecrated at Rome by Pope Sergius; fixed his residence at Utrecht; assumed the style of metropolitan of the Frisians; and ordained for the more distant missions, a competent number of suffragan bishops. Pepin and his successor frequently displayed the highest veneration for his character, and by their munificence enabled him to build and endow several monasteries and churches.⁶

The views of Willibrord expanded with his success. He ventured to preach to the independent Frisians: nor was he opposed by Radbode, who either respected his virtues, or feared the resentment of the Franks. The territories of Ongend, a ferocious Dane, were next visited by the intrepid missionary: but the threats of their chieftain rendered the natives deaf to his instructions, and he was compelled to content himself with the purchase of thirty boys, whom he designed to educate as the future apostles of their country. In the isle of Foiseteland his zeal was nearly rewarded with the crown of martyrdom. In a spring, which superstition had consecrated to the service of the pagan deities, he had presumed to baptize three of his converts. The profanation alarmed the fanaticism of the idolaters: and the permission of Radbode was asked to sacrifice the missionaries to the gods whose fountain they had polluted. By the order of the king the lots were cast. Willibrord escaped: but one of his companions was immolated to the vengeance of the islanders.⁷

Among the disciples of Egbert were two Anglo-Saxons, brothers, of the name of Ewald. The first news of the success of Willibrord kindled a similar ardour in their breasts; and with the permission and benediction of their teacher, they proceeded to the territories of the Old-Saxons. At the frontiers, they were received by the reeve of a neighbouring village, who entertained them hospitably in his house, and despatched a messenger to

⁶ Bed. l. v. c. 12. Ep. St. Bonif. p. 122.

⁷ Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iii. tom. I. p. 601.

inform the ealdorman of their arrival. But the priests of the canton carefully watched the conduct of the strangers: they observed them employed in the rites of a foreign worship; and, fearing the seduction of their chief, sacrificed, in a moment of jealousy, the two missionaries to their suspicions. One of the brothers was despatched by a single stroke: the lingering torments of the other amused and satisfied the cruelty of his persecutors. But the ealdorman considered their fate as an insult to his authority. At his return, he put the murderers to death, and ordered the village to be razed. By Pepin the bodies of the missionaries were honoured with a magnificent funeral at Cologne: by the Anglo-Saxon church their names were immediately enrolled in the martyrology.⁸

Of the Anglo-Saxons who associated themselves to the labours of Willibrord, several are mentioned in history with peculiar praise; and their memory was long revered with gratitude by the posterity of their converts. 1. Swibert was one of his first companions. The Boructuarii, the inhabitants of the present dutchy of Berg, and the county of Mark, were the principal objects of his zeal: but the fruits of his labours were interrupted and destroyed by a sudden irruption of the pagan Saxons. The country was laid waste; the natives, incapable of resistance, emigrated to the neighbouring nations; and the missionary, in his distress, was compelled to solicit the assistance of Pepin. That prince gave him the island of Keisserswerdt, in the river Rhine; on which he built a monastery, and from which he occasionally made excursions to instruct the remaining inhabitants.⁹ 2. Adelbert, a prince of the royal race of Northumbria, abandoned his country to share the merit and fortunes of Willibrord. He chose the north of Holland for the exercise of his zeal; the pagans listened with docility to his instructions; and his memory was long held in veneration by the inhabitants of Egmond, the place of his residence and death.¹⁰ 3. The Batavi, who dwelt in the island formed by the Rhine and the Wahal, owed their conversion to the instructions of Werenfrid. Elste was the capital of the mission; and the church of that town preserved his relics.¹¹ 4. Wiro, Plechelm, and Otger, three Anglo-Saxons, devoted themselves to the conversion of the inhabitants of Gueldres. Pepin revered and rewarded their virtues, and successively intrusted to the two former the direction of his conscience. Their principal residence was in the vicinity of Ruremond.¹²

⁸ Anno 692. Bed. l. v. c. 11. In Bede's martyrology the third of October is assigned to their memory. Smith's Bede, p. 428.

⁹ Bed. l. v. c. 12.

¹⁰ Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iii. tom. i. p. 631.

¹¹ Act. SS. Bolland. Aug. 28.

¹² Soc. Bolland. Mai. tom. ii. p. 309. Jul. tom. iv. p. 58. Sep. tom. ii. p. 612. The Irish writers consider Wiro as their countryman; but on the authority of Alcuin I have called him an Anglo-Saxon. Alc. de Pont. Ebor. v. 1045.

But the merit of converting barbarous nations was not confined to the zeal of the Northumbrian missionaries: and the title of apostle of Germany, has been bestowed by posterity on a West-Saxon of the name of Boniface. He was born at Crediton, in Devonshire, and at an early age discovered a strong predilection for the monastic profession. His father beheld with displeasure the inclination of his son: but a dangerous indisposition removed or subdued his objections; and the young Winfrid, (such was his original name,) accompanied by the friends of his family, repaired to the monastery of Exanceaster. From Exanceaster he was soon transferred to Nutselle; and in both houses his rising virtues and abilities commanded the esteem and admiration of his brethren. After having acquired every species of knowledge which was valued at that period, he was advanced to the office of teacher: his school was frequented by a crowd of students; and to facilitate the diffusion of knowledge, he taught, by the command of his superiors, in the neighbouring monasteries and convents. At the age of thirty he was ordained priest; and the eloquence or piety of his sermons increased his former reputation. He was admitted to the great council of the nation: Ina, king of Wessex, honoured him with his confidence; and the ambition of the monk, had he listened to ambition, might have justly aspired to the highest ecclesiastical preferments. But he had heard of the spiritual conquests of Willibrord and the other missionaries: and their example had kindled in his breast a desire of contributing, like them, to the progress and diffusion of Christianity. The abbot Wibert reluctantly yielded to his entreaties: and Winfrid, accompanied by three of his brethren, sailed from the port of London to the coast of Friesland. He could not have chosen a more inauspicious moment. Pepin was dead; Charles, his son and successor, was opposed by the rival ambition of Ragenfrid; and Radbode seized the favourable opportunity to pour his barbarians into the provinces which he had been formerly compelled to cede to the power of the Franks. The missionaries fled; the churches were demolished; and paganism recovered the ascendancy. Winfrid, however, penetrated as far as Utrecht; he even ventured to solicit the protection of the king: but his efforts were fruitless; and prudence induced him to return to England, and expect the issue of the war in the retirement of his former monastery.¹³

But in England his humility was soon alarmed by the partiality of his brethren, who chose him for their superior. To elude their importunity, he implored the assistance of Daniel, bishop of Winchester: and by the influence of that prelate a new abbot was installed, and the missionary was again permitted to pursue his apostolic labours. With several companions he sailed to the

¹³ St. Willib. vit. St. Bonif. p. 255—262. edit. Serraz.

continent, and directed his steps to Rome, carrying with him a letter from his diocesan. As soon as the pontiff had learned from it the views and qualifications of the pilgrim, he applauded his zeal, pointed out Germany as the theatre of his future labours, and dismissed him with his advice and benediction. By Liutprand, king of Lombardy, he was received with veneration. From the court of that hospitable monarch he crossed the Alps, traversed the territory of the Bavarians, and entered the country of the Thuringii. The natives had formerly listened to the doctrines of the gospel: but they still retained the habits of paganism, and their clergy were few, ignorant of their duties, and irregular in their morals. Boniface (he had now assumed a Latin name) instructed the people, and reformed the clergy. But he was recalled from this pious work to the first object of his choice, by the death of Radbode, and the subsequent successes of the Franks. Descending the Rhine, he entered Friesland, offered his services to Willibrord, and laboured three years under the direction of that apostolic prelate. The archbishop revered the virtues of his new associate; and determined to ordain him his successor in the see of Utrecht: but Boniface declined the dignity, and retired with precipitation among the Hessians and the Old-Saxons. The poverty of the country, the inclemency of the weather, and the caprice of the barbarians, furnished a long and severe trial to the patience of the missionary: but his perseverance subdued every obstacle; and within a few years he saw himself surrounded by a numerous and fervent society of Christians.¹⁴

By the report of travellers, Gregory II. was first informed of the conquests of Boniface: from his letters he learned that many thousands of the natives of Hesse, Saxony, and Thuringia, had willingly submitted to the doctrines of the gospel. The piety of the pontiff was gratified: he summoned the missionary to Rome, conferred on him the episcopal ordination,¹⁵ and sent him back with honour to his converts. From this hour spiritual distinctions continued to flow upon him. He soon received the pal-

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 262—268.

¹⁵ An ancient custom required that bishops, at their ordination, should subscribe a promise, or take an oath, of obedience to their metropolitan. That which was exacted by the Roman pontiffs, is still preserved in the *Liber Diurnus Rom. Pont.* p. 69. It is divided into two parts. In the first, the bishop promises to profess the faith, maintain the unity, and watch over the interests of the church: in the second, to bear true allegiance to the emperor, to oppose all treasonable practices, and to disclose to the pontiff such as may come to his knowledge. But after the conquests and conversion of the northern nations, it became necessary to change the second part, and adapt it to the particular circumstances of the bishop to whom it was proposed. Thus, in the time of Gregory the Great, the prelates of the Longobards, instead of the promise of allegiance to the emperor, swore that they would endeavour to preserve a just peace between their nation and the Romans. (*Lib. Diurn.* p. 71.) Another alteration was made at the ordination of St. Boniface. As several of the French prelates lived in the open infringement of the canons, he was made to promise that he would keep no communion with

lium with the metropolitanical jurisdiction; was authorized to assume the title of envoy of St. Peter, and legate of the apostolic see; and was appointed the superior not only of the German, but also of the Gallic prelates. To relieve the fatigue of the reader, I shall neglect the chronology of events, and rapidly notice the principal of his actions; 1. As a missionary to the pagan nations; and, 2. As the representative of the Roman pontiff.

1. The first care of the missionary, after he had received the episcopal consecration, was to increase the number of his associates. In a circular letter addressed to the bishops and the principal abbots in England, he painted in lively colours the wants of the mission, and exhorted his countrymen to assist him in liberating the souls of their fellow-creatures from the yoke of ignorance and paganism. His exhortations were read with congenial sentiments by the more fervent of the monks and clergy: the merit of converting the infidels, and the hope of obtaining the crown of martyrdom, taught them to despise the dangers and difficulties of the enterprise; and many zealous missionaries successively crossed the sea, and placed themselves at the disposal of the new apostle. No motives but those of the purest zeal could have supported them under the numerous privations and dangers to which they were continually exposed. Bread, indeed, they were able to obtain from the gratitude of their proselytes, and the menaces of the Franks protected them from the insults of the vanquished barbarians, who refused to listen to their doctrine: but for clothing, and almost every other necessary, they were compelled to depend on the casual benevolence of their distant friends; and the fruits of their labours were frequently destroyed, and their lives endangered, by the hostilities of the tribes that still retained the religion and independence of their fathers. By one incursion no less than thirty churches were levelled with the ground.¹⁶

The next object of the archbishop was to insure a permanent supply of missionaries. With this view he erected several monasteries, and exhorted his associates to copy his example in their different districts. His first foundation was the small cell at Ordof; this was followed by the larger monasteries of Fritzlar, and Amelburg: and to them succeeded the rich and magnificent abbey of Fulda. An extensive forest, known by the name of Buchow, lay in the midst of Franconia, Hesse, Wetteravia, and Thuringia. Through it ran the river Fuld, on the banks of which Boniface discovered a spot, adapted in his opinion to the purposes of a monastic life. A grant of the place was readily

those prelates, but would endeavour to reform them; and if his efforts were fruitless, would denounce them to the apostolic see. *Sed et si cognovero antistites contra instituta antiqua SS. patrum conversari, cum eis nullam habere communionem aut conjunctionem, sed magis, si valero prohibere, prohibebo; sin minus, fideliter statim domno meo apostolico renunciabo.* Ibid. p. 70.

¹⁶ St. Bonif. Ep. 91, 92.

obtained from the piety of Carloman, the son of Pepin : Sturm, his beloved disciple, with seven associates, cleared the wood, and erected the necessary buildings ; and Boniface himself taught them the strict observance of the rule of St. Benedict. The abbey continued to flourish after the death of its founder, and within the space of a few years contained four hundred monks. Till its late secularization its superior was a prince of the empire, and styled himself primate of all the abbots of Gaul and Germany.¹⁷

For the education of the female sex, Boniface solicited the assistance of Tetta, the abbess of Winburn ; and Lioba, with several of the sisters, readily devoted themselves to so meritorious an attempt. To these he afterwards joined several other English ladies, who were animated with similar views, and equally desirous to partake in the merit of the missionaries. Lioba was placed in the convent of Bischofesheim, on the Tuber ; Tecla, at Chitzingen, in Franconia ; Walpurg, at Heidenheim, near the Brentz ; and Chuniild and Chunitrude were sent, the former into Thuringia, the latter into Bavaria.¹⁸

As Boniface advanced in age, he found himself unequal to the administration of so extensive a diocese. With the permission of the pontiff, and the consent of Carloman, he established four episcopal sees at Erford, Buraburg, Aichstad, and Wurtzburg ; and intrusted them to the care of four of the most zealous among his associates, Adelhard, Wintan, Willibald, and Burchard.¹⁹

2. But the Anglo-Saxon did not confine his pastoral solicitude to the nations whom, by his preaching, he had converted to the Christian faith. In quality of apostolic legate, he visited Bavaria, and was received by the Duke Odilo with respect and kindness. The Bavarian church was then governed by Vivilo, a prelate ordained for that mission by the sovereign pontiff. Boniface judged that a greater number of pastors was necessary to accelerate the progress of the gospel, and divided the country into four smaller dioceses. Vivilo was obliged to content himself with the bishopric of Passau ; John, an Anglo-Saxon, was ordained for that of Saltzburg ; and Goibald and Erembert were placed in the churches of Ratisbon and Fresingen.²⁰

During the preceding century, the ambition of the mayors of the palace had dissolved the bands of civil subordination, and ecclesiastical polity, in the empire of the Franks. The regulations of the canons were openly infringed ; the highest dignities of the church were usurped by powerful and rapacious laymen ; and the clerical and monastic bodies were ignorant of the duties of their profession. To recall the severity of the ancient discipline was the great ambition of Boniface : and Carloman, whose

¹⁷ Vit. Bonif. p. 271, 272, 277. Ep. 142.

¹⁸ Othloni vit. St. Bonif. apud Canis. ant. Lect. tom. iii. Annal. Bened. tom. ii. p. 72.

¹⁹ St. Bonif. Ep. 131, 132.

²⁰ Vit. St. Bonif. auct. Willibal. p. 274.

piety readily listened to his suggestions, ordered the bishops of Austrasia to obey the summons of the legate. They met him successively in council, and respectfully subscribed to the canons which he dictated.²¹ Pepin imitated the zeal of his brother; a synod of three-and-twenty bishops assembled at Soissons; and by the care of Boniface, a uniformity of discipline was introduced throughout all the churches of the Franks.

An important revolution marks the history of this period. The sceptre had long since slipped from the feeble grasp of the Merovingian kings into the hands of Charles Martel and his sons. These princes at first contented themselves with the power, without the title of royalty: and, on the calends of May, the hereditary monarch of the Franks was annually exhibited to the veneration of his subjects. But Pepin soon dismissed the dangerous pageant: Childric, the last king of the race of Clovis, was shorn in the monastery of Sithiu; and Boniface, if we may believe a host of ancient writers, crowned the mayor of the palace, according to the wish or the advice of Pope Zachary. No point of history is, perhaps better attested than the share which the pontiff and his legate bore in this transaction:²²) yet several French critics have ventured to call it in question; and their rational skepticism may be excused or justified by the silence of Zachary and Boniface, and of Anastasius and Willibald, their ancient biographers.

Towards the close of his life the archbishop fixed his residence in the city of Mentz; and with the consent of Pepin and the pontiff ordained to succeed him his disciple Lullus, formerly a monk of Malmesbury. It was his wish to resume the labours of his youth, and spend his last breath in the conversion of the pagans. Attended by one bishop, three priests, three deacons, four monks, and forty-one laymen, he descended the Rhine, and penetrated to the centre of East-Friesland. By his exhortation some thousands of the idolaters were induced to abandon the altars of the gods, and to submit to the rite of baptism. After a short delay a general assembly of the neophytes was summoned to receive the sacrament of confirmation on the vigil of Pentecost; and in a tent in the plain of Dockum the archbishop waited the arrival of his converts. At the break of day he was informed that a body of Frisians, completely armed and of hostile aspect, were rapidly approaching. The laymen prepared to defend their lives: but Boniface, going out of his tent, bade them sheathe their swords, and receive with patience the crown of martyrdom. He had scarcely spoken, when the barbarians rushed upon them, and immolated the whole company to their fury. But their avarice was disappointed: and instead of the treasures which

²¹ Int. epist. St. Bonif. p. 110. 112.

²² See Eginhard, *Annales Laureshamenses*, Loiselani, Fuldenses, Bertiniani, &c. apud Le Cointe, *Annal. tom. iv.*

they expected, they obtained only a few books, with the use of which they were unacquainted. At the news, the Christian Frisians were fired with indignation: they assembled in great numbers, and within three days revenged the death of their teacher in the blood of his murderers.²³

The fate of Boniface did not arrest the zeal of his countrymen; and the nations whom he had converted, listened with docility to the instructions of his followers. But the first that added a new people to the Christian name, was Willehad, a Northumbrian priest, who, with the permission of his bishop and of King Alhred, sailed, in 772, to the northern coast of Germany. As soon as he had landed, he visited the plain of Dookum, kissed the ground which had been sanctified by the blood of the martyrs, and rose from prayer animated with the spirit of his predecessor. With irresistible eloquence he preached to the barbarians the doctrine of the gospel. The dangers to which he was frequently exposed, were repaid by the success of his labours; and the knowledge of the true God was successively planted on the banks of the Ems, the Weser, and the Elbe. Wigmode, the country lying between the two last rivers, became the principal theatre of his zeal; and during seven years he governed the mission with the authority, but without the ordination, of a bishop. When the Saxons made a last effort to throw off the yoke of the Franks, the Christians were the first victims of their fury. The churches erected by Willehad were demolished; five of his associates, with their companions, were massacred; and the missionary himself escaped with difficulty into Friesland. But after two years, the fortune of Charlemagne invited him to return, and he was ordained the first bishop of the Saxons. He chose for his residence a spot on the right bank of the Weser, where he built a cathedral, and laid the foundations of the city of Bremen. He died in 789.²⁴

From Germany the zeal of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries induced them to cross the Baltic; and Sigfrid, a priest of York, about the middle of the tenth century, preached, at the request

²³ Vit. S. Bonif. p. 279. The benefits, which Germany received from the ministry of Boniface, have not screened him from the severity of criticism; and the gratitude of Mosheim has induced him to draw a disadvantageous portrait of the apostle of his country. If we may believe him, Boniface often employed fraud and violence to multiply the number of his converts; and his own letters prove him to have been a man of an arrogant and insidious temper, and profoundly ignorant of many necessary truths, and of the real nature of the Christian religion. Mosh. sec. viii. par. 1, c. 1. As the German historian does not attempt to fortify his assertions by any reference to ancient writers, they must rest on his own authority: but if the reader think proper to peruse either the letters of the missionary, or his life by St. Willibald, he will be enabled to form an accurate notion of the veracity and impartiality of his accuser. The Anglo-Saxons considered Boniface as the glory of the nation. He died in 755, and in the first synod which was held the following year, they enrolled his name in the calendar, and chose him for one of the patrons of their church. Ep. Cuthb. archiep. p. 94.

²⁴ Annal. Bened. tom. ii. p. 222, 255, 260, 291.

of Olave Scotkonung, king of Upsal, to the natives of Sweden. The prince, his family, and army, received the sacrament of baptism; five episcopal sees were filled with pastors by the exertions of the missionary; and though he lost his three nephews by the cruelty of the idolaters, he at last succeeded in fixing the church of Sweden on a firm and lasting foundation. He died in 1002, and was buried at Wexiow, which had been his principal residence.²⁵ Ulfrid and Eskill, two of his countrymen, were martyred some time after by the inhabitants.²⁶

In Denmark the seeds of the gospel had been sown at different periods by the successors of St. Willehad, the archbishops of Bremen: but their success had been limited and transitory; and many missions were begun, many generations passed, before the fierce, intractable spirit of the natives could be induced to bend to the mild precepts of Christianity. A share of the merit of this pious work is due to the Anglo-Saxons; several of whom were transported by Canute the Great to Denmark, that, by their virtue and preaching, they might disseminate the Christian faith among his subjects. Bernard presided with episcopal authority in Schonen; Gerbrand in Zealand, and Reinher in Finland: but all three acknowledged the superior jurisdiction of Unuan, archbishop of Bremen.²⁷

The first of the Norwegian kings who received the sacrament of baptism, was Haco, surnamed the good. With the zeal of a proselyte he endeavoured to propagate the Christian religion; and at his request bishops and priests were sent from England to his assistance. In a public assembly he exhorted the deputies of the nation to embrace the new worship: but they despised his eloquence and authority, and compelled him to revert to the worship of his fathers.²⁸ Paganism retained the superiority in Norway till the accession of St. Olave. In one of those piratical expeditions which were the darling employment of the northern chieftains, he was converted to the faith by a hermit on one of the Scilly islands. When he had obtained the crown by the death of Haco the bad, he made it his principal ambition to convert his subjects; the severity of his laws abolished or repressed the practices of ancient superstition; the priests of Woden were put to death without mercy; and Norway was filled with real or pretended Christians. His assistants and advisers were Anglo-Saxons; Grimkele, bishop of Drontheim, Sigefrid, Rodolf, and Bernard, whose labours were not confined to the continent, but extended to all the islands which owned the dominion of the king of the Northmen.²⁹

²⁵ Apud Benzell. p. 1, cit. Butler, Feb. 15.

²⁶ Adam. Bremen. l. ii. c. 44.

²⁷ Chron. Holsatiæ, c. 10—13. Adam. Brem. l. ii. c. 38.

²⁸ Snorre, p. 138.

²⁹ Ibid. 223, 258. Adam. Bremen. l. ii. c. 40, 43. Anno 1027.

NOTES.

(A)—p. 64.

TOWARDS the close of his reign, Ethelwulf made a valuable donation to the church. It is, however, difficult to ascertain the true import of this donation. Some writers have described it as the establishment of tithes, (Selden, *Hist. of Tithes*, c. 8,) and, in defence of their opinion, appeal to the testimony of Ingulf. (*Tunc primo cum decimis omnium terrarum ac bonorum aliorum sive catallorum universam dotaverat ecclesiam.* Ing. f. 494.) I have, however, shown (p. 64) that tithes were introduced some centuries before: nor can I conceive how “the tenth part of the land” can mean no more than the donation of the tenth part of the produce of the land. The ancient historians may, in general, be divided into two classes. The first appear to limit the grant, whatever may have been its ultimate object, to the tenth part of the royal demesne lands. (*Teoþan ðæl hiþ londes.* Chron. Sax. p. 76. *Totam terram suam pro Christo decimavit,* Ailred, inter x. script. p. 351. *Totam terram suam decumavit.* Hunt. l. v. p. 200. *Decimam partem terræ meæ.* Chart. apud Wilk. p. 184. *Totam terram de dominico suo decimavit.* Annal. Winton. apud Dudg. Monast. tom. i. p. 32. *Decimam partem omnium terrarum in manibus suis existentium ecclesiæ donavit Anglicanæ.* Rudborne, p. 200.) The others, and in general the more ancient, extend it to all his dominions. (*Decimam totius regni sui partem ab omni regali servitio et tributo liberavit, et in sempiterno graphio in cruce Christi uni et trino Deo immolavit.* Asser, p. 2. *Hoved.* p. 232. *Decumavit de omni possessione sua in partem domini, et in universo regimine principatus sui sic instituit.* Ethelw. l. iii. c. 3, f. 478. *Decimam omnium hydarum intra regnum suum.* Malm. de Reg. l. ii. c. 2, f. 20.) There are also two charters given by Ethelwulf on this subject. The first is dated in the year 854, and appears from the signatures to have regarded only the kingdom of Wessex. In it he says, *Perfeci, ut decimam partem terrarum per regnum meum non solum sacris ecclesiis darem, verum etiam et*

ministris meis in perpetuam libertatem habere concederem. Malm. de Pont. l. v. p. 360, edit. Gale. Regist. Abend. apud Dugd. Monast. tom. i. p. 100. From these words the grant appears to have been made to the secular as well as the spiritual thanes; and was, perhaps, a donation, not of lands, but of immunities. This idea is strengthened by the additional clause in the copy preserved by the monks of Malmesbury. Terra autem ista, quam in libertate ponimus, ad ecclesiam pertinens Meldubesburg, est Piretune, &c. Malm. *ibid.* The second charter was given in the following year, and subscribed by the kings of Mercia and East-Anglia, and by all the bishops of England. The donation is expressed in the following terms: Aliquam portionem terræ hereditariam, antea possidentibus omnibus gradibus, sive famulis et famulabus Dei Deo servientibus, sive laicis miseris (perhaps ministris, as in the former charter,) semper decimam mansionem; ubi minimus sit, tum decimam partem omnium bonorum in libertatem perpetuam donari sanctæ ecclesiæ digudicavi. Wilk. ex Ingul. p. 183. This charter appears also to regard lands, which were already in the possession of the clergy and laity, (antea possidentibus,) and therefore can hardly mean any thing more than a grant of the great ecclesiastical privilege, that is, of immunity from all secular services, to the tenth part of such lands. This is insinuated in another part of the charter, in which it is termed a partial diminution of servitude. Eo libentius pro nobis ad Deum sine cessatione preces fundant, quo eorum servitatem in aliqua parte levigamus. Char. *ibid.* The grant of Ethelwulf is adverted to in a charter said to have been given by his grandson, Edward, to the new minster at Winchester, and extracted by Alford from the annals of Hyde. Ego Edvardus Saxonum Rex, ex decimatione, quam avi mei decimaverunt, ex eorum propriis terris istius regni, ministris suis aliquibus, sive etiam peregrinis, episcopis et bonis presbyteris, et monasteriis etiam emendandis, et pascendis pauperibus, tradiderunt ea ratione ut pro rege missarum celebrationem et votivas orationes faciant, &c. Alfordi Annal. tom. iii. p. 207.

(B)—p. 66.

HERE it may not be amiss to notice an error, to which the authority of respectable names has imparted the semblance of truth. It has long been fashionable to decry the clergy of the middle ages. Among their real or imaginary faults, they have been accused of valuing religion only as the source of temporal wealth; and in sup-

port of the charge, we are perpetually referred to the definition of a good Christian, attributed to St. Eloi, bishop of Noyon, in the seventh century. The history of this definition may, perhaps, amuse the reader. Dachery, a Benedictine monk, had rescued from the moths and cobwebs an old manuscript, containing the life of the saint: he published it in the fifth volume of his *Spicilegium*; and it fell into the hands of Maclaine, the English translator of Mosheim. With an eager eye this writer perused its contents, and selected from it a passage, which he appended, as a valuable ornament, to the text of the German historian. It was the character of the good Christian; and this character was made to consist in paying the dues of the church, and performing a few external practices of devotion: qualifications, which, as he observes more at length, might fill the coffers of the clergy, but could not satisfy the demands of the gospel. (Mosh. cent. vii. part 2, c. 3.) The present of Maclaine was gratefully accepted by the prejudices of his readers; and Robertson, who reprinted it, publicly acknowledged his obligations to him for the perusal of so important a passage. (Hist. Charles V. vol. i. p. 218, octavo edit.) From that period, it has held a very distinguished place in every invective which has been published against the clergy of former ages: and the definition of the good Christian has been re-echoed a thousand times, by the credulity of writers and their readers. May I hope to escape the imputation of skepticism, when I own, that I have always been inclined to mistrust this host of witnesses and their quotations? I at last resolved to consult the original document, nor were my expectations disappointed. I discovered that the bishop of Noyon had been foully calumniated, and that, instead of his real doctrine, a garbled extract had been presented to the public. That the good Christian should pay the dues of the church, he indeed requires: but he also requires, that he should cultivate peace among his neighbours, forgive his enemies, love all mankind as himself, observe the precepts of the decalogue, and faithfully comply with the engagements which he contracted at his baptism. *Non ergo vobis sufficit, charissimi, quod Christianum nomen accepistis, si opera Christiana non facitis. Illi enim prodest, quod Christianus vocatur, qui semper Christi præcepta mente retinet, et opere perficit: qui furtum scilicet non facit, qui falsum testimonium non dicit, qui nec mentitur nec perjerat, qui adulterium non committit, qui nullum hominem odit, sed omnes sicut semetipsum diligit, qui inimicis suis malum non reddit, sed magis pro ipsis orat, qui lites non concitat, sed discordes ad concordiam revocat, &c.* Dach. Spicil. tom. v. p. 213. On account of its similarity, I shall subjoin another description of the good Christian, from an Anglo-Saxon prelate, Wulstan, archbishop of York. "Let us always

profess one true faith, and love God with all our mind and might, and carefully keep all his commandments, and give to God that part (of our substance) which by his grace we are able to give, and earnestly avoid all evil, and act righteously to all others, that is, behave to others, as we wish others to behave to us. He is a good Christian who observeth this." *Sermo Lupi Epis. apud Whel. p. 487.*

(C)—p. 70.

It is no easy matter to determine the relative value of the different denominations of Anglo-Saxon money. The following is the most accurate information, which I have been able to collect on this subject.

I. The principal of the Anglo-Saxon coins appears to have been the silver penny. There is no evidence that our ancestors possessed any national pieces of a higher value.

By a statute, made in the reign of Edward I., it was ordered, that each penny should weigh thirty-two grains of wheat, taken from the middle of the ear; that twenty of these pennies should make one ounce; and twelve ounces one pound. (*Spelm. Gloss. voce Denar.*) This statute appears not to have altered, but only to have declared the legitimate weight of the English penny. Every more ancient document agrees in dividing the pound of silver into the same number of pennies.

I therefore conceive the penny always to have been the two hundred and fortieth part of a pound of silver: nor can I assent to those writers, who have ingeniously contended for two sorts of pennies; the larger, of which five, and the smaller, of which twelve are believed to have composed the shilling. For if the shilling of five pennies had contained as much silver as that of twelve, it must have been indifferent to the receiver, what shillings were offered him in payment: nor would the legislature so often have distinguished between the two sorts of shillings, and ordered some penalties to be discharged in shillings of five, and others in those of twelve pennies.

To prove the existence of two sorts of pennies, it has been observed that, in the laws of Alfred, mention is made of pounds *mæppa peninga*, (*Leg. Sax. p. 35.*) and in those ascribed to William the Conqueror, of *bener deners*. (*Turner, vol. iv. p. 168.* I have not found the original passage.) But I conceive the first passage should be translated shining pennies, or pennies fresh from the mint; the second,

better pennies, or such as were not adulterated with too great a quantity of alloy. From Domesday Book, and other authorities, we know that, when the king's treasurers suspected the purity of the silver, they refused it: and that, when the pennies had been diminished by remaining long in circulation, they required others, or a greater number to make up the weight. Ælfric translates, *probata moneta publica*, money of full weight: *be fullon ȝepihce*. Thwaites, *Heptat.* p. 30.

For the convenience of smaller payments, the penny was frequently clipped into two equal parts, each of which was called a hæfling, or half-penny: and these were again divided into halves, which were named feorthlings, or farthings.

In the Saxon translation of the gospels, are mentioned the *wecg*, (*Matth. xvii. 27.*) which I conceive to mean only a piece of money, and the *stycas*. (*Mark xii. 42.*) In this passage, two *stycas* are said to be the fourth of a penny. In the parallel passage in *St. Luke*, (*xxi. 2.*) the same sum is called two feorthlings. It should, however, be observed, that the translators are different—Ælfric in the latter, Aldred or Farmen in the former. In the year 1695, a considerable number of small copper coins, supposed to be *stycas*, were found near Rippon. Gibson's *Cam.* vol. i. p. cciii.

In the laws of Alfred, (*Leg. Sax. p. 45.*) and of Henry I. (*ibid. p. 282.*) mention is made of the third part of a penny. I am ignorant whether it was a coin, or only a division of the penny. Most probably it was the latter.

2. The shilling appears to have denoted a certain number of pennies, and to have varied in value at different times, and in different places. As this opinion has been controverted, I may be allowed to produce a few instances, by which I conceive it may be clearly established.

From the laws of Ethelred and Canute, (*Leg. Sax. p. 113, 127.*) it appears that one hundred and twenty shillings were the half of five pounds. Whence it follows, that the pound consisted of forty-eight shillings, and each shilling of five pennies, since the pound contained in all two hundred and forty pennies. This inference is confirmed by Ælfric, who assures us, that when he wrote, five pennies were equal to one shilling. *Fif penningar ȝemacigað ænne ſcillinge*. *Wilk. Gloss. p. 416.*

From the laws of Henry I. it appears, that fifty shillings were, at that period, the half of five pounds. (*Leg. Sax. p. 272.*) Whence it follows that the pound consisted of twenty shillings, and each shilling of twelve pennies, as the pound of silver was still coined into two

hundred and forty pennies. This inference is confirmed by several payments in Domesday Book, of twenty shillings to the pound: and by the Danegeld of the year 1083, which, by the Saxon Chronicle, is said to have been seventy-two pennies, (p. 185,) by other historians, six shillings. (Mat. Paris p. 9, Westmon. p. 229, and Brompton, p. 978.)

In the laws of Alfred, the different wounds which may be inflicted on the human body, are carefully enumerated, and a pecuniary compensation is assigned to each, proportionate to the injury which it was supposed to occasion. (Leg. Sax. p. 45.) The whole chapter, with the same fines, is inserted in the laws of Henry I.; but the Norman legislator, to prevent mistakes, admonishes his readers, that the shillings which are mentioned in it, are only shillings of five pennies. (Ibid. p. 281, 282.)

In the laws of Ina, and of Edward, the successor of Alfred, we are told, that the *healsfang* for a man, whose *were* was twelve hundred shillings, amounted to one hundred and twenty shillings. (Lex. Sax. p. 25. 54.) In those of Henry I., we are told, that the *healsfang* of a man whose *were* was twelve hundred shillings, or twenty-five pounds, amounted to one hundred and twenty shillings, which, according to the method of computation then in use, were only fifty shillings, (qui faciunt hodie solidos quinquaginta. Leg. Sax. p. 269.) Here the Norman observes, that the twelve hundred shillings, which, according to the ancient laws, were still demanded for the *were*, were the ancient shillings of five pennies, since they were only equal to twenty-five pounds, and that the one hundred and twenty shillings for the *healsfang* were of the same description, and equal to no more than fifty of the common shillings of twelve pence. In effect, one hundred and twenty shillings of five pennies, and fifty of twelve, give equally six hundred pennies.

According to the laws of Alfred, the *borhbryce* was a penalty of five pounds, (Leg. p. 35;) according to those of Henry I., it was one hundred shillings. (Leg. p. 250.) Five pounds of two hundred and forty pennies, and one hundred shillings of twelve pennies, give equally twelve hundred pence.

In the laws of Ethelred and Canute, (Leg. p. 113. 127,) the *grithbryce*, the penalty for violating the peace of a church of the

	Pounds.		Shillings.		Pennies.
1st class was	5	=	240	=	1200
2d " "	$\frac{1}{2}$	=	120	=	600
3d " "	$\frac{1}{4}$	=	60	=	300
4th " "	$\frac{1}{8}$	=	30	=	150

In the laws of Henry I., (Leg. p. 272,) the same penalty is stated as follows. For a church of the

	<i>Pounds.</i>		<i>Shillings.</i>		<i>Pennies.</i>
1st class was	5	=	100	=	1200
2d “	$\frac{1}{2}$	=	50	=	600
3d “	$\frac{1}{4}$	=	25	=	300
4th “	$\frac{1}{8}$	=	12-6	=	150

In both statements the value is the same. The only difference is in the shillings, which in the first are shillings of five, in the second of twelve pennies.

From these instances it may be inferred—1. That the same pecuniary compensations for crimes were in general continued by the Norman, which had been originally enforced by the Saxon princes:—2. That under the Saxons they were paid in shillings of five, under the Normans, in shillings of twelve pennies:—3. That the pennies continued of the same value, and the only difference was in the amount of the nominal sum called a shilling, which first denoted five, and afterwards twelve pennies.

It is difficult to discover at what period the shilling of twelve pennies was first employed. That it was introduced by some of the foreign adventurers, who, during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, settled in England, is evident: that it should be assigned to the national partiality of the Norman conquerors, is highly probable: both because it first appears in the English laws after the conquest, and because it is known to have been the shilling in use among all the provinces, which originally composed the empire of the Franks. (The French pound contained two hundred and forty pennies, or twenty shillings of twelve pennies each. *Mabil. sæc. iv. Bened. præf. i. p. cxi.* It was fixed at this sum by Pepin and Charlemagne. *Du Fresne, Glos. p. 894.* The Spanish pound contained three hundred pennies, and only twelve shillings of twenty-five pennies each. *Mabil. Anal. vet. p. 551.*) To this opinion, however, it may be objected, that in the history of Ely, mention is made of payments of twenty shillings to the pound, as early as the reign of Edgar, (*Hist. Elien. p. 473:*) and in Ælfric's version of Exodus, c. xxi. v. 10, the *mægþaðe*, which Alfred, in his laws, declares to be the woman's dower, (*Leg. Sax. p. 39,*) is said to be twelve shillings of twelve pennies, (*þa rind tþelf reillingar be tþelf penigon. Thwaites, Heptat. p. 85.*) It is not, however, impossible, that the monk of Ely, as he wrote after the conquest, might adopt, instead of the ancient, the new method of computation, which was more intelligible to his readers: and as the passage in Ælfric is an addition to the

original, it might, perhaps, be inserted by some of his copyists as a note, and have crept from the margin into the text.

There is reason to believe that, even among the Saxon nations, the shilling did not always denote the same number of pennies. The shilling of five pennies, was the shilling of Wessex; the head, as it is styled by Henry I., of the empire and the laws, (*Quæ caput regni est et legum. Leg. Sax. p. 265;*) but in Mercia the shilling appears to have contained no more than four pennies.

That the Mercians followed a particular method of calculation, is insinuated in the laws of Athelstan, from which we learn that a certain sum of money among the Angles, was equal to one hundred pounds in the Mercian law. (*be mýpna lage. Leg. Sax. p. 71.*)

In the assessment of the Weregild, we are told, that among the Mercians, seven thousand two hundred shillings are equal to one hundred and twenty pounds. (*Ibid. p. 72.*) Hence it follows, that sixty Mercian shillings made a pound, and that, of consequence, each shilling could contain no more than four pennies.

This inference is confirmed by a passage in the same laws, in which four pennies, and shortly after one shilling, are mentioned, as the sum contributed by each member of an association in London. *Ibid. p. 66.*

In the laws ascribed to William the Conqueror, we are told, that the shilling English is four pennies. (*Leg. p. 221.*) If the reading be correct, this must be the Mercian shilling.

Hence it may not be rash to infer, that the shilling denoted among the West-Saxons five, the Mercians four, and the Normans twelve pennies.

In ancient charters we sometimes meet with mention of *sieli*: in Archbishop Egbert's dialogue, (*p. 272, 273. 275;*) of *sieli* and *argentei* for the same sum. Both words were borrowed from the Latin translation of the Scriptures, and adopted by the Saxon writers in that language, as less barbarous than the national term *scyllinge*. In the vernacular version of the gospels, *argenteus* is always rendered by *shilling*, in that of Genesis, it is rendered a shilling, *p. 27*, and a penny, *p. 43*. Ælfrie translates *sielus* by *þeilling*. *Gen. xxiii. 16*, and *Exod. xxi. 32*, by *entþa*. *Jos. vii. 21*.

3. Among the Angles, (*inne mid Englum. Leg. p. 71*. Perhaps the Middle-Angles mentioned by Bede, *l. iii. c. 21*.) the pennies seem to have been computed, not by shillings, but by *thrymsas*. The word is derived from *þreo* or *þrum*, and appears to mean three pennies. That such was the real value of the *thrymsa*, may be deduced from the laws of Athelstan, from which we learn that two hundred

and sixty-six thrymsas among the Angles, were equal to two hundred shillings among the Mercians. (Leg. p. 71.) Two hundred and sixty-six thrymsas of three pennies, give seven hundred and ninety-eight pennies, and two hundred Mercian shillings of four, give eight hundred pennies. The difference is only two, and in so large a sum might have been overlooked by the legislator, for the sake of a round number. Such instances occur in the Saxon laws. See Leg. Sax. p. 269.

4. Of the value of the sceatta, I am compelled to confess my ignorance. From a diligent comparison of the sums mentioned in the laws of Ethelbert, king of Kent, the sceatta appears to have been the twentieth part of a shilling. Hence, if the shilling in these laws be that of Wessex, the sceatta will be one-fourth, if that of Mercia, one-fifth of a penny. But at the distance of three centuries it appears to denote a much greater sum. In the laws of Athelstan, the king's Weregild is said to be, according to the custom of Mercia, thirty thousand sceattas, which, by the computation mentioned above, will amount to no more than twenty-five pounds. Yet we are told immediately after, that it is equal to one hundred and twenty pounds, which makes each sceatta equal to one penny and the twenty-fourth part of a penny. I suspect the correctness of the passage.

5. The ora first appears in the convention between Edward and Guthrun, king of the Danes; it is often mentioned afterwards, and appears to have been peculiar to the countries in which the Danes were settled. In the laws of Ethelred, the ora is said to be the fifteenth part of a pound. (Spelm. Gloss. voce Ora. Wilk. Gloss. voce Hustinge.) It was, therefore, equal to sixteen pennies; and such is the value ascribed to it by Ælfric, according to Spelman, (ibid.) and by the register of Burton, according to Camden. (Gibson's Camden, Wiltshire, p. 130.) Twenty oras, if the register be correct, were equal to two marks, or three hundred and twenty pennies. But though sixteen new pennies made an ora, yet in many payments twenty were exacted on account of the diminution of the coin by circulation. Domesday, Gale, p. 759. 765.

6. The mancus was the eighth of a pound. Ælfric, after observing that five pennies make a shilling, adds, and thirty pennies a mancus. (Wilk. Gloss. voce Manca.) It is said in one chapter of the laws of Henry I., (c. 34,) that thirty shillings of five pennies make five mancuses; and in another, that twelve common shillings and sixpence make five mancuses. In each passage the mancus appears to have contained thirty pennies.

7. The mark is so frequently mentioned among the different deno-

minations of Saxon money, that it must appear surprising any doubt should exist respecting its value. By Spelman (*Gloss. voce Marca*) it is said to have been at one period equal to no more than two pennies. But he was deceived by a law of Edward the Confessor, the true meaning of which may be discovered from a parallel law of William the Conqueror. (Compare *Leg. p. 198*, with *p. 222*.) Other writers have pronounced the mark to be the same sum with the mancus: and in some passages, particularly in the laws of Henry I., these two denominations appear to be used indiscriminately. But this I am inclined to ascribe to the negligence of the copyists, who might easily confound words so similar to each other as *marca* and *manca*. At an early period after the conquest, the mark was two-thirds of a pound, (at this value it was called on the continent the English mark. *Du Fresne, Gloss. p. 438*.) and there is every reason to believe it to have been the same under the Saxon princes. This I shall endeavour to prove, by showing that the latter computation agrees, and the former disagrees, with the relative value of the sums mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon laws.

In the convention between Alfred and Guthrun, the life of an English and a Danish thane is declared to be of equal value: and the compensation for each is said to be eight half-marks of gold: that is, if the mark were two-thirds of a pound, thirty-two ounces; if, like the mancus, one-eighth, six ounces. Under the Normans, the value of gold to silver was as one to nine or ten, (*Spel. Gloss. p. 397. Wilk. Gloss. p. 416*;) and, as far as I can judge, the same proportion seems to have obtained under the Saxons. In this supposition thirty-two ounces of gold will be worth about twenty-five pounds of silver, and six ounces of gold worth about five pounds. To decide which of these computations deserves the preference, we need only examine the laws of Ethelred and Henry I., in which the same law is re-enacted, and the penalty is declared to be twenty-five pounds of silver. (See *Leg. Sax. p. 47. 105. 265*.)

Among the Danes, the *lahslite*, the fine for violating the law, was five marks, if the criminal were a king's thane; three, if he were a landholder; and twelve oras, if he were a countryman. (*Leg. p. 101*.) Supposing the mark to be no more than the mancus, the thane would pay thirty shillings, the landholder eighteen, and the countryman thirty-eight shillings and two-pence, which is evidently wrong. But supposing the mark to be two-thirds of a pound, the thane would pay one hundred and sixty shillings, the landholder ninety-six, and the countryman thirty-eight and two-pence, which appears nearer to the truth.

In the laws attributed to Edward the Confessor, (Leg. p. 199,) the manbote to be paid to the king or archbishop, for the murder of one of their retainers, was three marks; to a bishop or earl, forty-eight shillings of five pennies, equal to twenty of twelve; to a thane, twenty-four of five pennies, or ten of twelve. Supposing the mark to be two-thirds of a pound, three marks are ninety-six shillings of five pennies, and forty of twelve. That this is the true value of the three marks, will appear from the gradual diminution of the manbote in geometrical proportion.

	<i>Marks.</i>	=	<i>Shillings of 5.</i>	=	<i>Shillings of 12.</i>
King's manbote	3	=	96	=	40
Bishop's manbote	$\frac{1}{2}$	=	48	=	20
Thane's manbote	$\frac{1}{4}$	=	24	=	10

Hence, I conclude the Anglo-Saxon mark was two-thirds of the pound, or one hundred and sixty pennies.

The Saxon money may, therefore, be reckoned as follows :

		=	<i>Pennies.</i>
The pound	1	=	240
The mark	$\frac{2}{3}$	=	160
The mancus	$\frac{1}{3}$	=	30
The ora	$\frac{1}{15}$	=	16
The greater shilling	$\frac{1}{20}$	=	12
The common shilling	$\frac{1}{48}$	=	5
The Mercian shilling	$\frac{1}{60}$	=	4
The thrymsa	$\frac{1}{80}$	=	3
The penny	$\frac{1}{240}$	=	1

(D)—p. 83.

THE most accurate account of the discipline observed in the double monasteries, among the Anglo-Saxons, occurs in the life of St. Lioba, written by Ralph, a monk of Fulda, and contemporary historian. In quo (Winburne) duo monasteria antiquius a regibus gentis illius constructa sunt, muris altis et firmis circumdata, et omni sufficientia sumptuum rationabili dispositione procurata, unum scilicet clericorum, alterum feminarum. Quorum ab initio foundationis suæ ea lege disciplinæ ordinatum est, ut neutrum eorum dispar sexus ingrederetur. Nunquam enim virorum congregationem femina, aut virginum contur-

bernia quisquam virorum intrare permittebatur, exceptis solummodo presbyteris, qui in ecclesias earum ad agenda Missarum officia tantum ingredi solebant, et consummata celeriter oratione statim ad sua redire. Feminarum vero quæcumque sæculo renuntians earum collegio sociari voluerat, nunquam exitura intrabat, nisi causa rationabilis vel magnæ cujuslibet utilitatis existens eam cum consilio emitteret. Porro ipsa congregationis mater, quando aliquid externum pro utilitate Monasterii ordinare vel mandare necesse erat, per fenestram loquebatur. Tetta abbatissa virgines cum quibus indesinenter manebat, adeo immunes a virorum voluit esse consortio, ut non tantum laicis aut clericis, verum etiam ipsis quoque Episcopis in congregationem earum negaret ingressum. Vit. St. Liobæ apud Mab. Act. SS. Bened. sæc. 3, p. 246. See also Bede, l. iv. c. 7; iii. c. 11.

(E)—p. 92.

I SHALL take this opportunity to add a few miscellaneous remarks concerning the Anglo-Saxon monks at this period.

For several centuries, as Mabillon had justly observed, (Sæc. Bened. iv. præf. 1, n° 52,) the distinction of different orders of monks was unknown. Whatever diversity might exist in their private discipline, they considered each other as brethren, and professors of the same institute. Hence they made no difficulty to alter, as they thought proper, the internal police of their own monasteries, to borrow new regulations from each other, and to join in the observance of two or more rules at the same time, in those points in which they did not contradict each other. Many instances might be adduced from the historians of other countries, nor are they wanting in the records of the Anglo-Saxons. The discipline established at Weremouth, by St. Bennet Biscop, was collected from the customs of seventeen foreign monasteries, (ex decem et septem monasteriis, Bed. vit. Abbat. p. 297;) St. Botulf composed his rule from that of St. Benedict, the customs of the ancient monks, and the suggestions of his own judgment. Quod transmarinis partibus didicerat de monachorum districtiori vita et regulari consuetudine, memoriter repetendo quotidianis inculcationibus subditos consuescit solita mansuetudine. Præcepta salutis secundum B. patris Benedicti documentum, vetera novis, nova veteribus miscens, nunc antiquorum instituta, nunc per se intellecta discipulos edocuit.

Vit. St. Botul. auctore Felice, in actis SS. Benedic. tom. iii. p. 2. At Lindisfarne, after the departure of the Scottish monks, was observed a rule composed by St. Eata, the first Anglo-Saxon abbot, afterwards the rule of St. Benedict was added, and both were observed together. Nobis regularem vitam componens constituit, quam usque hodie cum regula Benedicti observamus. Vit. St. Cuth. auctore anonymo sed antiquo, cit. Mab. Annal. Bened. tom. i. p. 275.

The great number of monks belonging to some monasteries, will probably surprise the reader. At Winchelcomb they amounted to three hundred, (Monas. Ang. tom. i. p. 190;) at Weremouth and Jar-row to six hundred, (Bed. vit. Abbat. p. 301;) and in the houses established by St. Wilfrid, to some thousands. (Ed. vit. Wilf. c. 24.) It were, however, inaccurate to suppose, that all these were withdrawn from the occupations of social life, to attend solely to pious exercises. In the most populous monasteries, a very small proportion of the members were permitted to study the sciences, or to aspire to holy orders: the greater part (five-sixths according to the monk of Winchelcomb) were employed in the daily occupations of husbandry, and the mechanic arts, in which they acquired a much greater proficiency than any of their contemporaries. In illo magno religiosorum numero, vix fortassis quadraginta aut circiter in sacerdotes aut clericos ordinari cerneret: reliqua vero multitudo heremitarum et laicorum more, diversis artificiis, et aliis manuum laboribus operam dantes, pro his, quæ in necessariis defuerunt, prout ab antiquo boni fecere monachi, diligenter prospiciebant. Regist. Winchel. in Monas. Ang. tom. i. p. 190.

The dress of the Anglo-Saxon monks and nuns was not uniform. It is noticed as an instance of uncommon austerity, that the abbess Edilthryda denied herself the use of linen, (Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 19;) and St. Cuthbert is praised for having forbidden the woollen garments of his disciples to be dyed. (Bed. vit. St. Cuth. c. 16.) The Saxons in general were passionately addicted to dress, and great admirers of the most gaudy colours. Among these scarlet was the favourite; and flammea puella is used by Archbishop Lullus to denote a lady of fashion. (Ep. St. Bonif. 45, p. 63.) Variety, however, as we learn from St. Aldhelm, was deemed necessary: and from his expressions we may infer, that the weavers employed looms with several treadles, and understood the art of ornamenting their webs with figures, formed by threads of different colours. (Panuculæ purpureis, imo diversis colorum varietatibus fucatae, inter densa filorum stamina ultro citroque decurrant, et arte plumaria omne textrinum opus diversis imaginum toracielis perornent. St. Ald. de laud. Virg. p. 305.) He himself pos-

sessed a chasuble (a vestment for the celebration of mass) of a scarlet colour, decorated with figures of peacocks, each of which was enclosed in a circle of black. (Gale, p. 351.) It was not long before this taste violated, in many instances, the original simplicity of the monastic habit. Of the ladies, who retired to the convents, many were descended from the most illustrious families: in the cloister they devoted their leisure hours to works of ornament; and often retained a great part of the dress which they had worn in a secular life. St. Aldhelm has described the appearance of one of these noble or royal nuns. Her under vest (*subucula*) was of fine linen, and, if the text be accurate, of a violet colour; above this she wore a scarlet tunic, (*tunica coccinea*), with wide sleeves, and a hood striped with silk, (*manicæ et caputium sericis clavatæ*;) her shoes were of red leather; the locks on her forehead and temples were curled with irons; and a veil (*mafortium*) was tied to her head with ribands, crossed over her breast, and permitted to fall behind to the ground. He adds, that her nails were pared to a point, that they might resemble the talons of the falcon. St. Ald. *ibid.* p. 364. The principal difference between this dress and that of the secular ladies appears to have been, that the latter suspended crescents of gold and silver (*lunulæ*) on their necks, wore bracelets round their arms, rings encased with jewels on their fingers, and employed stibium to paint the face. *Id.* p. 307. The dress of the more dissipated among the clergy and monks is said to have borne a great resemblance to that of the nuns above described. *Id.* p. 364. But they affected to wear their tunics shorter, and imitated the secular thanes by wrapping fillets of different colours round their legs, (see an instance of this custom in Strutt's engraving from the ancient MSS. *Horda Angelcynn.* vol. i. p. 47,) and covering their heads with the lappets of their robes, which were made to resemble a mantle. (*Imitantur sæculares in vestitu crurum per fasciolas, et per coculas in circumdatione capitis in modum pallii.* *Con. Cloves.* p. 99.) These robes were faced with silk, and ornamented with vermicular figures, (*Ep. St. Bonif. 105, p. 149*;) the silk was of a crimson colour, striped with white, green, or yellow. (*Carmen Aldhel. inter ep. Bonif. p. 89.*) In the correspondence between the missionaries in Germany and their friends in England, is mentioned a great variety of presents. Among these are several articles of the clerical and monastic dress, the figure of which is perhaps now unknown; but which were made of silk, silk and wool, wool, and linen: some were lined with furs, and others woven in imitation of them. (*Ep. St. Bonif. p. 15. 105. 117. 126. 152. 155.*)

These innovations in the monastic dress were not, however, uni-

versal. Many monasteries retained with scrupulous exactitude the severe simplicity of their founders: and the vanity of the others was deservedly chastised by the zeal of the more vigilant prelates, and the decrees of the national councils. Among the former, St. Aldhelm, (*De laud. Vir. passim.*) and St. Boniface, (*Ep. ad Cuth. apud Wilk. p. 93;*) among the latter, the synods of Cloveshoe and Calcuith were conspicuous. By the synod of Cloveshoe, works of ornament were discouraged in nunneries, a greater attention to prayer and reading was recommended, and such habits ordered to be worn as became those who had renounced forever the pleasures and the vanities of the world. In the synod of Calcuith, the papal legates severely condemned the use of garments dyed with Indian colours, (*tinctis Indiæ coloribus. Id. p. 147.* From a passage in the life of St. Ansegisus, *Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. vol. i. p. 634*, in which the Indian colour is distinguished from the green and red, I should suspect it to be the same as is still known by the name of indigo.) The clergy and monks were also ordered to adopt the habits of their brethren in the east. (*Ibid.* By the east were meant the nations on the continent, as appears from comparing this passage with another, *p. 151.*) Whether this regulation was ever enforced I am ignorant. If it were, the dress of the monks would be as follows: a close woollen tunic of a white colour, reaching to the feet, over which was worn a wider robe, with long sleeves and a cowl of the same stuff, but of a darker colour. On many occasions this was exchanged for a shorter vest of nearly the same figure, with this exception, that it only reached to the elbows and thighs. They were called the tunic, cowl, and scapular. (*Tunica, cuculla, scapulare. Mab. Act. SS. Ben. sæc. v. præf. n° 59.*)

Of the canonical dress of the clergy, I have met with no exact description. From *Ingulf. (f. 500)* we learn, that *Turketul* ordered the clergy, who served the church of *St. Pega*, to wear *chlamydem nigram, vestesque talaris, ac omnes nigri coloris.* The *chlamys* was an open robe, fastened with a clasp. *Isidor. orig. l. xix. c. 24.*

The warm bath was in frequent use in monasteries at this period. It was recommended as conducive to cleanliness and health. *St. Wilfrid* bathed every evening during many years. *Edd. vit. St. Wilf. c. 21.* People bathed before communion through respect to the sacrament. *Mab. sæc. iv. tom. ii. præf. n° 187.* *Bede* mentions with praise the self-denial of *St. Edilthryda*, who seldom used the warm bath, except on the vigils of *Easter*, *Pentecost*, and the *Epiphany*. He adds, that all the other nuns were accustomed to bathe before her. *Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 19.*

In the histories of some monasteries, mention is made of recluses.

A recluse was a woman of approved piety, whom the abbot permitted to reside in a cell near the church, and to attend daily at the divine service. She generally wore the same habit as a nun, and submitted to the same regulations. Of this description was Etheldrida, a Mercian princess, who had been promised in marriage to Ethelbert, king of the East-Angles. Shocked at the barbarous murder of her intended husband, (he was killed by order of her father Offa, on his arrival at the court of Mercia,) she determined to forsake the world, and devote herself to a religious life. Croyland, which had been founded by a prince of her family, was the object of her choice; and the monks erected apartments for her in a corner of the church. In this situation she spent the rest of her days. Her cell afforded a secure asylum to her cousin Witlaff, king of Mercia, and concealed him during four months from the resentment of his victorious enemy, Egbert, king of Wessex. Cart. Witlaf. apud Ingulf. f. 487.

It was seldom that more than one recluse was permitted to reside near the monastery. If the abbot received many applications, he sometimes built a convent in the neighbourhood, appointed a prioress, and drew up a code of laws for its inhabitants. Matt. Paris, vit. Abbat. p. 992. Men, as well as women, sometimes became recluses.

(F)—p. 94.

THE houses of the Anglo-Saxons appear to have resembled those of the other northern tribes of that period. The walls were built of wood or stone, the roofs of branches of trees covered with straw or reeds. An aperture in the centre transmitted the smoke. (Bed. l. iii. c. x.) The habitation which St. Cuthbert built for himself in the isle of Farne, consisted of two separate rooms, surrounded by a wall two yards high. The latter was built with stone and turf: the rooms were partly excavated in the rock. (Bed. p. 243. 263.) Even the palace of the king of Northumbria was nothing more than a large hall, with two opposite openings for doors. The hearth was in the middle of the floor. (Bed. l. ii. c. 13.)

In the erection of their churches, the converts followed the method of the countries from which their teachers came. The Irish missionaries taught them to build churches of split oak, which Bede distinguishes by the name of the Irish method, (l. iii. c. 25,) and which appears to

have kept its ground in Ireland during several centuries. (Vit. St. Malachiæ, auctore D. Bern. c. v. xiii.) Of this method of building, a curious specimen still remains in Greenstead church, in the county of Essex. The walls are formed of the trunks of oaks six feet high, sawed in half. Being cut away at the bottom into a tenon, they are inserted into a groove cut in a horizontal piece of timber, which serves as the base sustainment. A second horizontal square timber, by way of entablature, grooved like the first, receives the ridges of the trunks, which stand with their sawed faces inwards, and within one inch of each other. At the gable end the trunks rise gradually pediment-wise to the height of fourteen feet. The interstices between the trunks admitted the light; but we find from Bede, (Vit. Cuth. c. xlvi.) that they were sometimes filled with straw: others nailed skins against them; Eadbert of Lindisfarne covered them entirely with lead. Id. l. iii. c. 25.

The Roman missionaries, who had been accustomed to the buildings of Italy, introduced the custom of building churches of stone: and the superior elegance and solidity of these soon superseded the method of building with wood.

The cruciform shape, which has since been usually given to churches, was then seldom adopted. The first instance of the kind in England is generally supposed to have been the church at Ramsey, built in 969, (Gale, Hist. Ram. c. 20:) but the contrary appears from a poem written in England long before that period, in which mention is made of a church built in the shape of a cross. (Ethelwulf, de Abbat. Lindis. c. 22.) In general, however, the Anglo-Saxon churches approached the form of a square. (Ibid. c. 20. Bed. l. ii. c. 14.)

The ceilings were flat, framed with oak, and supported by rows of columns. (Lel. Col. vol. i. p. 24. Alc. de Pont. v. 1507. Edd. vit. Wilf. c. 17.) From them were suspended a great number of lamps.

Ut cælum rutilat stellis fulgentibus, omnes
Sic tremulas vibrant subter testudine templi
Ordinibus variis funalia pendula flammæ.

Ethel. de Abbat. c. 20.

In the walls were formed spiral staircases. (Edd. vit. Wilf. c. 20.) The body of the church was surrounded by numerous porches, each of which formed a distinct chapel. (Bed. l. ii. c. 3. Ed. vit. Wilf. c. 17. 20.)

Emicat egregiis laquearibus intus atque fenestris,
Pulchraque porticibus fulget circumdata multis.

Alc. de Pont. v. 1507.

Plurès sacris altaribus ædes,
Quæ retinent dubium liminis introitum.
Quisquis ut ignotis deambulat atria plantis
Nesciat unde meat, quove pedem referat.
Onni parte quia fores conspiciuntur apertæ,
Nec patet ulla sibi semita certa viæ.

Wolstan in Act. SS. Ben. vol. iii. p. 629.

The church at Ramsey was ornamented with two towers, one at the western entrance, and another in the centre of the transept supported by four arches. (Hist. Rames. c. 20.) The tower of the new church at Winchester was at the eastern extremity. (Wolst. p. 630.) But I conceive that originally the towers were distinct from the churches, like the celebrated round towers that are still remaining in Ireland. Thus a tower had been erected before the western entrance of the *old* church at Winchester, as we learn from Wolstan.

Turris erat rostrata tholis quia maxima quædam
Illius ante sacri pulcherrima limina templi, &c.

Act. SS. Ben. vol. ii. p. 70.

If I may be allowed to conjecture on a subject which has exercised the ingenuity of many writers, I conceive such towers to have been originally built at a short distance from the church, that the walls might not be endangered by their weight, and that they were not considered merely as an ornament, but used as beacons to direct the traveller towards the church^o or monastery. Lights were kept burning in them during the night. At least such was the fact with respect to the new tower at Winchester, which, we learn from Wolstan, consisted of five stories, in each of which were four windows, looking towards the four cardinal points, that were illuminated every night. (Wols. p. 631.)

(G)—p. 98.

THAT the Anglo-Saxon monks, by their virtue, their learning, and their utility, deserved the esteem of their contemporaries, can scarcely

be denied by those, who are acquainted with their true history. It must, however, be acknowledged that the merit of all was not equal, and that in several monasteries the severe discipline of their founders was gradually abandoned. Experience showed that opulence was not in general the soil the most favourable to the growth of monastic virtue. But the cause should be ascribed to the circumstances of the times. The wealth and importance attached to the dignity of abbot, often stimulated the ambition, and rewarded the intrigues of men, the least qualified for so elevated an office. When the prince assumed the right of nominating to the vacant abbeys, the merit of the candidate was frequently the last recommendation which he required: and if the freedom of election was granted to the monks, they were often compelled, by the rapacity of an unprincipled neighbour, to purchase the protection of some powerful family, by giving their suffrages to one of its members. If we peruse the catalogue of those who governed the more opulent monasteries, we shall find them filled with names of royal or noble descent: and of these superiors, though several maintained with honour the reputation of the order, and the regularity of the monks, many considered themselves as little more than secular thanes. They abandoned to others the care of the community, followed the sovereign to the field of battle, and mixed in the pleasures and occupations of the world. The consequence was natural. The sterner virtues of the institute were suffered to languish; discipline was relaxed; and the private monk imitated, in many instances, the dissipation of his superior. See Wilkins, p. 93. 97. Bed. l. iv. c. 25. Ep. ad Egb. p. 311. Ep. Alc. apud Canis. xxiii. p. 411. Mat. Paris, vit. Abbat. p. 992. Gul. Thorn. p. 1781.

(H)—p. 103.

THE belief of the Anglo-Saxon church, respecting the supremacy of St. Peter, is so well established, that I shall not stop to unravel the web which the sophistry of Hicks (Gram. p. 20) and Whelock (Hist. p. 237) has spun from some expressions in the Saxon homilist. Yet I may observe, that the superior dignity of the apostle is asserted in the very passage which is the subject of their triumph. Nu beap̃ Petrus þ̃ h̃p̃ oððe zetacnung̃e ðæpe halgan zelap̃unge on þæpe he is ealdor under Eriur̃. “Now Peter beareth the type or resemblance of the holy church; in which he is the prince under

Christ." Whel. p. 237. Whelock, indeed, has rendered the Saxon word *ealdor* by senior, *Elstob* by bishop, (*Sax. Homil. pref. p. xl.:*) but that it should be prince or chief, is plain from the context, from Alfred's version of Bede, in which *ealdor* always answers to princeps, and from the original sermon of St. Augustine, (*Sermo 13, de verb. Dom.,*) from which this passage was borrowed by the homilist, and which has the words, *principatum tenens*.

(I)—p. 107.

THE reader has already seen, that the council of Cloveshoe was convoked in obedience to the command of the pontiff, and to avoid the sentence of excommunication, with which he had threatened the Anglo-Saxon prelates. I shall proceed to notice the manner in which Henry has undertaken to prove, from the same council, that the English church was independent of the church of Rome. He was urged to the attempt by the apparent success of Inett, (*vol. i. p. 177:*) but he applied to the work with greater boldness; and the master must be content to yield the palm to his scholar.

In Henry's ingenious narrative we are told—1. That the council was held, probably, at the suggestion of St. Boniface: 2. That its canons were, for the most part, taken from those of the synod of Mentz, which that prelate had transmitted to Archbishop Cuthbert: 3. But that the English council made a very important alteration in the canon respecting the unity of the church. In that formed by St. Boniface, the bishops professed their obedience to St. Peter and his vicar: in that published by the English prelates, no mention was made of the church of Rome, but it was declared that "sincere love and affection ought to be among all the clergy in the world, in deed and judgment, without flattery of any one's person." "This remarkable caution," adds the historian, "in the language of the canon, is a sufficient proof that the clergy of England were not yet disposed to bend their necks to the intolerable and ignominious yoke of Rome." *Hen. vol. iii. p. 225.*

It must be confessed, that the art with which this narrative is composed, does honour to the ingenuity of its author. The idea, that the synod was assembled at the suggestion of St. Boniface, and that the canons were selected from those which had been transmitted from Germany to the Saxon metropolitan, is well calculated to justify the

inference which he was so anxious to establish. The only defect is, that the whole system has been raised on a treacherous foundation; on the speculations of a modern writer, instead of the documents of ancient history. Henry's account is contradicted, in every particular, by the very acts of the council. 1. In the præmium the bishops assert, that they had assembled, not at the suggestion of St. Boniface, but at the peremptory command of Pope Zachary. 2. The canons sent from Germany were only nine in number, and were comprised in a few lines, (Wilk. p. 91 :) those published at Cloveshoe amounted to thirty, and are, many of them at least, of considerable length. (Ibid. p. 95—100.) How the latter could be selected from the former, it is difficult to conceive. In reality, there are only two or three passages in which they bear any resemblance to each other. 3. The English bishops made no alteration in the canon respecting the unity of the church. There is no such canon in either collection. As the bishops assembled at Mentz had been sent into Germany by the popes, to labour in the conversion of the pagans, it was natural for them to express their obedience to the apostolic see; but the English prelates were in different circumstances, and no reason can be assigned why they should adopt the same conduct. They, therefore, did not transcribe the first canon of the council of Mentz; much less did they make any alteration in it. To give some colour of plausibility to his story, Henry has had recourse to a ruse de guerre, which is sometimes employed by controversial writers. He has framed a new title for the second of the canons of Cloveshoe, omitted its commencement, and interpolated it in an important passage. The true title is not the unity of the church, but the unity of peace, (*De unitate pacis*. Wilk. p. 95 :) and the object of the canon is to inform us that the bishops had signed an engagement to live in peace and amity among themselves, without interfering with each others' rights, or flattering any particular person. The engagement which restrains the meaning of the canon to the contracting parties, Henry has prudently omitted: and, to extend its operation, has ingeniously inserted the words, "all the clergy in the world." *Ipsi præsules*, say the acts, *ad se ipsos verba mutuæ exhortationis verterunt*, . . . *et secundo loco sub testificatione quadam confirmaverunt, ut pacis intimæ et sinceræ charitatis devotio ubique inter eos* (all the clergy in the world, in Henry's translation,) *perpetuo permaneat, atque ut una sit omnium concordia in omnibus juribus ecclesiasticæ religionis, in sermone, in opere, in judicio, sine cujusquam adulatione personæ*. Wilk. *ibid.*

But the historian has another argument in reserve. "So careful,"

he adds, "were the prelates to guard against the encroachments of the popes on the independency of the church of England, that applications to Rome in difficult cases were discouraged by the twenty-fifth canon, and bishops directed to apply only to their metropolitan in a provincial synod." As Henry has not translated this canon, and I am unable to discover in it the discouragement of which he speaks, I shall content myself with transcribing it for the perusal of the reader. *Unusquisque episcoporum, si quid in sua diœcesi corrigere et emendare nequiverit, idem in synodo coram Archiepiscopo, et palam omnibus ad corrigendum insinuet.* Wilk. p. 98. Did Henry really believe that this canon was framed "to guard against the encroachments of the popes?" If he had read a letter to which he sometimes refers, he would have known that it was originally composed by St. Boniface, who adds immediately after it: *Sic enim, ni fallor, omnes episcopi debent metropolitano, et ipse Romano pontifici, si quid de corrigendis populis apud eos impossibile est, notum facere, et sic alieni fient a sanguine animarum perditarum.* Ep. St. Bonif. ad Cuthb. Archiep. apud Wilk. p. 91.

(K)—p. 115.

ST. WILFRID, by his earnest endeavours to introduce the canonical observances among his countrymen, and his successful appeals to the justice of the pontiffs, has been rewarded with the severest reproaches by the enemies of the church of Rome. To paint his character in the most odious colours, has been the favourite theme with modern writers. Among a host of competitors, I have assigned the precedence to Carte: and that the reader may form some notion of his merit, I shall subjoin a few passages from his work, and confront them with the original history of Eddius

1. According to Carte, (p. 250.) "Wilfrid's appeal appeared so new and singular, that it occasioned a general laughter, as a thing quite ridiculous." He refers to Eddius, c. 24. Henry thought this observation so important, that he was careful to copy it.

1. Eddius (c. 24, p. 63) says, not that the appeal excited either surprise or ridicule, but that the flatterers of the king expressed their joy by their laughter. *Adulatoribus cum risu gaudentibus.* They laughed at Wilfrid's disgrace. *Qui ridetis in meam condemnationem.* Ibid.

2. Carte accuses Eddius of misrepresentation, when he says, that Wilfrid was advised to appeal by his fellow-bishops, (*cum consilio co-episcoporum suorum*. Ed. c. 24, p. 63;) because no one but Winfrid, the deposed bishop of Mercia, could give such advice. Carte, p. 250.

3. Carte asserts, that the king of Northumbria would not restore the deposed prelate, because he conceived the conduct of the pontiff to be derogatory to the rights of the crown, (p. 251.)

4. According to Carte, (p. 252,) the king offered him a part of his former diocese, if he would renounce the authority of the papal mandate. He refers to Eddius, c. 25.

5. If we may believe Carte, (p. 254.) Wilfrid made his submission to Theodore, and employed the good offices of the bishop of London to procure a reconciliation. His authority is Eddius, c. 42.

6. To prove that this reconciliation was not owing to any respect which the metropolitan paid to the papal authority, but solely to his esteem for the personal merit of Wilfrid, he sends his reader to the letter of Theodore to King Ethelred, p. 254.

2. The assertion of Eddius is confirmed by Wilfrid's petition to the pontiff, in which he observes, that though several bishops were present with Theodore, not one of them assented to his measures. *In conventu Theodori, aliorumque tunc temporis antistitum absque consensu cujuslibet episcopi*. Ed. c. 29, p. 66.

3. According to Eddius, the ground of the objection was, that the papal decree had been purchased with money; *pretio redempta*. Edd. c. 33, p. 69.

4. Eddius informs us, that the king offered him a part of his former diocese, if he would acknowledge the papal mandate to be a forgery. *Si denegaret vera esse*. Ed. c. 35, p. 70.

5. If Eddius is to be credited, it was Theodore, who, actuated by remorse for his past injustice, sent for Wilfrid and the bishop of London, and solicited the forgiveness of the man whom he had injured. Ed. c. 42, p. 73.

6. Theodore, in his letter to King Ethelred, assigns the authority of the pontiff as the cause of his reconciliation. *Idcirco ego Theodorus, humilis episcopus, decrepita ætate, hoc tuæ Beatitudini suggero, quia Apostolica hoc, sicut scis, commendat auctoritas*. Ep. Theod. apud Wilk. p. 64. Ed. c. 42, p. 74. Pope John asserts the same. *Ut ex ejus dictis apparuit, decretis pontificalibus obsecutus erat*. Ibid. c. 52, p. 82.

7. Carte informs us, that, when the controversy was terminated at the synod of Nid, it was agreed, without conforming to the terms of the papal decree, that Wilfrid should be restored to his see of Hexham, and monastery of Rippon, p. 259.

8. According to Carte, the Anglo-Saxon bishops, during this contest, were careful to oppose the introduction of appeals, and to preserve the independence of their church.

7. Yet the restoration of Hexham and Rippon was all that Wilfrid demanded from the pontiff. Ed. c. 49, p. 79. It was also as much as the papal decree required, which is thus explained by Archbishop Brithwald. *Ut præsules ecclesiarum hujus provinciæ cum Wilfrido episcopo pacem plene perfecteque ineant, et partes ecclesiarum, quas olim ipse regebat, sicut sapientes mecum judicaverint, restituant.* Ed. c. 58, p. 85.

8. It is evident, from the whole history of Eddius, that both the archbishops, instead of opposing the introduction of appeals, acknowledged their legality, and sent messengers to Rome, to support their own decisions. Ed. c. 29, p. 66; c. 50, p. 79.

(L)—p. 120.

THIS poem was written about the year 810, and published by Mabillon, (*Sæc. iv. tom. ii. p. 302.*) from a copy of a MS. at Cambridge, sent to him by Gale. In his preface he observes, that it proves the existence of a monastery in the isle of Lindisfarne, distinct from that built by St. Aidan. (*Præf. n° 213.*) But the learned monk was undoubtedly deceived by the title of *Monachus Lindisfarnensis ecclesiæ*, which is given to Ethelwold, at the beginning and end of the poem. It is evident from the text, that the *cænobium* St. Petri to which he belonged, was not in the island; and the copy from which Leland made his extracts, appears not to have contained the addition of *Monachus Lindisfarnensis ecclesiæ*. *Lel. Collect. vol. i. p. 362.* In his catalogue of British writers, Leland informs us, that Ethelwold was a monk in the monastery of St. Peter, *ad orientale littus Berniorum.* *Lel. de Script. p. 140.*

(M)—p. 122.

WOLSTAN'S poem contains a curious description of the old church at Winchester. The following is the account of the organ :

Talia et auxistis hic organa, qualia nusquam
 Cernuntur, gemino constabilita solo.
 Bisseni supra sociantur in ordine folles,
 Inferiusque jacent quatuor atque decem.
 Flatibus alternis spiracula maxima reddunt,
 Quos agitant validi septuaginta viri,
 Brachia versantes, multo et sudore madentes,
 Certatimque suos quique monent socios,
 Viribus ut totis impellant flamina sursum,
 Rugiat et pleno capsâ referta sinu.
 Sola quadringentas quæ sustinet ordine musas,
 Quas manus organici temperat ingenii.
 Has aperit clausas, iterumque has claudit apertas,
 Exigit ut varii certa camœna soni.
 Consideruntque duo concordî pectore fratres,
 Et regit alphabetum rector uterque suum.
 Suntque quater denis occulta foramina linguis
 Inque suo retinet ordine quæque decem.
 Huc aliæ currunt, illuc aliæque recurrunt,
 Servantes modulî singula puncta suis,
 Et feriunt jubilum septem discrimina vocum,
 Permîxto lyrici carmine semitoni.

Wolstani carm. Sæc. Ben. v. p. 631.

Besides organs, other musical instruments appear to have been employed in the church.

Et simul hymnisona fratrum coeunte corona,
 Quisque tuum votum, qua valet arte, canit.
 Cimbalicæ voces calamis miscentur acutis,
 Disparibusque tropis dulce camœna sonat.

Ibid. p. 632.

(N)—p. 123.

To the reader, who has formed his notions of antiquity on the credit of modern writers, it may, probably, create surprise, that I have dared to pronounce the doctrine of the real presence, to have been the doctrine of the Anglo-Saxon church. What! he will ask, have not Parker, and Lisle, and Usher, and Whelock, and Hicks, and Collier, and Carte, and Littleton, and Henry shown that the ancient belief of our ancestors, respecting the sacrament of the eucharist, perfectly coincides with that established by the reformed churches? But facts are to be proved, not by authority, but by evidence: and to this formidable phalanx of controvertists, philologists, and historians, may be opposed a still more formidable array of contemporary and unquestionable vouchers. My opinion was not hastily assumed. It was the result of long and patient investigation; and before I am condemned of temerity, I trust the reader will have the candour to peruse the following observations:

I. The ecclesiastical history of the Anglo-Saxons may be divided into two periods, that which preceded, and that which followed the Danish devastations in the ninth century. Of these, the first must be acknowledged to have been the more brilliant. The writers whom it produced, were equal, if not superior, to any of their contemporaries in the other nations of Europe. The works of several have survived the revolutions of one thousand years, and are still extant to attest the religious creed of their authors. To search in them for a single passage, which denies the real presence, will be a fruitless labour: but testimonies, which tacitly suppose, or expressly assert it, may be discovered in almost every page. By a long acquaintance with them in the composition of these sheets, I have earned the right to make this assertion.

But to the reader, something more is due than mere assertion. To satisfy his judgment, without fatiguing his patience, I shall subjoin a few short quotations, from the acts of the council of Calcuith, the homilies of the venerable Bede, and the Anglo-Saxon pontificals.

1. A custom, which originated in the earlier ages of Christianity, had introduced a law, that no church should be dedicated, unless the remains of some martyr reposed within its walls. In England, the difficulty of observing this regulation induced the bishops of the council of Calcuith (anno 816) to ordain, that when the proper relics could not be procured, the eucharist should be consecrated, and care-

fully preserved in the church. The reason which they assign, is remarkable: "Because the eucharist is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;" (*quia corpus et sanguis est Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Con. Calc. apud Wilk. p. 169:*) words which, in this case, appear to imply not only a real, but also a permanent presence, that is not confined merely to the time of manducation.

2. Bede, the brightest luminary of the Anglo-Saxon church, in a homily on the vigil of Easter, forcibly expresses the notion, which he had been taught to entertain respecting the sacrifice of the mass, and the sacrament of the altar. "When we celebrate the mass," says he, "we again immolate to the Father the sacred body and the precious blood of the Lamb, with which we have been redeemed from our sins." *Missarum solemnia celebrantes, corpus sacrosanctum et preciosum agni sanguinem, quo a peccatis redempti sumus, denuo Deo in profectum nostræ salutis immolamus. Hom. in vig. Pas. tom. vii. p. 6.*

3. Egbert, archbishop of York, lived before the middle of the eighth century. His pontifical, written in Anglo-Saxon characters, was preserved in the church of Evreux in Normandy. The abbey of Jumiege, in the same province, possessed another Anglo-Saxon pontifical of nearly the same age. From both, Martene, a Maurist monk, published several copious extracts in his treatise *De antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus*, (anno 1700 et seq. :) and from them may be readily learned the doctrine of our ancestors, respecting the eucharist. In the office of ordination, the bishop is directed to invoke the blessing of God on the priest whom he ordained, that he might be endowed with every virtue, and might transform, by an immaculate benediction, the body and blood of Christ. (*Tu, Domine, super hunc famulum tuum illum quem ad presbyterii honorem dedicamus, manum tuæ benedictionis infunde, ut purum atque immaculatum ministerii tui donum custodiat, et per obsequium plebis tuæ corpus et sanguinem filii tui immaculata benedictione transformet. Pontif. Egberti apud Martene, tom. ii. p. 353. Pontif. Gemet. ibid. p. 366.*) The vessel, in which the eucharist was preserved, is called the bearer of the body of Christ, (*corporis Domini nostri Jesu Christi gerulum. Pontif. Egbert. apud Mart. lib. ii. p. 258. Pontif. Gemet. p. 266.*) and a new sepulchre for the body of Christ, (*hoc vasculum corporis Christi novum sepulchrum spiritus sancti gratia perficiatur. Pont. Egb. ibid.*) The corporale is said to be a piece of linen, on which the body and blood of Christ are consecrated, and in which they are covered or wrapped up, (*hæc linteamina in usum altaris tui ad consecrandum super ea, sive ad tegendum involvendumque corpus et sanguinem filii tui. Pont. Egb. ibid. p. 255. Pon. Gemet. p. 265:*) and the altar is said to be

consecrated, that on it "a secret virtue may turn the creatures chosen for sacrifice into the body and blood of the Redeemer, and transform them by an invisible change, into the sacred hosts of the Lamb, that, as the word was made flesh, so the nature of the offering being blessed, may be elevated to the substance of the Word, and what before was food, may here be made eternal life." *Quod electas ad sacrificium creaturas in corpus et sanguinem redemptoris virtus secreta convertat, et in sacras agni hostias invisibili mutatione transcribat, ut sicut verbum caro factum est, ita in verbi substantiam benedicta oblationis natura proficiat, et quod prius fuerat alimonia, vita hic efficiatur æterna.* Pont. Gemet. p. 263.

II. The second period, compared with the first, may almost be called an age of darkness. The writers whom it produced were fewer in number, and inferior in merit. Among them was Ælfric, a monk who studied in the school of St. Ethelwold, and after passing through the different gradations of ecclesiastical preferment, was raised at last to the metropolitan chair of Canterbury. He has left some translations, and several sermons. But he is chiefly remarkable for the novelty and obscurity of his language, respecting the eucharist. He frequently inculcates that "the eucharistic differs from the natural body of Christ: and that the former is indeed his body, but after a spiritual, not after a bodily manner." (*Na lichamlice ac ȝarlice.* Serm. in die Pasc. p. 7, edit. Lisle.) These expressions have been accepted with gratitude by Protestant writers, (Lisle præf. Usher, answer to Chall. p. 77. Whelock, p. 462. Inett, vol. i. p. 351. Henry, Hist. vol. ii. p. 202, quarto,) and their author has been hailed as the first of the English reformers. (Wise apud Mores, xxix.) But Catholic polemics have refused to surrender him to their adversaries, and have eagerly maintained the orthodoxy of his sentiments. (Smith, Flores Hist. p. 90. Cressy, Hist. p. 912. Alford, Annal. tom. iii. p. 440.) To enable the reader to form an opinion on this controverted subject, it will be proper to quit for a while the concerns of the Anglo-Saxon church, and attend to the religious disputes on the continent.

During the ninth century, several of the most eminent scholars in France exercised their ingenuity in discussing difficult and obscure points, relative to the sacrament of the eucharist. From the doctrine universally received, that the eucharist was truly the body and blood of Christ, it was inferred by some (Haimo, bishop of Halberstad, and his followers) that the sacrament contained no mystery or sign, because the sign was necessarily excluded by the reality. This argument did not satisfy the reason of others, (Paschasius Ratbertus, Hincmar, &c.,)

who admitted both the sign and the reality ; and added, that the body of Christ contained in the eucharist, was the identical body, which had been born of the virgin, and had suffered on the cross. A third party rejected both the former opinions ; and contended for a triple distinction of the body of Christ : viz. the body born of the virgin, the body contained in the eucharist, and his mystical body, the church. Among the latter was Ratramn or Bertram, a monk of Corbie, whose dissertation I shall notice, as it is intimately connected with the doctrine of Ælfric.

The treatise of Bertram is short, and divided into two parts. In the first, he proposes to solve the question, whether there be in the eucharist any mystery or figure. With Paschasius, he decides in the affirmative. His principal argument is the following :—After the consecration, the bread and wine have become, or have passed into, the body and blood of Christ, (*facta sunt*, p. 20, *transitum fecerunt*, p. 18 :) consequently they are changed. But no change has been made outwardly or corporally : therefore it has been made inwardly or spiritually : therefore the eucharist is the body and blood of Christ ; not indeed corporally, but spiritually ; and of consequence a mystery or figure must be admitted. He adds, lest his meaning should be misunderstood, that he does not assert the simultaneous existence of two things so different as a body and a spirit, but that the same thing in one respect, is the appearance of bread and wine, and in another, is the body and blood of Christ. *Non quod duarum sint existentiarum rerum inter se diversarum, corporis videlicet et spiritus, verum una eademque res secundum aliud species panis et vini consistit, secundum aliud autem corpus et sanguis Christi.* The principal difficulty in this part of the treatise, is to discover the exact signification, which Bertram affixes to the words corporally and spiritually. To me he appears to mean, that in the eucharist the body of Christ exists, not with the properties of bodies in their natural state, but after a manner which is spiritual or mysterious, and imperceptible to the senses.¹

In the second part he inquires, whether the eucharistic be the same as the natural body of Christ. To prove that it is not, he observes that the natural body was visible and palpable, the eucharistic is invisible and impalpable ; that the natural body appeared to be what it was, the eucharistic appears to be what it is not : whence he infers that they are different, and consequently cannot be the same. This argument

¹ Thus he says, p. 42, in the person of Christ : *Non ergo carnem meam vel sanguinem meum vobis corporaliter comedendum vel bibendum, et per partes distributum distribuendum pupetis . . . sed vere per mysterium panem et vinum in corporis et sanguinis mei conversa substantiam a credentibus sumendam.*

he pursues through several pages ; and after comparing the eucharistic body of Christ with his mystical body, the congregation of the faithful;² he concludes with begging the reader not to infer from what he has said, that he denies the body and blood of Christ to be received in the eucharist. *Non ideo, quoniam ista dicimus, putetur in mysterio sacramenti corpus domini vel sanguinem ipsius non a fidelibus sumi, quando fides, non quod oculus videt, sed quod credit, accipit, p. 134.* Though Bertram, through the whole of this treatise, attempts to prove that the natural and eucharistic body of Christ are not the same, he appears to confine the difference to the manner in which they exist, (*secundem speciem quam gerit exterius, p. 94.*) In one passage he plainly asserts their identity, when he says, that Christ, on the night before his passion, changed the substance of bread into his own body, which was about to suffer, and the creature of wine into his own blood, which was to be shed on the cross. *Paulo antequam pateretur panis substantiam, et vini creaturam convertere potuit in proprium corpus quod passurum erat, et in suum sanguinem, qui post fundendus extabat, p. 40.* Perhaps the true sentiments of Bertram may be safely collected from those of Rabanus Maurus, archbishop of Mentz, who lived at the same time, and defended the same cause. This writer expressly declared, that the difference for which he contended, was entirely confined to the external appearance. *Manifestissime cognoscetis, non quidem (quod absit!) naturaliter, sed specialiter aliud esse corpus Domini, quod ex substantia panis ac vini pro mundi vita quotidie per spiritum sanctum consecratur, quod a sacerdote postmodum Deo patri suppliciter offertur; et aliud specialiter corpus Christi, quod natum est de Maria virgine, in quod istud transfertur. Dicta cujusdam sapien. apud Mab. sæc. iv. vol. ii. p. 593.*³

In the tenth century, about the time in which St. Dunstan restored the monastic order in England, these disputes were revived in France. As the devastations of the Danes had interrupted the succession of the English monks, colonies of instructors were obtained from the

² It is perhaps to these opinions that Paschasius alludes, when he contemptuously mentions the *ineptias de tripartito corpore Christi*. Apud Mabil. sæc. iv. tom. ii. præf. n^o 55.

³ The English translator of Bertram is positive, that in the Latin of this age, the word *species* signified the specific nature of a thing. This passage proves his mistake, as in it *species* and *natura* are opposed to each other. Here I may observe, that the orthodoxy of Bertram was never questioned before the reformation. From the catalogues of the monastic libraries in Leland, copies of his work appear not to have been scarce; and, five years before the first printed edition, he is cited as a champion of the Catholic faith, by Dr. Fisher, the learned and virtuous bishop of Rochester. (Præf. lib. iv. adver. Œcolamp. ann. 1526.)

French monasteries : and, at the prayer of Ethelwold, the abbots of Fleury and Corbie commissioned some of their disciples to teach at Abingdon and Winchester. It was in these establishments that Ælfric was educated, and in them he imbibed from his foreign masters the doctrine of Bertram, which he afterwards most zealously inculcated.

Among the works of Ælfric, much importance has been attached by controversial writers, to his sermon on the sacrifice of the mass. Nearly one-half of it consists of extracts from the work of Bertram ; and of these extracts it has been asserted, perhaps with more boldness than prudence, that they contain the doctrine of the Protestant church in the clearest terms, and cannot by any ingenuity be reconciled with the tenets of the church of Rome. (Henry, vol. ii. p. 202.) That the reader may be able to judge for himself, I shall translate, as literally as I can, the passage on which this assertion is chiefly founded, preserving such Saxon expressions as are still intelligible, and inserting those sentences which Henry has suppressed. Below I shall add the original Latin of Bertram, that the translation of Ælfric may more readily be compared with it. The Saxon may be seen at the end of Ælfric's treatise on the Old and New Testament, published by Lisle in 1623, and in Whelock's edition of Bede's History, p. 462.

“ Much is there between the invisible might of the holy husel, and the visible appearance of its own kind. In its own kind it is corruptible bread and corruptible wine ; but, after the might of the divine word, it is truly Christ's body and his blood, not indeed in a bodily, but in a ghostly manner.⁴ Much is there between the body, in which Christ suffered, and the body which is hallowed to husel.⁵ Truly the body, in which Christ suffered, was born of the flesh of Mary, with blood and with bone, with skin and with sinews, in human limbs, and with a reasonable living soul. But his ghostly body, which we call the husel, is gathered of many corns, without blood and bone, without limbs and a soul ;⁶ and therefore nothing is to be understood in it

⁴ Christi corpus et sanguis superficie tenus considerata creatura est mutabilitati corruptelæque subjecta : si mysterii vero perpendas virtutem, vita est participantibus se tribuens immortalitatem, p. 28. Ad sensum quod pertinet corporis, corruptibile est, quod fides vero credit, incorruptibile, p. 100.

⁵ Multa differentia separantur corpus, in quo passus est Christus, et hoc corpus quod in mysterio passionis Christi quotidie a fidelibus celebratur, p. 88.

⁶ Illa namque caro, quæ crucifixa est, de virginis carne facta est, ossibus et nervis compacta, humanorum membrorum lineamentis distincta, rationalis animæ spiritu vivificata in propriam vitam. At vero caro spiritualis, quæ populum credentem spiritualiter pascit, secundum speciem quam gerit exterius, frumenti granis manu artificis

after a bodily, but all is to be understood after a ghostly manner.⁷ Whatever there is in the husel, which giveth us the substance of life, that cometh of the ghostly might and invisible operation.⁸ For this reason the holy husel is called a sacrament; because one thing is seen in it, and another understood.⁹ That which is seen, hath a bodily appearance; that which we understand, hath a ghostly might.¹⁰ Certainly Christ's body, that suffered death, and arose from death, dies now no more; it is eternal and impassible. The husel is temporal, not eternal, corruptible, and dealed into pieces, chewed between the teeth, and sent into the stomach.¹¹ But it is nevertheless all in every part according to the ghostly might. Many receive the holy body, but it is nevertheless all in every part according to the ghostly sacrament. Though some men receive a smaller part, yet there is not more might in a greater part than in a smaller. Because it is entire in all men, according to the invisible might.¹² This sacrament is a pledge and a figure: Christ's body is truth. This pledge we hold sacramentally, till we come to the truth, and then this pledge will end.¹³ Truly it is, as we said before, Christ's body and his blood, not after a bodily, but after a ghostly manner.¹⁴ Nor shall ye search how it is made so: but hold that it is made so."¹⁵

How such language as this would sound from a Protestant pulpit, I shall not pretend to determine:¹⁶ but this I am free to assert, that

consistit, nullis nervis ossibusque compacta, nulla membrorum varietate distincta, nulla rationali substantia vegetata, nullos proprios potens motus exercere, p. 94.

⁷ *Nihil in esca ista, nihil in potu isto corporaliter sentiendum, sed totum spiritua-liter attendendum, p. 86.*

⁸ *Quidquid in ea vitæ præbet substantiam, spiritualis est potentiæ, et invisibilis efficientiæ, divinæque virtutis, p. 94.*

⁹ *Ostendit (St. Isidorus) omne sacramentum aliquid secreti in se continere, et aliud esse quod visibiliter appareat, aliud vero quod invisibiliter sic accipiendum, p. 62.*

¹⁰ *Exterius quod videtur, speciem habet corpoream, . . . interius vero quod intelligitur, fructum spiritualem, p. 126.*

¹¹ *Corpus Christi, quod mortuum est, quod resurrexit, . . . jam non moritur . . . æternum est jam, non passibile. Hoc autem quod in ecclesia celebratur, temporale est, non æternum, corruptibile non incorruptum, p. 99, 100.*

¹² This passage I do not find in Bertram.

¹³ *Hoc corpus pignus est et species: illud veritas. Hoc enim geritur donec ad illud perveniatur: ubi vero ad illud perventum fuerit, hoc removebitur, p. 114.*

¹⁴ *Est quidem corpus Christi, sed non corporale sed spirituale: est sanguis Christi, sed non corporalis sed spiritualis, p. 80.*

¹⁵ *Nec istic ratio qui fieri potuit est disquirenda, sed fides, quod factum sit adhibenda, p. 36.*

¹⁶ Indeed I cannot, as I am unable to understand the doctrine of the established church on this subject. After an attentive perusal of Archbishop Secker's thirty-

no Catholic divine will pronounce it repugnant to the Catholic doctrine.

1. If the body of Christ exist at all in the eucharist, it is evident that it does not exist after the manner of a natural body. Hence, to express this difference of existence, some distinction is necessary. By Bertram and Ælfric, the words *naturaliter* and *spiritualiter* were adopted: by the council of Trent, *naturaliter* and *sacramentaliter* were preferred. (Sess. 13, c. 1.) Many Catholics, however, still preserve the old distinction of Bertram. (Veron. reg. fid. c. xi.) I shall cite only Holden, an Englishman, and an eminent member of the university of Paris. *Summa doctrinæ nostræ in eo sita est, ut verum et reale corpus Christi profiteamur esse in hoc sacramento, non more corporeo et passibili, sed spirituali et invisibili, nobis omnino incognito.* Hold. Anal. fid. p. 192, edit. 1767. If this distinction be a test of Protestantism, the church of Rome must resign the most distinguished of her children.

2. It is true that Ælfric denies the perfect identity of the natural and eucharistic body of Christ. But the same doctrine is admitted by the most orthodox among the Catholic writers. Lanfranc, the first Norman archbishop of Canterbury, and the strenuous opponent of Berengarius, in the eleventh century, asserts, that if we consider the manner in which the eucharistic body exists, we may truly say, it is not the same body which was born of the virgin. *Ut vere dici possit, et ipsum corpus, quod de virgine sumptum est, nos sumere, et non ipsum: ipsum quidem, quantum ad essentiam veræque naturæ proprietatem; non ipsum autem, si spectes panis vini que speciem.* Lanf. Adver. Bereng. c. 18. With Lanfranc agrees, and that, too, in stronger terms, Bossuet, the great champion of Catholicity in the seventeenth century. *En un sens et n'y regardant que la substance c'est le même corps de Jesus Christ, né de Marie: mais dans un autre sens, et n'y regardant que les manieres, c'en est un autre, qu'il s'est fait par ses paroles.*

sixth lecture on the catechism, I have only learned, that the unworthy communicant "receives what Christ has called his body and blood, that is, the signs of them," but that the worthy communicant "eats his flesh and drinks his blood, because Christ is present to his soul, becoming, by the inward virtue of his spirit, its food and sustenance." If the reader wish for more information on this subject, he may consult Bishop Porteus. *He* "believes Christ's body and blood to be verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful, in the Lord's Supper; that is, a union with him to be not only represented, but really and effectually communicated to the worthy receiver." *Confutation of errors*, p. 37. If these right reverend divines have clear ideas on this subject, it must, I think, be confessed, that they also possess the art of clothing them in obscure language.

Bos. tom. iii. p. 182. This is the general language of Catholic divines: but there have been some who have adopted still stronger language. *Ce corps sacramental, quoiqu'il n'a pas été immolé sur la croix, ne laisse pas d'être le corps de J. C. parceque sa sainte ame y est unie, et que son ame est unie personnellement au verbe.* *Instruct. sur l'eucharistie par l'évêque de Boulogne, p. 36.* With the truth of their opinion, I have no concern: but if it has been maintained without the imputation of heterodoxy, I cannot see what there is in the writings of Ælfric repugnant to the Catholic faith.

3. The observation of Ælfric, that the eucharist is a pledge and a figure, is strictly conformable to the doctrine of the church of Rome. The same is expressly asserted in the office of the sacrament, used by that church. In the anthem at the magnificat, the eucharist is called a pledge of future glory, (*pignus futuræ gloriæ*;) in the prayer after the communion it is called a figure, almost in the language of Ælfric: (*quam pretiosi corporis et sanguinis tui temporalis perceptio præfiguratur.*)

If these observations do not convince the reader of the Catholicity of Ælfric, he may peruse the passage immediately following that which I have transcribed. In it, to prove the truth of his doctrine, he appeals to two miracles, in which he pretends that the eucharist, by the divine permission, appeared to different persons under the form of flesh and blood. (*Lisle, p. 7. Whelock, p. 427.*) What credit may be due to these miracles, is foreign to the present subject: but I cannot persuade myself that any person, who denied the supernatural conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, would ever attempt to prove by such miracles the truth of his opinion.

It is perpetually inculcated by modern writers, that the doctrine of Ælfric was the national belief of the Anglo-Saxons. In one respect this assertion is true. Ælfric, as well as his countrymen, believed, that in the mass the bread and wine were made, by the divine power, the body and blood of Christ. But ingenious men have always assumed the privilege of speculating on the mysteries of Christianity: nor have their speculations been condemned, as long as they have not trespassed on the integrity of faith. In this career, Ælfric exercised his abilities under the guidance of Bertram: and I think I have shown that his opinions are not repugnant to the established doctrine of the Catholic church. His language and distinctions were certainly singular: but I am at a loss to conceive why we must consider them as the standard of Anglo-Saxon orthodoxy. With respect to them Ælfric stands alone. He has neither precursor nor successor. It is in vain to search for a single allusion to his particular opinions, either

in the works of the Anglo-Saxon writers, or in the acts of the Anglo-Saxon councils, that preceded, accompanied, or followed him. But it were easy to select numerous instances, both prior and posterior in time, in which the contrary doctrine, that the natural and eucharistic body of Christ are the same, is frequently and forcibly inculcated.

1. The passage which I have already transcribed from Bede, asserts, that the body of the Lamb, which is immolated on the altar, is that by which we were redeemed from our sins: and, in another part, the same venerable author observes, that the blood of Christ is not now shed by the hands of the Jews, but received by the mouths of the faithful. *Sanguis illius non infidelium manibus ad perniciem ipsorum funditur, sed fidelium ore suam sumitur in salutem.* Hom. in Epiph. tom. vii. 2. To Bede I shall add Alcuin. In the Caroline books, which were principally composed by him, and to which modern writers frequently refer their readers, we are told, that the eucharist is not an image, but the truth, not the shadow, but the body, not a figure of future things, but that which was prefigured by things past, &c. *Non enim corporis et sanguinis dominici mysterium imago jam dicendum est, sed veritas; non umbra sed corpus; non exemplar futurorum, sed id quod exemplaribus præfigurabatur: nec ait, hæc est imago corporis mei, sed hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur.* Carol. lib. iv. c. 14. 3. But Bede and Alcuin may, perhaps, be considered as too early: let us, therefore, consult the writers who followed Ælfric in the eleventh century. In a Franco-theotisc MS., once the property of Canute the Great, (Cott. MSS. Cal. A. 7. Wanley, p. 225,) Christ is represented as speaking to his apostles at the last supper, and declaring, that “he gave to them his body to eat, and his blood to drink, that body which he should give up to be crucified, and that blood which he should shed for them.” (*Ʒibu ik iu beƷhu samod eƷan endi drinean. Ʒhes an erƷhu seal Ʒeban endi ƷioƷan.* Hicks, Gram. p. 191.) In another MS. (Tib. c. i.) of the same, or perhaps of a later date, we are told, that “Christ did not say, take this consecrated bread, and eat it in place of my body, or drink this consecrated wine in place of my blood: but without any figure or circumlocution, this, said he, is my body, and this is my blood. And to cut off all the windings of error, he added, which body shall be delivered for you, and which blood shall be shed for you.” (*Non dixit dominus, accipite panem hunc consecratum, et comedite in vice corporis mei, vel bibite vinum hoc consecratum in vice sanguinis mei; sed nulla figura, nulla circuitiione usus, hoc, inquit, est corpus meum, hic est sanguis meus. Utque omnes excluderet errorum ambages, quod, inquit, corpus pro vobis tradetur, et qui sanguis*

pro vobis fundetur. Wanley MSS. p. 221.) These instances appear to me to prove not only that the real presence, but also that the identity of the natural and the eucharistic body of Christ was believed by the Saxon church as late as the period of the Norman conquest.

This note has insensibly swelled to the bulk of a dissertation. To the reader who is desirous to learn the real sentiments of antiquity, I trust, that I shall stand in need of no apology. But I had ventured to contradict an opinion which had been zealously propagated by a host of respectable writers: and I owed it both to the public and myself, to state the reasons on which I refused to bend to their authority. Of the validity of these reasons, it is for others to judge.

(O)—p. 129.

THE three days preceding the fast of Lent, which are still called shrovetide, (i. e. confession-tide,) were the time particularly allotted to confession. The public imposition of penance was reserved for the mass of Ash-Wednesday. (Egbert. Pœnitent. apud Wilk. p. 127.) In the morning, those who were disposed to repair, in the face of their brethren, the insult which, by their scandalous behaviour, they had offered to religion and morality, were admonished to repair to the porch of the church, barefoot, and in sackcloth. At the proper hour the bishop introduced them into the church, and lay prostrate before the altar, while the choir chanted the thirty-seventh, fiftieth, fifty-third, and fifty-first psalms. At the conclusion of the last, he rose, and recited the following prayer: "O Lord our God, who art not overcome by our offences, but art appeased by our repentance, look down, we beseech thee, on these thy servants, who confess that they have sinned against thee. To wash away sin, and grant pardon to the sinner, belongs to thee, who hast said that thou wilt not the death, but the repentance of sinners. Grant, then, O Lord, to these, that they may perform their course of penance, and having amended their bad actions, rejoice in eternal happiness, through Christ our Lord." He then imposed his hands on them, placed ashes and sackcloth on their heads, and informed them, that as Adam, for his disobedience, had been excluded from paradise, so they, for their crimes, would be expelled from the church. While the clergy led them to the porch, was sung the anthem, "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread, until thou return to the dust from which thou

wert taken ; for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." They then prostrated themselves on the ground, four prayers were said over them, and the gates were closed. During the rest of Lent, they remained in the buildings belonging to the church, and performed the penitential exercises, which had been prescribed them. *Pontificale Egberti*, apud Martene, part. 2, p. 41. *Pontif. Gemet. ibid.* p. 44.

On the Thursday before Easter, the penitents, who had completed their course, were publicly reconciled. After the gospel, they were again introduced into the church, and cast themselves on the pavement. The bishop ascended the pulpit, and pronounced over them several forms of absolution. Of these the greater part were deprecatory; some were absolute. He began by the following prayer: "Attend, O Lord, to our supplications, and hear me, who first stand in need of thy mercy. It was not through my merit, but through thy grace, that thou didst appoint me to be thy minister. Grant me the confidence to perform the duty which thou hast intrusted to me, and do thou thyself, by my service, perform the part which belongs to thy mercy." He then continued: "In the place of the blessed Peter, the prince of the apostles, to whom the Lord gave the power of binding and loosing, we absolve you, as far as you are obliged to confess, and we have power to remit. May the Almighty God be to you salvation and life, and forgive you all your sins." "King of kings, and Lord of lords, who sittest at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us, look down on these, thy servants, and hear them begging for the remission of their sins. Have mercy, O Lord, on their sighs, have mercy on their tears. Thou, O Saviour, knowest the nature of man, and the frailty of flesh. Spare, therefore, O Redeemer of the world, spare thy servants returning to thee, whose mercy has no bounds: heal their wounds, forgive their offences, release the bonds of their sins." They now rose from the pavement, and the fiftieth psalm was sung. The bishop proceeded thus: "O God, the restorer and lover of innocence, extend, we beseech thee, the hand of thy mercy to these, thy servants, whom we raise from the dust, and preserve them immaculate from the stain of sin. For, it is the glory of our church, that as thou hast given to the blessed apostle, the prince of our mission, the power of binding and of loosing, so, by means of his disciples, the teachers of thy truth, thou hast appointed us to bind thy enemies, and loose those who are converted to thee. Therefore, we beseech thee, O Lord our God, be present to the ministry of our mouth, and loose the bonds of the sins of thy servants, that, freed from the yoke of iniquity, they may walk in the path which leads to eternal happiness." "I, a bishop, though sinful and unworthy, confirming this absolution

with my hand, my mouth, and my heart, humbly implore the clemency of God, that, by his power, and at our prayer, he absolve you from all the bonds of your sins, and from whatever you have negligently committed in thought, word, and deed: and after absolving you by his mercy, bring you to eternal happiness. Amen." The penitents then made their offering, assisted at the sacrifice, and received the communion. Pontif. Egb. *ibid.* Pontif. Gemet. *ibid.* Of the prayers in the originals, I have omitted some, and abridged others. Whether all were repeated at once, I am uncertain: perhaps the bishop selected those which pleased him best.

I shall take this occasion to subjoin a short account of the manner in which the sacrament of confirmation was conferred in the Anglo-Saxon church.

Of confirmation, the sole minister was the bishop. (Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 167.) It was regularly given immediately after baptism: but as the bishop could not always be present, he was careful, in his annual visits, (Wilk. Con. p. 95. 146. 213; Bed. Vit. Cuth. c. xxix.,) to administer it to those who had been lately baptized. Extending his hands over them, he prayed that the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit might descend upon them: and, anointing the forehead of each, repeated these words: "Receive the sign of the holy cross, with the chrism of salvation in Christ Jesus for eternal life. AMEN." Their heads were then bound with fillets of new linen, which were worn during the next seven days. The bishop at the same time said:—"O God, who gavest the Holy Spirit to thy apostles, that by them and their successors he might be given to the rest of the faithful, look down on our ministry, and grant that in the hearts of those, whose foreheads we have this day anointed, and confirmed with the sign of the cross, the Holy Spirit may descend, and, dwelling there, make them the temples of his glory. AMEN." He then gave them his benediction, and the ceremony was finished. Egb. Pontif. apud Mart. l. i. c. 2, p. 249.

(O)—p. 143.

THE origin of the ceremonies, which during many centuries have accompanied the coronation of princes, has by some writers been ascribed to the policy of usurpers, who sought to cover the defect of their title under the sanction of religion. Carte, in a long and learned

dissertation, has laboured to prove that Phocas, who assumed the imperial purple in 602, was the first of the Christian emperors whose coronation was performed as a religious rite. (Carte, Hist. vol. I, p. 290.) It is, indeed, true, that Phocas was the first who is expressly said to have received the regal unction at his inauguration: but it is equally true, that most, perhaps all, of his predecessors, from the accession of Theodosius in 450, were crowned by the hands of the patriarch of Constantinople: and the very selection of that prelate to perform the ceremony, will justify the inference that the coronation of the emperors was not merely a civil rite, but accompanied by acts of religious worship. Carte, indeed, contends that the patriarch was chosen, because he was the first officer in the empire: but this assertion is supported by no proof, and is overturned by the testimony of the poet Corippus, to whom he appeals. That writer, in his description of the coronation of the emperor Justin, in 565, expressly mentions the prayers and benediction of the patriarch.

Postquam cuncta videt ritu perfecta priorum
 Pontificum summus plenaque ætate venustus,
 Astantem *benedixit* eum, cœlique potentem
Exorans Dominum, sacro diademate jussit
 Augustum sancire caput, summoque coronam
 Imponens capiti feliciter—

CORIP. I. ii.

With respect to other princes, Gildas, who wrote before the accession of Phocas, informs us, that the kings, who reigned in Britain about the close of the fifth century, were accustomed to receive the regal unction, (Gild. p. 82 :) and from the fact recorded of St. Columba by his ancient biographer, Cuminius, it appears that the princes of Ireland in the sixth century, were crowned with ceremonies resembling the ordination of priests. (Cum. vit. St. Colum. p. 30.) Are we then to believe that the Byzantine emperors borrowed the rite of coronation from the petty princes of Britain and Ireland? To me it appears more probable, that the Irish chieftains, and also the British, after their separation from the empire, and the recovery of their independence, caused themselves to be crowned with the same ceremonies, which they knew to have been adopted by the Roman emperors. If this be true, the coronation of those princes must have been performed with religious rites as early as the commencement of the fifth century.

Carte is equally unfortunate when he asserts Eardulf, the usurper

of the Northumbrian sceptre in 797, to have been the first Anglo-Saxon prince, who was anointed at his coronation. (Carte, p. 293.) The Saxon Chronicle assures us that Egferth, the son of Offa of Mercia, was *consecrated* king in 785. To cýnninge gehalgod. Chron. Sax. p. 64.

(P)—p. 169.

MABILLON, in his *Analecta Vetera*, (p. 168,) has published an ancient litany, which he has entitled *Veteres Litanie Anglicanæ*. He discovered the original manuscript at Rheims, and was induced to give it that title from a petition contained in it for the prosperity of the clergy and people of the English. (*Ut clerum et plebem Anglorum conservare digneris*, p. 169.) As none of the persons mentioned in it, are known to have lived after the year 650, we may infer, that it was composed towards the expiration of the seventh century.

Were it certain that this litany originally belonged to the Anglo-Saxon church, it would be, undoubtedly, a curious document. But I think there are many reasons to question it. From a diligent inspection it will appear, 1. That the litany does not contain the name of any Anglo-Saxon, or even of any missionary to the Anglo-Saxons: for the St. Augustine, inserted between SS. Gregory and Jerome, seems to be the celebrated bishop of Hippo. 2. Neither does it contain the name of any of the ancient saints of Britain, who were afterwards revered by our ancestors. 3. The majority of the names are evidently British; and of these all which are known, belonged to persons who flourished in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and Armorica. If this litany had been formerly in use among the Saxons, how happened it that all these names, with one or two exceptions, should have been afterwards expunged, and others admitted in their place?

For these reasons I am inclined to think the learned editor was deceived. The litany appears to me to have belonged to some of the many British churches, which the fate of war subjected to the power of the Anglo-Saxons, in the seventh and eighth centuries: and to this circumstance I would ascribe the insertion of the petition in favour of the English clergy and people.

The most ancient document respecting the saints revered by the Anglo-Saxons, is the martyrology of Bede. It was written about the year 700; and seems to have been confined to the saints, whose

festivals were kept by the monks of Weremouth and Jarrow. Of the missionaries he mentions only SS. Augustine, Paulinus, and Mellitus; of the natives SS. Cuthbert, Edilthryda, and the two Ewalds. In Dachery's *Spicilegium* (tom. x. p. 126) is another martyrology, written in verse, and ascribed also to Bede, in which are added the names of Egbert, Wilfrid, Wilfrid, and Bosa.

In the Cotton Library, Jul. A. 10, and the Library of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge, D. 5, are two imperfect manuscript copies of an ancient martyrology or menology. The latter was written about the beginning, the former about the end of the tenth century. (Wanley, p. 106. 185.) From them both I have extracted the following calendar of the Anglo-Saxon saints; with a few of the foreign saints, to show the connexion between the English church, and the churches on the continent.

JANUARY.

- 12. St. Benedict, (abbot of Weremouth and Jarrow.)
- 16. St. Fursey, (abbot and hermit.)

FEBRUARY is lost.

MARCH.

- 1. St. Ceadda, bishop (of Lichfield.)
- 7. St. Easterwine, (abbot of Weremouth and Jarrow.)
- 12. The day of the departure of St. Gregory, our father, who sent baptism to us in Britain.
- 20. St. Cuthbert, bishop.

APRIL.

- 11. St. Guthlake, hermit (at Croyland.)
- 21. St. Ethelwald, (bishop,) hermit at Farne Island.
- 24. St. Wilfrid, bishop.

MAY.

- 6. St. Eadbryht, bishop at Farne Island.
- 7. St. John, bishop in Northumbria.
- 26. The memory of St. Augustine, the bishop who first brought baptism to the English nation. His see was at Canterbury.

JUNE.

- 9. St. Columba, otherwise called St. Columeylle.
- 22. St. Alban, martyr in Britain.
- 23. St. Edilthryda, virgin, queen of Northumbria.

JULY.

- 29. St. Lupus, bishop.

AUGUST.

- 1. St. Germanus, bishop.
- 5. St. Oswald, king of Northumbria.
- 31. St. Aidan, bishop.

SEPTEMBER.

- 5. St. Bertin, abbot (of Sithiu.)
- 8. St. Omer, bishop (of Terouenne.)
- 25. St. Ceolfrið, abbot (of Weremouth and Jarrow.)

OCTOBER.

- 3. SS. Ewalds, martyrs.
- 11. St. Ewelburh, (Edelburgh,) abbess (of Barking.)
- 26. St. Cedd, bishop. He was brother to St. Ceadda.

NOVEMBER.

- 6. St. Winnoc, abbot (of Wormhoulth, near Berg St. Winnoc.)
- 17. St. Hilda, abbess (of Whitby.)

DECEMBER.

- 14. St. Hygebald, abbot (in Lincolnshire.)

From the names it is evident that this calendar was originally appropriated to the north of England. I have not met with any belonging to the southern churches: but from a litany in a MS. of the Norfolk library, belonging to the Royal Society, Wanley, (p. 291,) extracted the following names.

Martyrs: SS. Edward, Oswald, Edmund, Alban, Kenelm, Æthelbriht.

Bishops and confessors : SS. Cuthbert, Swithin, Dunstan, Ethelwold, Birnstan, Elphege, Rumwold, Columban, Erconwald, Hedda, Frithestan, Guthlake, Iwig.

Virgins : SS. Etheldrithe, Eadgive, Sexburh, Eadburh, Withburh, Ætheldrithe, Mildrithe, Osgith, Mildburh, Fritheswith, Æthelburh, Wærburh, Ælgiva, Mærwenn, and Æthelflæda.

(Q)—p. 176.

ON the subject of images, the learning of the two Spelmans has enabled them to make some curious discoveries. Alfred the Great, in the preface to his laws, inserted an abridgment of the decalogue, in which were omitted the words—"Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing." Now, what could be the cause of this omission? Sir Henry Spelman gravely informs us, that it was made out of compliment to the church of Rome, which, from the time when she first adopted the worship of images, had expunged the second commandment from the decalogue. The king, however, appears to have felt some compunction for the fraud, and, to compound the matter with his conscience, added the following prohibition: "Thou shalt not make to thyself gods of silver, nor gods of gold." Thus far Sir Henry Spelman. *Cone.* tom. i. p. 363. Sir John Spelman pursued his father's discoveries, and informed the public, that the addition irritated the court of Rome, and was one of the offences which deprived the king of the honour of canonization. *Spelm. Life of Alfred*, p. 220, edit. Hearne. These most important discoveries have been gratefully received, and carefully re-echoed by the prejudice or ignorance of later historians. (*Smollet*, vol. i. p. 374. *Henry*, vol. iii. p. 251.) Fortunately, however, the Spelmans did not grasp at universal praise: and if any modern antiquary wish to dispute with them the palm of absurdity, he may still exert his sagacity to discover why the king omitted another very important prohibition: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." Perhaps an ordinary reader would ascribe both omissions to the same cause: a persuasion that the clauses omitted were sufficiently included in those that were retained.

(R)—p. 192.

At the time when our ancestors were converted, different Latin versions of the Scriptures were in use among the western Christians. The same diversity prevailed in the Anglo-Saxon church during its infancy. At Lindisfarne the psalms were sung according to a translation from the Greek, corrected by St. Jerome: at Canterbury according to another translation from the Greek, which Eddius calls the fifth edition. (Quintam editionem. Edd. vit. St. Wilf. p. 45. Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. i. p. 678.) At Weremouth, the abbot Ceolfrid procured for his monks three pandects (Bibles) of the new, and one of the old translation. (Bed. vit. Abbat. Wirem. p. 299.) The new translation was that by St. Jerome. It quickly superseded the old, except in the church office, in which they continued to sing the psalms, and a few other parts, after the more ancient version. In his commentaries Bede generally agrees with the present Vulgate, though he sometimes refers to the old translation. (Expos. Genes. p. 34. 36. edit. Wharton:) but in his exposition of the canticle of Habacuc he has followed the ancient version, though he occasionally quotes that of St. Jerome, and the different readings in old MSS. (Expos. cant. Abac. p. 199. 203. 205, &c.)

In the Anglo-Saxon version of the gospels, published at London in 1571, and reprinted by Junius and Marshall, at Dordrecht, in 1665, are several readings, which correspond with the celebrated MS. of Beza, edited by Dr. Kipling. This has encouraged an idea that the Anglo-Saxon church used a Latin version of the Scriptures very different from the Vulgate. It may, however, be observed, that all the existing MS. copies of the Scripture, which are known to have belonged to the Anglo-Saxons, are of St. Jerome's translation. Of these some are very ancient. In the library belonging to the dean and chapter of Durham, are two very fair copies of the four gospels, written about the year 700, (A. 11. 16. A. 11. 17.) In the British Museum, (Nero. D. 4.) is another MS. of the gospels, beautifully written, about the year 686, by Eadfrid, who was afterwards bishop of Lindisfarne. Ethelwald, his successor, illuminated and ornamented it with several elegant drawings. By the anachoret Bilfrith, it was covered with gems, silver gilt, and gold, in honour of St. Cuthbert; and Aldred, the priest, afterwards added an interlineary version. During the removal of St. Cuthbert's body in 885, this copy was lost in the sea, but recovered three days afterwards. If we may believe Simeon

of Durham, it had not been injured by the water, (Sim. p. 117 :) but Mr. Wanley thought he could discover some stains, which he ascribed to that accident. It is still in the best preservation. In the possession of the Rev. Mr. Stone, at Stonyhurst, is another, and still more ancient MS. of St. John's gospel, believed to be the same which is said by Bede, to have belonged to St. Boisil, the master of St. Cuthbert. An inscription, in a more recent hand, states it to have been taken out of the tomb of the saint; but this is, probably, a mistake. The contemporary history of the translation of St. Cuthbert says, that the MS. buried with him was a book of the *gospels*, (Act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. p. 296 :) and that the copy of St. John, which had belonged to St. Boisil, was preserved in the church in a case of red leather, and was held by the bishop in his hand, while he preached to the people during the translation, (ibid. p. 301.)

As all these MSS. contain the version of St. Jerome, I suspect the agreement between the Anglo-Saxon translation and the Codex Bezaë, to be accidental. A similar agreement exists, in many instances, between that Codex and the celebrated MS. of the abbey of Corbie; nor is it improbable that a copy of that MS. might be brought into England by some of the monks, who, at the invitation of St. Dunstan, left Corbie to instruct the Anglo-Saxon cœnobites. It was soon after that period, that the translation was made.

(S)—p. 192.

It is well known, that several of the Greek vowels and diphthongs are differently sounded by the present inhabitants of Greece, and the learned in some of the more western nations. After the revival of literature, the arguments or authority of Manutius, Erasmus, Sir John Cheke, Beza, Gretser, and others, induced several universities to reject the old, and adopt a new pronunciation. To decide on the respective merits of the two systems, would be, perhaps, a difficult attempt: but to inquire in what manner the Anglo-Saxons were taught to pronounce the Greek letters, is a subject of curious and more easy investigation. It was by Theodore of Canterbury, that the knowledge of the language was introduced into England. (Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 2.) He was born at Tarsus, in Cilicia, and versed in Grecian literature; whence, it were not rash to infer, that the pronunciation

which he taught, was the same as was followed at that period by the natives of Greece.

In the Cotton Library, Galba, A. 18, is a small MS., said to have once belonged to King Æthelstan. It was written in 703, thirteen years after the death of Theodore, (*ibid.* f. 16.) It contains a calendar with ornamental paintings, a psalter, prayers, and a fragment of a litany in the Greek language, but in Anglo-Saxon characters. The writer appears to have been ignorant of Greek, and either to have transcribed some other copy, or to have written, while another person dictated. Hence, his work contains several errors; but his general system of spelling clearly shows the sounds which were then given to the vowels and diphthongs. For the satisfaction of the reader, I shall transcribe the Our Father, and an abridgment of the Creed: but it will be necessary to premise, that in the Anglo-Saxon spelling, the vowels a, e, i, should be sounded in the same manner as they are sounded in the pronunciation of Latin, by all the nations of Europe, except the English.

Πατερ ημων ο εν τοις ουρανοις . αγιασθητω το οναμα σου * ελθητω η
 Pater imon o yn (t)ys uranis agiasthito onaman su * elthetu e
 Βασιλεια σου* γενηθητω το θελημα σε, ως εν ουρανω και επι της γης * τον
 basilia s genithito to theliman su oss en uaranu ke ep tas gis . ton
 αρτον ημων τον επιουσιον δος ημιν σημερον, και αφες ημιν τα οφειληματα
 arton imon ton epiuSSION doss imin simero. ke affes imin ta offilemata
 ημων ως και ημεις αφιμεν τοις οφειλεταις ημων* και μη εισενεγκης ημας εις
 imon os ke imis affiomen tas ophiletas imon. ke mi esininkes imas is
 πειρασμον, αλλα ρυσαι ημας απο του πονηρου.
 perasmon, ala ryse imas apo tu poniru.

Πιστευω εις θεον πατερα παντοκρατορα, και εις χριστον Ιησουν υιον αυτου τον
 Pistheu is then patera pantocratero . ce is criston ihū yon autu ton
 μονογενη, τον κυριον ημων, τον γενηθεντα εκ πνευματος αγιου, εκ μαριας
 monogen ton quirion imon, ton genegenta ek pneumatus agiu ec maria
 της παρθενου, τον επι ποντιου πιλατου σταυρωθεντα, ταφεντα, τη τριτη ημερα
 tis parthenu . ton epi pontio pilatu staurothenta, tafinta, te trite imera
 ανασταντα εκ νεκρων, αναβαντα εις τους ουρανοσ, καθημενον εν δεξια του
 anastanta ec nicron, anaunta is tos uranos, catimenon in dexia tu
 πατροσ, οθεν ερχεται κρινει ζωντας και νεκροσ . και εις πνευμα αγιον,
 patros, oten erchete crine zontas ce nicros . ce is pneuma agion
 αγιου (ων κοινωνιαν) αφεσιν αμαρτιων, σαρκος αναστασιν . αμην.*
 agri afisin amartion, sarcos anasta . amin.

That this manner of spelling may not be thought peculiar to the writer of the MS., I will add another specimen from the first chapter

of Genesis, in an Anglo-Saxon MS. of the Bodleian Library, NE. D. 11, f. 28. A fac simile of it is published by Hicks, *Thes.* p. 168.

Εν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀορατὸς
 En archē epōiesen o theos ton ouranōn ce tin gin . i de gi in aoratos
 καὶ ἀκατασχευατὸς * καὶ σκοτὸς ἦν ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου * καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ
 ce acatasceuastos ce skotos in epāno tis abyssou . ce phneuma theu
 ἐπέφερετο ἐπάνω τῆς ὑδάτος. Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς γενέθῃτο φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο
 epēfereto epāno tis ydatos . ce ipen o theos genethito fos, ce egeneto
 φῶς. καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλόν. καὶ διεχώρισεν ὁ θεός.
 fos . ce iden o theos to fos, oti kalon, ce chechorisen o theos.

Neither was this method of writing Greek peculiar to the Anglo-Saxons: it occurs in the specimen which Mabillon has given of the characters in the Codex Dyonisianus. *De re Diplomat.* p. 367.

Πιστεύω εἰς ἓνα θεὸν πατέρα—καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ κυριον
 Pisteuō is ena theon patera—ke is to pneuma to agion to kyrion
 καὶ ζῶοπιον, τὸ ἐκ τῆς πατρὸς.
 ke zoopion, to ek tis patros.

It must be confessed that these passages present many errors: yet, from a diligent comparison of those words and syllables, in which the ear was less liable to be deceived, I think it may be inferred that not only the vowel *ι*, but also *η*, and the diphthongs *ει* and *οι* were generally sounded alike, and expressed by the Anglo-Saxon *i*, and that the diphthong *αι* had the long slender sound in the present English *a*, and therefore was always expressed by the Anglo-Saxon letter *e*. In these respects the pronunciation of our ancestors appears to agree perfectly with the pronunciation of the modern Greeks. Dans *αι ει, οι, η, υ*, says De la Rocca, vicar general of the isle of Syra, les Ellénistes de Paris prétendent qu'il faut prononcer les trois premières, comme si elles étoient deux letters *ai, ei, oi*: à l'égard des deux autres la première comme *e*, la seconde comme *i*. Nous prononçons au contraire la première comme *e*, et les quatre autres comme *i*. Précis Historique sur l'Isle de Syra, p. 159. Paris, 1790.

(T)—p. 194.

THE vernacular poetry of the Anglo-Saxons has been ably described by Mr. Turner, in his fourth volume, p. 374. Its principal characteristics appear to be a constant inversion of phrase, with the frequent

use of alliteration, metaphor, and periphrasis. Rhyme seems neither to have been sought after, nor rejected. It occurs but seldom. To reduce the measure of the verse to certain rules is difficult, perhaps impracticable. Of the many writers who have attempted it, not one has succeeded. If I may be indulged in a conjecture, I would say that their versification consisted in such an arrangement of words, as might easily be adapted to some favourite national tune. All their poetry was originally designed to be sung to the harp.

The reader will not perhaps be displeased with a short specimen of Anglo-Saxon poetry, believed to have been composed by Cædmon, the celebrated monk of Whitby. Bede translated it in his Ecclesiastical History: but confessed that his version did not do justice to the spirit and elegance of the original. (Bede. l. iv. c. 24.) The Anglo-Saxon verses are found in King Alfred's translation of Bede, and are generally supposed to have been transcribed by that prince from some ancient copy. I think it, however, equally probable, that they were the composition of the royal translator.

To the Anglo-Saxon I have added an English version as literal as possible.

Nu we sceolan herigean
 Heofon rice we gearð.
 Metodes mihte
 And his mod gefanc
 Yeorc wuldres fæder.
 Spa he wuldres gehwær
 Ece drihten
 Orð onstealde.
 He æfter gearcop
 Eorþan bearnum
 Heofon to rofe
 Halg scýppend.
 Ða middan gearð
 Mon cýnnes gearð
 Ece Drihtne
 Æfter teode.
 Firum foldan
 Frea ælmihtig. ÆLFRED'S BED. p. 597.

Now ought we to praise
 Of heaven the guardian,
 The might of the Creator,
 The thoughts of his mind,

The works of the Father of glory.
 How he, of all glory,
 The Lord eternal!
 Made the beginning.
 He first did frame,
 For the children of earth,
 Heaven as a canopy:
 Holy Creator!
 The expanded earth
 The guardian of man,
 The Lord eternal,
 Afterwards made.
 For men the earth:
 Ruler Almighty!

(U)—p. 209.

EPITAPHIUM ALCWINI.

Hic, rogo, paucillum veniens subsiste, viator,
 Et mea scrutator pectore dicta tuo.
 Ut tua, deque meis, cognoscas fata figuris,
 Vertitur en species, ut mea, sicque tua.
 Quod nunc es, fueram, famosus in orbe viator:
 Et quod nunc ego sum, tuque futurus eris.
 Delicias mundi casso sectabar amore:
 Nunc cinis et pulvis, vermibus atque cibus.
 Quapropter potius animam curare memento,
 Quam carnem: quoniam hæc manet, illa perit.
 Cur tibi rura paras? Quam parvo cernis in antro
 Me tenet hic requies, sic tua parva fiet.
 Cur Tyrio corpus inhias vestirier ostro
 Quod mox esuriens pulvere vermis edet
 Ut flores pereunt vento veniente minaci,
 Sic tua namque caro, gloria tota perit.
 Tu mihi redde vicem, lector, rogo carminis hujus,
 Et dic, da veniam, Christe, tuo famulo.
 Obsecro nulla manus violet pia jura sepulchri
 Personet angelica donec ab arce tuba.
 Qui jaces in tumulo, terræ de pulvere surge,
 Magnus adest iudex milibus innumeris.

Alchwin nomen erat sophiam mihi semper amanti,
Pro quo funde preces mente, legens titulum.

Hic requiescit beatæ memoriæ domnus Alchwinus abbas, qui obiit in pace xiiii. Kalend. Junias. Quando legeritis, o vos omnes, orate pro eo, et dicite: Requiem æternam donet ei Dominus.—This epigraph was inscribed on a brass tablet fixed in the wall. Vit. Alc. p. 161.

(V)—p. 238.

IN my account of Edwin, I have ventured to oppose the whole stream of modern writers.¹ With the person or history of Ethelgiva, they scarcely appear acquainted: her daughter is their favourite; and, after lavishing upon her every charm, of which the female form is susceptible, they marry her to Edwin before his coronation, lash with zeal the bigotry of her supposed enemies, and allot to her the disgrace and sufferings, which I have described as the fate of her mother. In the present note I may be allowed to detail the authorities on which my narrative is grounded.

I. As to the names of the two women, Mr. Turner has produced an ancient charter, in which they are called Ethelgiva and Elgiva, (*Testes fuerunt Ælfgiva regis uxor, et Æthelgiva mater ejus. Ex Hist. Abbend. Turn. vol. iii. p. 163.*) The authenticity of the instrument, as he observes, is suspicious; but I have no doubt of the accuracy of the names. In the contemporary biographer of St. Dunstan, the mother is called Ethelgiva, (MS. Cleop. B. 13 :) and Elgiva is often mentioned as the name of the woman from whom Edwin was afterwards separated. *Hoved. Ann. 958. Wigorn. Ann. 958. Westmon. Ann. 958.*

II. But was not Elgiva married to Edwin at the time of his coronation? I answer in the negative. 1. This marriage is not, as far as I have read, expressly asserted by any ancient writer. 2. By every historian, who describes at length the transactions of that day, she is considered not as the wife, but as the mistress of the king. See note 11, p. 236. 3. The contemporary life of St. Dunstan,

¹ From this number, however, should have been excepted Dr. Milner, who, in his *History of Winchester*, (vol. i. p. 153,) has shown that, in narrating the history of Elgiva, Rapin, Guthrie, Carte, and Hume have substituted a romance of their own creation in place of the real facts, as they are stated by the ancient writers.

plainly shows that she was not his wife: as it ascribes the indelicacy of Ethelgiva's conduct to her hope of prevailing with the king to marry either her or her daughter, (*Eotenus videlicet, quo sese vel etiam natam suam sub conjugali titulo illi innectendo sociaret.* MS. Cleop. p. 76.) Of consequence the king, at the time of his coronation, remained unmarried: and the queen to whom Dunstan is represented as offering the grossest insult, is the creation of modern prejudice.

III. Whether Edwin married Elgiva after his coronation, is a more difficult question. That she was his near relation, (*proxime cognatam*, Malms. de Reg. l. ii. c. 7,) is acknowledged: and, consequently, the marriage, if ever it took place, must have been deemed void, according to the canons, which, at that period, obtained the force of laws among our ancestors. Perhaps the expressions of the monk of Ramsey, (*illicitum invasit matrimonium.* Hist. Ram. p. 390,) and the title of queen, which Wallingford gives to Elgiva, (*Chron. Walling. p. 543,*) may countenance the idea that they were actually married: and a MS. of the Saxon Chronicle, (*Tib. B. 4,*) quoted by Mr. Turner, (*vol. iii. p. 164,*) in a paragraph which occurs not in the other copies, asserts, that in the year 958, Archbishop Odo separated Edwin and Elgiva, because they were relations, (958.) On þýŕŕum ƷeaƷe Oða aƷcebiƷcop toƷƷæmðe EaðƷi cýning Ʒ ÆlgýƷe ƷoƷ ðæm ða hi ƷæƷon to ƷeƷýbbe.) But the other chroniclers, when they notice the separation, are less positive; and observe, that the archbishop acted in this manner, because Elgiva was either the king's relation, or his mistress. (*Archiepiscopus regem Westsaxonum Edwium et Elfgivam, vel quia, ut fertur, propinqua illius extiterit, vel quia ipsam sub propria uxore adamavit, ab invicem separavit.* Hoved. Ann. 958. Wigorn. Ann. 958. Sim. Dunel. Ann. 958. Vel causa consanguinitatis, vel quia illam ut adulteram adamavit. Westmon. Ann. 958.) However, were we to admit the marriage, yet the very date of the separation will furnish an additional proof that it was posterior to the king's coronation. Otherwise, how can we account for the apathy or indolence of that active and inflexible prelate, Odo, who would have waited three years before he performed that which he must daily have considered as an imperious and indispensable duty? If his irresolution be ascribed to fear, why did he omit the favourable moment of the insurrection, and wait till Edwin was firmly and peaceably seated on the throne of Wessex, Kent, and Sussex?

IV. I do not know that any writer has mentioned the name of the unfortunate woman, who was banished to Ireland, and at her return

put to a cruel death. That it was either Ethelgiva or Elgiva, is certain: that it was Elgiva, is the consentient assertion of our modern historians. I cannot submit to their authority. 1. To decide the controversy, we must have recourse to Osbern, from whose narrative succeeding writers have derived their information. In his account of the coronation, he mentions Ethelgiva under the designation of adultera, (she was then the wife of a thane, according to Brompton, p. 863,) and adds, that her daughter was in her company. But from that moment he loses sight of the daughter, and fixes our attention solely on the mother, till he describes her death by the swords of the insurgents, (*Repertum simul cum adultera et filia ejus --- Regem cum adultera persequi non desistunt ---- ipsam repertam subnervare.* Osbern, p. 105, 106.) I do not think it possible to read attentively the narrative of Osbern, and believe that it was the daughter who fell a victim to the fury of the rebels. 2. From the writers quoted above, it appears that Elgiva was alive in 958, since in that year she was separated from Edwin. Now, the death of the woman who returned from Ireland, happened in 956, or at the latest in 957. Osbern informs us, that she was murdered during the revolt of the Mercians, and before the division of the kingdom between the two brothers: events which occurred in 956, according to the Peterborough, (p. 27,) and the Saxon Chronicles, (p. 116;) in 957, according to Simeon, Wigornensis, and Matthew of Westminster. (*Vide omnes ad Ann. 957.*) Hence it follows, that the woman who was banished, and afterwards put to death, must have been, not the daughter, but her mother, Ethelgiva.

From these premises, I should infer, that these ladies were women of high rank, but abandoned character, who endeavoured to corrupt the morals of their young sovereign: that the mother was compelled to quit the kingdom, and venturing to return, perished during the revolt; and that Edwin, after her banishment, either took Elgiva to his bed as his mistress, or married her within the prohibited degrees, which called forth the censures of Archbishop Odo. If these circumstances be true, the laboured narrative of Hume, and the passionate declamation of Mr. Turner, may be given to the winds.

(X)—p. 244.

Ex Wolst. Epist. ad Elpheg. Epis. Winton.

Insuper excelsum fecistis et addere templum,
 Quo sine nocte manet continuata dies.
 Turris ab axe micat, quo sol oriendo coruscat,
 Et spargit lucis spicula prima suæ.
 Stat super auratis virgæ fabricatio bullis,
 Aureus et totum splendor adornat opus.
 Luna coronato quoties radiaverit ortu,
 Alterum ab æde sacra surgit ad astra jubar.
 Si nocte inspiciat hunc prætereundo viator,
 Et terram stellas credit habere suas.
 Additur ad speciem, stat ei quod vertice Gallus
 Aureus ornatu, grandis et intuitu.
 Despiciat omne solum, cunctis supereminet arvis,
 Signiferi et Boreæ sidera pulchra videns.
 Imperii sceptrum pedibus tenet ille superbis,
 Stat super et cunctum Wintoniæ populum.
 Imperat et cunctis evectus in æra gallis,
 Et regit occiduum nobilis imperium.
 Impiger imbriferos qui suscipit undique ventos,
 Seque rotando suam præbet eis faciem.
 Turbinis horrisonos suffertque viriliter ictus,
 Intrepidus perstans, flabra, nives tolerans.
 Oceano solem solus vidit ipse ruentem :
 Auroræ primum cernit et hic radium.
 A longe adveniens oculo vicinus adhæret,
 Figit et adspectum dissociante loco :
 Quo fessus rapitur visu mirante viator,
 Et pede disjunctus, lumine junctus adest.

ACT. SS. BENED. sæc. iv. p. 931.

For the convenience of those who may wish to compare the Saxon with the modern English, and who have no grammar of that language, the following Alphabet and Prayer are appended to this edition.

SAXON ALPHABET.

Ǻ a	.....	a.	Ǫ o	.....	o.
B b	.....	b.	P p	.....	p.
C c	.....	c.	Q cp	.....	q.
D ð	.....	d.	R r	.....	r.
E e	.....	e.	S ſ	.....	s.
F f	.....	f.	T t	.....	t.
Ʒ Ʒ	.....	g.	U u	.....	u.
H h	.....	h.	V v	.....	v.
I i	.....	i.	W w	.....	w.
K k	.....	k.	X x	.....	x.
L l	.....	l.	Y y	.....	y.
M m	.....	m.	Z z	.....	z.
N n	.....	n.			

Th Ð, ð, þ.

That ꝥ.

And ƿ.

The vowels are sounded as in Latin. The Ʒ was sounded nearly as in German; hence *y* has been substituted for it in *beƷeond*, *beyond*; *halige*, *holy*; *Ʒear*, *year*; *ðæg*, *day*.

THE LORD'S PRAYER,

Written about A. D. 900, by Alfred, bishop of Durham.

Vren fader ðic arð in ðeornar ric gehalgud ðin noma
 Our Father which art in Heavens be hallowed thine Name
 to cýmeð ðin ric ric ðin willa sue is in ðeornar and in
 come thy Kingdom be thy Will so as in Heavens and in
 eorðo. Vren hlaþ ofer þinthe fel vr to dæg and forþer
 Earth. Our Loaf supersubstantial give us to Day and forgive
 vr scýlða urna sue we forþeran scýlðgum vrum, and no
 us Debts our so we forgive Debts ours, and do
 inlead vrið in curtnung, Al gefrið vrich fram iþle, Amen.
 not lead us into Temptation, but deliver every one from Evil. Amen.

THE END.







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